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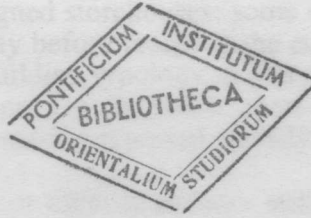


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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE GULF OF KERAMOS,  
1997

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## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE GULF OF KERAMOS, 1997<sup>1</sup>

Vincenzo RUGGIERI\*

Most of the time of our field work has been focused on the ancient city of Keramos, today the pretty town of Ören including its hinterland; thenceforth we moved to the east boating as far as the island of Kedreai, having once again checked the frescoes in Alakışla and some monuments and inscriptions on the shore of Aşağı Mazı.

Aşağı Mazı resulted to be in the Byzantine period a late V-early VI century settlement whose main activity was maritime trading. This can be inferred by the long row of aligned storehouses: some of them are still visible along the eastern shore of the bay before reaching the ecclesiastical complex. One might compare this sort of building typology to that which was found and surveyed at Alakışla three years ago. On the shore, apart from the fragmented inscription on the decree by Anastasius reported already last year, another classical inscription was found<sup>2</sup>.

At Alakışla, whose identity remains still unknown, the entire plan of the Carian fortress has been drawn<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1), and a detailed analysis has been devoted to the conservation of the early VI century frescoes in the baptistery of the main church and those in the mausoleum. As said in the past reports, the state of the frescoes is quite precarious, and there is an urgent need to block the falling of the plaster: this need is required for both the buildings. It is our hope next year to intervene on this matter of primary importance.

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- (1) I would like to express my gratitude to the General Director of the Monuments and Museums for granting us the permission to carry on the 1997 survey which lasted the entire month of September. The Ministry representative was Dr F. Nurhan Turan, Ankara: her hewn insights and support helped us to reach the results this report embodies. Dr M. Yaşar Şimşek, from Gazi University, has been our guest for two weeks. It seems pertinent to the purpose of the present paper to underline that the Late-Antique bath at Çökertme is being turned to a modern villa. The matter has been reported to the General Directorate in Ankara, and steps have been already taken to prevent this.
- (2) The limestone piece is used today as a step to enter Mr Öztekin's garden. The Greek inscription retains 9 lines of which the first three are badly preserved. Lettering 35-40 mm., while the slab measures 65 cm. of length and 33 cm. of width.
- (3) As said, there is an uncertainty about the identification of the city. Varinlioğlu (Lelegian Cities on the Halicarnassian Peninsula in the Athenian Tribute Lists, Studien zum antiken Kleinasien II [Asia Minor Studies B. 8], Bonn, 1992, 18) puts forth a possibility for the site of Amyndara. For a preliminary report on this site, cf. V. Ruggieri and F. Giordano, Una città bizantina sul sito cario di Alakışla. Rapporto preliminare, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 62 (1996) 53-88.

The ancient city of Keramos has already been investigated historically and epigraphically<sup>4</sup> therefore our main purpose was to add what has been left out of the Byzantine history of the site. Our first deal was to study and draw a full plan of the Byzantine fortress overlooking the city from the north. The circuit of the walls follows approximately the orography of the hill; in addition, the northern Byzantine walls run on top of the previous Carian walls by ending with an arrow-shape spur to the north-west (Fig. 2). The overall dimensions of the citadel measure ca. 160 by 100 m. The logistic disposition of the fortress meet therefore two main issues: to the north, the Byzantine had full control of the main roads coming from the north, i. e. Mylasa (Milas) and from west, i.e. Ouranion, Türk evleri, while overlooking the city to the south, the fortress had the broadest sight over the gulf. According to these strategic requirements two gates have been set up to the south and to the north intersecting the main walls diagonally so that new comers could be under strict control while approaching the fortress from either the directions. The highest part of the core bore a series of rooms stretching from north to south, a little chapel, some cisterns and undefined buildings. In a certain way this inner core can reasonably be called the, and stood on the higher part of the citadel, to the north-east.

The ancient circuit of Roman walls is still to be seen on the flat plain where the modern town of Ören stands. The best preserved part of walls runs on the outskirts of the town following a east-west direction. That the Byzantine reused the ancient circuit has become quite evident by the technique applied to large sections of the walls where ancient blocks have been cemented with rough stones and mortar<sup>5</sup>.

Within the walls a plan of Akyapı has been drawn (Fig. 3). This complex, originally Roman, has become later a Byzantine complex whose identity remains yet unknown. The best preserved part of the complex consists of a roughly square, two-storey building bearing on the intradoses of the niches red bands of fresco decoration. The relatively elegant shape of this large hall may induce to relate the building to the large, undefined foundation which lay nearby where marble fragments have been previously collected by the inhabitants<sup>6</sup>.

Two other major buildings are worth mentioning. Outside the city walls, coming close to the harbour quarter of the city, one comes across a thermal complex whose main dimensions are 23 by 20 m. (Fig. 4). Unfortunately the south part of the complex is today turned to a private house so that one cannot realize how the entire bath eventually worked. To the north four halls have been preserved showing an accurate masonry and traces of fresco decoration on the walls; a hall had, in addition, marble incrustations and a well refined circular basin.

(4) Cf. E. Varinlioglu, *Die Inschriften von Keramos* (Bonn, 1986), and M. Spanu, *Keramos di Caria: una città inedita d'Asia Minore*, forthcoming Rome 1997; V. Ruggieri, A Historical Addendum to the Episcopal Lists of Caria, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 54 (1996) 228-9. A sample of church decoration (ambo) in Keramos has been published by M. Falla Castelfranchi, *Amboni cari: un caso desueto*, *Boreas* B. 17 (= *Bild- und Formensprache der spätantiken Kunst*, H. Brandenburg zum 65. Geburtstag, hrs. von M. Jordan-Ruwe und U. Real), Münster, 1994, 49-52). On this church we shall come back later.

(5) In one case we have ascertained the presence of an inscribed block bearing 9 lines (7 visible) of a Greek inscription (lettering 45 mm.). Not far from this part of the circuit, due to ploughing, a marble conical colomnette has come to light. It has the following dimensions: high 23 cm., top diameter 13 cm., low diameter 18 with a simple moulding and bearing on the shaft a pearl-decoration.

(6) An elegant marble frieze was found within the rubbish that fills the large foundation; nearby a huge number of columns have been lined up by the farmers who said that all these come from Akyapı.

Near to the latter building, four late V-early VI century proconnesian capitals, and a beautiful front of an ambo were found. These are kept today within two adjoining gardens and we have been told that they came to light there few years ago, when some work was done in the gardens<sup>7</sup>. The information came to be true for the layout of the church was found. The general dimensions of the basilica church, as reckoned from the finding, are the following: 25 m. long and 18 large (Fig. 5). One apse alone is still visible (6 m. of diameter) to the east, while there was no chance to ascertain whether the length assured is to be related to the inner core of the building, or should it be include also the narthex. Although the church seems to be a large one, one might doubt that it was the cathedral church of Keramos since the remains are place outside the city walls. It should have served to the harbour quarter of the city which, on its part, seems to have been a large one. This extention of the urban plan of Keramos has not come unexpected.

While surveying the monument called Kurşunlu Yapı by the locals<sup>8</sup>, we came across some Byzantine walls which evidenced the reuse of the classical building. It has been rather difficult to work out a plan of the entire complex, but apart from a Christian monogram incised on a Roman marble lintel, two marble impost-capitals were discovered. By means of the decoration (cross and acanthus leaves) and of the type of the capitals, we reckoned that the marble pieces should be dated towards the mid-VI century. If this is so, and considering the marble decoration of the former church, one ought to think that Keramos was indeed a considerably well endowed city towards the end of the V and throughout the VI century. Such a realization does take into consideration the fact that these findings were met outside the city walls, to say, that we are still unaware of the properly urban Byzantine decoration.

As far as Keramos goes, another main concern of ours was to collect the most relevant marble pieces scattered throughout the town. Roman and Byzantine sculptured decorations, capitals, colomnettes, two unedited inscriptions have been brought to a store-house made available to us by the city-hall.

It was few years ago that five *miliaria* have been found at Sek, a village ca. 24 km. NNE of Keramos<sup>9</sup>. The milestones provide evidence for a hierarchy of responsibility in the restoration of the roads and prosopography; in addition to this, the *miliaria* indicate the main road coming down from Milas and, if we are not mistaken, a crossroad either to the west as well to the east of Sek<sup>10</sup>. Our purpose was then to follow an easterly direction tracking the river-bed of the Koca Çay in order to understand the road system in the Byzantine period. Along this route we met at Küçük Asar a Carian fortress which later became

- (7) The capital and the front part of the ambo have been already registered by Milas Archaeological Museum: in the certification there is no mention whatsoever that the pieces belong to the church whose area is nowadays occupied by the gardens.
- (8) The complex stands outside the city walls, right on the low slope of the hill to the east. The ruins show classical masonry, and it should have been a large public building whose layout is still discernible on the ground.
- (9) Cf E. Varinlioğlu and D. French, Four milestones from Ceramus, *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 93 (1991) 123-137, and II D., A new milestone from Ceramus, *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 94 (1992) 403-412.
- (10) On the hill of Sek we found an interesting fortress bearing masonry which could easily be recognized as having two different wall-techniques: a polygonal one and a Lelegian.

Byzantine. The Byzantine fortress is smaller than the Carian one, and was just meant to be a controlling post along the route. Further to the east, another fortress came to sight: the rocky site is called Datçağız<sup>11</sup>. Once again it became clear that for the Byzantines the setting of fortresses along this route was meant to be basically strategic. Datçağız, in fact, is a small fortress, built eventually on a previous military post, whose intent was to control the valley to the west and the approach to Akbük<sup>12</sup> by sea. The Byzantine nucleus of the fortress occupies a rocky spur which looks like a conical rock quite detached from the hills around. An old gate has been reused in order to get into, and the thickness of the Byzantine walls reaches a reasonable measure of 60-60 cm. since there was no urgent need to wall up this rocky fortress. A chapel of reduced dimensions was attached to the northern wall of the circuit - this can be a clue of the strict military nature of the fortress which did not house but soldiers - and a series of rooms was built on a rocky platform lying slightly lower than the chapel.

One main factor of the Byzantine strategy in this mountainous region behind Keramos has become clear as a result of our survey: the Byzantines did not prefer to built up fortresses on the high Carian peaks where ancient fortresses were already built and well reserved; they rather turned to control the valleys following the Roman road system (either to the north-east as well to the west of Keramos).

The last place which is worthy to mention in these pages is the ancient city of Kedreai on the island called today Sedir. The city has been already visited and partly studied in the past by visitors and scholars; our goal was therefore to place it within the broader understanding of that territory which it belongs. The main basilica church (ca. 36 by 23 m.) on the island shows one single apse and a projecting body to the south-east corner. As for the letter, we could not ascertain whether it was a baptistery or not, while in the main core of the building a chancel foundation shows the division of the sanctuary from the remaining part of the central apse. This a feature we found in the church of Tavşan Adası and of Monastır Dağ<sup>13</sup>, and possibly should be retained as an architectural characteristic of these regional churches. In the main nave of the basilica various fragments of marble and limestone church decoration were found. Among them it seems quite relevant to notice a marble impost capital (cf similar samples in Iasos, Cnidos and Gököy), an ambo, today unfortunately broken in scattered pieces (it belongs to the usual Carian ambo: cf the samples collected in the courtyard of Milas Archaeological Museum), and pieces of broken chancel slabs. The western part of the church housed the narthex which ex-

(11) E. Varinlioğlu, A. Bresson, P. Brun, P. Debord, R. Descat, Une inscription de Pladasa en Carie, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 92 (1990) esp. 63-66.

(12) This place is becoming totally touristic, henceforth one may have within few years the full oblivion of those foundations (Byzantine bath and jetties) which are still discernible along the south-west shore of the bay. Akbük, as a matter of fact, is the only anchoring bay findable from Idyma and Sedir Ada to Keramos, and it served in antiquity the inland towns or villages to reach the sea.

(13) Cf V. Ruggieri, F. Giordano, A. Zöh, La penisola di Alicarnasso in età bizantina. Şa parte, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 63 (1997) 147-153; V. Ruggieri, F. Giordano, La penisola di Alicarnasso in età bizantina. 1 parte. Le chiese di Tavşan Adası e Monastır dağ: eredità monofisita?, forthcoming *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1998.

tended either to north and to the south. While the northern part ended with a well preserved cistern, the southern part introduced a passage way, 150 cm. large, parallel to the southern nave and ending into the adjoining body to the south-east.

A different plan was offered by another basilica church on the eastern shore of the island. At the outset, one should first underline that this part of the island seems to have been densely inhabited during the Byzantine period, for all the long eastern shore of the island bears evident and extensive remains of Byzantine buildings. The church to which we shall soon refer is placed within a large Byzantine complex which preserves a considerably large bath amongst other buildings. The church shows three naves ending to the east with three semi-circular apses; to the north an adjoining complex was added whose identity, however, cannot be identified. The southern apse has shown that the church had mosaic pavements right at the time of the erection; later the mosaic was covered by means of a rough mortar pavement.

The last days were spent on surveying the large Byzantine complex at Karaca burnu, on the Lycian shore, a site which should reasonably be referred to as belonging to Sidyma. Due to the shortage of time, the ecclesiastical complex was analyzed first. It was a basilica church (ca. 23, 50 by 11, 25 m.), with three naves and three semi-circular apses on the outside<sup>14</sup>. The church was joined to the south-east by another small church and cisterns; in addition, on the outside attached to the central and southern apse, a roughly circular building was set up bearing frescoes. It is obvious that this building was added later, albeit not to far from the erection of the church, but what results new is that the inner walls revealed two layers of frescoes. The first one covers the western wall and shows a cross with two hanging chains bearing at the end, on either side of the vertical bar, the alpha and omega; the second layer, on the contrary, has three haloed figures (the central one bigger)<sup>15</sup>. In order to set up the second layer of fresco the painters hammered the first fresco, a "technique" we found also on the intradoses of the windows in the central apse.

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(14) Strangely enough we found in this church an architectural feature which we thought to be rather Carian: two projecting walls as featuring the main entrance into the church. In this case, due the regionalism of the workers, the main entrance was slight put to the northern part of the western wall, i. e. it did not have an axial perspective.

(15) Above the figures (we reckon of the X-XI cent.), roughly on the base of the circular roofing, a frescoed illegible inscription ran, having white letters on red background.

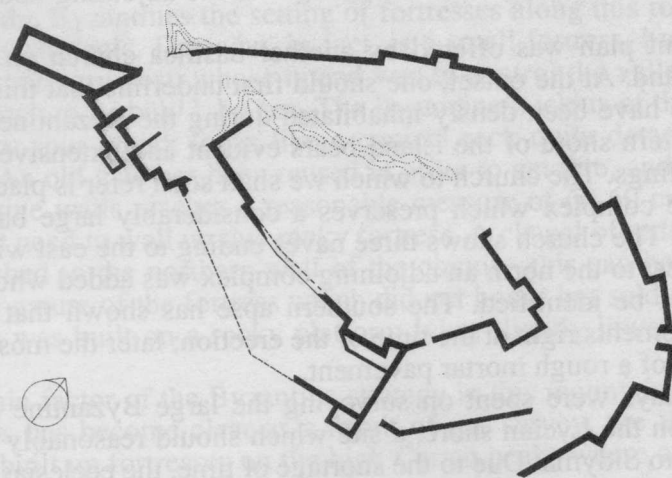


Fig. 1 : Alakişla, the Carian fortress

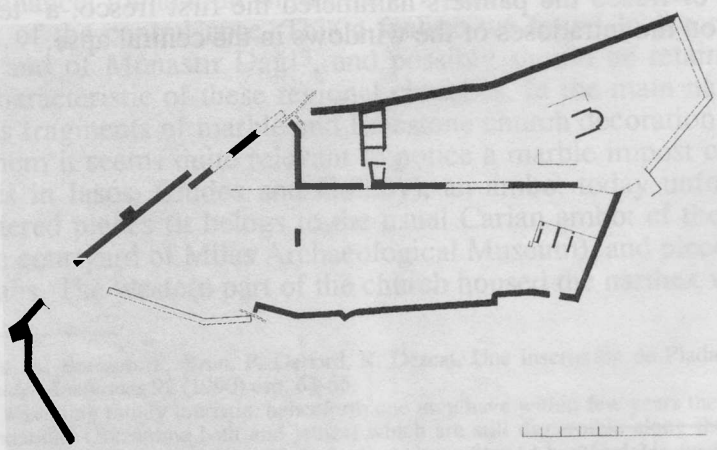


Fig. 2 : Keramos, Ören, the Byzantine fortress

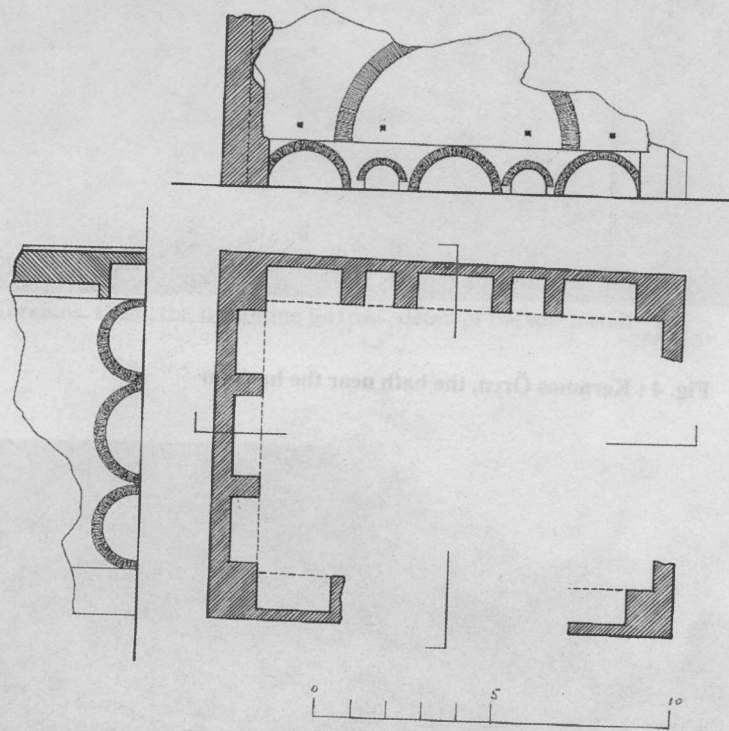
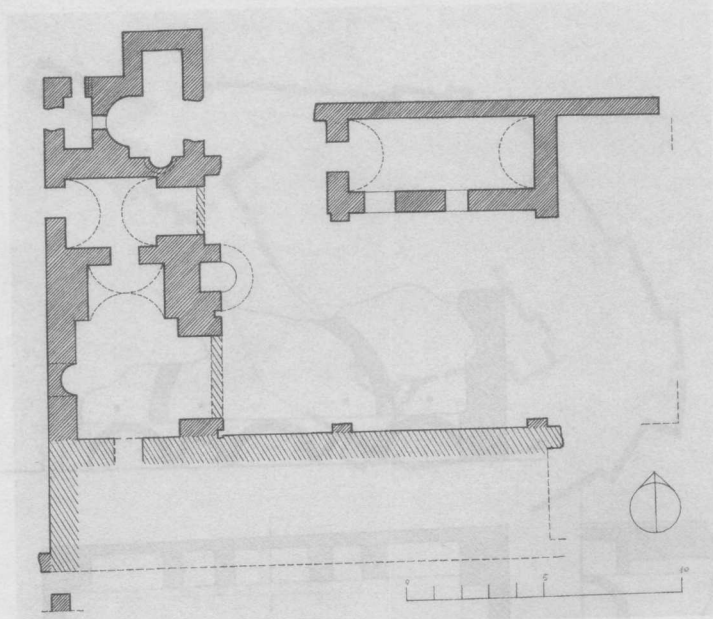
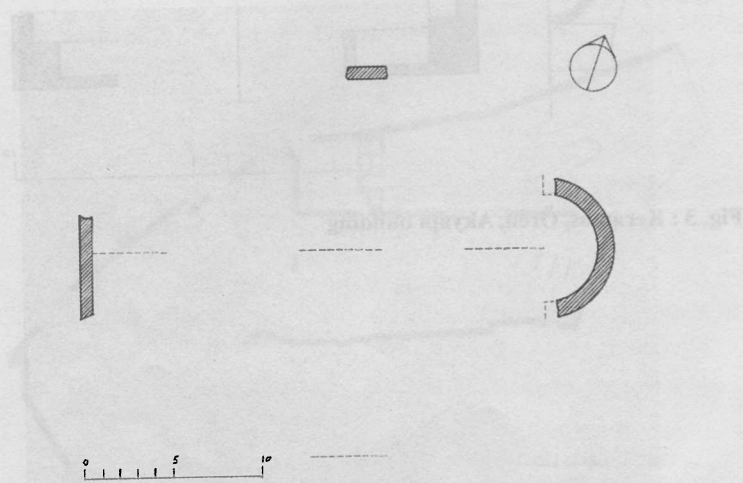


Fig. 3 : Keramos, Ören, Akyapı building





**Fig. 4 : Keramos Ören, the bath near the harbour**



**Fig. 5 : Keramos, Ören, the church near the harbour**



**Fig. 6 : Keramos, Ören, the Byzantine fortress, detail of the south wall**



**Fig. 7 : Keramos, Ören, the Byzantine fortress, the southern walls**



Fig. 8 : Keramos, Ören, Kurşunlu Yapı, Byzantine capital

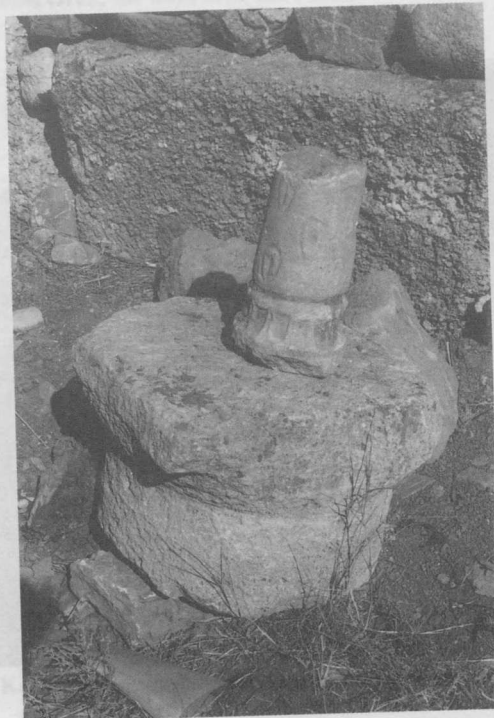
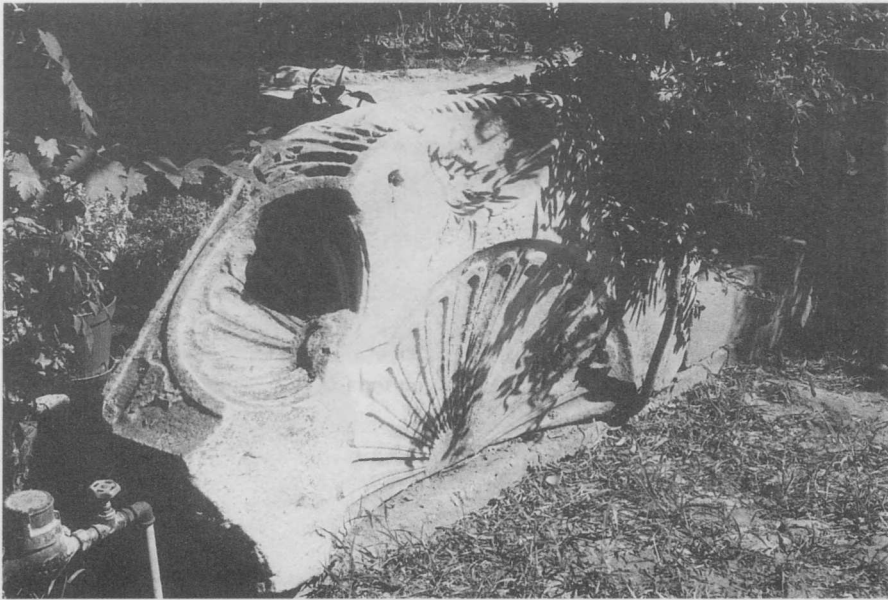


Fig. 9 : Keramos, Ören, the columnette near the city walls



**Fig. 10 : Keramos, Ören, Byzantine capitals of the church near the harbour**



**Fig. 11 : Keramos, Ören, Byzantine ambo of the church near the harbour  
Tedigiintepe buluntuları**

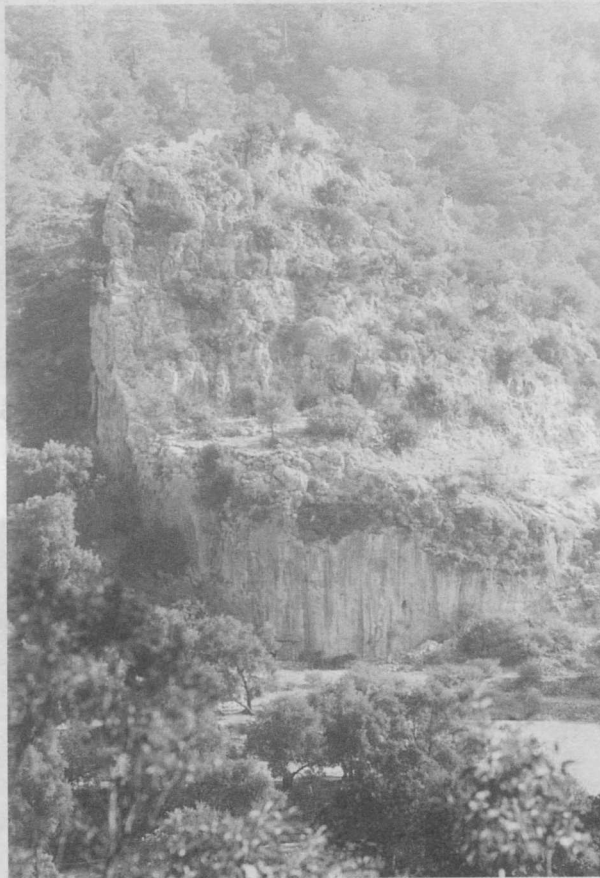


Fig. 12 : Datçağız, the fortress on top the rocky spur



**Fig. 13 : Sedir Ardasi, the apse of the main church**



**Fig. 14 : Karaca burnu, the church from nort-west**