THE PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE WESTERN BASILICA OF THE ZENOBIA-HALABIEH CITY

Camilla Mileto, Fernando Vegas López-Manzanares, Guillermo Guimaraens Igual and María Diodato
Instituto Universitario de Restauración del Patrimonio de la Universidad Politécnica de Valencia.
Unidad de investigación, restauración y difusión del patrimonio arquitectónico. Loggia.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: Camilla Mileto, cami2@cpa.upv.es

ABSTRACT: *The city of Zenobia-Halabieh, an ancient Roman garrison renamed after and by the mythical Queen of Palmyra, transformed by Justinian into its present-day magnitude, constituted a strategic commercial and defensive point on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire. From the fortress on the hill summit, its walls and towers, most of which are conserved, open out in a triangular shape on to the pier on the bank of the River Euphrates. In the city centre, the remains of the Western Basilica rise, a building containing three naves with semicircular apses. This work is the preliminary study of the restoration and conservation problems of these ruins exposed to the elements.*

KEYWORDS: architecture, byzantine, church, plaster, ruins, conservation, lifting, restoration, ashlars.

HALABIEH THROUGHOUT HISTORY

On the western bank of the Syrian Euphrates, between the cities of Deir ez-Zur and Raqqa, lie the ruins of what was the Byzantine Halabieh city, ancient Zenobia, in honour of its founder, the courageous Queen of Palmyra. The gates of the city open on the Western side of the Euphrates towards a vast desert expanse that separates this fertile edge of the Mediterranean from the densely populated Syrian cities of Damascus and Aleppo.

At a short distance from the fortified city, in the city of Rasafa, defensive limes made up of a constellation of fortified areas can be made out. They were constructed because, for Emperor Justinian the Great (483-565), the Euphrates became an eastern wall destined to safeguard the Empire from being harassed by Persian dynasties while this Empire expanded westwards.

In this context, the key area of Halabieh arises, built in 270, and named by the Queen of Zenobia, who governed within the Roman Empire and reigned over the satellite kingdom of Palmyra, who acted as a vassal to avoid attacks from northern towns by Sarmatians and Scythians who had arrived on their way to Greece.

Zenobia had come to power after her husband's death, Odenatus's, but Rome had not acknowledged her as they suspected her playing a role in his assassination. The Queen took no notice of Emperor Aurelianus' setbacks, and went on to not only defeat the legions, but also attacked Bosra, the state capital of Arabia, and invaded Egypt. In no time at all, the Kingdom of Palmyra had expanded from Syria to Egypt, indicating that the prosperity of Zenobia-Halabieh was at the mercy of city of Palmyra's splendour.

When Emperor Aurelianus, whose men called him «sword-in-hand», put a stop to the threats spreading around Rome in the West by handing over Dacia to the Goths. He defeated the enemies, the Vandals and Germanics, who had already invaded Italy, and he travelled east in 271 with the intention of defeating the Zenobian armies in Antakya and of besieging the capital, Palmyra, until it surrendered.

The fall of Palmyra meant an end to magnificence in the region. From that time onwards, it became a controlled military area. The situation worsened some years later when, in 273, dissatisfaction fuelled a rebellion in the capital which became a brutal retaliation by the residing legions who massacred the settlement and set fire to it.

When Emperor Diocletian (254-305) attempted to secure the eastern limes, he did not hesitate to centre his searches on the area of the Euphrates by making Palmyra one of the key lime fortresses. Therefore, Zenobia became one of his sites. It was through this that the heritage of the Eastern Emperor was maintained until, as previously mentioned, Emperor Justinian paid attention to the key crossing of the Euphrates.

The strategic value of the Halabieh city cannot be understood without its eastern homonym, Zalabiyeh, located on the other bank of the Euphrates, both of which were destined to restrict the crossing of the river. In a sense, the river traffic towards Aleppo was controlled and a route supported by different enclaves such as Qasr ibn Wardan or Rasafa came into being.

The Muslim Expansion in the seventh century tested this defensive network, which collapsed not so much because of its architectural

inefficiency, but to the weak state that the Empire found itself in. At the time, it was incapable of maintaining a powerful army to garrison positions. Without public funds, it was impossible to maintain the loyalty of the Phylarchs, allied tribal captains, in whose hands the Syrian territory had fallen.

We are able to affirm that this group of locations did not satisfy the assigned holding operation, and that their roles in Byzantine History might have created a false sense of security for its citizens who survived while the caravan traffic continued, but which began to deteriorate until it finally disappeared while other places, like Rasafa1, survived as pilgrimage centres. The cities were abandoned due to Arabic occupation and were forgotten about, and Palymra was no exception. Their structures were destroyed by earthquakes and ended up covered by earth and sand.

THE ARCHITECTURE AND RELIGION

A historical glance at the Halabieh City, its neighbouring areas, its aims and its outcomes, enable us to understand the architectural structure of its walls. As we have already mentioned, even though the origin of the enclave was military, it will never, especially in those times, be able to wash its hands of the holiness of its architectural settlement. Halabieh is possibly a better example of the evolution of holiness in Eastern lands than other cities may prove to be. Thus from the Pagan world, this city evolves towards a more diverse form of Monotheism.

The first figure that we should probably concentrate on is Emperor Aurelianus. An unavoidable personage because he was a person who had endlessly fought against separatism in his special crusade to maintain the unity of the Empire. He also believed he could combat spiritual breakdown by founding a new faith that combined the ancient Pagan Gods with the new Christian God by his reinventing the Sun God. We may speak of the first formalisation in the Roman world of a Monotheist culture that led the way to a clear victory for the Christian faith. At the same time, the Emperor proclaimed a Supreme power sworn by the Deity which, above the Senate, guaranteed absolute power based on "God's Grace", a concept originating from the East that would take no time to spread worldwide and would inherit the Byzantine Crown.

The Unique Deity concept and a new culture implied a new type of architecture. Aurelianus represented this concept by constructing the magnificent temple in Rome, consecrated to the sun and which inherited the Temple's Pagan architecture. Somewhat later in the same way with the formalisation of Christianity, the Christian World, open to the whole world, would be able to erect its public spaces which were intended for the Monotheist culture, and would find the Basilica suitable for liturgy.

However as many scholars have stated, the functional suitability of the Basilica did not satisfy certain rites of Christian Liturgy, and more new suitable kinds of typological models were recovered and adapted. For example, the centralised type that, prior to renaissance idealisation attempts, was resorted for cases of Baptistery, Mausoleum or Martyrium.

Without renouncing the Basilica-based idea, the Orthodox Church in the East opted for centralised typologies that constituted a mixed structural scheme by combining the centralised space with the iconostasis and triforium. The best example of this is, without doubt, the Hagia Sophie Basilica in former Constantinople. The centralised space was to be emphasised by its dome, while the traditional exedra marked the unavoidable direction the ritual took, was to become separate from other faiths by a vertical screen known as the Iconostasis, that which separates or covers icons, this being a constant feature in Eastern Architecture and Liturgy.

From this context, it is necessary to mention the importance of the milestones involved in constructing the space, for example, the hermitical tradition that spread through the east from the heart of the Orthodox world. The Stylites on their columns praising and emulating Saint Simeon aspired to take on Asceticism by approaching the Deity, and by congregating those who worshipped them. As with Saint Simeon, the anchorite location became a sacred pilgrimage site, be it in life or death, and the architecture that led to sanctuaries such as Qala'at Samaan, located a few kilometres west of the Aleppo City, grew around what was its column.

When Simeon Stylites died in 459, a church was constructed around the pillar location that had been maintained externally but had been admired by the world. It may be described as a sum of Basilica structures in the shape of the Latin cross that enclose a central octagonal space covered by its dome. In this way, each Basilica would have its own objective, that is, to serve the daily liturgy or to serve the different pilgrim groups.

The Muslim Culture was to bring a new form of understanding to liturgical spaces and, although they respected the centralised spaces to worship their own relics, they consolidated a hypostyle homogeneous and isotropic space, understood as a collection of Basilica-like structures, a collection of stoae and a collection of models, as in the Great Mosque of Damascus, and the size of individual areas of worship may become smaller. Although this line is preserved, this, basically, outlines the mihrab.

The sites of these Syrian cities are interesting precisely because we have found evidence of populations in them which not only tells us about the territory's defence, but also about its rituals, as seen by the new or reutilised sources of architecture. In the heart of the city, these structures reminds us how, at that time, the city was civitas dei— a City of God. Because of this, the hypothetic forums, the Basilica structures, the centralised structures or mosques are, surprisingly, located together as if to remind us that this land was Pagan, Primitive Christian, Orthodox Christian and Muslim.

THE HALABIEH CITY

The fortified city of Halabieh spans over a total of fifteen hectares, and is completely enclosed by jagged walls that are entirely conserved in length, covering approximately one thousand, four hundred metres, although certain areas have altered as the curtained walls present crumbling characteristics and damage is seen practically on all the blocks. According to Procopius of Caesarea's testimony (De Aedificiis, book II, VIII, 15-IX, 1), one assumes that they would have exceeded a height of ten metres. This testimony also speaks of the constructive efforts undertaken under the government of Justinian the Great.

We can deduce that in parallel with the Persian threat in 545, a decision was made to extend the city's defence to protect the western hill. This was to become a conflictive point to ensure the city's defence when it lay outside the city walls. The hill was somehow integrated into the city to become its protector and was capable of covering the front of the Euphrates from great heights. The river bent as in the form of a dike which, at the same time, protected the city from the river floods.

The city consisted of thirty-eight blocks and six gates, two of which were constructed in the form of monumental doors: one facing north and the other south, thus emphasising the significance of the north-south axis, that is, the Cardo of the Roman city. Around the hillside at an intermediate point, that coincided with the escarpment and the wall, a categorical three-dimensional building was constructed, known as the Praetorium which, in the Justinian era, occupied over three levels covering almost six-hundred square metres, and was covered with a vaulted structure made of plaster and brick. In 2007, this structure was the subject of analysis of the research team writing this article.

However, other than this defensive contribution, Procopius reorganised the city for the Emperor. In other words, he was in charge of a transcendental urban intervention that changed the orientation of the city by changing the direction of the main axis

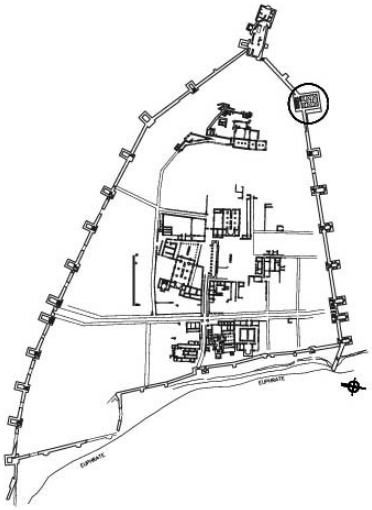

Figure 1: Location Plan of the Western Basilica of Zenobia-Halabieh City

Figure 3: The Northern Wall of Halabieh, an exterior viewpoint. At the first background level, we see the Praetorium, and the fortress is set further back (photo: G. Guimaraens).

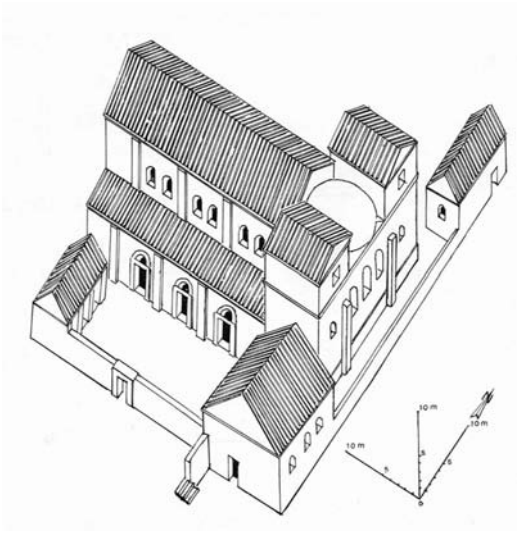

Figure 2: The axonometric hypothesis for the Western Basilica by Lauffray, 1945.

Figure 4: A View of the Western Basilica from the Halabieh Fortress with the Euphrates in the background (photo: G. Guimaraens).

which can be seen with the current lifting of the location and where the identification of two basilica structures is essential. The south-easterly structure, which is possibly from a pre-Justinian era, and the north-easterly structure are aligned with both the new main routes and the housing structure.

As mentioned, the two Basilica structures are the symbol of co-existing liturgies: the Chalcedon2 and the Monophysitism3. The south-westerly church enhanced by its cruciform baptistery and architectural decoration doubtlessly beholds even greater transcendence within the city than the second church, the Western Basilica, which is the object of this study.

The Basilica faces the Euphrates and its base is protected by the mountain upon which the city is located. Regarding the urban location, which dates back to Justinian times, we find ourselves adjacent to a large open space that architect Jean Lauffray identified in the 1940s as the City Forum.

Access to the church is through a gateway opening out onto a Decumanus which was adjacent to a block of large domus. Between these constructions there is a complete structure of thermal baths, an arena, apodyterium, toilets, frigidarium, caldarium and tepidarium, with a corresponding hypocaust system fed by the Euphrates' waterwheel.

The importance that Emperor Justinian attached to the reconstruction of the city was determined when Procopius indicated that he assigned architects John of Byzantium and Isidore of Miletus to the task, the latter being the nephew of the famous architect of the same name, creator of the Hagia Sophie of former Constantinople, and the person in charge of repairing the damage that the cathedral underwent years later due to an earthquake that caused the audacious dome to collapse.

Two necropolises lie on the outskirts of the city, one in the north and the other in the south. They are made up of tombs, hypogea, towers, graveyards and a chapel with a total of one hundred and twenty tombs from which different decorative elements, stucco paintings, graffiti and other inscriptions such as textile remains, have been found.

THE WESTERN BASILICA

The Western Basilica is characterised by a three-nave Basilica construction where the main nave ends at the central part of the structure, and comes to a semicircular outlined apse which is

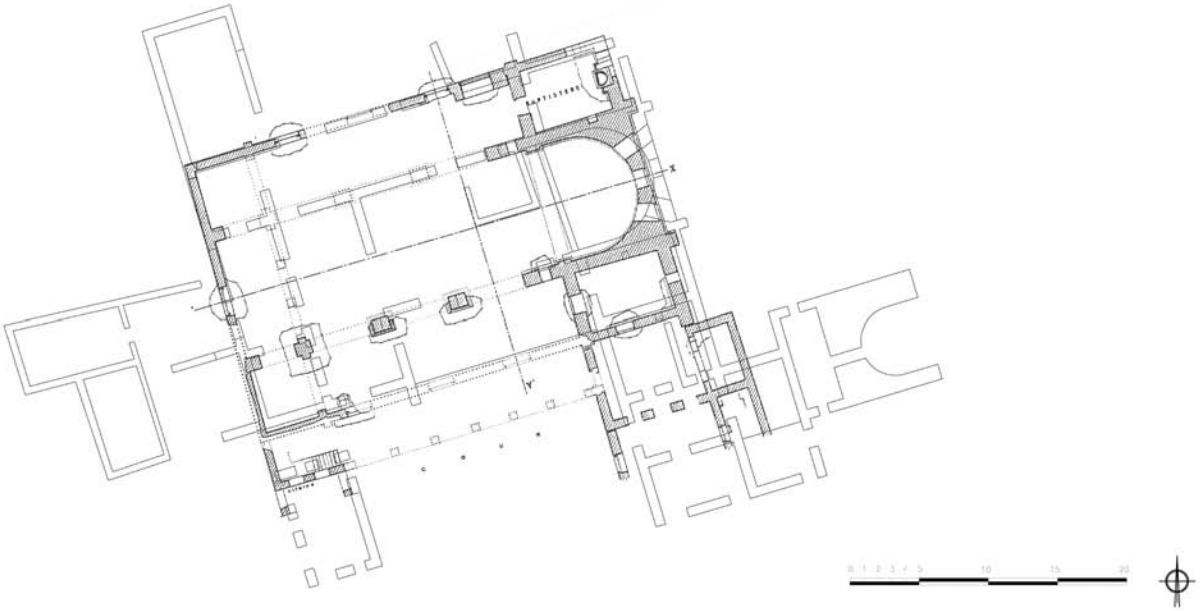

Figure 5: Superimposition of the current lifting with the layout idealised by J. Lauffray in the 1940s.

supported by the surviving remains. We conclude that it must have been covered by a hemispherical dome. The lateral naves finish with two squared apses at the central part that house the corresponding sacristies, one of them being the northern chapel and what might have been a baptismal font.

The naves of this Basilica appear to be compartmentalised from the wall remains which originate from pre-occupancy. These constructions are modest in accordance with the space delimited by wall remains which superimpose the church and extend to the south-west front and the eastern vertex.

On the south church facade, lodgings or ancient spaces lie adjacently and additionally to the church. However, in agreement with Lauffray's description, a large gateway connecting the Decumanus could have existed. This building culminates in a large exedra at its most northern point, which could have been flanked together symmetrically with the stoa that marked the Forum. We always consider Lauffray's hypothesis and wait to see if previous excavation findings corroborate it.

The constructive reality testifies the superimposing of structures in the current location, where one can differentiate large gypsum ashlars joined together with baked plaster, such as joining mortar, and superimposed walls of ordinary rough stone in which gypsum and basalt rock that constitute previous additions to the site can be found within the city walls.

Unlike the Pretorium's structure, very few structures still stand in this architectural collection. Only three of the main walls reach the height where the vaults start as their structures corresponding to the church's naves and bases have disappeared, but can be traced from the remains of the lines that make up the bases of the walls and the previously added parts. Here remains accumulate, victims of plundering, earthquakes and probably fires given the burn marks on the plaster stone, as well as of past excavations.

THE AIM OF THE BEFORE STUDY

This preliminary study aspires to define the current state of the ruin from its lifting for the purpose of starting an archaeological excavation of the church area. Thus with an updated lifting, a concept should be brought forward in relation to the layouts derived as a result of the excavation works dating back to the 1940s. Therefore, the lifting acquires enormous transcendence when it comes to obtaining more knowledge about the building, and allows data to be interpreted and hollow materials to be recovered that do not satisfy the morphological reality of the ruin.

METHODOLOGY

Given the conditions that the location is in and the circumstances that the team in the area face at the time of lifting, traditional methods and technological measures should be combined. The strong gusty winds from the Euphrates on summer mornings, whicht drag the dust and desert sand, must be taken into account as these conditions make it more difficult to record data and they also affect the integrity of technological materials.

In short, resorting to traditional lifting methodologies, combining levels of water, alidades and the contemporary interpretation of a traditional plane table, along with the use of a telemeter laser combined with a technograph and tripod, we will be able to find the horizontal and vertical sections of each wall that forms part of the building. We will be able to accurately define and estimate the deformations of the objects found, regardless of them being arches or walls. Their exact profile is laid out by the measurements taken, such as joints, or even the arbitrary points of the facades taken at will, if required.

The vertical sections of the walls shown are raised with the assistance of calibrated and rectified photographs that stand freely on the support points obtained from the measurements taken. Some vertical sections are viewed as metric liftings, and are understood as real-life projections of an orthogonal plan for the purpose of obtaining the largest possible amount of accurate data. This system allows us to perceive the geometrical reality of the structures as well as their visually perceived pathologies.

The floor lifting is also worthy of mention, and is complex to the extent that there are few support points on the horizontal plane, plus there is the added difficulty of the pieces being positioned in their original place, which are confused with the among remaining superimposed heaps.

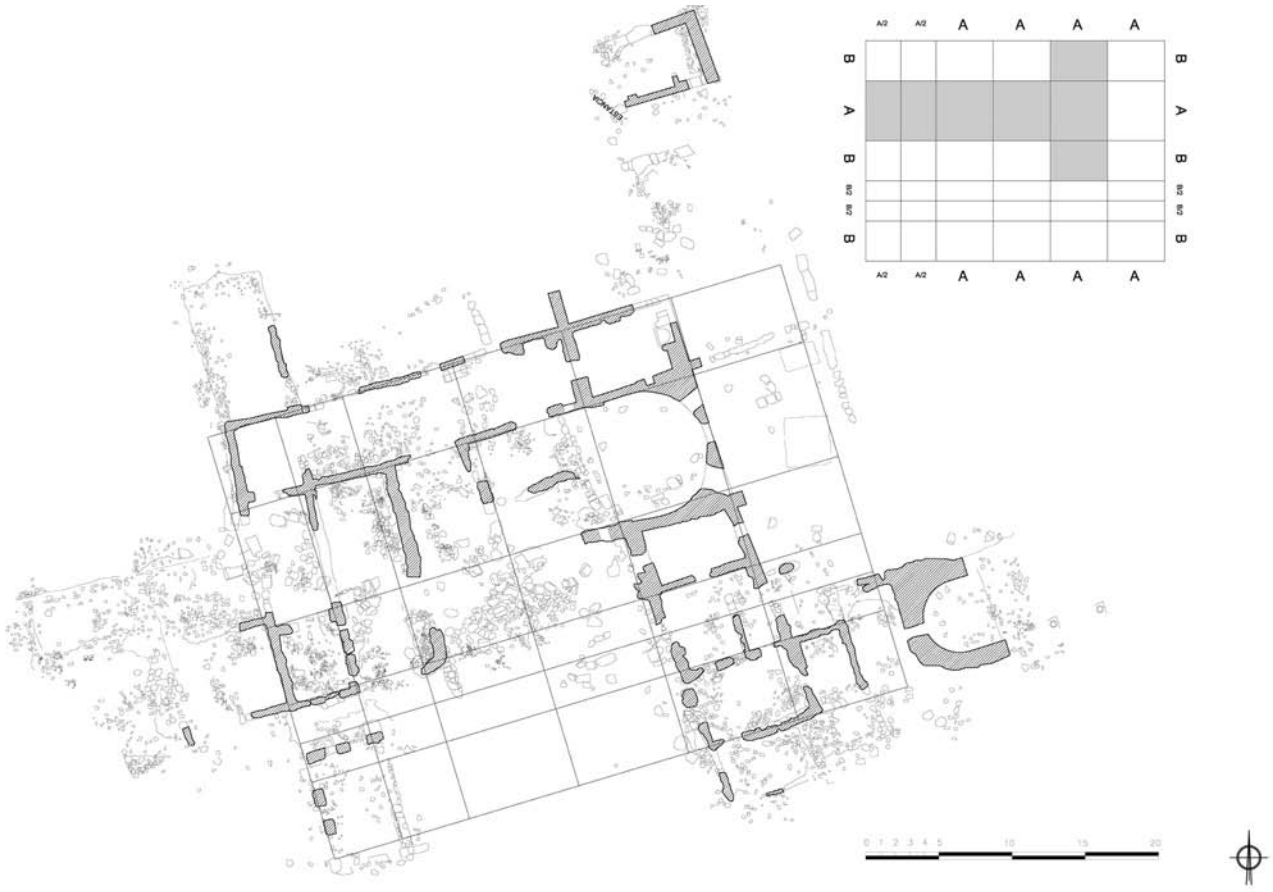

Figure 6: Superimposed layouts of the floor of the Western Basilica' (Lifting carried out by the team whose members are M. Diodato, G. Guimaraens, M. Mestre, E. Zaccaria).

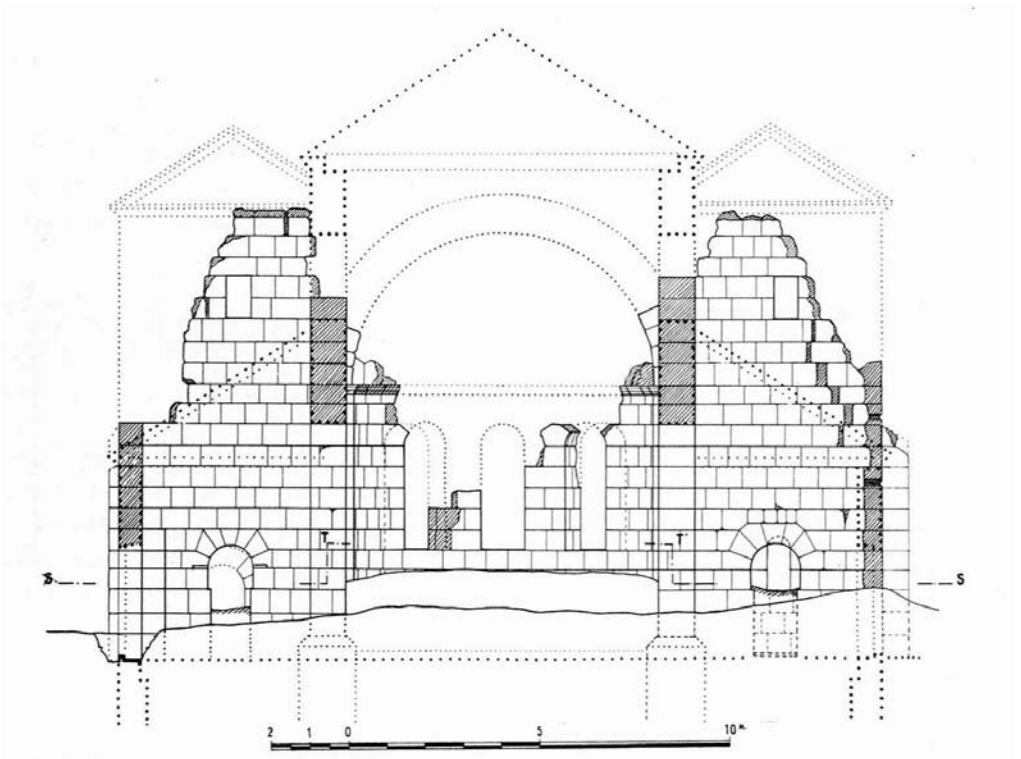

Figure. 7: J Lauffray's hypothesis about the transversal section of the Basilica in 1945, before discovering brackets inside the northern nave.

Figure 8: A photomap of the current state of the main front walls of the Western Basilica.

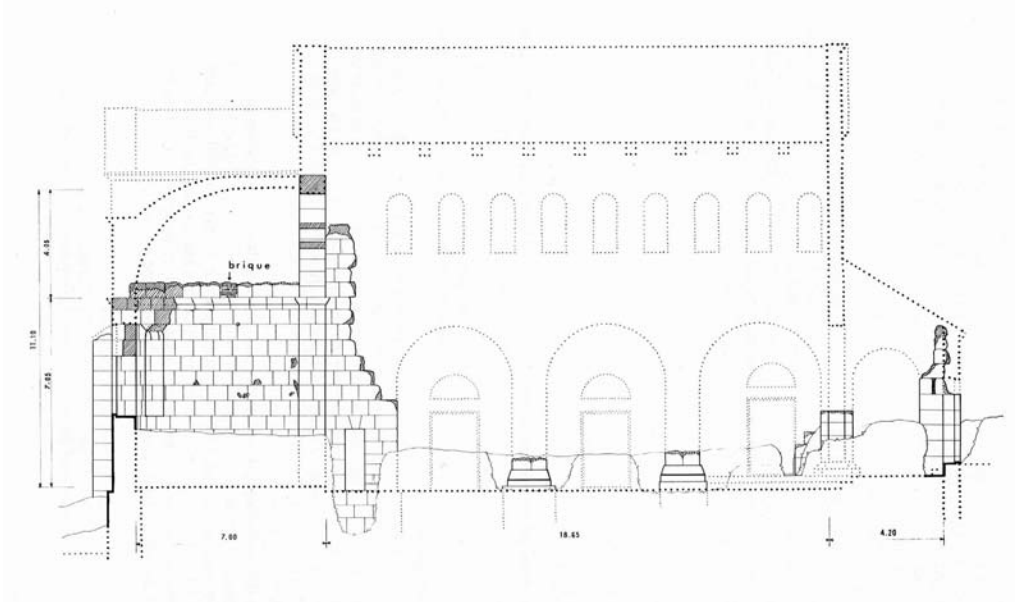

Figure. 9: The longitudinal section that Lauffray proposed.

Thus by sketching, the work team has to not only distinguish existence by abstracting the ruin, where the two original structures can be seen and have not moved from their original location, but also detect alignments, etc. At the same time, the different horizontal cutting planes can be defined whose representation provide the largest amount of data, and once defined, the arbitrary points belonging to the same horizontal plane can be marked with the help of the level in order to subsequently carry out the corresponding liftings.

In this way, these sections will become genuinely clear and will be graphically and accurately designed on plans to offer as much information as possible. It is advisable to bear in mind the few remaining walls which have been victims of gypsum stone erosion as they will be hard to see as a uniform mass in their graphically designed reconstruction if this assumption is correct.

Therefore, if the plans are to portray more information beyond merely witnessing what exists (only valid in terms of registering the current state, although this could prove too confusing without the corresponding references), the next step to take is to idealise the layout on the corresponding hypothesis plans. This allows us to compare the present lifting layout and the current state of the ruin with previous liftings such as that carried out by Lauffray in the 1940s.

RESULTS

The results of this study into the ruins of the Western Basilica involves the first reliable lifting of the current state which will enable the pending excavation to be done by means of subsequent campaigns organised by the Syrian-French archaeological teams, directed by Dr. Sylvie Bletry, alongside members from the Paul-Valéry University and the General Ancient Syria Management Services.

At the same time, cartography work of the location can be done for it to be checked against the only source available to date, the liftings by Jean Lauffray, done between 1944 and 1945, and to detect several mismatches in an attempt to idealise the liftings done by predecessors and which cannot be justified in the face of the construction work of the current building.

Similarly, previous hypotheses will be verified, and suggestions as to how the Halabieh Western Basilica may have been will be put forward after using the layouts. Finally the lifting itself will witness the most prominent pathologies in relation to the deformation of the only facades still standing which may underline serious stability problems due to gypsum stone erosion.

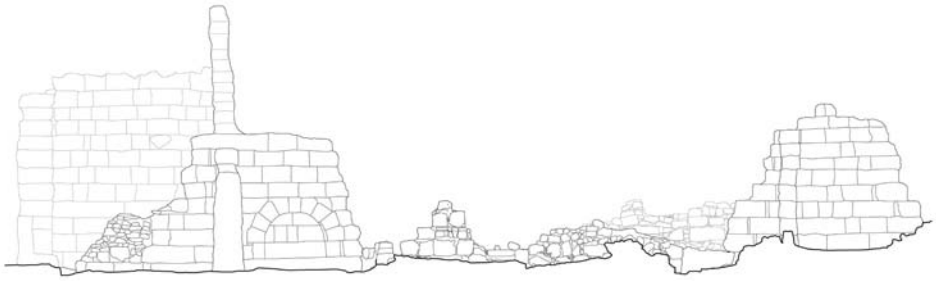

Figure 10: A linear drawing of the northern elevation.

Figure 11: A photomap of the northern elevation.

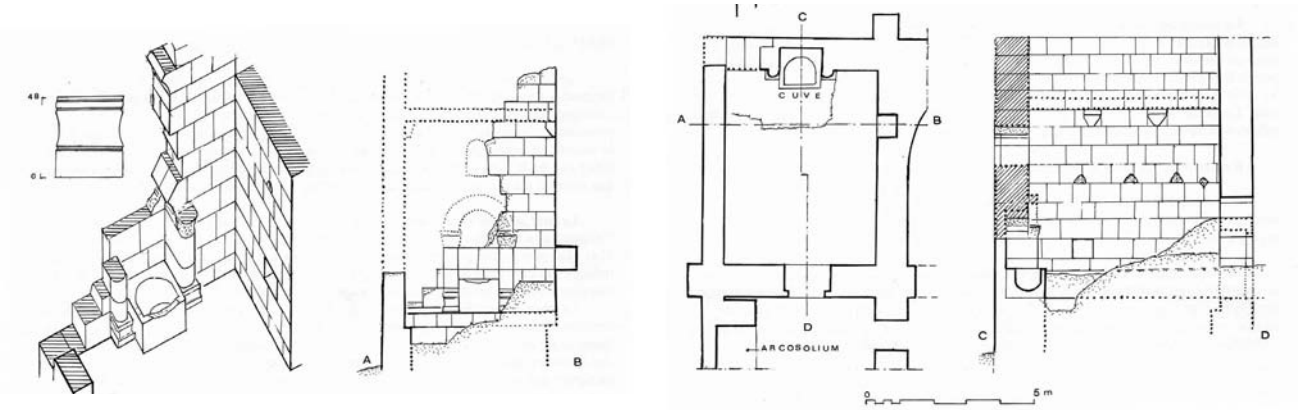

Figure. 12: Details of the "so-called" North Sacristy (According to LAUFFRAY, 1945).

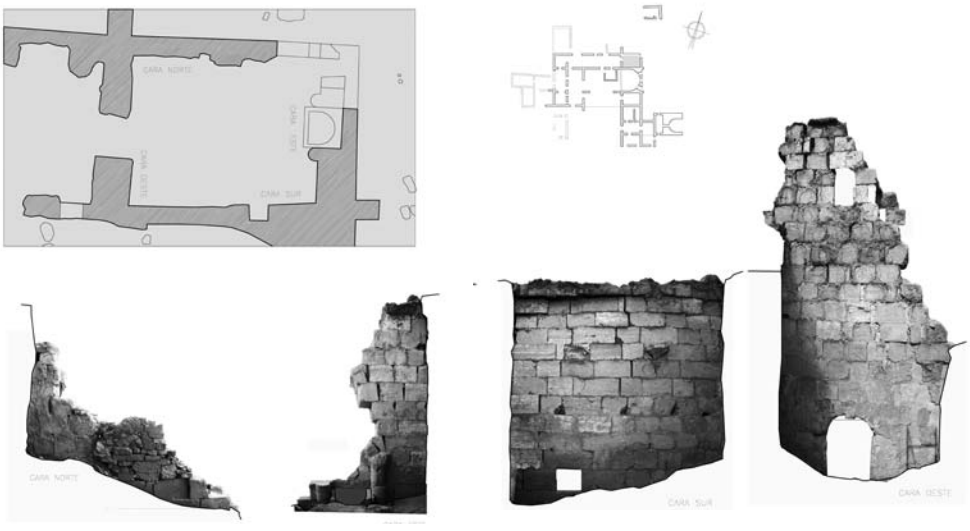

Figure. 13: The current state of the North Sacristy.

CONCLUSIONS

The Western Basilica of Halabieh is a construction that dates back to the fifth century, and was built in response to the Chalcedony doctrine. It is, therefore, a typology of a traditional Christian Basilica, with a central nave and a lateral one which narrows on each side. It also has a main face, integrated by a semicircular apse covered by a semi-spherical done, and has a chapel at each side to cover the Baptistery's functions.

It is in a ruined state as only the principal walls of the main face remain standing, and neither vaults nor ceilings have survived. The walls that remain upright do so thanks to the perpendicular shape of their faces and to the physical make up of the large gypsum ashlars. At their crowning point, however, the fact that the joints of the stone itself have been exposed to erosion enables us to predict subsequent cracking.

Nevertheless, the worse enemies of this construction have apparently been earth tremors and fires, and numerous burnt fragments of gypsum stone have given way to baked plaster.

Obviously, the existing walls require urgent structural repairs. Furthermore, numerous moulded fragments are observed among the piles of material remains at the site which, in their day, belonged to the building, and today make up either the subsequently added walls or many of the stone mounds scattered around the enclosure. Therefore, an approach to select and classify both hidden and displayed fragments is required in order to reconstruct the decorative reality in a more accurate way than a superficial lifting can offer.

NOTES:

[1] The city of Rasafa (Ressafa) has already been mentioned in Assyrian and biblical texts. It was reinforced by Diocletian, before the Sassanid threat due to the loss of Dura Europos in the year 256. Its magnificence peaked during the Byzantine era thanks to its transformation into a pilgrimage centre based on worshiping Saint Sergius. Therefore, the Anastasius Basileo was rebaptized under the name of Sergiopolis.

[2] Between 8th October and 1st November 451, in Chalcedon (Bitynia) Asia Minor, the fourth of the first seven Christian Ecumenical Councils took place. The Catholic and Orthodox churches believed it to have infallible dogmatic ways. During the Councils, the doctrine based on Monophysitism was rejected and the Chalcedon Creed was established which preached that Christ beholds a human form and a spiritual form, this being the second form of the Holy Trinity

[3] Monophysitism was founded as a doctrine, in which Jesus Christ had only one form was believed, as opposed to the Orthodox doctrine which stated that He had two forms: human and spiritual. Monophysitism declared itself as heretical during the Chalcedon Council (451) after which the Syriac and Armenian Churches separated from the Christian Community. Each church type considered the Monophysitism concept to be pejorative and they declared it to indicate a complete lack the knowledge regarding its theoretical doctrine

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borwning, I. (1979): *Palmyra. Chatto & Windus*, London.

Burns, R. (1998): *Monuments de Syrie,* Dummar, Damasco.

Dalrymple, W. (2008): *Desde el Monte Santo, Viaje a la sombra de Bizancio*, RBA, Barcelona 2008.

Diehl, Charles (1896): *L'Afrique Byzantine, Histoire de la domination byzantine en Africa, (568-751),* E. Leroux, París.

Egea Vivancos, A. (2005): "Eufratense et Osrhoene: Poblamiento romano en el Alto Éfrates Sirio", in *Antigüedad y cristianismo: Monografías históricas sobre la Antigüedad tardía. XXII,* University of Murcia, Pulblication Services, Murcia.

Evagrius Scholastic's (2007): "Ecclesiastical History (AD431-594), translated by E. Walford (1846). Book 4.", http:// www.ccel.org/p/ pearse/ morefathers/ evagrius_4_ book4.htm.

Gomez, H. (2002): "Los ejércitos de Bizancio", http://es.geocities.com/ mundo_medieval/bizancio/ murallas.html.

Guimaraens, G. (2001): *La evolución histórica de la arquitectura militar y de las técnicas de ataque a las plazas, Trabajo de Investigación, Departamento de Composición Arquitectónica*, Polytechnic University of Valencia, (unpublished).

Guimaraens, G. (2008): "Aproximación a la Historia de la Fortificación Bizantina" in *Estudio previo del Pretorium, Complejo Arqueológico Halabiyeh/ Zenobia, Siria, Agosto 2007,* Polytechnic University of Valencia, Valencia, 5-15.

Klinckowstroem, C.VON. (1965): *Historia de la técnica, Del descubrimiento del fuego a la conquista del espacio*, Labor, Barcelona.

Krautheimer, R. (1984): *Arquitectura paleocristiana y bizantina*, Cátedra, Madrid.
Lauffray, J. (1983): *Halabiyya-Zenobia, place forte du limes oriental et la haute Mésopotamie au VI siècle, T. I. Les duchs frontaliers de Mesopotamie et les fortifications de Zenobia,* Geuthner, Paris.

Lauffray, J. (1991): *Halabiyya-Zenobia, place forte du limes oriental et la haute Mésopotamie au VI siècle, T. II. L'architecture publique, prive et funerarie,* Geuthner, Paris.

Procopius of Caesarea (2007): *Historia de las Guerras, Obra completa*, Gredos, Madrid.

Procopius of Caesarea *De Aedificiis*, (*Sobre los edificios [de Justiniano]). ap. 550-562.*
Richmond, I. A. (1930): *The City Wall of Imperial Rome: An Account of Its Architectural Development from Aurelian to Narses*, Oxford UP, Oxford.

Sartre, M. (1978): *El Oriente Romano: Provincias y sociedades provinciales del Mediterráneo Oriental, de Augusto a los Severos (31 a.C.-235 d.C.),* Ed.Akal, Madrid.

Sateh, A. (Sin fecha. s.f.): *Citadels and Castles in Syria,* Dar Dimashq, Damasco.

Schug-Wille, C. (1978): *Bizancio y su mundo,* Plaza & Janés, Barcelona.

Toy, S. (1937): *Babylon of Egypt*, Brit. Archaeol. Journal, London

Toy, S. (1955): *A history of fortification from 3000 B.C. to 1700,* William Heinemann, London.

Vera Botí, A. (2001): *La arquitectura militar del Renacimiento a través de los tratadistas de los siglos XV y XVI,* Tesis Doctoral, E.T.S. Architecture of the la U.P.V. of Valencia, (unpublished).

Versión española

TITULO: ***Estudio previo de la Basílica Occidental de la ciudad de Zenobia-Halabiyeh.***

RESUMEN: *La ciudad de Zenobia-Halabiyeh, una antigua guarnición romana que Zenobia la mítica reina de Palmira refundó con su propio nombre y Justiniano transformó a su envergadura actual, constituyó un punto estratégico comercial y defensivo en la frontera oriental del Imperio bizantino. Sus murallas y torres, conservadas en gran parte de su envergadura, se abren en triángulo desde la ciudadela en la cima de la colina hasta el muelle en la ribera del río Éufrates. En el centro de la ciudad se erigen los restos de la denominada basílica occidental, un edificio de tres naves con ábside semicircular, cuyo estudio previo a la restauración y problemática de conservación como ruina expuesta a la intemperie se pasan a exponer en este artículo.*

PALABRAS CLAVES: *arquitectura, bizantina/o, iglesia, yeso, ruina, conservación, levantamiento, restauración, sillería*