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A CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ALANYA: ALARA (DOWN) BATH

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Abstract

Alara Castle and Medieval Settlement, which is located in the boundaries of Antalya province, Alanya district and Okurcalar town, began to develop soon after Sultan Alaeddin I conquered the region. The region consists of a down city located on out skirt of steep sloped castle and Alara Valley. Alara is located on the trade route protecting its significance throughout the Middle Ages. The region has a strategic importance on the roads of Anatolia from the North to the South by its location. Although the castle which was used in the periods of Rome, Byzantine, Cilicia, Armenian Kingdom, Seljukian and Ottoman became a small settlement in the course of time, its main period was in the 13th century in medieval age after it was captured by the Turks.

Down city primarily consists of structural units such as khan, bridge, mosque and bath.

On the edge of creek, down bath is located outside of expanding fortress walls, lots in plants and its remains are almost entirely below ground. Because of its location, the bath building was damaged badly during the overflow of the Alara stream, also a part of building was able to survive.

In this paper, a general evaluation will be done about architectural features of the building which was named "Down Bath" and had been unearthed by excavation during Alara Archeological Excavations.

Keywords: Alara, Bath, Water Architecture, Alanya.

Introduction

Alara is at the end of a convoluted road which was and 9 km. inwards from the shore, 38 km. west of Alanya (Map 1). The region is located on the bank of the Alara Streamlet which is flowing in a narrow and deep valley making convolutions. Alara Castle, which consists of precipices and a steep hill by this streamlet, dominates the region (Loyd-Rice, 1964, 53). The settlement is concentrated on and around the castle. The Alara Streamlet is flowing along the bottom of the castle and originates from the high mountains whose two sides are covered with forest and it reaches the sea continuing through the valley that stretches to the sea. The historical topography of the settlement is determined by the Alara Streamlet.

The region has a strategic importance on the roads of Anatolia from the North to the South by its location. Although the castle which was used in the periods of Rome, Byzantine, Cilicia, Armenian Kingdom, Seljukian and Ottoman became a small settlement in the course of time, its main period was in the 13th century in medieval age after it was captured by the Turks.

After the conquest of Alanya Castle in 1223, Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I was coming back to Antalya when he saw Alara Castle which was rising around the Alara Streamlet and he ordered his commanders to conquer there and he captured the castle without a battle (Yetkin, 1993: 119-126). Alara Castle maintained its name after it was captured by the Seljukians. The walls of the castle which were quite in ruins after the conquest were repaired and the castle was simply rebuilt. After the castle was conquered and the security of the castle and of the environment were provided, Alara Inn which looked like a small castle was built by Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I opposite the Alara Castle where the road was curving (Konyalı, 1946, 371). In this way, the castle which was on Silk Road took the charge of providing the security of the caravans which had a break at Alara Inn. Also, opposite the inn on the Alara Streamlet there are the signs of residuals of a devastated bridge whose location is hardly seen today. These two structures are

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simply the evidence that the settlement around the castle came alive. Besides, a bath and a small mosque which were discovered up the streamlet and the places built coterminously are the signs that the region developed and became a village.

It was understood that there was a need to make surface exploration and then excavation works so as to discover the places around the castle and the Alara Streamlet and to search these structures better. It would be inevitable to find out new information by means of ruins of the structures that could be found or discovered in excavations or researches performed in this manner. In line with this requirement, excavation and research activities were started for the first time under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Osman Eravşar from Selçuk University, the department of Art History in 2007 to determine the settlements on and around the castle (Eravşar, 2008, 12-13).

Alara Down Bath¹

The bath was the most important of the structures which were partly found out as a result of the first excavation in 2007. The Down Bath was located on the bank of the Alara Streamlet and outside the fortification wall of the castle which was stretching like a set and got lost under the plants by remaining under the soil almost completely. The structure got damaged at the times the streamlet overflowed due to its location and a significant part of it has fallen down today as well. Before the excavation works were started only a specific part of the dome of the structure was observed (Fig. 1-2).

In the first excavation season, the works were concentrated on and around the bath and the features of architectural plan related to the structure were tried to be found out. The works were started with the follow-up of the fortification wall which was stretching along the Alara Streamlet. A water tank was discovered in ruins in the north-east of the structure. Inside the place covered with dome, in the furnace and in the other places, 2 meter top-soil that was applying pressure to the structure was removed. The top-soil that was removed was analyzed in detail but no foundling was found. A low arched door was unearthed by removing the top-soil in the west of this place as well. The height of the door was 1.5 m. and the width was about 70 cm. Moreover, another structure was discovered in the south east corner of it next to the bath. Finding small metal foundlings and forger tools inside indicates that the place used to be a smithery (Eravşar, 2010, 8) (Fig. 3).

The excavation works performed in the bath were started in 2007 and finished in 2010. As a result of the works that lasted 4 years in this area, the excavation of the bath and the places around was completed. As a result, it was understood that the bath grew in the direction of east and west. It was understood that the significant part of the structure, nearly $\frac{1}{4}$, fell down because the river that was flowing in front of the bath changed the bed (Fig. 4). Some parts of the ruins are still seen today in the river bed. One of the private bathing room, furnace and water tank ruins of the bath, which was uncovered to a large extent during the excavations in 2007 and 2008, were discovered. A new place was discovered in the south east corner of the private room which was square planned and covered with the dome and whose low arched door was opening to the west. The upper part of the middle dome of the bath was largely destroyed (Fig. 5). As a result of the discovered places, it was understood that the bath had a cruciform and four-iwan plan. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to give information about the current situation and frontal features of the structure. The bath was built with rubble stones to a large extent but face stones were also used partly. Face stones were preferred inside the structure mostly. The entrance of the bath was opening to the streamlet directly (Draw. 1).

No records of inscription or endowment related to the structure were found. The founder and the architect are not known. Dating the structure whose inscription has not reached the present day and taking into account its building technique and building materials, it is estimated that the bath was built in the 13th century. The existence of another structure was discovered adjacent to the bath in the south east of it and as a result of excavations works, small metal foundlings were found which were considered to belong to a smithery (forger tools, hammer, mallet, nails).

As a result of the studies on and around the bath, some graffiti were found on the walls of some places (especially the north) inside the bath (Fig. 6). During the works in 2008, the paper copies of some graffiti were taken with a firing up but when no success was achieved since the plaster was damaged too much, they were documented by means of photogrammetric methods (Draw. 2). Most of the graffiti which were damaged constituted different compositions along the north wall (Eravşar, 2012, 8). Intertwined sails,

¹ In and around Alara, there are two baths determined to belong to Anatolian Seljukian. One of them is the İç Castle Bath (Yetkin, 1970: 65-66) that is located in İç castle and the other one is the one that constitutes the title of our article. This work is called Down Bath because it is located at the feet of the castle, on the bank of the streamlet.



human figures on the deck of the ship and different sizes of boats were on the forefront here. On the other hand, the most significant of the compositions was the description of a ship and a man leaving this ship in a boat. This composition differs from the other graffiti in size. Among the likes of graffiti examples that were seen at the towers of Alanya Castle, cisterns and at small mosques, this graffiti differs in subject.

Conclusion

The fact that Islam gave importance to the cleanliness of body and regarded it as the first condition for worship caused the construction and development of the baths in muslim societies. The Turks considered the construction of the baths as an important charity and they built baths in many regions of Anatolia. The baths which were built in Anatolia were designed in terms of a specific plan. The baths developed according to temperature function and significant works were built such as double-baths and the baths connected to one structure. Besides, small scale structures which were not attached to a specific structure but built especially in big settlements like castles had an important place in bath architecture.

Alara Castle and the Alara Streamlet, which were located in historic Silk Road, developed after they were captured by the Turks in the 13th century. Alara Down Bath, which was located on the bank of the Alara Streamlet as a result of this development, was built in cruciform corner cell style that was the most preferred bath plan in Anatolian Seljukian period. There are a total of 2 baths from Seljuks period in Alara Castle and around. The other bath is located in the inner castle (Önge, 1995: 169). It differs from the Down Bath according to its plan. On the other hand, it is in better condition than the Down Bath.

The bath was constructed just next to the Alara Streamlet to get rid of the water distribution problem of the Seljukian and it was one of the most important structures together with the commercial building fabric next to it to contribute the development of the region. After the conquest of the region by Sultan Alaaddin Keykubat the 1st, many facilities were built, especially the Alara Inn and the bridge. It is thought that the Down Bath was built in the approximately same time along with the Inn and the bridge.

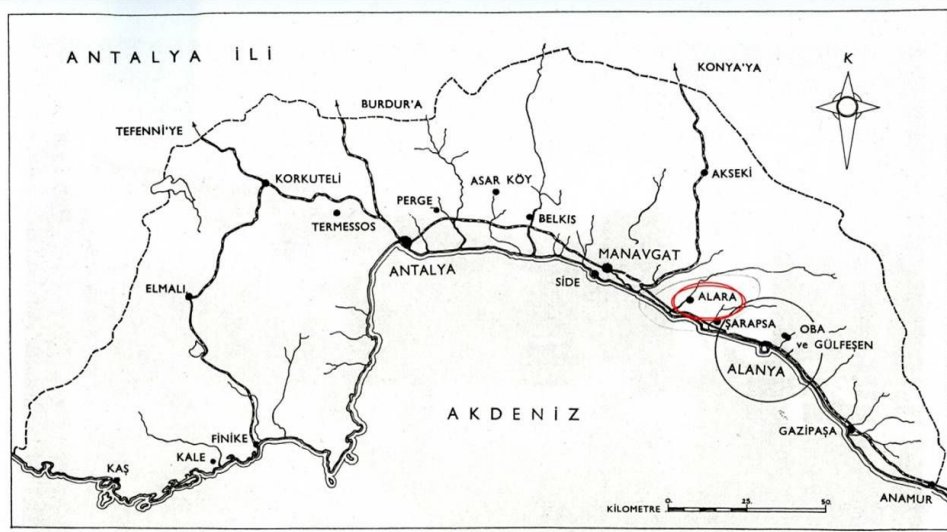
Taking into account the development of the region in the 13th century, the bath was not designed in large scale but the graffiti in the temperature place came to the forefront despite its modest material features. It is possible to see the intertwined ship with flags especially on the north wall, the boat with people on them and the likes of human figures in recent era examples in and around Alanya (Bilici, 2008, 25-65).

Due to the fact that the Alara Streamlet overflowed in winter and it often changed its bed, the bath was damaged as the time went by and unfortunately it has reached the present day in ruins to a large extent. The settlement that continued on and around the castle until Mehmet IV (1648-1687) in Ottoman Empire period gradually disappeared from that time on (Altun, 1989, 342). After that time, it is understood that the bath was abandoned to its fate. By means of relief and restitution projects, it is our earnest desire to see the bath is repaired whose plan features were found out by the archeological excavation works performed in recent years.

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EKLER



Map 1 (Lloyd- Rice, 1964)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



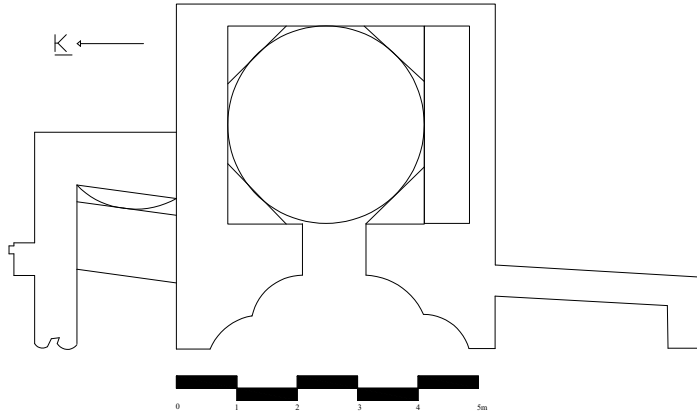
Fig. 4



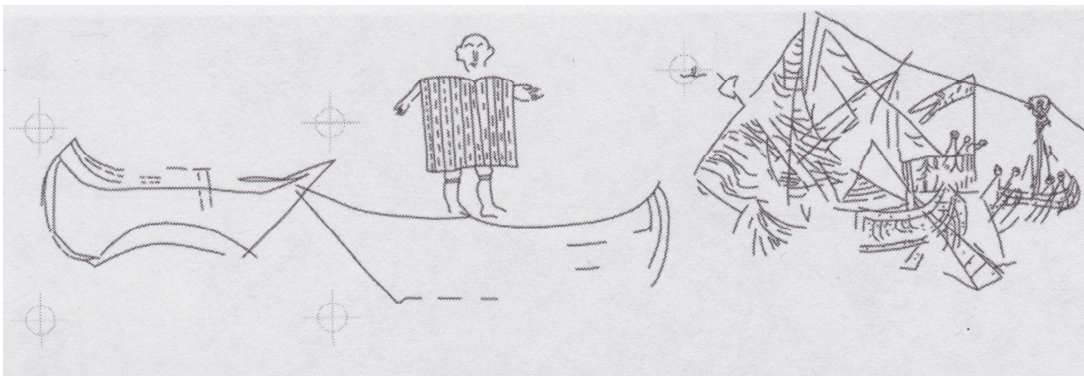
Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Draw. 1 (O. Eravşar)



Draw. 2 (R. Wimmel)