

Death and Burial Cult of the Martyrs

February 27, 2015

Death: Tertullian

- Preparation for Death
 - Emergency baptism of catechumens
 - Reconciliation of Penitents
 - Conflict on reconciliation of adulterers and apostates
- Burial
 - Reject all rituals associated with idolatry
 - Christians preferred inhumation to cremation
 - Allowed use of incense and anointing of corpse
 - Christian sections in cemeteries possible
- Ritual
 - Prayers at the grave
- Mourning
 - Observance of anniversary of death with prayers and meal

Death: Tertullian

- Condition of the Dead
 - Martyrs enter the presence of Christ immediately
 - Dead in the underworld awaiting resurrection
 - Consolation or punishment
 - Living can assist the dead by prayers and alms
- Resurrection of the Flesh
 - Judgment of Christ will follow
 - Reward and punishment experience in immortal body
 - Fires of Gehenna
 - Pleasure of Paradise

Death: Cyprian

- Preparation for Death
 - Participation in eucharistic communion necessary for salvation.
 - Baptism offered to catechumens
 - Reconciliation offered to active penitents
 - Debated and decided during Cyprian's episcopate
- Burial
 - Church provided burial for martyrs and poor
 - Christians should be buried in church ritual and space
- Mourning
 - Prayers offered for all the Christian dead (including martyrs)
 - Prayers were withheld when a serious sin was discovered after death
- Condition of the Dead
 - Martyrs, and possibly faithful, in Paradise
 - Others in Hades, awaiting return of Christ
 - Repentance begun before death could be continued, with assistance of living.

Death: Augustine

- Preparation for Death
 - Baptism necessary for salvation; given in emergency and regarded as effective
 - Emergency baptism of infants indicated inherited guilt
 - Reconciliation
 - Offered to all baptized who asked for it but its efficacy depended on intention of penitent
- Burial
 - Usually on day of death
 - Procession to grave in Christian burial ground
 - Some burials in the church or near grave of saint
 - A reminder to pray for the departed when honoring the saint
- Ritual
 - Eucharist could be celebrated before first meal of day
 - Eucharist not celebrated in presence of corpse
 - Prayers at the gravesite

Death: Augustine

- Mourning
 - Death a penalty for sin: proper to mourn loss of earthly life in hope of resurrection
 - Banqueting at grave and even sharing food with dead
 - Food should be given to the poor; does more good for dead
- Tombs
 - Caring for the dead was act of Christian piety; honoring the body
 - Provides no advantage to the dead
 - Christians discourage family tombs
 - Tombs marked with name, age, formulae of church status, signs of affection



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Tomb with
Table: Salakta



Death: Augustine

- Condition of the Dead
 - Follow pattern of Christ: to Hades, Resurrection, Heaven
 - Martyrs enter presence of Christ immediately
 - Faithful are secure in salvation; Unfaithful without hope
 - Faithful can be further purified and perfected during interim
 - Helped by the prayers and gifts of the living
 - Church prayed for the baptized dead
 - Speculation on the minimum condition for salvation (City of God 22.17-22)
 - Dead are unaware of the living
- Resurrection of all
 - Judgment by Christ for reward or punishment

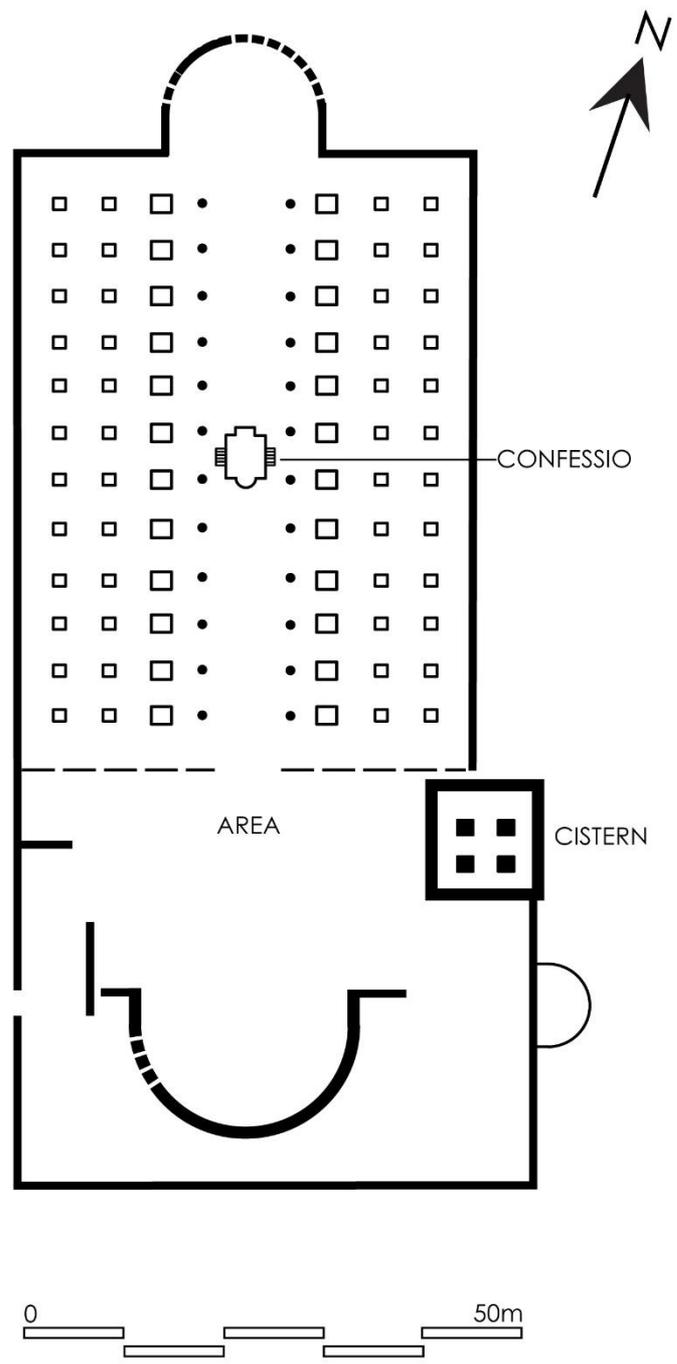
Martyrs: Tertullian & Cyprian

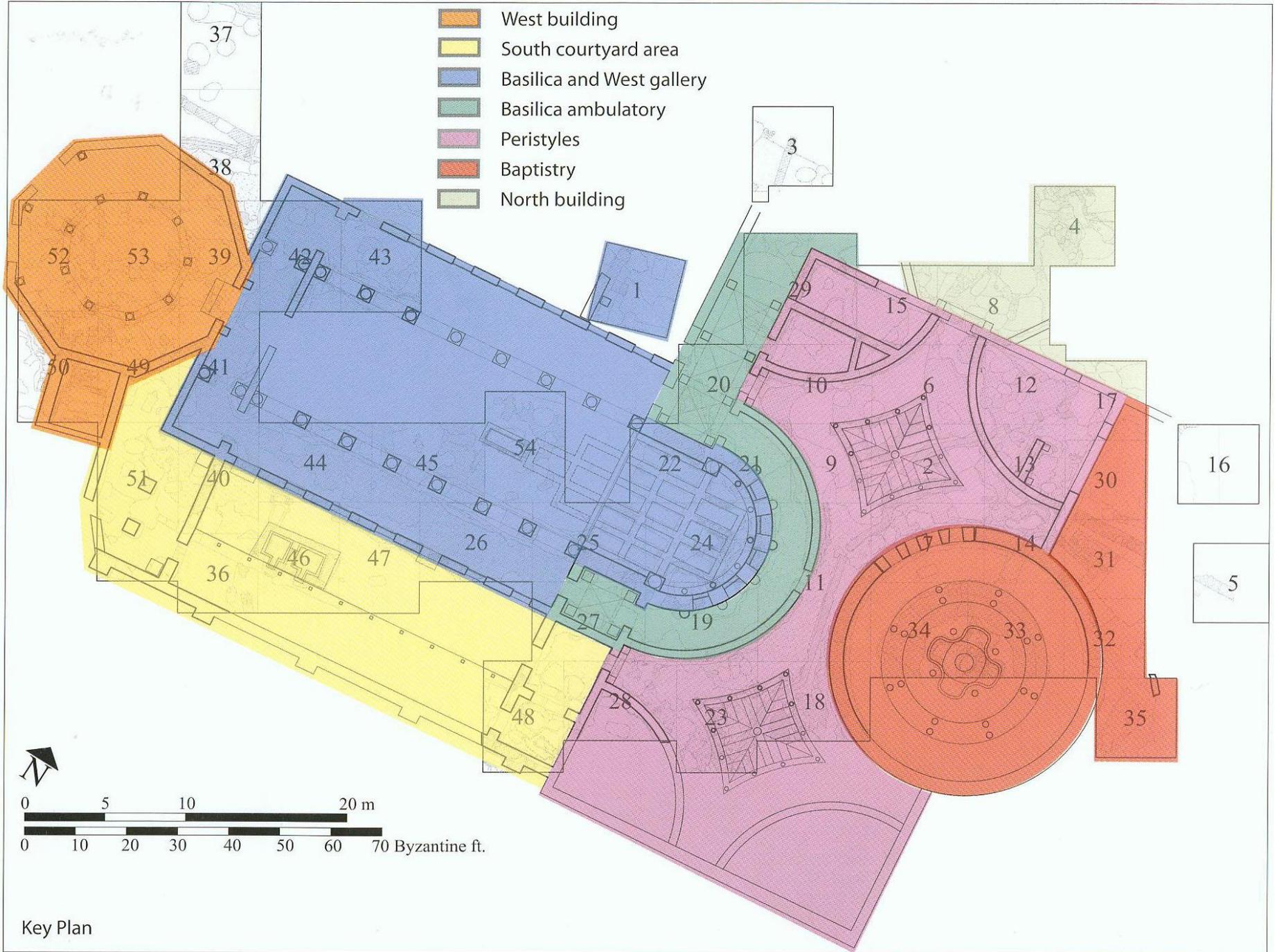
- The *acta* of martyrs are already appearing in Africa, from 180 A.D.
- Relics (parts of bodies) are being kept, two cases of collecting blood from an execution
- Martyrs are thought to have intercessory power with God for forgiveness of sins
 - Cyprian claimed this power could be exercised only at last judgment, not in the church's decisions.
- Cyprian attempted to equate the faithful with the martyrs
 - God wants faith more than blood
 - Faithful might also go directly to heaven

Martyrs: Fourth Century

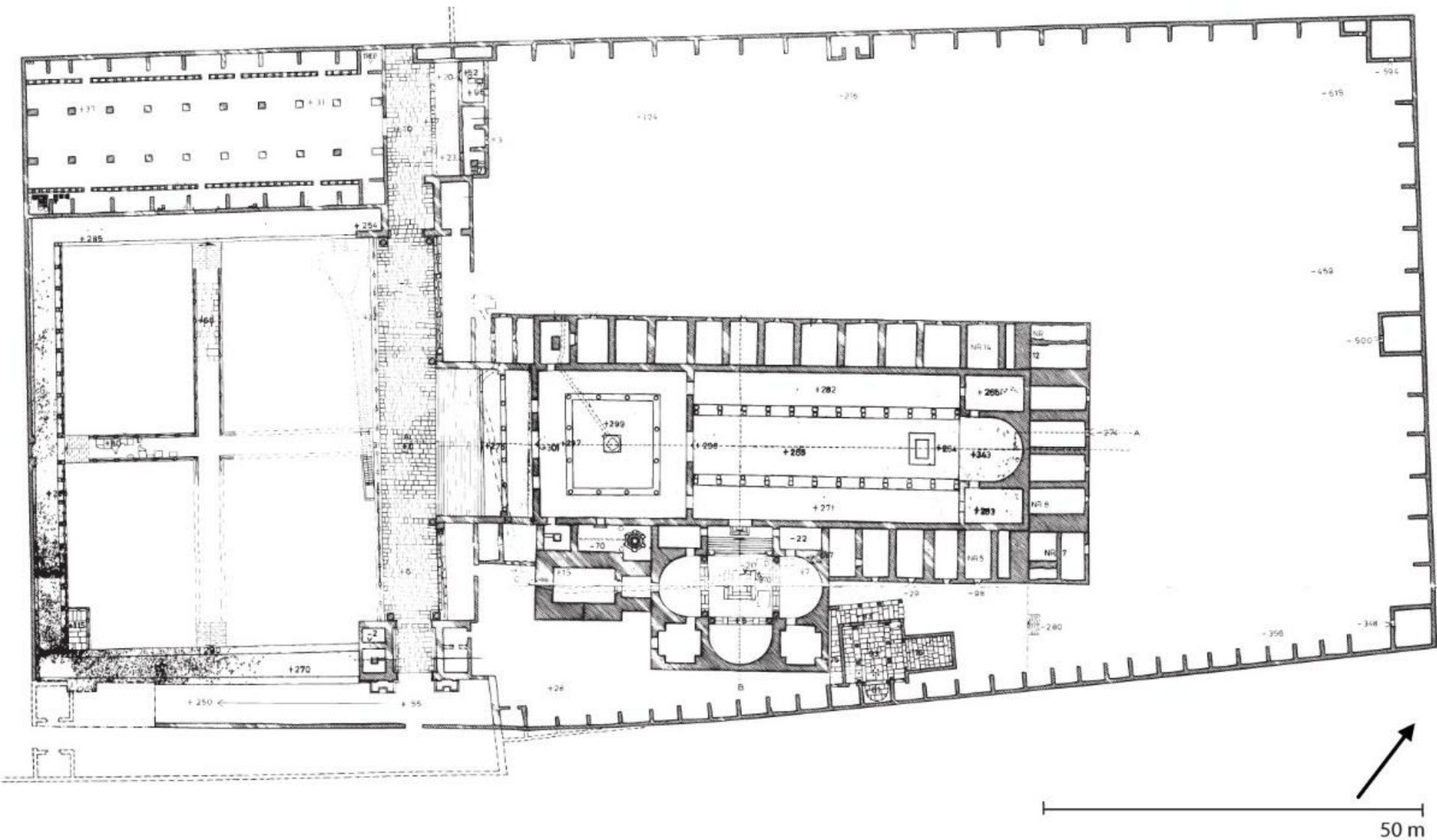
- The *acta* of martyrs change
 - Focus on the suffering martyrs endure
 - Are used as propaganda in conflict between churches in Africa
 - Military martyrs more prominent: rejecting imperial service
- Shrines are built over the tombs of martyrs
 - Cyprian's execution and burial sites in Carthage
 - Banqueting at the shrines to celebrate the anniversaries
 - Pilgrimage to the shrines
 - Burial of the faithful near the tombs of martyrs
- Relics linked to the eucharistic
 - Tomb used as altar
 - Relics placed under altar in church (Revelations 6:9-10)

Basilica Maiorum
Carthage





Colour frontispiece 3. Reconstructed plan of the complex at Bir Ftouha.

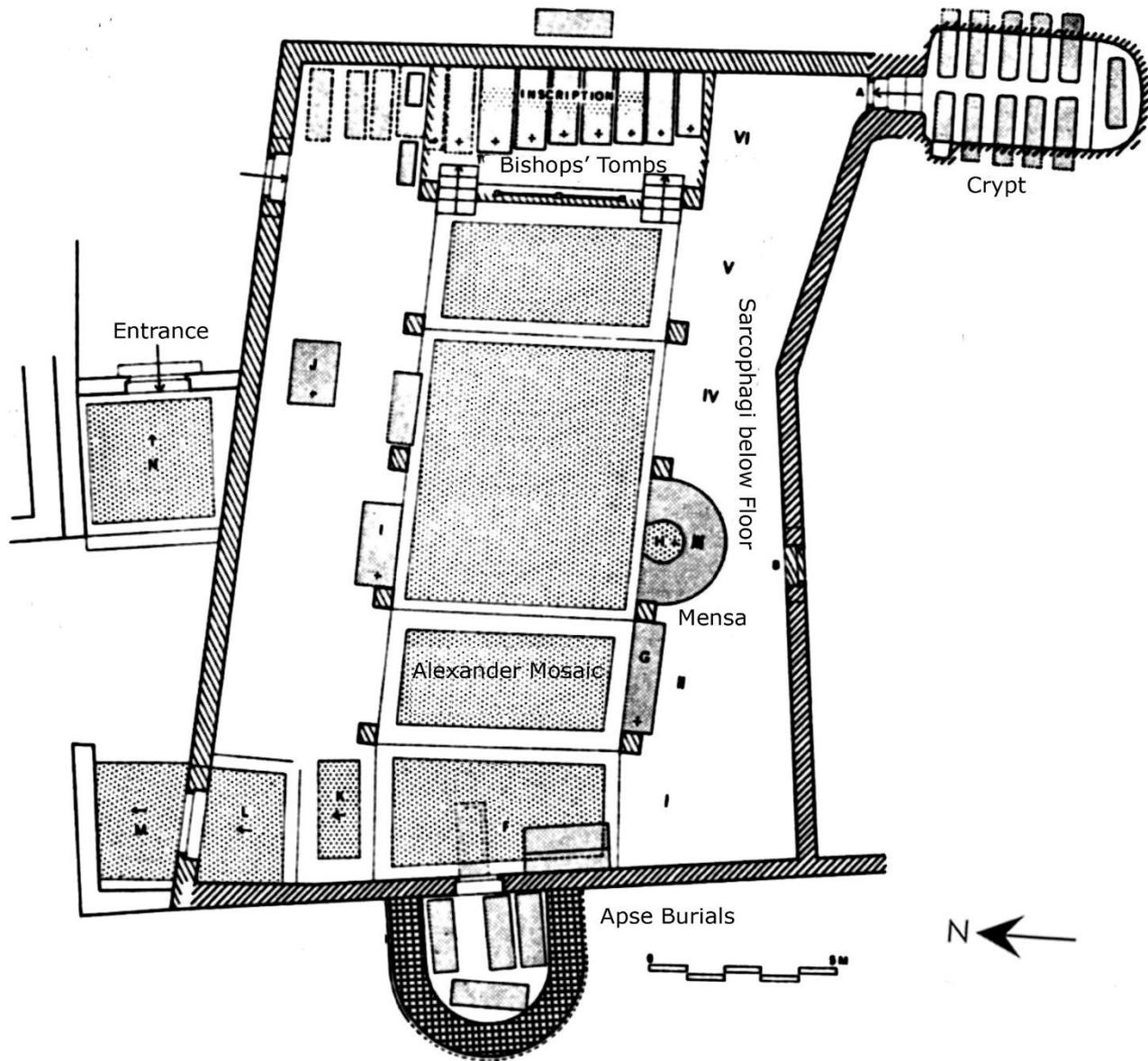


Basilica of St. Crispina: Theveste





Alexander
Chapel
Tipasa









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MEMORIA
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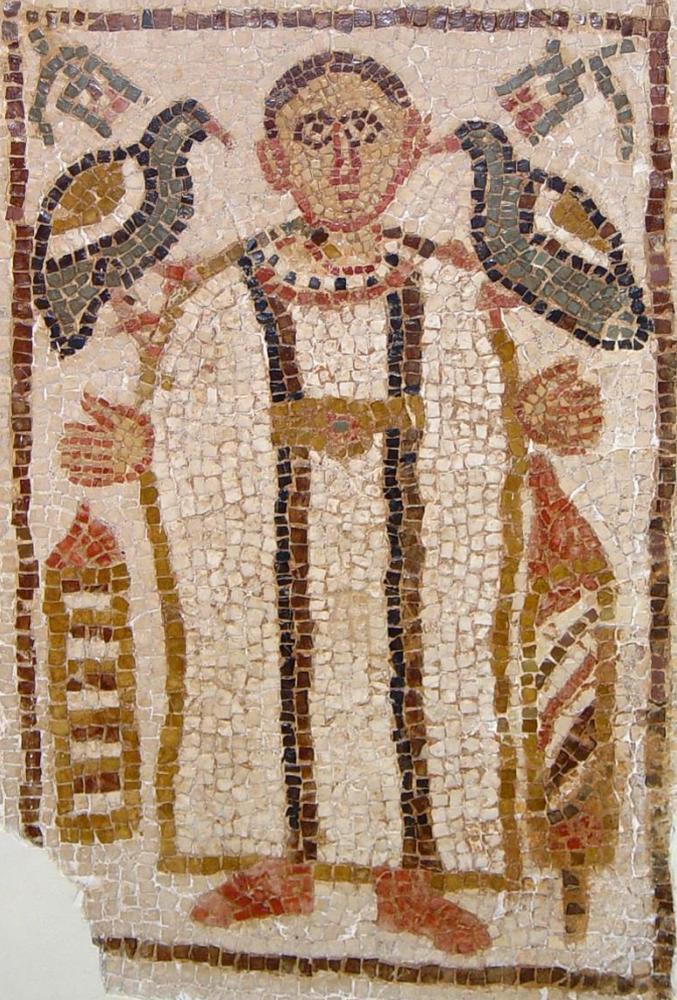
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Martyrs: Fifth Century

- Introduction of the relics of St. Stephen from Jerusalem
 - Healing miracles begin to multiply in Africa
 - The Christians in the universal communion use miracles as sign of their connection to founding church
- Augustine questions the intercessory role of martyrs
 - The dead are unaware of the living, so cannot obtain favors for them.
 - God honors the martyr by performing the miracle at the shrine.

RESIDENT
SINWAGE
SINPACE





ΑΥΤΑ

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CRESCENTIUS
ET CONVS
IN PACE VIXIT
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