

Agios Andreas Monastery

Emre Kishalı, Ioannis Papachristou

District of Erdek, Karşıyaka Neighbourhood, Fener Adası Locality	Construction period/date: Beginning of the 20th century
GPS: 40°27'30.0"N 28°04'23.6"E	Current status: Abandoned
	Ownership status: Private ownership
Registration date and number: Bursa KTVKKBK 08.10.2009 - 5080	

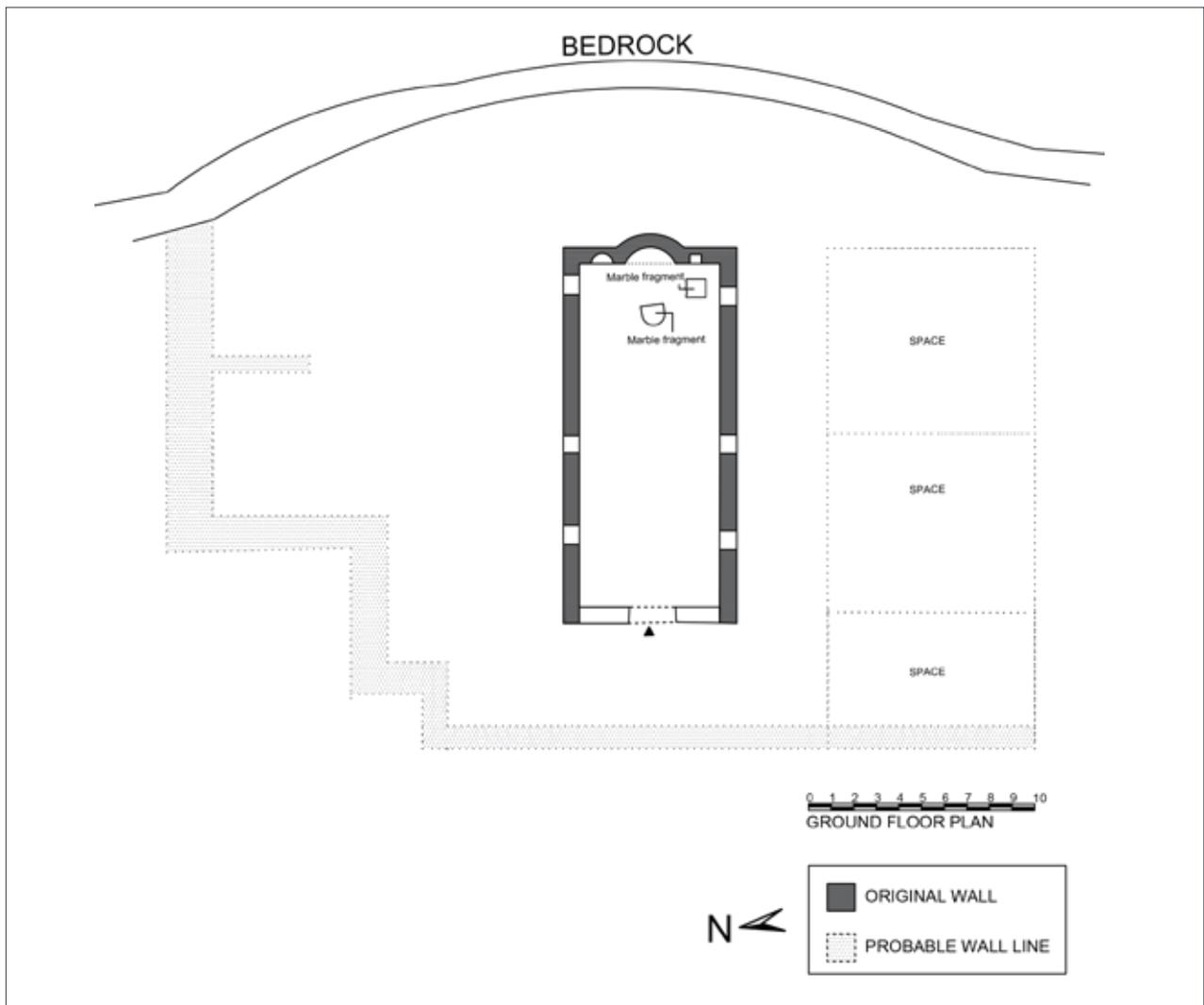
History

Georgios Theologos, the author of *Anagrafi tis Kyzikou* [*Description of Cyzicus*] (1825), refers to the three small islands opposite the eastern cape of the Cyzicene Peninsula, called Kapsala, as 'the islands of Agios Andreas' (Papachristou *et al.* 2015, 76). Konstantinos Makris and his son Ippokratis note (1959, 151-152) that the biggest island was called Agios Andreas or just the Island (Νησί, in Greek), on which there was a chapel honouring Agios Andreas and a smaller one honouring Agios Antonios. The soil on the island was suitable for cultivating

grain and corn. The second island was called Meksa and no buildings are mentioned here, only grain fields. The fields belonged to Stratis Gavrielakis at the beginning of 20th century. The waters around Meksa were rich in fish and seafood. The third island was called Agios Georgios or Elia (because of the olive trees) and its rocky ground was used to graze goats. It is said that there was a chapel for Agios Georgios and ruins of other small buildings, which were visible up to the beginning of 20th century, that most likely belonged to the people exiled



Fig. 1: General view



during the Byzantine era. The two smaller, rocky islands between Agios Andreas and Meksa were called Diapori and Diaporaki.

Up to 1900 the three islands belonged to the archimandrite Papa-Kyroglu who must also have been responsible for the Agios Andreas Monastery. In 1900, Papa-Kyroglu sold the islands to the congregation of Michaniona (Çakılköy) who, in turn, rented out the fields to different people from Michaniona. In the 19th century, Agios Andreas Island had a lighthouse that inspired its Turkish name, 'Fener'. The inhabitants of Michaniona refer to the presence of hundreds of wild pigeons, *karkatsounes* (a kind of black bird, maybe the one known in Turkish as *karabatak*), foxes, and even seals gathering at the rocky coasts. The island was rich in oysters that were sold in the fish markets of Istanbul and Bandırma (Panormos). The Agios Andreas Monastery burned down in a fire at the beginning of the 20th century and it was abandoned

for some years. However, the inhabitants of Michaniona restored the roof and the walls of the church before 1922.

Architecture

The ruins of the monastery are located near the eastern tip of Fener Island, in an agricultural field that is approximately 31500 m², according to the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre. There is a sloping, rocky area to the north of the ruins and a few trees to the south. Rough terrain extends to the east and west.

The area consists of terraces. The first terrace is at a lower level to the south of the church and contains wall traces relating to the auxiliary buildings. The walls of these spaces, which are lined up in the east-west direction, remain only at their foundation level. Their extant sections reveal that the walls are constructed in rubble masonry.

Another wall at the western end of the westernmost of these three rooms extends northward and continues on the second terrace. This wall turns east to the north of the church and connects to the rocky terrain in the east while making angles at certain points. A safe border was formed by this eastern wall that makes use of the topography. Since these remains are currently in the form of scattered rubble stones, the exact wall thickness could not be determined. The southward partition wall to the north may suggest a spatial organization in this area. About 20 m northwest of these walls were the remnants of an inscription dated 1699, a marble gargoyle, and another piece of marble (Fig. 5). The marble inscription and the other marble fragment must belong to the legs of the broken altar inside the church. The inscription dating from 1699 fits in the bottom line of the inscription on the upper part of the broken leg. The historical sources indicate that the complex was active in the late 17th century, then repaired and rebuilt in the early 20th century.

The plan organization of the church on the second terrace can be traced because its main walls have survived (Fig. 1). The western wall of the church, where the entrance was located, has completely collapsed. There are three round, arched windows on the southern and northern walls. The curving niche covered by an arch of solid bricks on the eastern wall is the apse (Fig. 2). There is a square niche with a lintel to the south of the apse and another niche with a round arch to its north. The apse is not attested on the exterior. The roof has not survived, but the triangular pediment on the eastern wall indicates that it was a gable roof (Fig. 3).

The church walls were constructed in rubble and brick. There are two rows of brick belt courses in the rubble walls. These belt courses, which are seen in all of the walls, are made of hollow bricks.

The dimensions of the building elements and the wall thicknesses were measured during the fieldwork. The wall thickness is 70 cm. The distance between the brick belt courses on the southern wall is 120 cm. The sizes of the hollow bricks, forming the brick rows, are 19.5~20x9.5~10x5.5~6 cm. The dimensions of



Fig. 2: Main wall to the east and the apse



Fig. 3: Triangular gable

the solid bricks, forming the arch of the niche in the north of the eastern façade, are 21x10x5 cm. The curving apse is formed by square bricks with dimensions of 27.5x27.5x3 cm. The thickness of the brick belt courses is 13~14 cm (Fig. 4).

Current Condition

The building's main western wall and roof have not survived. Loss of materials and surface weathering are observed on its extant southern and northern façades. Access to the structure is not controlled and there are no information panels in the surrounding area. There are pits indicating illicit digs by treasure hunters near the apse of the building, which is completely neglected.

Risk Assessment and Recommendations

The deteriorations that were observed in the remains include loss of materials, surface weathering, external environmental effects, and intense vegetation. Considering the location of the building, it is difficult to access without a local guide. There is no information panel in the environs, which is among the



Fig. 4: Brick belt courses

factors that increase the isolation of this cultural heritage site. Yet, the building was still subjected to treasure hunting.

Although there are not any structural cracks attested in the building, loss of material is noted on the main wall surfaces and window openings. This issue must be taken under control since it affects the integrity of the building. Moreover, the original construction technique and materials that have survived should be preserved through consolidation.

While it is difficult to access the extant remains, the building is under the threat of deterioration since it is exposed to environmental factors and treasure hunting. After a thorough research on the architectural features of the remains, a strategic planning should be prepared with the involvement of all stakeholders in the region to open the site to visitors. In this way, not only the multi-layered character of the area will be made visible, but also this cultural heritage site can be transferred to future generations.



Fig. 5: Inscription dated 1699