

TURKEY

Recent publications about Heritage at Risk in Turkey

In early 2002, TAÇ, the Turkish Foundation for the Promotion and the Preservation of Heritage- Monuments, Environment and Tourism Values, published a book (Sezgin 2001) that incorporates 40 articles about Natural and Cultural Heritage at Risk in Turkey. As this publication clearly shows, many archaeological, urban and rural sites, as well as monuments in Turkey are under pressure of illegal development, neglect, poor use and unauthorised restoration.

The extent of the damage threatening archaeological sites all over Turkey has been surveyed and a report has been published by TAY (Turkish Archaeological Association). New roads, dams and other development projects are presenting serious risks to the cultural strata of Turkey. There are 335 dams under construction, 47 being planned and all are in some way changing the landscape and inundating natural and cultural assets. A one-day symposium was held on 14 June 2002 in Istanbul by the Dams and Cultural Heritage group (of which ICOMOS Turkey is a member) to discuss the problems of dam construction in Turkey, and to attract the attention of the public to the extent of the damage to the natural and cultural heritage in the name of modern development.

Archaeological Sites at Risk

Archaeological sites are also suffering from tourism. Encroachment of tourist facilities and holiday villages near or on archaeological sites is a pressing issue on the western and southern coasts of Turkey. The visual pollution created by extensive building on archaeological sites such as Side obscures the significance of the ancient sites.

The re-use of some of the ancient theatres for performances exerts a lot of pressure on these structures. There are also political pressures from municipalities, governors or MPs to rebuild the damaged or lost parts of ancient theatres, in order to make it possible to use them for concerts and plays. The cases of the theatres in Ephesus and Side are striking examples. The installation of modern stage facilities and lighting equipment, as well as great numbers of spectators, impose serious risks for sensitive old structures.

Timber architecture at risk

Timber is the traditional material for houses in many parts of Turkey. If they are not maintained properly, timber structures become very fragile. Many are suffering from neglect and misuse. Several fires – some intentional, some due to old and badly maintained electrical installations – ruin historic timber houses. Recently a 19th-century Bosphorus mansion that was being used as a primary school burned due to badly maintained electrical installation. The improvement of old electrical systems is essential for old timber buildings.

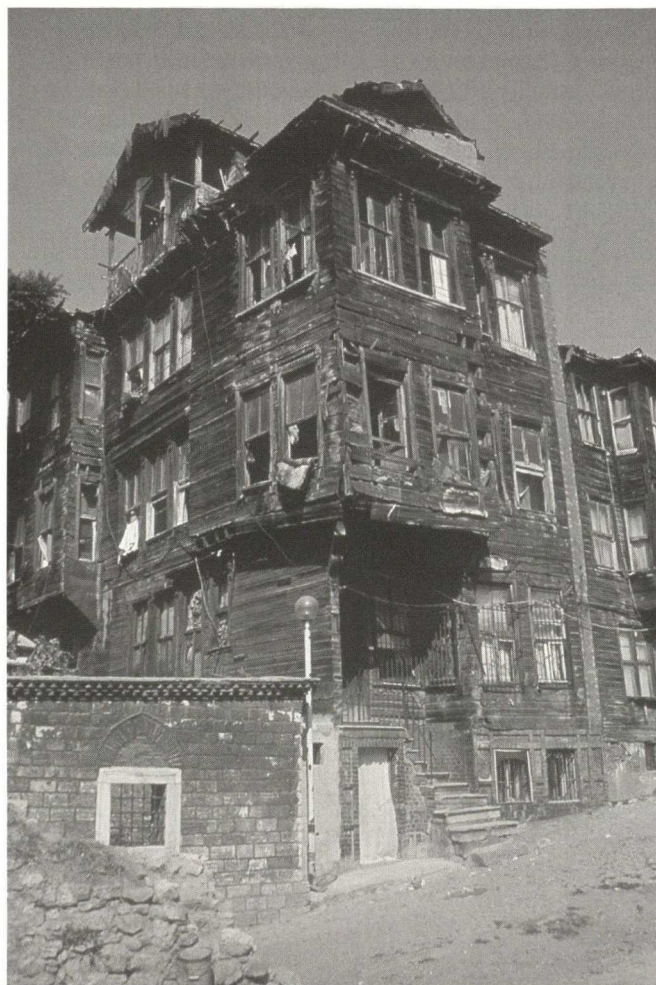
Within historic Istanbul, which is registered as a World Heritage Site, Süleymaniye and Zeyrek are two important residential quarters with timber houses. Unfortunately these two sites are severely threatened by neglect and fires. Due to a lack of opera-

tional rules, fires are eating up the old timber houses. The number of big gaps, devoid of their attractive houses, is increasing. The ruined or burned houses are not rebuilt properly; some are reconstructed as cheap replicas, some of the lots are used for car parking, which seems to be more financially rewarding for the owners.

Deserted buildings in historic centres are a great problem for public safety. Municipalities want to demolish these vacant and leaning buildings. In fact, when the houses are not maintained, the roofs start to leak and floors become very weak. After heavy snow-fall or rain, old buildings collapse – and often this causes death or injury to people. During the winter of 2002, several old houses fell down and caused loss to life.

Recent earthquakes in Turkey have damaged half-timbered structures that were not well maintained. Old houses near Afyon were damaged and will never be the same again. Traditional practice in building with timber is being forgotten. Timber houses are seldom restored properly using traditional techniques and crafts. There are many examples of bad restorations that change the form and material of the original structure.

A timber house from the Zeyrek, one of the significant historic quarters of Istanbul. The structure, the survival of which has to be assured, is in an increasing state of dilapidation; the western wall is out of plumb and one of the main floor beams is near collapse.



Restoration of earthquake-damaged masonry buildings

Engineers graduating from modern schools are rarely educated in the restoration of historic buildings. They learn about constructing modern structures, but in order to restore a cracked masonry building one needs to know more than modern engineering techniques. Usually engineers in Turkey try to apply modern standards and codes to old structures, making them very stiff with a lot of strengthening. If funds are entrusted into the hands of professionals not sensitive to historic structures, the money may be used to transform and abuse historic buildings. Feyzullah Efendi Medrese is one such case. After being damaged in 1999 by an earthquake, the early 18th-century library and college was evacuated due to cracks on its walls and domes. Instead of repairing the building with masonry-sympathetic techniques, steel beams were inserted into the masonry. This has damaged the original construction and might be a big risk for the structure in future earthquakes. It is unfortunate that the Monuments Council could not intervene on time to prevent the destructive interventions.

Several towers and wall sections of the Theodosian Wall in Istanbul were damaged during the 1999 earthquake. The restoration of Tower 89, which was taken up by the Municipality of Istanbul, is another example of bad restoration practice. The problems of authenticity and preservation of historic evidence need to be discussed, because the tower was reconstructed to its full height with a completely new façade.

Natural and cultural assets of the Bosphorus at risk

The construction of a third bridge over the Bosphorus, spanning the strait between Asia and Europe at Arnavutköy continues. The inhabitants of Arnavutköy are very much concerned for their historic village, organising several meetings and demonstrations, and travelling to Ankara to meet the Minister of Constructions to explain to him the damage the new bridge would inflict on the urban and natural assets of the Bosphorus. A press conference was held at Arnavutköy in June 2002 with the participation of several politicians, journalists, the Chamber of Architects and ICOMOS Turkey to discuss the legal situation and convey the opinions of the inhabitants to the public.

During their passage through the Bosphorus, ships or oil tankers run out of control and collide with the shore. Such accidents cause severe damage to the historic buildings and to the people living in them. Many people have died and several houses have been damaged or destroyed by such accidents. This is a great risk: recently a tanker stopped 3 metres short of going into a water-front house at Scutari. Occasionally ships sink or burn on the Bosphorus, causing considerable pollution and environmental damage. For the safety of the inhabitants of Istanbul it is essential to limit the passage of tankers through the Bosphorus. In June 2002, there was a demonstration against the increase in the number of oil tankers passing the Bosphorus. Many NGOs sailed in boats on the Bosphorus carrying signs protesting the use of the Bosphorus as a passage for oil transfer.

Theft and vandalism

Looting and vandalism are serious threats to monuments with valuable details like icons, mosaic floors, statues and glazed tiles.



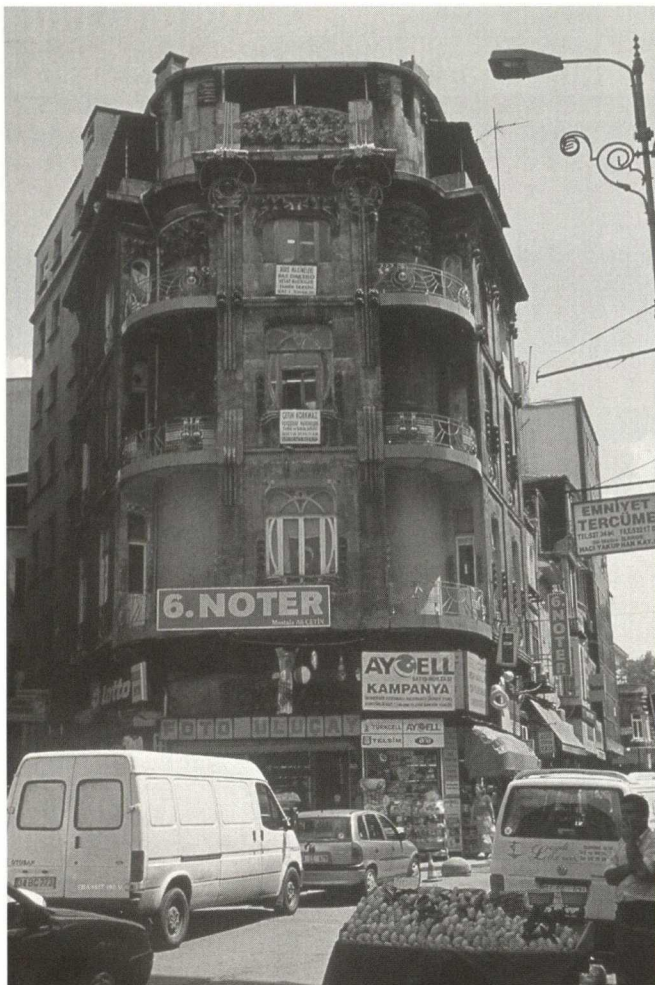
Late 19th-century timber palace on the Bosphorus, Istanbul, devastated by fire. Electrical installations in historic buildings are often the cause of such losses. Used as a public school, the building was suffering from lack of funds for its maintenance.



Tower 89 of the Theodosian Wall had suffered from the earthquake in 1999 (see *Heritage at Risk 2000* for a photo of the damaged state). The vestiges were not enough for a proper reconstruction. A new tower has been recreated, reducing the significance and legibility of the ancient remains.

The mosque of Murat II in Edirne is a 15th-century monument, famous for the beautiful glazed tiles on its walls. The artistic impact of the mosque had been greatly damaged by the looting of its beautiful tiles. (Photo: Dr. Yegan Kashya)





Vlora Han is a beautiful Art Nouveau office building at Sirkeci, within the commercial centre of historic Istanbul. The crowd of advertisements on the façades and alterations to the shopfronts make it difficult to appreciate the beauty of the building.

Thieves make their way into museums or monuments – churches, mosques or tombs – to steal their valuable elements. They do a lot of harm to the monuments by cutting the iron bars of the windows and by destroying original elements and surfaces.

Unsuitable re-use projects

Assigning suitable functions to ancient buildings is essential to guarantee their future. Cultural property is an unrenewable resource; to give ancient buildings functions that demand modern installations and additions is criminal. The choice for the new use for the Cistern of Binbirdirek is scandalous. The ancient building is one of the most important underground cisterns in Istanbul. Originally it had only access from the top; now it has been turned into a restaurant and a commercial mall. To provide easy access, a new vaulted entrance has been cut into its ancient, 5-metre thick wall. Modern installations required to ventilate and light a space used for commercial purposes cannot be acceptable within a 6th-century structure. Bad use and bad restorations ruin interior spaces, insulting the monumentality of the structure.

Damage to 20th-century heritage

Twentieth-century heritage is only partially under legislative protection in Turkey. Many 20th-century buildings are being repaired or renovated by their present occupants, without paying due attention to their historic and architectural significance. In Ankara, early Republican Period public buildings of the 20th century are suffering from being painted with incoherent colour schemes. Some 20th-century buildings are being pulled down without notice. The owners of mid-20th-century houses even react to their houses being listed.

Drastic changes are made to the street fronts of 20th-century buildings, widening the shop-fronts or inserting new shops on the street-level walls of residential buildings. Additional floors and interior alterations, loss of original furniture also result in losses to the understanding of the original design.

Due to lack of control and absence of a general principle for the protection of the recent times, immediate action is necessary to record and survey the heritage of the last century.

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Early Christian and Byzantine Sites in coastal South Western Anatolia at Risk

Introduction

The early Christian and Byzantine monuments and sites of coastal South-Western Anatolia are in a poor, scanty and most endangered condition. The state of preservation of the ruins is low and nothing has been done for their conservation and restoration until now. Additionally these sites are in danger of complete destruction, because of recent building activities and plans to erect holiday resorts and villages, mostly at the very romantic abandoned bays, where many of these settlements with their monuments are located. In addition, uncontrolled tourist activities including 'boat trips' and 'jeep safaris' are endangering the monuments: wall paintings of churches are destroyed and the ruins are mis-used for climbing. It is striking that most of the monuments are not known at all – many still have to be recorded and because of this the loss of monuments is difficult to recognise. The following presents four different sites that are all suffering from the circumstances described, and which need immediate support to solve these problems. There are many more sites at risk, but the following give a representative impression of the regretful situation at the moment. Two settlements are situated in abandoned bays on the coasts of the historical landscapes of Karia and Lykia. First, the site of Ala Kilise (probably the late ancient harbour city foundation Anastasiópolis) in coastal Karia, then the site of Kalabatia (Sancaklı Limanı). The third example is the site of Kaunos (near the small-town of Dalyan near Dalaman) – which in the late ancient and Byzantine ecclesiastical administration also belonged to the province of Lykia. The last building mentioned is situated on the Karian Peninsula of Stadia (Datça) and represents the middle-Byzantine area.

The site of Ala Kilise – a late ancient city foundation (Anastasiópolis?)

About 30 kilometres east of Bodrum at the bay of the coloured church (Ala Kilise Bay), a late antique city foundation with two large churches has recently been discovered. The ruins found behind the shore and at the bay can be divided into two important areas: the area at the sea-side and that of the fortified 'Acropolis-hill'. While the ruins covering the 'Acropolis-hill' can possibly be dated to a very early age because of their masonry technique and defence character, the other remains at the shore belong to the late antique era. Recent investigations show that the ruins of the settlement behind the shores of Ala Kilise Bükü consist of extensive ruins of late ancient housing and commercial areas. Furthermore, on the spot we find the ruins of two Byzantine baths (a small bath and a big one at the western part of the bay), and a ship mole at the eastern part of the bay.

The most important monuments of Ala Kilise Bükü are in fact the ruins of two large churches that show a basilical plan. The city's impressive main church (Ala Kilise I) lies in the centre of the bay directly behind the shore, while the second one is located at the eastern part (Ala Kilise II). The main church possesses an octagonal baptistery with a tetra-conch plan. This building once had an upper storey and the central room was originally covered

with a dome. Baptisteries related to this type can be found at many places in the Mediterranean and are particularly documented in the Balkans and at the church of St. Mary at Ephesos. The architectural features suggest that the building and its church belong to the 6th or the late 5th century, a unique construction with no direct equivalent. The main church had three aisles closing eastward with a large, outside polygonal apse and two smaller ones appearing circular outside. The aisles of the church were divided by two lines of columns made out of marble (small fragments can still be found in situ). The church was connected with the baptistery through a door and had a narthex. At a later date, a more eastward orientated funeral chapel has been added instead of its south-east small apse, closing the south aisle eastward (perhaps a middle-Byzantine addition). The baptistery and the main church had once been completely covered with wall paintings (frescoes of which important remains still can be found in situ, e.g. many shapes of saints and red crosses decorated with 'blood drops' in the niches of the building).

The ruins of the second big church of the city are situated in the eastern part of the bay, also directly behind the shore. The building must also once have been a three-aisled basilica – appearing outside with a polygonal apse – in the west it still possesses a tiny annexed building with a square plan, which is still covered by its original dome and a fragmentary cover of frescoed wall paintings of the late 5th or the 6th century. Here we find remains of a circle of saints, and at other parts of the walls we find the fragmental paintings of Jesus and the apostles, Emperor Constantine's mother Helena and others. Apart from the baptistery of Gököy (north of Bodrum), this small building is one of the earliest early Christian domed buildings preserved and known in this part of Anatolia. It was probably used as a funeral chapel. However, on the near island of Kös we find exactly this small building type, which here was often used as a baptistery. Eastward of the church a group of small, barrel-vaulted tombs can be found. At the much smaller neighbourhood bay of Şeytan Bükü, some kilometres to the east, a small monastery basilica, a tomb and another bath ruin can be found, belonging to the same period of construction. The whole site is in great danger of being built-over as a holiday resort village by a European hotel group. Additionally uncontrolled tourist activities are causing destruction of the masonry of the buildings and the late ancient wall-paintings still preserved in the churches and their annexed buildings of this site. Also, a hotel

Ala Kilise II, basilica – polygonal apse, view from the east



construction is planned for the extensive nearby Byzantine settlement of Torba (on the northern peninsula of Bodrum).

Kalabatia – late antique settlement and church ruin with painted apse decoration

Kalabatia (or Kalabantia) was once the harbour settlement of the Greek polis, Sidyma, which is situated on the Western Lykian Coast in an abandoned bay called Sancaklı Lima-nı. In late antiquity a settlement was founded here and a two-aisled church constructed of quarry stones has been erected on a terrace just some metres above the level of the sea-shore in the south-east part of the bay. The church can be compared with the recently excavated and investigated nearby churches of Gemiler Adası at Ölüdeniz, a bay near Fethiye. While most parts of the main church collapsed, the apse of the church is completely preserved and is showing its iconographical programme with nine schemes of saints visible. The lower part of the apse was colourfully decorated with a painted marble imitation. Additionally frescoed medallions of saints and a colourful ornamental decoration are visible in the arch of the apse. The arch of the apse and the apse vaulting are cracked and in danger of a total collapse.

Kaunos (Hagia) – domed basilica (6th century)

The new main church of Kaunos (in the Byzantine era also called Hagia) was erected, probably in the 6th century, on a terrace between the most important public buildings: the Roman theatre and the Roman baths. The building, partly excavated by the author, was constructed of cubic cut stones and had two later-added annexed chapels and a narthex. The three aisled structure once possessed a central dome, which collapsed at an unknown date. The two narrow aisles were covered with barrel vaults of which parts in the southern aisle are still preserved, but in absolute danger of collapse. Additionally the massive lintels of the west and eastern doors of this aisle are broken and also in great danger of collapse. The building is outstanding because most of the monuments of that era in this region were built with more easily obtainable material: spolia and collected quarry stones. The church is also remarkable, because it is one of the only known buildings showing this architectural plan in an Anatolian province of the Byzantine empire. It was constructed following the plan of Hagia Eirene (1st phase) at Constantinople – which is one of the most important churches of Byzantine architectural history. Furthermore, at the site a Middle-Age Byzantine castle-like structure (Kastron) is preserved at the greater acropolis hill. It was erected out of quarry stones and possesses a small church. These ruins are in a scanty state and poorly preserved.

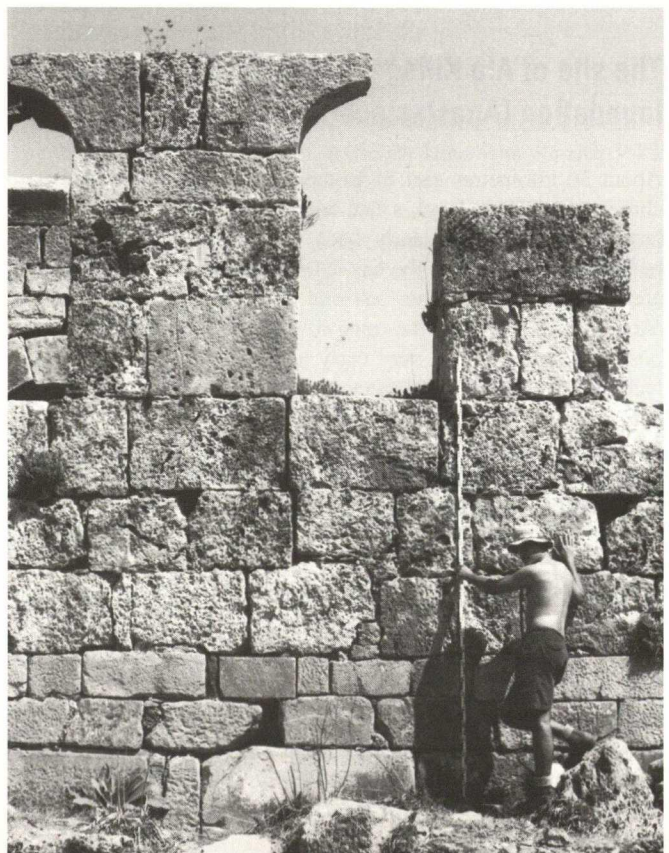
Territory of Knidos (Değirmen Bükü) – Middle Age church and Roman bath

A Middle Age Byzantine church ruin is found at Değirmen Bükü, located on the far western peninsula of Stadia (Datça) in the territory of the polis of Knidos, at the harbour of the village of Yazı Köyü. The church was most probably erected in the 11th or 12th century, and is preserved at the western part of the bay on a narrow hill behind the shore. It is still partly closed with cloister-vaults,



Kaunos (Hagia), domed basilica, southern aisle, eastern door – cracked lintel

Kaunos (Hagia), domed basilica, southern facade, windows



which are in great danger of collapsing. In addition, a large Byzantine barrel-vaulted building is situated westward of the church, which may have belonged to a contemporary settlement. The site is dominated by the ruin of a large Roman bath, which was erected in the direct neighbourhood of the site of the ancient harbour city Knidos.

Conclusions

The sites of the abandoned bays should all be accepted as archaeological sites of primary importance, a status only existent for Kaunos at the moment – because it has recently been a place of Turkish and German archaeological excavations. In addition, a programme has to be set up to direct the preservation of the buildings and their subsequent presentation to the public.

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Değirmen Bükü, middle Byzantine settlement with church ruin – view towards the east