

# Koyun Island Chapel

*Emre Kishalı, Ioannis Papachristou*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| District of Erdek, Paşalimanı<br>Neighbourhood, Koyun Adası Locality | Construction period/date: <b>18<sup>th</sup> century</b> |
|  | Current status: <b>Ruinous</b>                           |
| GPS: 40°29'48.5"N 27°34'29.2"E                                       | Ownership status: <b>Private ownership</b>               |
| Registration date and number: <b>Unregistered.</b>                   |  |

## History

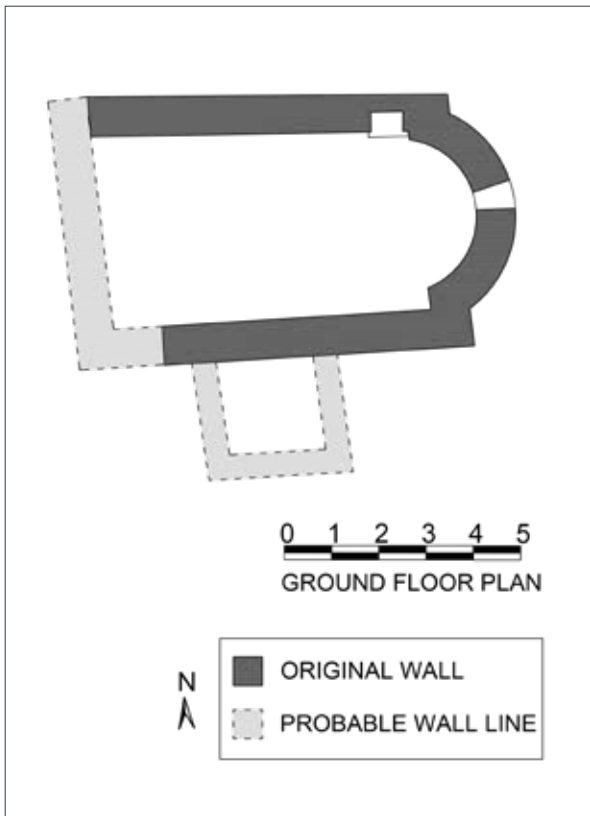
The islet Gera (Γερά, perhaps deriving from the word 'ιερά', 'sacred, holy'), known as Koyun Adası in Turkish, is situated opposite the village of Paşalimanı. The island was not inhabited before 1922 and houses only a chapel.

The only known source about the chapel is Gedeon (1895, 37-39), who unfortunately forgets to give us its name —perhaps dedicated to the Holy Virgin (Panagia). According to

Gedeon, the chapel was reconstructed over remains of Byzantine walls. An ancient heptagonal marble —maybe the basis of a statue— with a diameter over 1 m was used as the altar. Gedeon notes that the oldest icons he found was one of the Holy Virgin and one of Christ Almighty dating from 1728 and 1758 respectively. In 1892, he could see pieces of columns, capitals and marble pilasters around the chapel. Gedeon also writes that close to



Fig. 1: General view



the chapel, on the sea side, the water uncovered graves, and that he transferred part of a Greek inscription on marble —bearing the letters ‘METPO[...]’ (‘METRO[...]’)— to Istanbul.

### Architecture

The remains of the chapel are in the southwestern part of Koyun Island. There is a small pier, which provides access to the island, about 50 m southwest of the building. According to the records of the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, the building is located on a lot of approximately 1285 decares.

Although the plan organization of the building can be identified, its spatial properties cannot be estimated (Fig. 1). The eastern part of the building, which is located on an area descending westward, remains concealed up to a certain level (Fig. 2). The building is currently accessed through the collapsed western wall. There are not any traces of the superstructure of the building. The northern wall of the chapel is 7.55 m long, while the length of the southern wall is 6.05 m. The curvilinear wall on the eastern façade, where the apse is located, is 5.58 m long. There are wall remains of about 2.50x3.00 m adjacent to the southern wall of the building, which must be related to the chapel. The

northern wall contains a 70-cm-wide niche. There is a small window with a width of 35 cm in the apse wall.

The walls of rubble masonry with brick fragments resting on rubble foundations constitute the overall construction technique. The inner cavity of the double-faced rubble masonry is filled with stone and earth (Fig. 1). The wall thickness is measured 78-81 cm at upper levels that could be reached. Spolia materials are noted in the wall. Earth and adobe were used as the binding material. Traces of both rough and fine lime-based plaster were found on the interior surfaces of the main walls.

### Current Condition

The entire western wall of the building, certain sections of its northern and southern walls, and its superstructure have been lost. While the eastern façade still stands, the other masonry walls have largely collapsed. Loss of materials, vegetation, and surface deterioration are noted on the southern and northern façades. Access to the building is not controlled and there is no information panel on the site. During the fieldwork, it was observed that the area to the south had been recently destroyed by dynamite (Fig. 3). It was discovered that this destruction was deliberate in order to procure stones for the construction of Yiğitler Port. The inscription panel and column capital seen in the historical photographs, which were located in the west of the chapel, are currently found in the area destroyed by dynamite (Fig. 4). Moreover, traces of damage caused by illicit digging were found within the building.

### Risk Assessment and Recommendations

Deteriorations attested in the remains can be listed as loss of material, surface weathering, effects of environmental conditions, and intense vegetation. Moreover, it is difficult to reach the building without a local guide due to its location. There is no information panel about the cultural heritage site on or near it.

Although structural cracks are not observed in the building, there is loss of material on the wall surfaces. In addition, plants grow in the joints of the main walls due to earth-based binding material. These decays, which affect the strength of the materials and the building's integrity, should be taken under control.



*Fig. 2: Eastern façade*



*Fig. 3: The area destroyed by dynamite*



*Fig. 4: Ion-impost column capital*

The original construction technique and materials that have survived should be preserved through consolidation. The vegetation in the main walls that will cause further deterioration should be removed in a controlled manner. Currently, there are not any attempts for the

building to continue its function; therefore, it should be repaired in its present state, without the reconstruction of its lost western wall or superstructure, by consolidating the existing materials. The structure should also be continuously maintained and repaired afterwards.