

# The episcopal palace of Parnassos in Cappadocia and its Early Byzantine floor mosaics

Melih Arslan,<sup>1</sup> Philipp Niewöhner<sup>2</sup> and Yavuz Yeğın<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Hacı Bayram Veli University, Türkiye,* <sup>2</sup>*University of Göttingen, Germany, and*

<sup>3</sup>*Ardahan University, Türkiye*  
*philippniewoehner@hotmail.com*

## Contents

### Appendix 1

A Late Roman sarcophagus and three early Christian gravestones from Parnassos

### Supplementary bibliography

### Appendix 2

Detailed images of the animal mosaic in the apsed hall of Parnassos

---

## Appendix 1: A Late Roman sarcophagus and three early Christian gravestones from Parnassos

A fragment of a garland sarcophagus was photographed by Ali and Levent Egemen Vardar at Parlasan in 2006 (Vardar 2007: 459–60). The fragment preserves only about a third of the box and is badly eroded (supplementary fig. 1), but the relief may be deciphered by comparison to a similar sarcophagus at Konya. Unlike other garland sarcophagi (Waelkens 1982: pls 5, 7, 8, 11; Koch, Sichtermann 1982: 499–500), the one at Konya displays not only Medusa with knotted snakes under the chin, but also a maenad with hair gathered in binders that are tied around a horizontal thyrsus under the chin (Özgan 2003: 69–71, cat. 26, pls 53–54). The same appears to be the case at Parlasan, suggesting that the illustration of maenads represents a regional variation in the decoration of garland sarcophagi. The maenads may have been conceived of as an alternative to the otherwise common theatre masks. The inclusion of palm branches between the head and the garland is also unusual, and the woodenly rigid victories that compare poorly to those wearing the long wavy garments of metropolitan showpieces indicate a provincial workshop of modest aspirations.

The Vardars also documented an early Christian gravestone for Ioania (supplementary fig. 2). The slab is 79cm tall but with a width of only 36cm seems too narrow for even a child's grave. The slab may have covered the grave only in part, or it could have stood upright. Both

alternatives are attested elsewhere in central Anatolia, where such early Christian gravestones were widespread (Bittel 1975; Mitchell 1982: 361, cat. 500, pl. 28; Wallner 2015: 189, pl. 23; French, Mitchell 2019: cat. 366–67, 393, 397, 400, 405, 416, 420; Krüger 2021: cat. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9; Buora, Laflı 2022: 193, fig. 18). Like at Parlasan, the decoration is often centred on a large cross. The arch above the cross at Parlasan occurs on some other gravestones, too, as well as above numerous other crosses. It may allude to a ciborium or canopy, as crosses and, in particular, the jewelled memorial cross on Golgotha were often depicted as standing under, or before, a ciborium (Torp 2018, 224–29).

A second, man-sized slab with a cross and an arch was found during the rescue excavation that is reported on in the main part of this paper, outside the building with the mosaics, to the southwest of the apse (supplementary fig. 3). The slab is of the right size for a grave cover but was found outside any context, and it is not clear when and how it ended up next to the apse. A third slab with a large cross survives as a fragment only. Today, it marks a grave in the Turkish cemetery, but it will originally have been an Early Christian gravestone, too (supplementary fig. 4). Taken together, these four stray finds suggest that Parnassos had a monumental Late Roman to early Christian necropolis.

**Supplementary bibliography**

- Bittel, K. 1975: 'Christliche und jüdische Grabsteine' in K. Bittel (ed.), *Boğazköy 5, Funde aus den Grabungen 1970 und 1971*. Berlin, Mann: 108–13
- Buora, M., Laflı, E. 2022: 'A slab from Izmir with two peacocks: depictions of peacocks in Byzantine architectural sculpture of Asia Minor' *Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya 4. Istorija. Regionovedenie. Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* 27.6: 171–210
- French, D., Mitchell, S. 2019: *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Ankara (Ancyra) 2. Late Roman, Byzantine and Other Texts*. Munich, C.H. Beck
- Koch, G., Sichtermann, H. 1982: *Römische Sarkophage*. Munich, Beck
- Krüger, D. 2021: 'Byzantinische Grabsteine und ein Bauglied aus der Umgebung von Boğazköy' *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 71: 227–37
- Mitchell, S. 1982: *Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor 2. The Inscriptions of North Galatia*. Oxford, BAR
- Özgan, R. 2003: *Die kaiserzeitlichen Sarkophage in Konya und Umgebung*. Bonn, R. Habelt
- Torp, H. 2018: *La rotonde palatine à Thessalonique*. Athens, Kapon
- Vardar, L.E. 2007: 'Galatia Bölgesi Kaleleri/Yerleşmeleri Yüzey Araştırması. Ankara ve Eskişehir İlleri, 2006' *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* 25.3: 453–68
- Waelkens, M. 1982: *Dokimeion: Die Werkstatt der repräsentativen kleinasiatischen Sarkophage*. Berlin, Mann
- Wallner, Ch. 2015: 'Die Inschriften des Museums in Yozgat – Addenda' *Tyche* 30: 173–91



Supplementary fig. 1. Parnassos/Parlasan, left third of the long side of a garland sarcophagus, broken on the right (photograph by L.E. Vardar, 2006). A victory at the left corner upholds the garland. Above the garland, two palm branches flank the head of a maenad; her face is eroded, but her hair ends in binders that are tied around a horizontal thyrsus under her chin.



Supplementary fig. 2. Parnassos/Parlasan, gravestone of Ioania, carved with a cross inside an arch below a pointed roof and inscribed + *Ενθα κατακίτε Ιωάννια* + Here rests Ioania: H. 79, W. 36, Th. 19, Height of letters 5 (photograph by L.E. Vardar, 2006).



Supplementary fig. 3. Parnassos, man-sized slab with cross and arch, found outside the apse, on the southwest side (photograph © M. Arslan). The carving is highlighted with red paint, as are four additional pendilia hanging down from the horizontal cross arm, as well as what appear to be the four rivers of paradise at the bottom of the cross.



*Supplementary fig. 4. Parnassos/Parlasan, back side of a grave marker in the Turkish graveyard, carved with what appears to have been a Byzantine cross with flaring arms (photograph by P. Niewöhner 2021).*

**Appendix 2: Detailed images of the animal mosaic in the apsed hall at Parnassos**



*Supplementary fig. 5. Detail of the animal mosaic: the mountain goat in the northern half of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



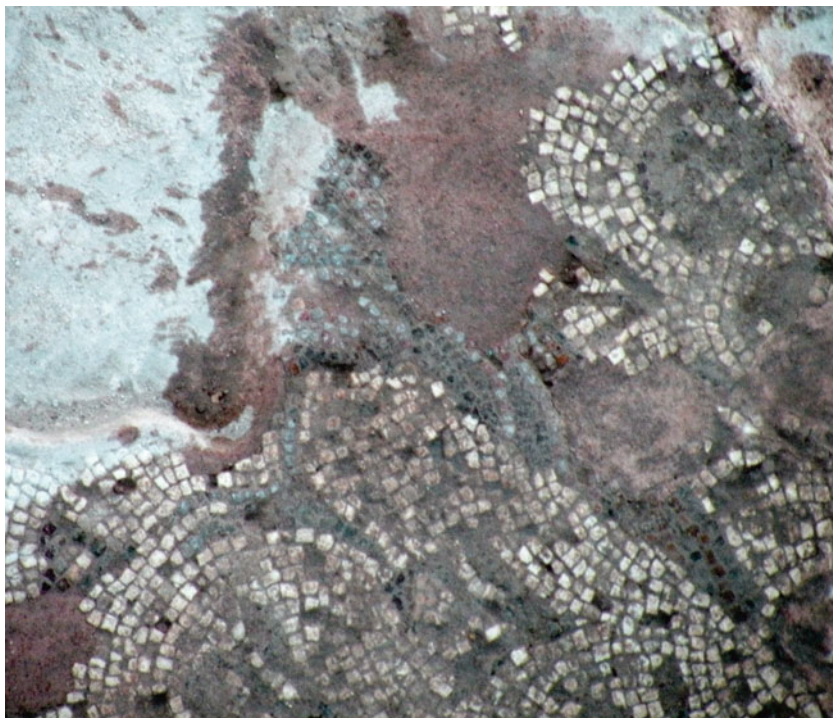
*Supplementary fig. 6. Detail of the animal mosaic: the doe(?) at the northern end of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 7. Detail of the animal mosaic: the horse in the northern half of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 8. Detail of the animal mosaic: the mare or colt(?) at the northern end of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 9. Detail of the animal mosaic: the black bird above the croup of the horse in the northern half of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 10. Detail of the animal mosaic: the rabbit in the centre north of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 11. Detail of the animal mosaic: the sheep(?) in the centre south of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 12. Detail of the animal mosaic: the goat in the centre of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 13. Detail of the animal mosaic: the leopard at the southern end of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*





*Supplementary fig. 14. Detail of the animal mosaic: the ostrich in the southern half of the west side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 15. Detail of the animal mosaic: the stag in the southern half of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 16. Detail of the animal mosaic: the goose in the southern half of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*



*Supplementary fig. 17. Detail of the animal mosaic: the bull at the southern end of the east side (photograph © M. Arslan).*