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THE PILGRIMAGE CENTER OF ABÛ MÎNÂ*

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Abû Mînâ is a place in Maryût, ca. 45 km south-west of Alexandria, where since the late fourth century the tomb of St. Menas has been venerated.¹ According to tradition, the place of the tomb was unknown for a long time.² Some miraculous healings, however, helped its re-discovery.³ The site henceforth developed into a large pilgrimage center. Most famous are the churches erected upon the tomb of the saint and the so-called Menas-bottles produced in Abû Mînâ itself

¹ On the vita and miracles of St. Menas see J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A selection of Coptic texts relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946) *passim*; a similar collection of Arabic texts is prepared by F. Jaritz, *Die arabischen Quellen zum Heiligen Menas* (Heidelberg 1993).

² According to the legend, as recorded in the *encomium* on St. Menas, attributed to John, Patriarch of Alexandria (either John III, 681–689, or John IV, 775–789), Menas was the son of an officer in the Roman army stationed in Phrygia. He was a Christian and of Egyptian origin. After the death of his father Menas entered the army as well, but when during the reign of Diocletianus (284–305) imperial sacrifices were demanded (edict from AD 303) he deserted the service and returned only five years later confessing in the same time his Christian belief. He refused to take part in the required imperial sacrifices and was accordingly beheaded. Although his body was supposed to be cremated, it was rescued by his former comrades of the army, who were then transferred to Egypt to oppose barbarian attacks in Maryût. There the troops were forced to abandon the sarcophagus with the relics of the saint on their return to Phrygia, when the camels bearing the coffin refused to carry it further. Therefore they buried him at the spot near a village called “Este”. Many years later the villagers became aware of the healing power of the tomb of St. Menas and built over it a tiny oratory in the form of a tetrapylon with a small dome, cf. Drescher, *Coptic texts* 35–72 (Coptic) 126–149 (Introduction and Engl. transl.).

³ There are several different versions recording the burial of the saint and its final discovery. The most convincing tradition which accords also with the archaeological observations is recorded in the anonymous martyrdom of St. Menas, survived in Greek (B.H.G., 1254) and Coptic (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Cod. M. 590 fol. 1r–18v); the latter edited and translated by Drescher, *Coptic Texts* 1–6 (text), 100–104 (transl.) and tells that after the martyrdom of the saint, his relics were collected by his sister who also brought them to Alexandria. The rest then goes on in a rather miraculous manner. However, since his sister brought his body to Egypt she would also have organized his funeral in a probably family-owned tomb at their native place. Since she surely would have been aware of the location of this family tomb, it is also not unbelievable that the tomb where his relics were finally discovered is identical with this very tomb of his family.

according to the model of traditional pilgrim flasks⁴ and decorated with a picture of the saint in an adoring gesture flanked on both sides with two camels. The ancient name of the town is not known.⁵ In all surviving sources the place is named only as "the church of St. Menas in Maryût."

I. *The earliest remains*

The oldest remains which have been discovered are datable to the late fourth century CE and belong to the tomb of the saint. The tomb proper of St. Menas was located in an earlier *hypogaeum* (underground burial place). Small statuettes of monkeys and miniature stelae of the god Horus-Harpocrates, discovered by the first excavator in the earlier burial sections of the *hypogaeum*,⁶ suggest that this area goes back to the pagan period and demonstrates that the region was inhabited already in pre-Christian times.⁷ Originally this *hypogaeum* was accessible in typical fashion by a vertical shaft which opens at the bottom, at a depth of about 5.3 m, to a group of three galleries distributed in a star-shaped manner, each of which gave access to seven symmetrically arranged burial caves.⁸ The relics of the saint were placed above the position of an unfinished extension of the *hypogaeum* and the same place was later transformed into a semi-domed niche (*arcosolium*), similar to those which are known from Roman catacombs. Above this, at ground level only a simple cenotaph was first erected.⁹ It was soon surrounded by a small mausoleum built of sundried bricks.¹⁰

⁴ Kaufmann, *Ikonographie* 57–120.

⁵ The name "Zenopolis" as it was deduced by Kaufmann, *Ikonographie* 44, from an Ethiopian text, is not historical.

⁶ Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt* 71ff. Figs. 24–29; *ibidem*, *Ikonographie* 110ff. fig. 55f.

⁷ This does, not however mean that these finds date back to the pre-Constantinian period. Until the edict of Theodosius I. from 392 CE, which forbids pagan sacrifices in the Empire, paganism has to be expected everywhere in the country.

⁸ Recently another *hypogaeum* of apparently the same kind was discovered about 60 m to the north-west of the Menas tomb, below the actual *Great Xenodochium*, having unfortunately its burial chambers so deep in the ground that they come to be located below the actual ground water table.

⁹ A full description of the *hypogaeum* including all the later erected churches above the tomb is given in: Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, *passim*.

¹⁰ In the texts it is described as a *tetrapylon* which, however, not corresponds with the archaeological finds.

II. *The first church upon the tomb of the Saint and the Great Basilica*

The first small church, whose sanctuary occupies the area of that mausoleum, dates back to the first half of the fifth century. It had the shape of a three-aisled basilica and its sanctuary consisted of a central apse flanked on both sides with rectangular side chambers (*pastophoria*). In the following years this church was enlarged several times with various additions and alterations on all sides. One of the earliest additions was a staircase to accommodate access to the tomb, established to the east of the church. Soon after, it was provided to the west with a small baptistry which reflects the desire of many neophytes to be baptized at the church of St. Menas. At the end of the 5th century the Great Basilica was added in the east.¹¹ It had the shape of a transept basilica, and the width of its nave—more than 14 meters, made it the largest church in Egypt for the period.

In the actual ruins of this church two building periods have to be distinguished. The earlier one had a three-aisled nave and a single-aisled transept. At both ends of the transept two rectangular chambers were placed, both serving probably as *pastophoria* (liturgical side chambers). During the second period the transept was enlarged to a three-aisled transverse hall with the *pastophoria* placed now to the sides of the apse. In front of the apse as usual the altar was standing surrounded by a *ciborium* on four columns and the *cancelli* (screens) of the presbytery. It is interesting to note that behind the altar a slightly curved tribune was erected standing on columns and accessible apparently from the inner area of the presbytery. Probably this structure has to be understood as an unusually shaped *synthronon* (seats for the clerics and the bishop). It is, however, of later date. The two small underground chambers beyond this structure and below the triumphal arch of the apse are ordinary burial chambers, assigned probably to meritorious clerics who did the services in this church.

A few decades later the old baptistry at the western end of the first church was replaced by a larger one. It was composed of several rooms for the necessary preparations of baptism, such as undressing and anointing of the neophytes. Consignation after the immersion in the *piscina* (font) was probably performed in the neighbouring room to the south, which is connected to a larger hall where neophytes

¹¹ P. Grossmann, in: "11. vorl. Bericht," 131ff. fig. 1; *ibidem*, "Neue Funde aus Abû Mînâ," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 825–828, fig. 2.

could assemble at the end of the baptismal rites and proceed together into the church to take part in the liturgy with the rest of the congregation. The centrally placed main chamber of the new baptistry was a domed octagon with niches in the diagonal corners, each flanked by a pair of columns.¹² The center of the octagon is provided with a very large *piscina* sunk into the floor with steps at the eastern and western sides. Its size is suitable to perform large numbers of baptisms. Apparently two or even three neophytes could enter the font together at the same time. Some years later the building was provided even with a second baptismal font in the chamber to the west of the octagon, which was used in other seasons of the year when only a smaller number of neophytes were to be baptized. The excavators were lucky to discover the complete equipment of this baptistry: its water supply from a neighbouring tank in the north-west (at its latest stage even from the roof of the building) and the place where the used water would finally seep into the ground.

III. *The Martyr Church ("Grufkirche") of the Justinianic period*

A. *The main body of the church*

Finally, in the time of Justinian (527–565), the first church, which had been frequently enlarged, was replaced by a new "Martyr Church," which received the shape of a double shell tetraconch. This is a building type that one finds relatively often in Syria,¹³ but which has no tradition in Egypt. The example in Abû Mînâ differs from the usual design in having a slightly elongated ground plan while the concept of the tetraconch is realized only in the inner colonnades, composed of large, reused marble columns. The outer walls are straight, interrupted only at the apexes of the lateral conches with small outwardly projecting niches. These niches are flanked with columns and screened in front. Probably reliquaries were placed inside the screened area for the production of martyr oil, which was needed in large quantities for the different ointments in the baptismal rites. Such reliquaries, of which many examples are known

¹² W. Müller-Wiener in: "3. vorl. Bericht," 133–137.

¹³ P. Grossmann, "Die zweischaligen spätantiken Vierkonchenbauten in Ägypten und ihre Beziehung zu den gleichartigen Bauten in Europa und Kleinasien," in: *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten*, Aegyptiaca Treverensia 2 (Mainz 1983), 167–173.

from Syrian churches,¹⁴ are usually constructed with a small opening on top and an outlet at the bottom of one side. When oil was poured into the reliquary through the upper opening, it would come into connection with the relics, and the healing power of the relics (as it was understood at that time) would be transmitted to the oil.¹⁵

Concerning the roofing of the church, only the eastern conche (which functioned at the same time as the apse of the church) was headed with a semi-dome. It rested upon a closer sequence of columns which stood on stronger foundations. For the other conches that had much lighter foundations semi-pyramidal roofs had to be constructed of wooden beams.¹⁶

The altar was placed, according to tradition, in front of the eastern conche, encircled as usual by *cancelli* (screens) of marble slabs held by small posts (*stipites*). Remains of those marble posts are still visible in front of the apse. Below the place of the altar, recognizable in a slightly elevated podium, a vessel of alabaster was placed into the ground with a narrow upper opening at floor level for libation. Apparently, oil was poured through that opening into the vessel. There it became consecrated through the vessel's proximity to the earth around the tomb, which was understood as sacred.¹⁷ Later the oil was taken out and distributed among the faithful, who regarded it as consecrated Martyr-oil. People filled small vessels with it and carried it home for use as medical treatment. It is very likely that this practice led to the invention of the famous Menas bottles.¹⁸ According to a chemical analysis of remains in this underground vessel this oil contained a high percentage of suspended incense.¹⁹

B. *Narthex*

In the remaining rather narrow area between this "Martyr Church" and the Great Basilica a kind of narthex was built with two smaller lateral conches at the narrower northern and southern ends. It had

¹⁴ W. Gessel, "Das Öl der Märtyrer. Zur Funktion und Interpretation der Ölsarkophage von Apamea in Syrien," *OrChrist* 72 (1988):183–202.

¹⁵ Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, 194f., 299.

¹⁶ Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 142ff.

¹⁷ Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 298, 301ff.; even nowadays faithful people collect the earth from the area around the churches in paper and plastic-bags and carry it home as a valuable substance.

¹⁸ J. Engemann, "Eulogien und Votive," in: *Akten 12. Kongr. I*, 223–233.

¹⁹ Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 65ff.

a straight row of columns on its western side into which the two easternmost columns at the apex of the eastern conch of the Martyr-Church were integrated. The narthex opens to the east with a large entrance (*tribelon*) into the Great Basilica divided by two inserted columns into three openings. On the northern side of the narthex the stairs for the descent to the crypt were placed.

C. *The crypt*

With every reshaping of the Martyr-Church the crypt with the saint's tomb received a new design. At its final stage, also completed under Justinian, the crypt was provided with two large stairways, one for descending and the other for ascending.²⁰ Apparently the eastern stairway served for descending, the northern one for ascending. The existence of two stairs points to the large number of pilgrims wishing to venerate the relics of St. Menas in that time. The crypt proper was now composed of two underground chambers: a square antechamber covered with a cross vault resting on four corner columns and to the west a small domed *confessio*. At the southern side of the latter the already mentioned semidomed niche (*arcosolium*) was situated, and it was here that the sarcophagus with the relics of the saint was placed. In this *confessio* the faithful could perform their devotions, say prayers, convey secretly their wishes, and then depart by the second stairs to the north. A so-called *cataract*, a kind of vertical tube often installed in western churches to establish a direct connection from the relics in the crypt to the sanctuary of the upper church,²¹ was not present. Access to the remaining galleries of the earlier *hypogaeum* was walled up.

IV. *The Pilgrimage Center*

At the same time that the churches were built, the region around them was turned into a large pilgrimage center.²² It consisted of a central ecclesiastical area surrounded by a settlement of ordinary

²⁰ Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 189ff.

²¹ J. Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* I (München 1924), 562f.

²² P. Grossmann, "Neue Funde aus Abû Mînâ," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 825–832, fig. 1.

dwelling. The ecclesiastical center was to a large extent arranged according to the principles of classical town planning, with regularly distributed colonnaded streets, squares, street arches, and a number of different public buildings. Of particular importance is the lay-out of the colonnaded north-south street, the main approach (*embolos*) to the center of the town that was used by all the pilgrims visiting the tomb of St. Menas. In an apparently deliberate architectural plan—to raise the tension of the pilgrims arriving for the first time—this street becomes continuously narrower the closer it comes to the center, such that even the lateral colonnaded porticoes are abandoned at the end. The center itself is represented by a large rectangular square ("Pilgrims' court") into which the street runs with a final tripartite archway. This Pilgrims' court is itself surrounded on all four sides with colonnaded porticoes and shops behind them. The churches and the baptistry lie to the south of the court, while on its northern side the main row of *xenodochia* (rest houses) is situated. The center of the court is adorned with a small well-house, sitting on four columns. Other pilgrim hostels of a more modest standard are placed further to the north. In their architectural shapes these *xenodochia* are composed with large inner peristyles, following the designs of earlier guest-houses as they are known from classical sites.²³ An unusual building of this kind in Abû Mînâ is the so-called "peristyle-house," a huge single-storied complex composed of two peristyles with extraordinarily wide surrounding porticoes and only a very small number of additional rooms. Apparently the guests who rested in this house were not accommodated in different rooms, but remained in the porticoes where they were at least protected against sun and rain. The building might thus be understood as a *xenodochium* for *humiliores* (resthouse for the poor). Probably one of the two peristyles was destined for men, the other for women and children.²⁴

²³ E.g. the *Katagogeion* in the sanctuary of Asklepios in Epidaurus, of which a plan is to be found in all tourist guides; and the Leonidaion of Olympia, cf. A. Mallwitz, *Olympia und seine Bauten* (Darmstadt 1972), 246ff. fig. 201; recently, however, the Leonidaion has been interpreted not as a resthouse, but as an *estiatorion* to feed a larger number of guests, cf. W. Hoepfner, "Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones," in: *Basileia. Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige. Internationales Symposium in Berlin 16.–20. 12. 1992* (Mainz 1996), 1–43, esp. 36ff. figs. 32, 35.

²⁴ P. Grossmann in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 398ff.

A. *The southern hemicyclium*

To the south of the churches, and thus far from the main traffic zone, a semi-circular building of two stories is situated.²⁵ It served with all probability the accommodation of sick people who wanted to stay for a longer period beside the tomb of the saint. This function would explain the semi-circular ground plan of the building, because all the rooms are of roughly equal proximity to the tomb of the saint. The building has two different kinds of toilets situated side by side, obviously assigned separately by gender. The other rooms differ in their sizes. Smaller and larger rooms apparently accommodated single persons and larger groups and might thus have been used for incubation purposes, a frequently chosen way of being healed from severe diseases in which doctors at that time were not able to help.²⁶ Many cases of successful healings are recorded by Sophronios, the early 7th century Patriarch of Jerusalem, for the pilgrimage center of Abû Kir ("Cyrus and John") at ancient Menouthis situated to the east of Alexandria,²⁷ where he stayed for several months to be healed from a severe sickness of his eyes. Unfortunately this pilgrimage center does not survive.

Incubation, which was practiced already in pagan times throughout the Empire,²⁸ was a miraculous way of healing carried out through the direct interference of the saint in cases where human medicine could not help anymore. It is based upon the ancient belief that the ascended martyr was present near his earthly body while at the same time accessible at other places or able to move very fast from one place to the other.²⁹ Incubation rites involved resting, preferably at night, next to the tomb of the saint,³⁰ or in a neighbouring room

²⁵ W. Hölzle in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 401–406 fig. 11.

²⁶ A basic discussion of the procedure is given by Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 252ff.

²⁷ Sophronios, *Laudes in ss. Cyrum et Joannes* 20 (= PG 87, 3:3481A); a new edition was prepared by N. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio. Contribucion al estudio de la Incubatio cristiana* (Madrid 1975); on the site itself see L. Duchesne, "Le sanctuaire d'Aboukir," *BSAA* 12, 1910, 3–14; generally on incubation rites in Christian churches see Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 299ff.; Kötting, *Peregrinatio* 392ff.

²⁸ Especially in the sanctuaries of the god Asclepius, examples collected by Thraemer, *RE* II (1896) 1690, see also *ibid.* 1686ff.; detailed descriptions on the procedure gives Aelius Aristides, *hieroi logoi* II 5ff.; but they occur also in the temples of Sarapis and Isis, cf. recently R. Merkelbach, *Isis regina—Zeus Sarapis* (Stuttgart/Leipzig 1995) 199ff.; as historical sources cf. Strabo, *de geogr.* XVII 1,17; Diodor Sicul. I,25,2–5; Tibull I,3,27.

²⁹ Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 124ff.

³⁰ In a small church, at Sidi Maḥmūd (not far to the north-west of Abû Mînâ)

if there are multiple incubants, with the expectation that the Saint would visit during sleep and either immediately heal the incubant or give advice for a successful treatment.³¹ Besides healing serious health-problems the saint could also fulfill the desire for children,³² help in an easy delivery for women, finding lost or stolen objects, finding out the truth if someone is lying (miracles no. 14 and 15),³³ or solving crimes (miracles no. 5.18.22).³⁴ Of course, incubation did not always bring the desired results immediately. Often the incubants had to repeat the procedure several times. Others needed to wait for many years. In difficult cases the assisting priests could unofficially arrange a closer vantage to the body of the saint, permitting the pilgrim to stay overnight in the crypt itself in order to intensify the reception of the saint's power. Nevertheless, ultimate success was expected with confidence, and hagiographical literature and historical sources are full of testimonies to successful healings.³⁵ Healings from incubation and from visions in the chapels of martyrs were still occurring at other places in Egypt through the medieval period.³⁶ Those who were successfully healed often extended their stay at the pilgrimage center, as Sophronios did at Menouthis,³⁷ to assist in the

where a tomb of a saint was extant at the western end of the church provision was made to allow incubants to rest and sleep directly upon the burial place of the saint, see P. Grossmann – F. Khorshid, "Excavation in the church of Sidi Maḥmūd in 1993," in: *Papers of a Symposium on Coptic Excavations hold at the Soc. of Coptic Arch. in Cairo, 7th–9th Nov. 1996* (in press).

³¹ An account how such a healing process during an incubation sleep in a church takes place is fully described by Agathon (665–681) in his record of the consecration of the church of Benjamin I in the monastery of Abû Maqâr in Wādî Natrûn, cf. R.-G. Coquin, *Livre de la consécration du sanctuaire de Benjamin*, Bibliothèque d'études coptes 13 (Cairo 1975), 177–185. Miraculous healings which occurred in Abû Mînâ are recorded in several miraculous stories of the saint, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 161ff. (as no. 1. 3.) 300ff.

³² Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 168f. no. 9.

³³ Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

³⁴ See Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 165ff.

³⁵ Sozomenos, *Hist.eccl.* 2.3.10ff., with the description of several successful treatments in the church of the archangel Michael near Constantinople; Gregory of Tours, *de glor.martyr.* 98 concerning the sanctuary of Cosmas and Damian at Aegae in Cilicia; also well known is the miraculous healing of the Emperor Justinian from a serious illness by the same saints in a sanctuary near Constantinople, which later was richly embellished by the Emperor; cf. Procopius, *de aed.* 1.6.5–7.

³⁶ Cf. Abû l-Makarîm (ed. and tr. B.T.A. Evetts, *The churches and monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries attributed to Abû Sâlih, the Armenian*, Anecdota Oxoniensia [Oxford 1895, repr. 1969], fol. 111a (p. 301): "... many men lodged in the church and spent day and night there; and the king provided for those that lodged there and built chambers for them to dwell in."

³⁷ Kötting, *Peregrinatio* 203ff.

care for other pilgrims³⁸ or to demonstrate their gratitude in other ways. Sophronios, for example, wrote a book on all the miracles performed by the saints Cyrus and John from Menouthis;³⁹ Paulinus of Nola composed a new poem in praise of his saint Felix of Nola every year, to be proclaimed at the day of his feast.⁴⁰ A document from Upper Egypt of 770/80 CE deals with a certain John from Hermonthis who gave his child as a present to the monastery of Apa Phoibammon as gratitude for the successful healing from the child's mortal sickness.⁴¹ Others offered valuables of various kinds (or simply money), or they endowed icons, precious vessels,⁴² crosses, lamps, knitted curtains, wall paintings, mosaics, and marble-encrustation for the embellishment of the church. Still others contributed to the oil for lamps, brought flowers or wreaths for the decoration of the tomb and altar, or supplied meat and drink for the celebration of memorial meals beside the tomb of the Saint or for feeding the poor during the days of the feast.⁴³ There are several miracles of St. Menas telling about the devotion of animals, especially pigs, which would have been slaughtered at the Site to feed the poor.⁴⁴ One would thus expect a pen or a farm to have stood in the vicinity to keep these animals, similar to the poultry farm recorded from the sanctuary of St. Thecla in Seleucia.⁴⁵

B. The palace

To the east of the southern hemicyclium at Abû Mînâ, in the corner bordered by the nave and the transept of the Great Basilica, a palace-like structure is situated with a small atrium-like court to the

³⁸ Also miracle no. 15, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

³⁹ See N. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio. Contribucion al estudio de la Incubatio cristiana* (Madrid 1975), with a new edition of the Greek text.

⁴⁰ Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, 297.

⁴¹ KRU 93, cf. W.C. Till, *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben* (Wien 1964), 173ff. (Germ. transl.).

⁴² The miracle no. 7, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 167f., deals with the devotion of a silver plate; of the Coptic miracle collected by Drescher this has the no. 3, see *ibidem*, *Coptic texts* 114ff.; another miracle no. 13, cf. Jaritz, *ibid.*, 173, deals with the endowment of "coloured wood for the work in the sanctuary."

⁴³ For examples with rich bibliography see Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 288ff.

⁴⁴ Miracle no. 14, 18, 20, 21, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

⁴⁵ Bas. Seleuc., *De miraculorum Theclae* II, 8 (PG 85, 577), quoted after Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 296 n. 1; a new edition of these miracles with French translation and comment was published by G. Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle*, *Subsidia hagiographica* 62 (1978), not available to me.

north and a typical reception hall to the south flanked on both sides with symmetrically arranged side chambers. The building probably served for representative purposes of the *hegoumenos* of the pilgrimage center and was accessible only through the church. The court is provided at its eastern side with a broad but rather flat niche in the wall and a screened area in front. Probably on certain occasions this arrangement could be used for some liturgical celebrations for a select group of people. To the west there is a large *triclinium* (dining room) with a southern apse. However, private rooms where the *hegoumenos* really lived are missing in this complex and they have to be located elsewhere, or were situated in the upper floor, which was reached by a stairway, added somewhat later, located in the rear part of the building.

C. The eastern court

To the east of the pilgrimage square a small secondary court is situated extending along the northern and eastern sides of the Great Basilica. It is accessible from the pilgrimage court through a relatively large gate. At the northern and eastern sides of this court stands a rather long and apparently multifloored building. It is built of sun-dried bricks with equally arranged two-room apartments that were probably meant for the housing of the so-called *spudaioi* or *philoponoi* who assisted in the services and organization of the pilgrimage center.⁴⁶ Among them were probably also some former pilgrims who had received successful healing by the power of the saint. Similar cases are recorded from other pilgrimage centers, like the sanctuary of Cyrus and John in Menouthis.⁴⁷ The way of grouping these rooms is very much like the monk cells in the *laura* near the East Church (east of the main center of Abû Mînâ; see below, § VI): each had a large, usually square, entrance chamber that served as a working or reception room and a smaller room for sleeping or prayer.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ On these see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich. Byzantinisches Handbuch* II, 1 (München 1959); 138f.; also E. Wipszycka, "Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l'Égypte chrétienne," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Papyrology* (Toronto 1970), 511–525; in Egypt they are known from the third century on under the name of *philoponoi*.

⁴⁷ Kötting op. cit. 205f.; another example is recorded by Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 297, of a former blind from Milan who devoted the rest of his life to the service of the saints who helped in receiving again his eyesight.

⁴⁸ P. Grossmann in: "6. vorl. Bericht," 463–465 fig. 3.

Since the region of Abû Mînâ is devoid of any natural water source at an acceptable depth in the ground, the roofs of all the buildings in the ecclesiastical precinct were used to collect rain water during the winter months for underground cisterns. All the center's buildings as well as the numerous small private houses on the periphery had their own underground cisterns for collecting rain water for use in the dry summer months.⁴⁹ The combined cistern of the *Grufkirche* and the Great Basilica has a length of about 25 meters and a capacity of ca. 450 cubic meters.

D. *The northern region of the center*

Further to the north but still within the ecclesiastical precinct there are also two public baths, built according to the style of Roman bath-buildings, with independent sections for men and women. They probably did not serve the everyday entertainment of the population. Rather, their location within the boundaries of the ecclesiastical precinct suggests that they were used mainly at the end of the Lenten fast on Maundy Thursday for the preparation of Easter, for in antiquity abstention from washing was included with fasting. At that time all the neophytes would also bathe before being baptized in the great Baptistry of the sanctuary mentioned above. Other buildings served for church administration and as magazines and shops. To the east of the so-called Double Bath stands a huge wine factory.

The whole ecclesiastical precinct was surrounded by a narrow wall (*peribolos* wall), which was provided with gates at the different street junctions. One gate in the north-western road bend of the main street (opposite the so-called North-Bath) is somewhat remarkable for having on its outer side a number of sitting benches, apparently to be used by people awaiting the opening of the gate.

The point at which the main north-south street enters directly into

⁴⁹ The graffito of a pilgrim from Smyrna praising the water at Abû Mînâ as recorded by C.M. Kaufmann, "I. Bericht," 93 and "III. Bericht," 18, has misled the researchers for more than two generations. The author of this graffito could have meant only the rain water. No water, holy by itself without any priestly consecration, was ever available in Abû Mînâ; to this context belongs also the story of a woman who sold falsely curative water from St. Menas, according to the Coptic Synaxarium of 11th Sept. (= *PO* 1:267: 4): the woman was discovered as being possessed by an unclean spirit, and was cured by St. Agathon the stylite.

the inner ecclesiastical area is marked by an arch resting on two tall columns as well as a new beginning of the colonnaded porticoes on both sides of the street.

E. *The outer living quarters of the town*

Beyond the *peribolos* wall of the ecclesiastical precinct the ordinary living quarters of the town were laid out. Here the houses, built usually of sun-dried bricks, are much more irregularly distributed. They are mainly ordinary dwellings but also include many small workshops such as wine presses and pottery kilns. One house has a mill. At several sites small, apparently private burial places in the form of underground tombs, often combined with independent memorial chapels, were discovered. So far only four such mortuary complexes are known, and the sparse excavations in this area suggest that these four could hardly represent the complete number. They were apparently the property of families whom we may presume to be Alexandrian, who liked to have their deceased buried in the sacred ground near the tomb of St. Menas.⁵⁰ Since all these examples are connected to normal dwellings within the same complexes it seems likely that these houses were frequented by the members of the family also for the celebration of memorial meals (*cenae funebres, refrigeria*) at the anniversary of the death of the deceased, as was customary at that time.⁵¹

The traditional cemetery of Abû Mînâ as it was discovered by C.M. Kaufmann⁵² lies, however, to the south, beyond the boundaries of the town.⁵³ Kaufmann discovered several underground tombs. All of them were family tombs, several containing corpses of children, sometimes even in two layers. The smaller tombs consisted of small, shallow caves hollowed out of the ground and accessible by

⁵⁰ This habit points to the fact that in its legal state the town of Saint Menas was not a true town but, rather, was understood as the burial ground of the saint. Still in the late antique period it was forbidden to have burials within the boundaries of a town (*Cod. Theod.* 9.17.6; *Cod. Just.* 3.44.12).

⁵¹ B. Kötting, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchegebäude* (Köln 1965), 24ff.; P.-A. Février, "Le culte des martyrs en Afrique et ses plus anciens monuments," *Corsi Ravenna* 17 (1970):191-215.

⁵² Kaufmann, "II. Bericht," 102ff.

⁵³ Kaufmann, "II. Bericht," 97f., mentions also a northern cemetery that was concentrated in the close surroundings of the North Basilica; this cemetery is, however, highly disturbed by over-laying modern Arab tombs.

stairs of three or four steps. The larger tombs descend to a depth of about four meters below the surface and consist of large underground chambers (ca. 4 · 6 m), usually vaulted and with continuous benches running along each wall, in the center of which the bodies were. Any traces of body-wrappings or of coffins had disappeared by the time of Kaufmann's work. The area of the stairways was covered with sequences of stones to avoid the penetration of rain water.

The private houses and workshops were erected at a relatively early period. When, apparently at the end of the sixth century, the above-mentioned main colonnaded street was built, it became necessary to demolish a number of these already existing houses in order to create space for the street.

F. *The fortification wall*

Close to the end of the sixth or even at the beginning of the seventh century the erection of a surrounding fortification wall for the city was started, of whose total length only a section (ca. 1.4 km) has so far been traced. However, the vestiges of this wall were observed only at the western side of the town and it seems likely that the part on the eastern side was never built. Roughly every 125 meters the wall is fitted with towers and every thirty meters—approximately the distance of an arrow-shot—there is a big outer buttress that probably was meant to support an upper platform surrounded by an outwardly projecting wooden railing. Stairs to reach the upper rampart walk were installed beside all the larger towers.⁵⁴

There are also three gates. The northern one at the main access road to the site was a monumental state gate with three carriage-ways and a roofed portico along its inner side facing towards the town, as well as rooms for the guards on the inner western side. The structure remained unfinished, however, since the towers usually flanking a gate of this kind are still missing and no traces indicate that they ever existed. From here the colonnaded main street leading to the churches of the pilgrimage center started. At its northern end the street passed through the above-mentioned living quarter, which is of earlier date than the street itself. The north-western city gate is a normal fortification gate with only one carriage-way

⁵⁴ H. Jaritz in: "12. vorl. Bericht," 460ff.

between two outwardly projecting towers,⁵⁵ while the south-western gate, situated in a corner of the fortification, contains only two relatively small passages between the doorposts and a presumed central pillar.

V. *The North Basilica*

In the north, outside the perimeter wall of the town, the North Basilica is situated.⁵⁶ It is a medium-sized, three-aisled church of remarkably well-balanced proportion. It has a tripartite sanctuary and a western return aisle, characteristic for Egyptian church architecture although missing from the other churches at Abû Mînâ. The apse was once furnished with a *synthronon* including the throne of the bishop. In front of the apse the presbytery is situated, surrounded with the remains of the *cancelli* and traces of the altar area in the center. To the west of the church lies an atrium-like court surrounded with several dwelling units and a latrine, and to the north lies a reception hall with an apse pointing to the west. This hall was also provided with a kitchen that could be used as a *triclinium*. Attached to the church at the southern side lies a baptistry with a circular *piscina* (font) sunk into the floor and once surrounded with a *ciborium* on six columns. The baptistry is of slightly later date than the church proper. The little chapel to the east of the baptistry is provided with three altar-niches, one of the earliest examples of this arrangement,⁵⁷ reflecting the multiple baptisms performed in the baptistry at Easter. These details, as well as the general character of the complex—its situation outside the general fortification wall—suggest that the North Basilica with its additional buildings comprised the area of the Monophysite church, which the Chalcedonian owners of the town had at that time deemed heretical and thus had forbidden residence inside the town.⁵⁸ The cells around the atrium would then have served the accommodation of the bishop and his party.

⁵⁵ H. Jaritz in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 393–398.

⁵⁶ H. Jaritz in: "9. vorl. Bericht," 216–222.

⁵⁷ Such an augmentation of the altar places becomes necessary when more than one eucharistic liturgy has to be celebrated in the same chapel at the same day, in order to overcome the proscription of celebrating the liturgy more than once a day at the same altar; a rule dating back to the time of Gregor of Nyssa (IV cent.) and recorded in the *nomocanon* 33 (163b) of Michael of Damietta; cf. W. Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien* (Aalen 19682), 102.

⁵⁸ Examples are known from all the capitals of the Empire. During the Arian

VI. *The East church*

A second church situated outside the town of Abû Minâ is the East Church,⁵⁹ which lies about 1.5 km further to the east and belongs as well to the sixth century. Like the Justinianic "Martyr-church," it is built according to the model of a two-shelled tetraconch. However, in contrast to the Martyr church, its outer wall sections run exactly concentrically to the inner conches, a feature corresponding directly to the Syrian model of this building type. The East Church also has an atrium to the west and, attached to it, a sequence of rooms, including a latrine along the southern side. In the north-east corner of the church a small baptistry is situated with an additional altar in the antechamber. The church is erected upon the site of an earlier and smaller basilica built of sundried bricks with a very narrow apse.

In the surroundings of the church are numerous small monks' hermitages, and thus the church has to be recognized as the spiritual center of a monastic community living in this area.⁶⁰ The hermitages themselves all have approximately the same ground-plan: a large usually square entrance room and a much smaller room in the rear. The former room probably served for living, working, and receiving guests, while the inner room was devoted to prayer and sleep. Some of these little houses have staircases, occupying a part of the smaller room and accessible from the outside. The uniformity among the houses as well as their overall simplicity compared with what we find in normal dwellings constitute the main arguments for the identification of this settlement as a *laura* of hermits.

VII. *The later history after the Arab conquest*

In 619 CE the town was destroyed by Persian invaders under Chosroes II (610–628).⁶¹ Throughout the center of the town where new sixth-century buildings have been excavated there is also evidence of

controversies in Rome under the Popes Liberius (352–366) and Damasus (366–384) the losing parties could stay only in the suburb of St. Peter, which was not counted as the inner region of Rome; cf. *Lib. Pont.* nos. 37–39. Under the orthodox Emperor Theodosius I (379–395) the Arian patriarchs could meet their people only outside the walls: Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.7. In Ravenna the Arian bishops had an *episcopium* outside of the town, which they left when the Goths came to power. So also in Egypt the Monophysite patriarchs usually resided in the monastery of ENATON when a Chalcedonian patriarch ruled in Alexandria.

⁵⁹ P. Grossmann in: "8. vorl. Bericht," 35–38.

⁶⁰ P. Grossmann in: "6. vorl. Bericht," 457–480, spec. 463–465 fig. 3.

⁶¹ On the date of the Persian invasion in Egypt see recently R. Altheim-Stiehl,

heavy fire destruction. The population apparently took refuge, however, since no corpses have so far been discovered among the ruins. The circulation of coins declined to almost nothing during the Persian occupation.⁶² After the Persians' withdrawal in 629 and the ensuing return of the inhabitants, only the most serious damages were repaired. Ten years later came the Arab conquest (639/642), and this time the invaders did not withdraw. Consequently, the site fell into the hands of the Coptic Church, no doubt causing the emigration of the original Chalcedonian—mainly Greek or Graeco-Egyptian—population.

The new inhabitants of the town had a completely different understanding of town planning and architecture. New houses were built mainly of rubble masonry. Streets and squares ceased to represent architectural points. Small dwellings were erected in these areas, and the original large rooms in the *xenodochia* and other buildings were subdivided into numerous small, irregular units. The sections of the colonnaded porticoes along the main streets and to the sides of the pilgrimage court of which the ceilings were still intact were walled up and subdivided into numerous smaller units. At several unexpected locations (e.g. in the south-west corner of the Pilgrimage square, directly in front of the baptistry and in the entrance-hall of the Great *Xenodochium*) small workshops such as wine presses and pottery kilns were installed.

Of all the churches in Abû Minâ only the "Martyr-Church" was rebuilt at that time, by the very active Alexandrian Patriarch Michael I (744–68). The rebuilt church was arranged in the shape of a five-aisled basilica.⁶³ The outer walls of the Justinianic tetraconch church, still mostly intact, were reused. A western return aisle, customary in the Egyptian basilicas, was then added to the church, and the church's nave was extended to the former apex of the eastern conch. Meanwhile, the presbytery was moved further to the east, into the area of the former narthex of the Great Basilica, where the *khûrus* was installed, a newly developed part of the sanctuary in Egyptian church architecture.⁶⁴ The former large tripartite opening leading from the narthex

"The Sasanians in Egypt—some evidence of historical interest," *BSAC* 31 (1992), 1–10; and *ibid.*, "Zur zeitlichen Bestimmung der sasanidischen Eroberung Ägyptens," *MOYCIKOC ANHP: Festschrift für M. Wegner* (Bonn 1992), 5–8.

⁶² H.-Chr. Noeske (personal communication); see also Grossmann, *Abû Minâ* I, 184.

⁶³ Grossmann, *Abû Minâ* I, 173–188.

⁶⁴ On this *khûrus* see *Coptic Encyclopedia* I (1991), 213f.

into the Great Basilica was walled up to be used as the place for the new apse.

For a short period the site flourished anew. The number of recognizable new houses points to a considerable population. August personalities of the Coptic Church were chosen to administer the site, several of them later becoming patriarchs of the see of Alexandria. However, this flourishing period did not last very long. Already in the first half of the ninth century attacks by marauding nomads from the desert are recorded, and the site is abandoned by its inhabitants. The *History of the Coptic Church*, compiled by Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' (ed. Burmester II 64) mentions the site for the last time under Pope Shinûda I (859–880).

A short and final resettlement took place after that date, and apparently after a relatively long interruption, according to archaeological remains overlaying the western part of the original town. This resettlement lasted probably until the Fatimid period (XI/XII centuries).⁶⁵ The remains consist of many well-built houses as well as workshops like bakeries and mills. Carefully selected rubble-stones were used as building material. In the center of this settlement there was a small market place surrounded by several small shops.

Finally, in the middle of the thirteenth century, we learn from a text of some reliability, the relics of the saint were discovered by some bedouins while extracting stones from the ruins of Abû Mînâ. A Christian scribe with the name Shaykh as-Sanî'a al-Barmakî learned of this and brought the relics to his house, where they were finally identified and, after several adventures, were transferred to the church of St. Menas in Cairo in the time of the patriarch Benjamin II (1327–1339).⁶⁶ There was no resettlement of the area, however, in connection with this discovery.

VIII. *The local industry*

Among local industries the production of wine and pottery deserves primary mention. In the region of Abû Mînâ more than a dozen wine-presses are known. Some of them are of impressive dimensions with a production capacity that would have far exceeded estimated

⁶⁵ J. Kosciuk in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 409–422, fig. 16.

⁶⁶ Arabic text with a German translation in: F. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen*, 251–257 (transl.), 451–456.

local consumption. The wine was thus undoubtedly produced for market. That a kind of commerce with the products of Abû Mînâ existed in antiquity we learn from some gypsum and clay amphora stoppers found at different sites in Egypt.⁶⁷ Many are sealed with the picture of St. Menas. Two examples discovered in the excavations at Elephantine were made of Nile mud,⁶⁸ a material which would not have been available in the region of Abû Mînâ. It is thus not to be excluded that somewhere in the Nile Valley an *emporium* for the commerce of Abû Mînâ was situated.

Small jars or amphorae with two handles, made of light reddish ware and manufactured in Abû Mînâ, have also been found in other early Christian sites in Egypt. However, the quality of the clay available in the region of Abû Mînâ is low, unsuitable for the production of cooking pots and wine amphorae. The amphorae from workshops in Abû Mînâ were used only as recipients for dry substances.

Local ceramic products most notably included oil lamps⁶⁹ and the famous pilgrim bottles (Menas flasks), which bore an image of St. Menas between two camels on one side and a cross or a small inscription like EULOGIA TOU HAGIOU MĒNA OR, more simply, TOU HAGIOU MĒNA on the other side.⁷⁰ They were designed according to pilgrimage flasks of the time and were apparently intended for taking home drops of oil⁷¹ as *eulogia* from lamps at the tomb of the saint, from the oil receptacle beneath the altar of the Martyr Church (Grufkirche),⁷² or from the other reliquaries in the lateral niches of the Martyr Church. Small vessels in the form of human heads (representing the pilgrims themselves) served apparently the same purpose.

The local ceramic industry also produced small figurines: horsemen

⁶⁷ J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Nos. 7001–7394 et 8742–9200 (Vienne 1904), 227, 8977, Pl. 21.; 239–9029, Pl. 23.

⁶⁸ Not published.

⁶⁹ The local production of oil-lamps is proven by the discovery of numerous forms for lamps in the excavations of Abû Mînâ.

⁷⁰ Kaufmann, *Ikongraphie* 57ff.; Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, 223ff., Pl. 21.

⁷¹ See J. Engemann, "Eulogien und Votive," 223–233; several examples have been found in Italy and the Balkan, see P. Lopreato, "Le ampolle di San Menas e la diffusione del suo culto nell'Alto Adriatico," *Antichità Alloadriatica* 12 (1977), 411–428; I. Barnea, "Menasampullen auf dem Gebiet Rumäniens," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* I, 509–514; I. Barnea, *Les monuments paléochrétiens de Roumanie* (Vatican City 1977), 232f. fig. 90,1 (Constanta); Z. Kádár, "Die Menasampulle von Szombathely," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 886–888.

⁷² Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 65ff.

with Phrygian hats and several different models of pregnant women. The horsemen hold shields in their left hands but no swords in their right. They resemble dolls but were probably bought by soldiers and consecrated in the churches to give the saint's protection for a coming battle.⁷³ Some of the figures of pregnant women are well painted and richly dressed with large rounded hats according to the fashion of those times. Buying these figures and taking them home after their consecration in the church allowed women an expression of their wishes to be cured from infertility, to have a safe delivery, or simply to win supernatural aid in matters of love and marriage.⁷⁴ Similar figurines of pregnant women found elsewhere were provided with small holes,⁷⁵ evidently to facilitate transportation and display. It may be also that such figurines were used in Abû Mînâ as votive offerings in the crypt. The plaster of the dome over the crypt contains hundreds of little rust-stains from iron nails on which such votive offerings for the saint could be hung. Apparently these pieces were often replaced by other votive gifts when the plaster in the ceiling was repaired, a procedure that—according to the visible traces—was carried out not less than seven times.

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⁷³ Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 51f.

⁷⁴ Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 30f.

⁷⁵ Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 30ff., pl. 27–37.

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Abbreviations used

Akten 12. Kongr. I–II

= *Akten des 12. internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 22.–28. Sept. 1991* [= *JAC*, Erg.-Bd. 20, 1–2, 1995] part I–II "1.–13. vorl. Bericht" = "Abu Mena, erster vorläufiger Bericht," *MDAIK* 19, 1963, 114–120; part 2, *MDAIK* 20, 1965, 122–125; part 3, *MDAIK* 20, 1965, 126–137; part 4, *MDAIK* 21, 1966, 170–187; part 5, *MDAIK* 22, 1967, 206–224; part 6, *Arch.Anz.* 1967, 457–480; part 7, *MDAIK* 26, 1970, 55–82; part 8, *MDAIK* 33, 1977, 35–45; part 9, *MDAIK* 36, 1980, 203–227; part 10, *MDAIK* 38, 1982, 131–154; part 11, *MDAIK* 40, 1984, 123–151; part 12, *Arch.Anz.* 1991, 457–486; part 13, *Arch.Anz.* 1995, 389–423; part 14, in preparation.

Drescher, *Coptic Texts*

= J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A selection of Coptic texts relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946)

Arch.Anz

= *Archäologischer Anzeiger*

BSR

= Papers of the British School in Rome

Corsi Ravenna

= *Corsi di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina*

Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ. I*

= P. Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ. I. Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* (Mainz 1989)

Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen*

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Kaufmann, I.–III. Bericht

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Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt*

= K.M. Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt und das Nationalheiligtum der altchristlichen Ägypter. Ausgrabungen*

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 Kaufmann, *Ikongraphie* = C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikongraphie der Menas-Ampullen* (Cairo 1910)
 Kötting, *Peregrinatio* = B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche* (Münster 1980²) 392ff.
 Lucius, *Heiligenkult* = E. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche* (Tübingen 1904, repr. 1966)
 R.E. = Pauly's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
 Török, *Coptic Antiquities* = L. Török, *Coptic Antiquities I*, Bibliotheca Achaologica 11 (Rome 1993)

PILGRIMAGE AND THE CULT OF SAINT THECLA IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

STEPHEN J. DAVIS

I. *We have this treasure in clay jars*

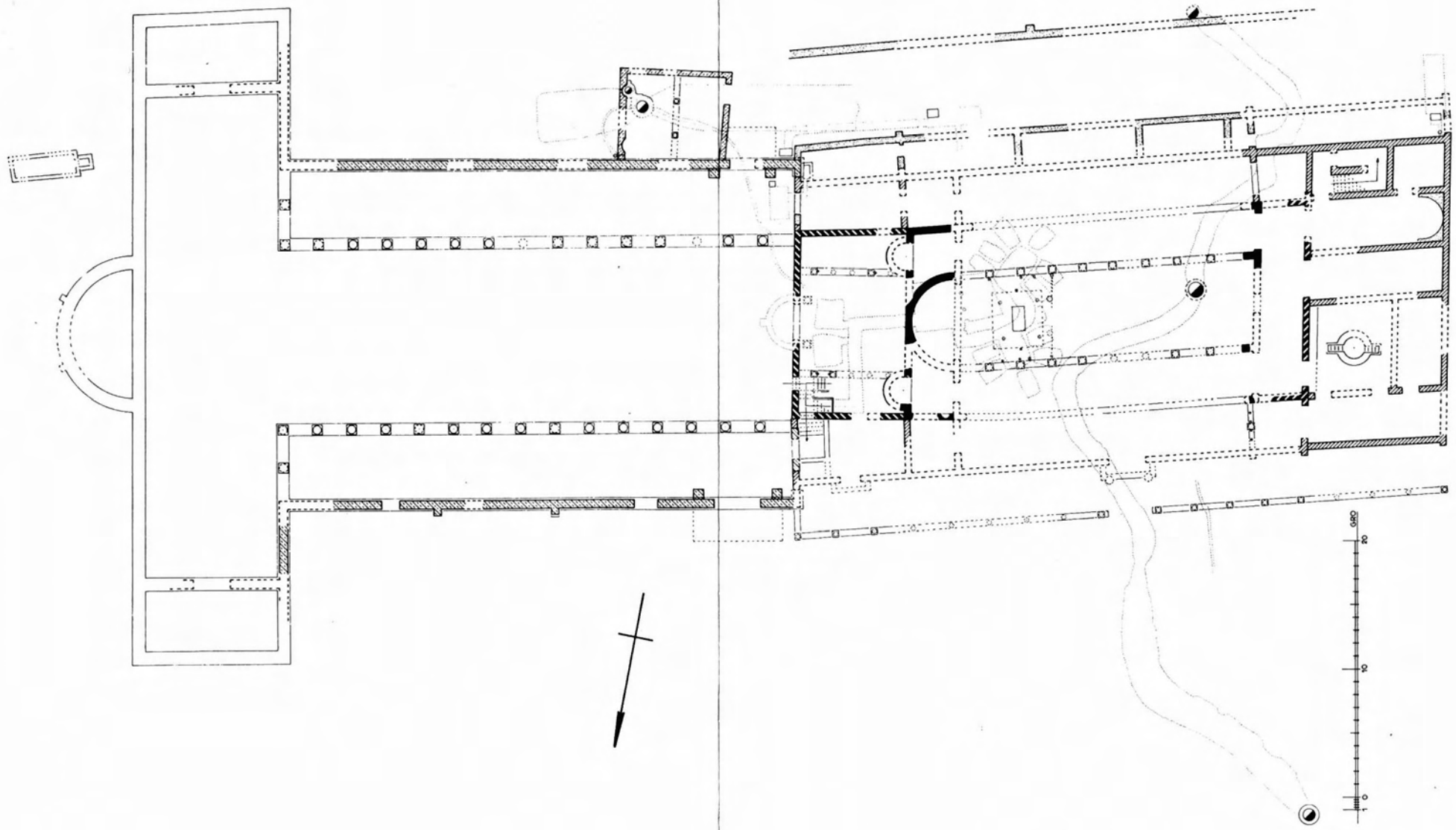
About 28 miles (46 km) southwest of Alexandria in the Mareotis district, the ancient pilgrimage city of the Egyptian martyr Saint Menas (Abu Mina), lies in silent ruin, baked by the heat of the desert sun. Fifteen hundred years ago, the dry Mareotis was dotted by small towns and cultivated plots,¹ and Menas' outlying shrine was a clamorous way-station for Christian pilgrims from Alexandria and from all over the Mediterranean world.² There, amidst the tumult of the pilgrimage festivals, the plaintive cries of the sick who came to the shrine for healing commingled with the sharp barks of artisans selling their special wares—small clay flasks (ampullae) holding holy water or oil, souvenir “blessings” (εὐλογία) stamped with the image of Egypt's national saint.

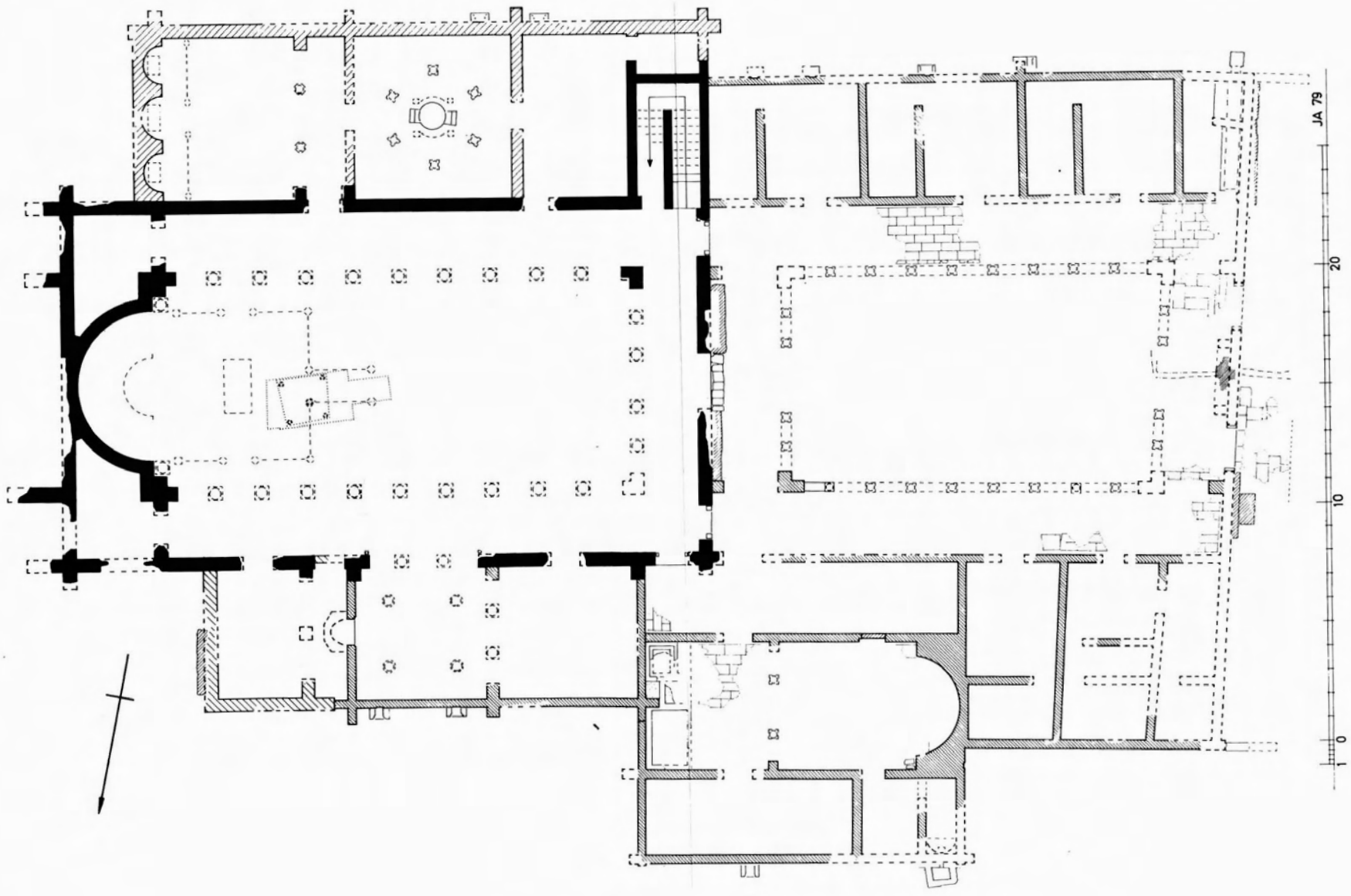
Thousands of pilgrims who streamed through the doors of Saint Menas' church carried these “blessings” with them as they reembarked on their journeys home. The humble clay flasks held the treasure of the saint's healing power, a power to which the pilgrims now could claim personal access. Today, hundreds of these ampullae

¹ In Graeco-Roman times, the larger freshwater Lake Mareotis and its Alexandrian port served as a crucial trade link for the transportation of goods and foodstuffs from the interior of Egypt. Under the Romans, the Mareotis district became an important grain-producer for the capital city. (Anthony de Cosson, *Mareotis* [London 1935], 40). A.J. Butler describes the Mareotis at the beginning of the seventh century, on the eve of the Arab conquest: “[T]here is abundant evidence to show that in the seventh century of our era there were many flourishing towns, palm groves, and fertile tracts of country, where now little is known or imagined to be but a waste of rocks and burning sands.” (A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion* (2nd ed.; Oxford 1978), 9). The desiccation of the Mareotis gradually increased after the Arab Conquest—by the twelfth century, its lake had dried up completely. Lake Mareotis remained without water until 1892; today its dimensions remain considerably smaller than in antiquity. (See de Cosson, *Mareotis*, 70–82.)

² Pierre du Bourguet compares the site's fame to that of the present day Lourdes. (P. du Bourguet, *Coptic Art* [London 1971], 82).





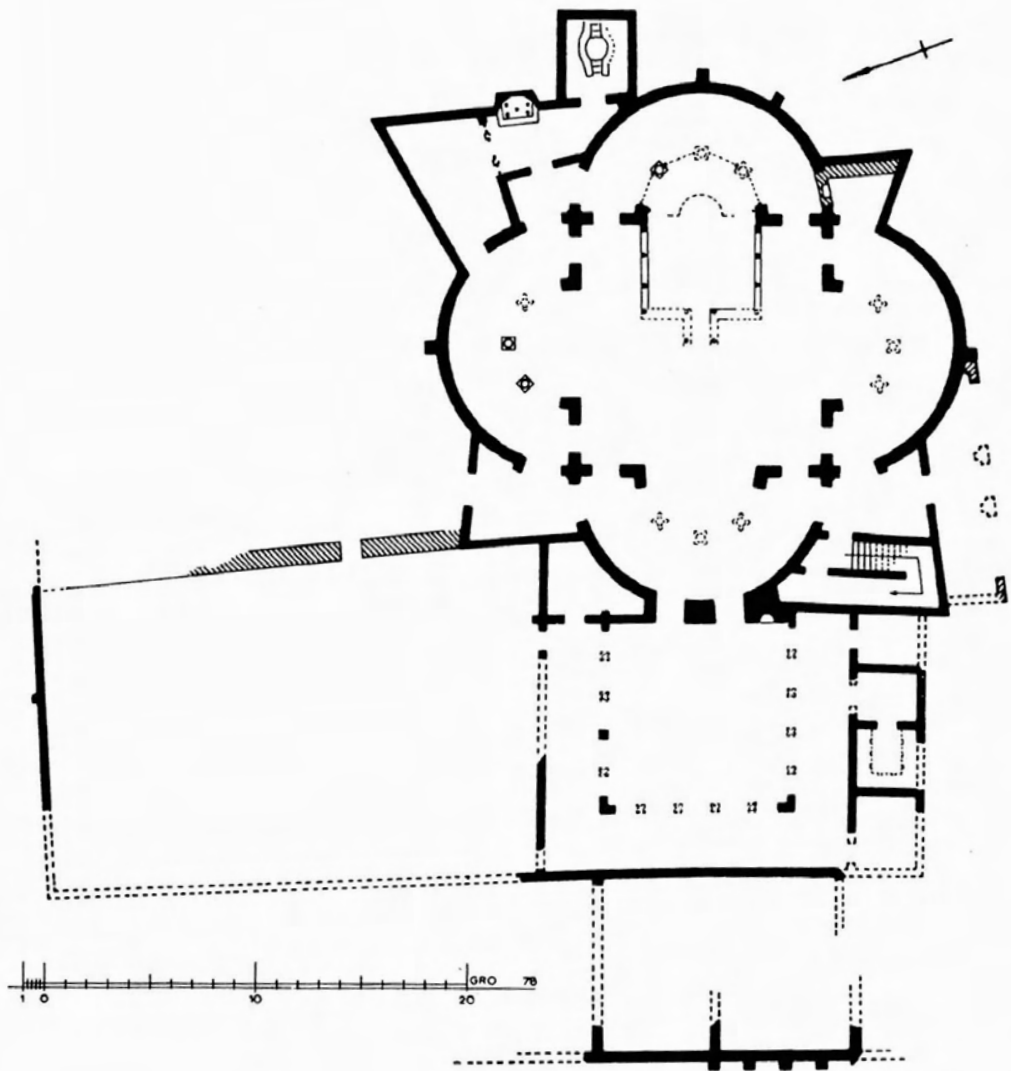


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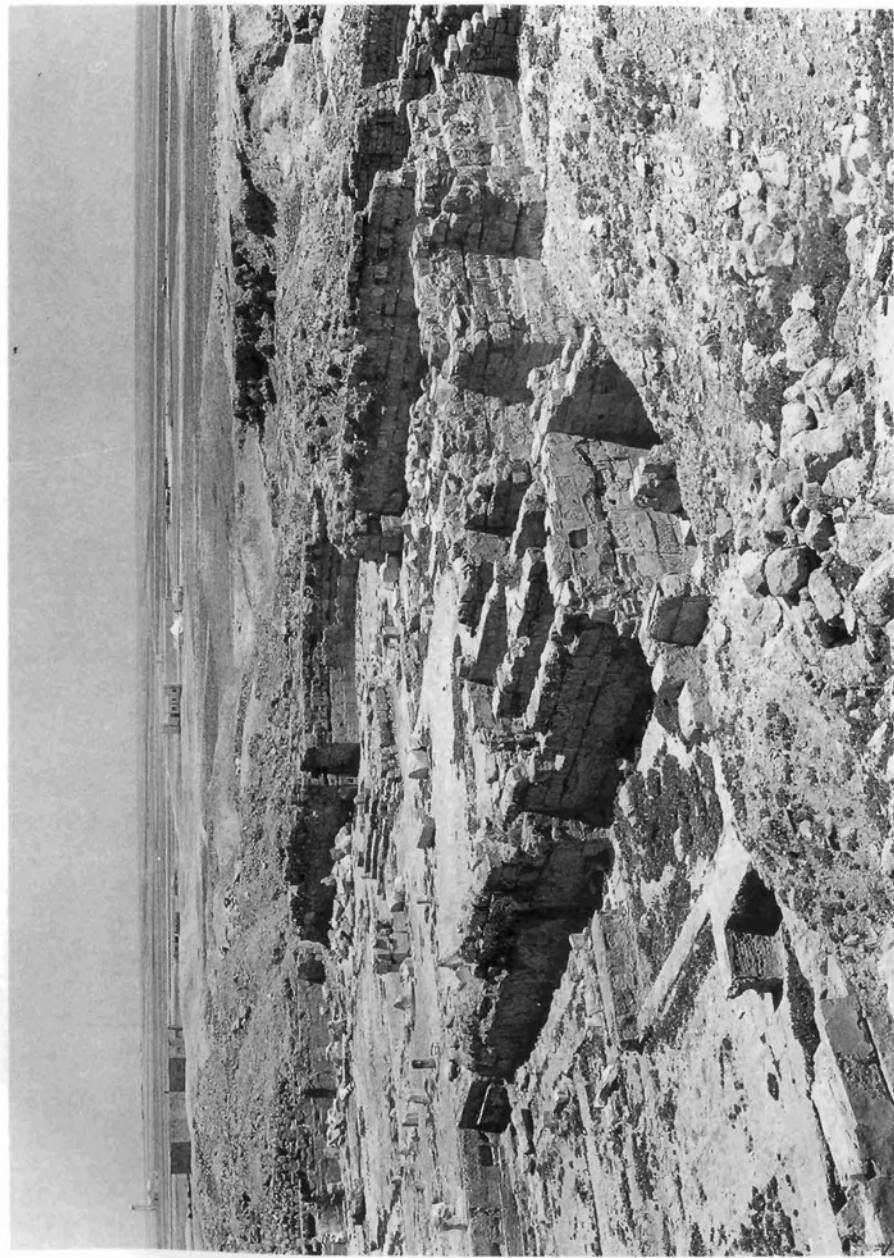


Plate 1: Abū Mīnā: Great Basilica (credit: Peter Grossmann)

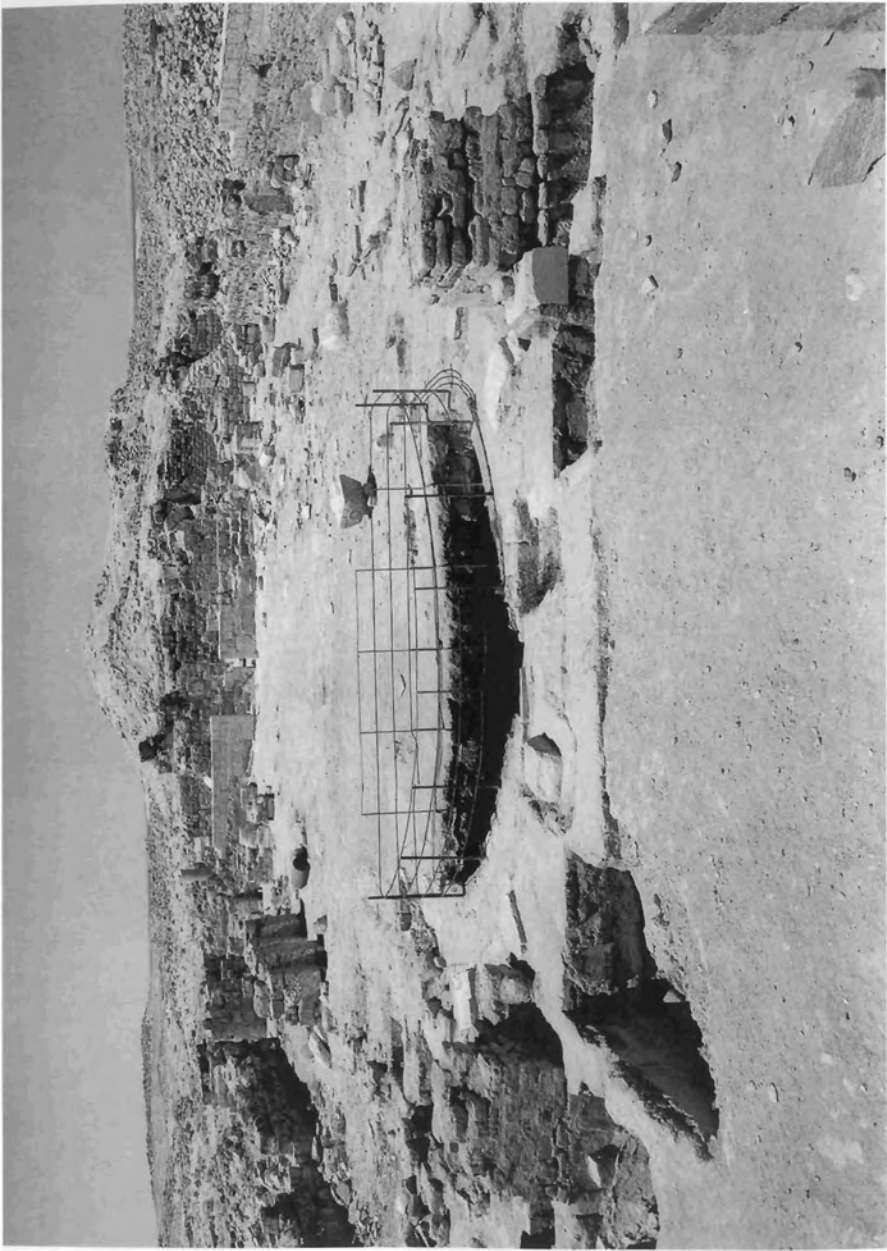


Plate 2: Abû Mînâ: Martyr Church (credit: Peter Grossmann)

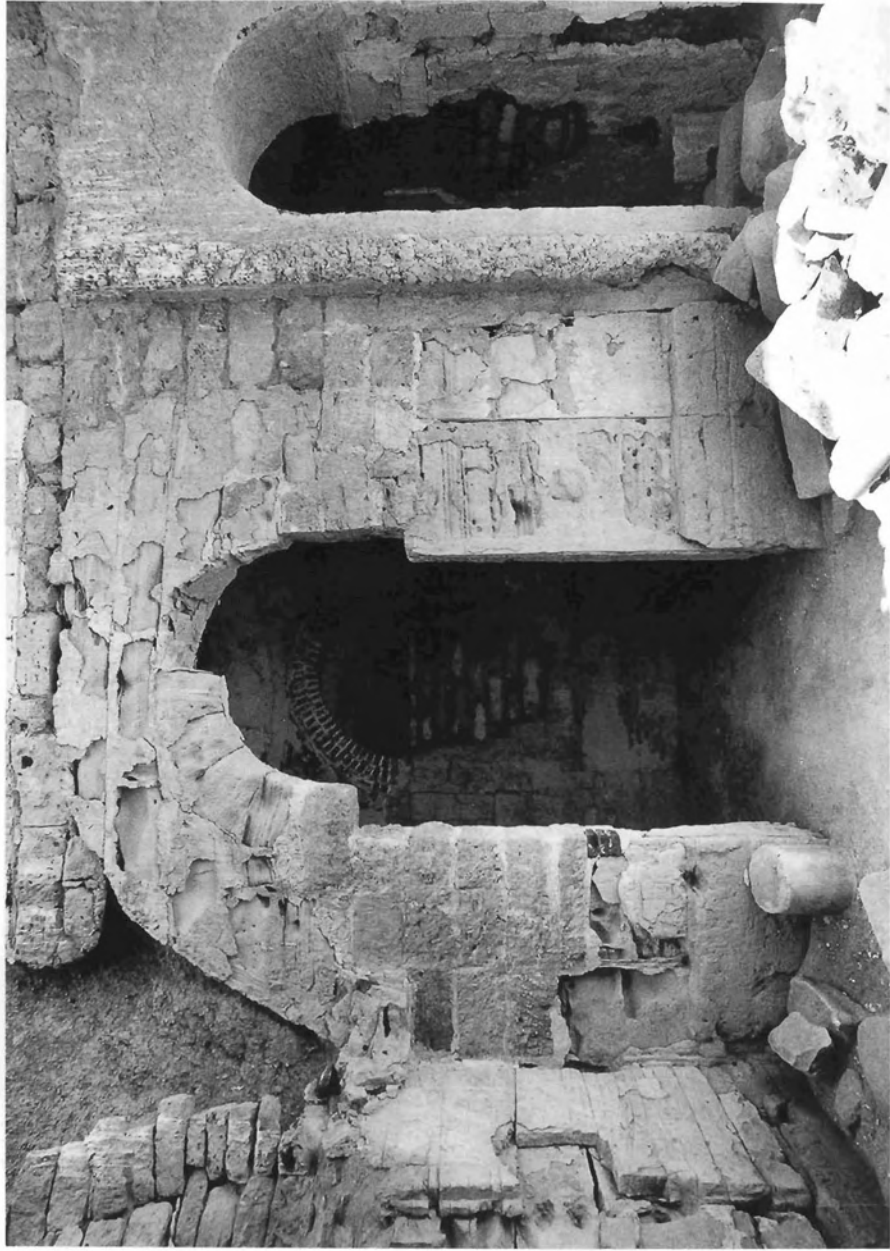


Plate 3: Abû Mînâ: Entrance to Crypt (credit: Peter Grossmann)

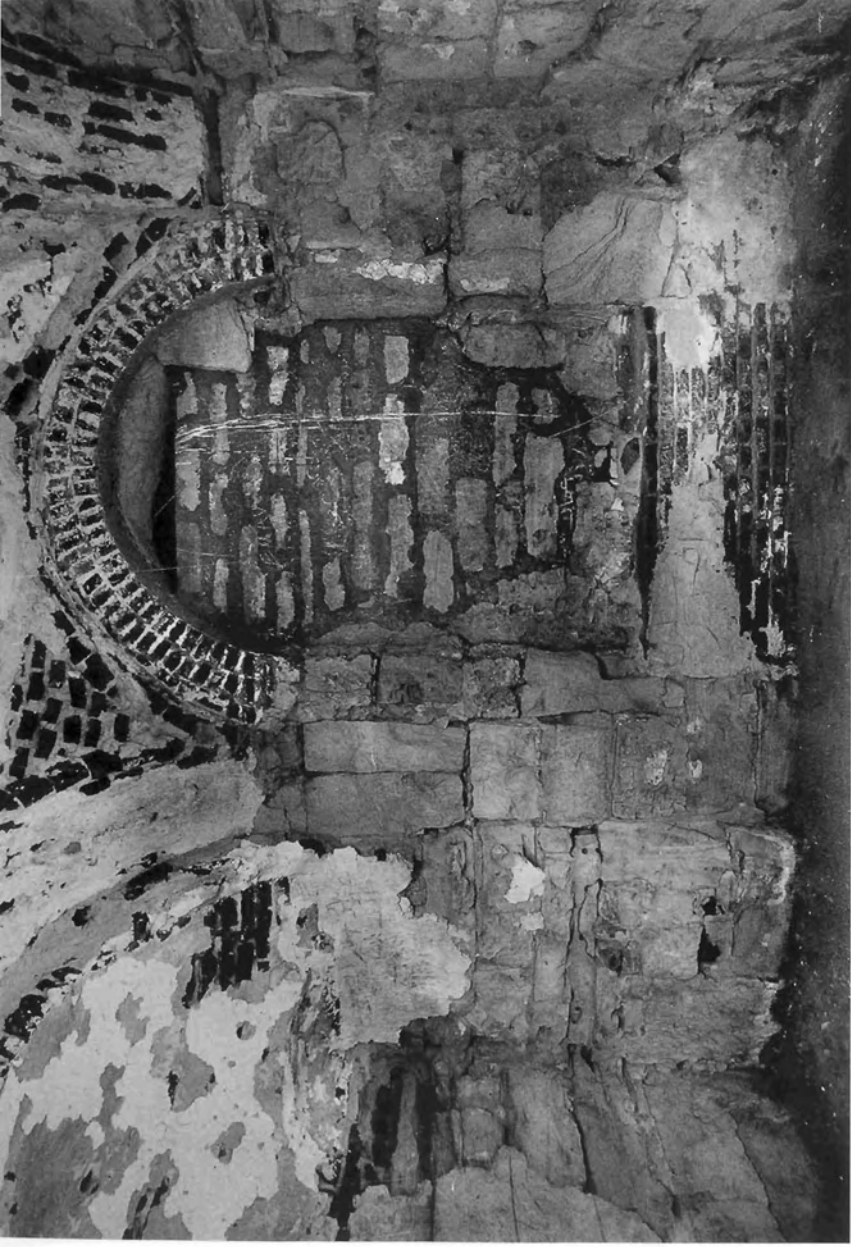


Plate 4: Abū Mīnā: Interior of Crypt (credit: Peter Grossmann)



Plate 5: Abū Mīnā: Western End of Pilgrims' court (credit: Peter Grossmann)