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КОЛУМБАРНЫЕ ГРОБНИЦЫ КОРАМАЗСКОЙ ДОЛИНЫ**Б. Язлик**Университет Хаджи Бекташа Вели, Каппадокия, Невшехир, Турция, bilginyazlik@nevsehir.edu.tr

Город Кайсери, расположенный в предгорьях вулканической группы Эрджияс — один из важнейших городов центральной части Анатолии. Со времён хеттского поселения Канеш и до наших дней в Кайсери пересекаются важные торговые пути. Таким образом, уже в период римского владычества Кайсери стал одним из главных центров региона. Монументальные погребальные комплексы, руины стен и храмов, сохранившиеся до наших дней, дают нам возможность оценить размах и масштабы реконструкции города, проводимой при римлянах. Кремация — важнейшая традиция погребения, привнесённая из Рима. В течение некоторого времени она была широко распространена и привела к сооружению крупных погребальных комплексов, известных как колумбарии. Колумбарии являются местами массового захоронения определённого класса людей.

Корамазская долина (также известная под местным названием Акбин) имеет длину около 12 км и заложена по разлому, образовавшемуся в результате землетрясения. Она расположена приблизительно в 20 км к северо-востоку от центра Кайсери. В Корамазской долине находится множество скальных сооружений: захоронений, христианских церквей, и даже до сих пор действующих пещерных поселений. В рамках данного исследования авторы осмотрели 21 колумбарий и три голубятни, расположенные в Корамазской долине. В первой части статьи приводится история города Кайсери вместе с описанием Корамазской долины. Далее описываются древнеримские методы погребения, особое внимание уделяется практике кремации и сооружению колумбариев. Авторы отдельно указывают на то, что колумбарии можно легко спутать с голубятнями. Это усугубляется и тем, что практически все колумбарии были позже перестроены в голубятни. В заключительной части статьи колумбарии Корамазской долины описываются подробно, особое внимание уделяется их характерным отличиям от сооружений, изначально выработанных как голубятни.

Ключевые слова: колумбарий, гробница, голубятня, Корамазская долина

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COLUMBARIUM TOMBS OF THE KORAMAZ VALLEY**B. Yazlik**

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Kayseri, established on the foothills of Mount Erciyes, is an important city located in the area that can be regarded as the central point of Anatolia. From the time of Kanesh's settlement until today, Kayseri has always been the crossroads of important trade routes.

By the times of the Roman period Kayseri had become one of the most important centers of the region. Monumental tombs, wall ruins, and temple ruins, which have survived till the present day, show the scale of the reconstruction activity that was carried out in Kayseri by Rome. Cremation was an important burial tradition that came from Rome. For some period, this tradition became widespread with the use of mass graves known as columbarium tombs. Columbarium tombs were collective burial areas, which served to particular classes of people.

The Koramaz Valley is an earthquake fracture formation with its length of approximately 12 km. It is located in about twenty kilometers northeast of Kayseri city center and contains many rock-carved structures: tombs, Christian churches and still inhabited villages. Within the scope of this study, we have examined 21 columbarium tombs and 3 dovecotes located in the Koramaz Valley. In the first chapter, the general history of Kayseri is illustrated and then the Koramaz Valley is described. Thereafter, burial methods of the Roman period are examined, especially practices of cremation and columbarium tombs constructing are discussed. We point out that dovecotes are often confused with columbarium tombs. The fact that almost all of the columbarium tombs were later transformed into dovecotes is a decisive factor in this misunderstanding. Therefore, in the conclusive part, the Koramaz Valley columbarium tombs, which are the subject of this study, are examined in detail, and their differences with the dovecotes are clearly highlighted.

Keywords: columbarium, columbarium tombs, dovecote, cremation, the Koramaz

The history of Kayseri

One of the first known settlements in Kayseri is Kultepe. Based on its excavations, it has already existed by the early periods of the Old Bronze

Age [15]. Kultepe settlement is an important excavation site today and is located in 3 km to the west of the Koramaz Valley, which is the subject of this study. Following Kanesh, the sovereignty

of Hittite, Phrygian, Persian, Cappadocia Kingdom, Roman, Byzantine, Danishmend, Mongolian, Seljuk, Ottoman, and Turkish Republic held on in the mentioned order [7]. Kayseri is a big and important city which had a population of 400 thousand before the Roman Empire. It became a city of Rome in AD 17 and the sovereignty of Rome continued until 395. After the Roman Empire divided into two parts, Kayseri went under the rule of Byzantine

(East Roman Empire). Especially due to the existence of Mount Erciyes, Kayseri has used to be an important city for Rome. The current name of Kayseri was derived from Caesarea (the pronunciation in Turkish: Kaisaria) referring to Julius Caesar, who was the famous Roman emperor. Today in Kayseri, can be found remains of tumulus tombs, fountains, temples, and castle walls dated by the Roman period. In the last period of Rome, which had pagan

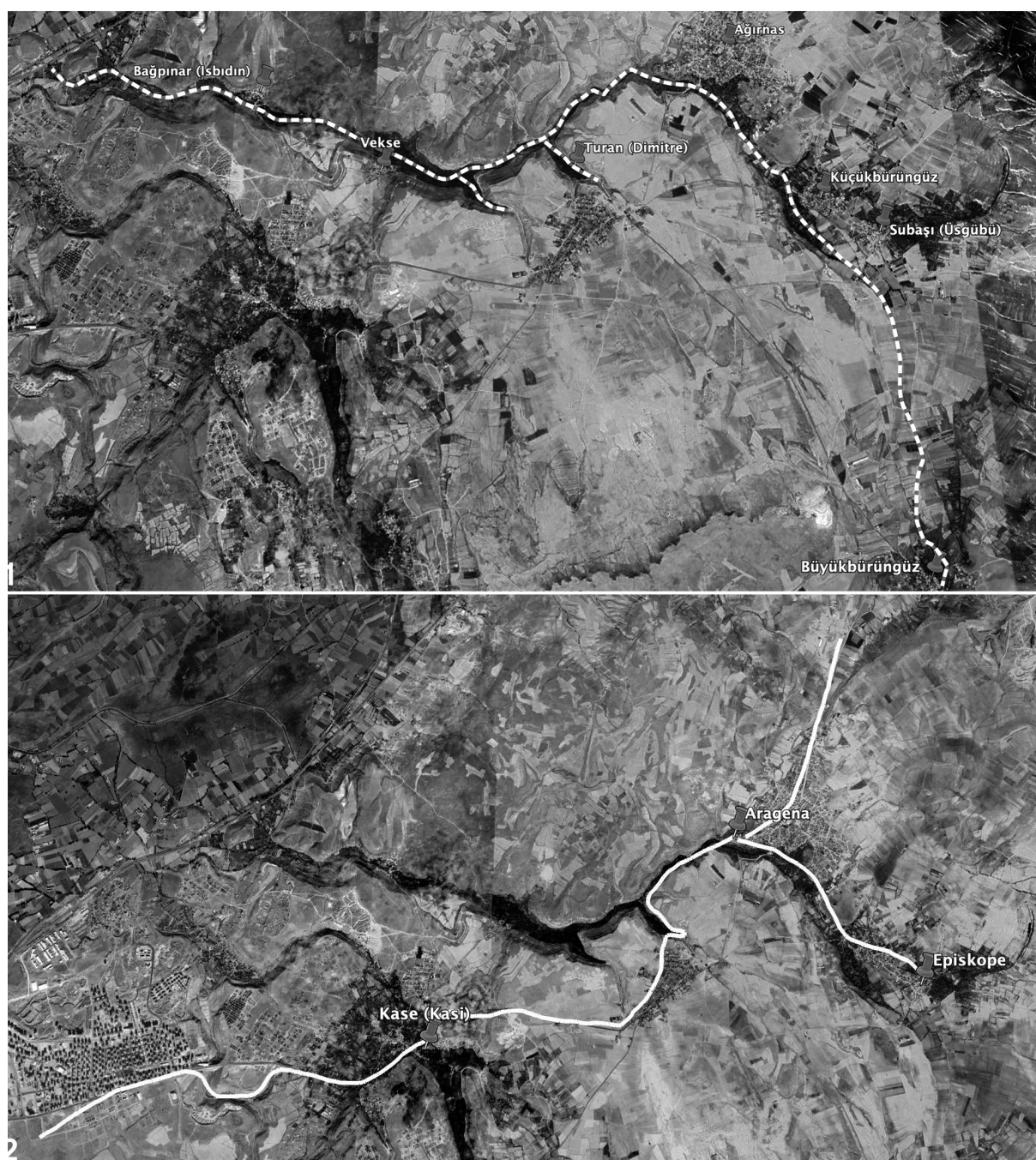


Fig. 1. 1 – The Koramaz Valley and its settlements; 2 – the estimated route of the Byzantine road passing through the Koramaz Valley and the names of old places (based on the Google Earth map)

Рис. 1. 1 – Корамазская долина и поселения, находящиеся в ней; 2 – приблизительная трасса византийской дороги, проходившей по Корамазской долине, и названия местностей византийского времени (на основе спутникового снимка Google Earth)

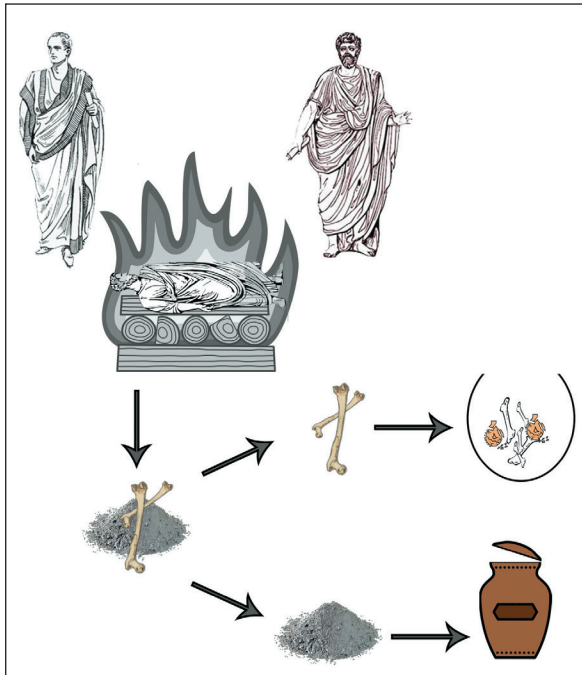


Fig. 2. A schematic illustration of cremation process

Рис. 2. Схема процесса кремации

beliefs, Christianity movements were formed, and Kayseri was also affected by these movements. At the time of the Roman Empire division, Kayseri became an important center for Christianity. It is also known that the two Fathers of the Church Basil and Gregorius lived in Kayseri in those times [8]. In the Roman period, many temples such as Zeus Poliouchos Temple, Apollon Patras Temple, Tyche Temple, Serapis Temple and Argios Temple were built in Kayseri [7]. Today, some of the remains which are thought to belong to these Roman temples can be seen in the Koramaz Valley.

The Koramaz valley

The Koramaz Valley is an earthquake fracture formation that has a length of approximately 12 km and is located within the borders of Melikgazi district of Kayseri. The name of Koramaz appears for the first time in documents in the Ottoman State Archives [17]. It is known that the name of Koramaz belonged to a township which was one of the lower management units of this period. It is also known that Koramaz township is connected to the Kayseri sanjak and has its karyes (villages) which are connected to itself. The mountain with a height of 1,900 meters in the east of the Koramaz Valley is also called Mt. Koramaz. Today in the Koramaz Valley, from the east to the west, there are Büyük Bürüngüz (Ulu Bürüngüz), Subaşı (Üsgübü), Küçük Bürüngüz (Kiçi Bürüngüz), Ağırnas, Turan (Dimitre), Vekse, Bağpınar (İsbıdın) villages and life goes on there. The Koramaz Valley catches the attention not only with its historical richness but also with its natural wealth. The natural walking

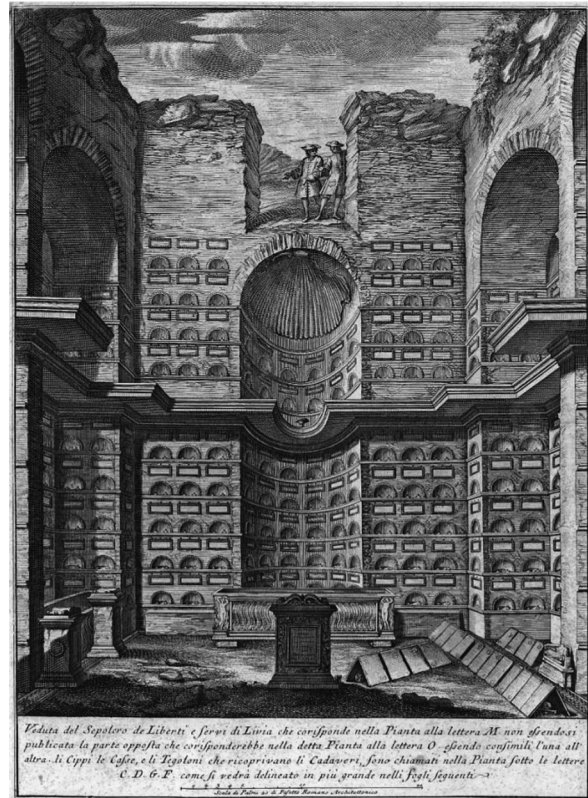


Fig. 3. The East Wall of Livia Columbarium Tomb

Рис. 3. Восточная стена колумбария, Ливия

tracks of the valley [6] have become rather popular recently. The Koramaz Vally main line and inhabited settlements are shown in fig. 1/1.

In his visit to Kayseri, Strabon mentioned the plain where the modern Kayseri city center is located as a bog and explained that the people lived in areas that were higher than the plain [20]. From this point of view, it can be supposed that there was a settlement in the Koramaz Valley in that period situated in 300 meters higher than the city center. Considering the Kultepe Mound, which was located in the west of the Koramaz Valley, it can be thought that the valley has been inhabited continuously for thousands of years.

It is also known that the valley was an important center in Byzantine period and some of the roads, connecting the city with the East, passed here. One of the important Byzantine roads of the period passed through Gesi region in parallel with the Sivas road. Gesi¹, called "Kase" in Byzantine Period, and according to some sources [16] "Kasi"

¹ Kase (Gesi) is a settlement located between Pınarbaşı (Ariaratheia) and Kayseri (Kaisareia). In his book, Hild claims that this place is today a settlement known as Gesi, which is located in 13 km north-east of Kayseri, containing various ancient ruins. If this claim is true, today, the ancient name continues to live as a local name. The distance between Pınarbaşı and Gesi is too big to be managed by a bishop, to strengthen his claim, Hild claims that the bishop of Pınarbaşı settled in Gesi for security reasons [24].

too. Gesi (Kase) belonged to the Cappadocia Military District (Theme) during the VI. Leon period (886–912); then it was included to the Charsianon Military District (Theme) and joined the new Military District called Charsianon with Kayseri. In the early 20th century, the region was called “Nea Kasiane” by the Greeks, who settled in the region, but today the region is called Gesi. For a short period, the Gesi garrison hosted the Pinarbasi Bishop because of the security weakness in its region.

The mentioned Byzantine road continued in the north-east direction after Gesi and after 6 km reached the ancient episcopal city of Aragena. Today, Aragena is known as Ağırnas. Mandaie is the name of the monastery in Usgubu, which is also a village today (situated in 2 km south of Ağırnas). The bishop of Ağırnas lived in this monastery. The name of the village, which is Usgubu (Subasi) today, was derived from firstly “Episkope” then “Skupi” [10]. The Forty Martyrs Church, which is bound up with the Mandaie Monastery, was in the

Usgubu. According to the rumors, this church was completely destroyed and the stones of the church were used for constructing a school. The ruins of the church are on a hill to the north of the modern village. After Ağırnas, in the North-East direction, the road headed towards Bünyan known as Sarmısaklı in the past [11]. It is clearly seen that the Koramaz Valley was important because it housed the road route during the Byzantine period. The estimated route of the Byzantine road (and also the probable previous Roman road) which passed through the Koramaz valley is shown in fig. 1/2.

While looking at frescos, niches, and the way how they were made, it is found out that there are a total of 40 rock-carved churches dated by the Byzantine period identified so far. One of them is the most important church, because its frescoes are the best preserved ones and it has survived until today. This church was presented as Isbidim Rock-Carved Church by N. Karakaya. The church is supposed to be built between the 11th and 13th centuries [13,

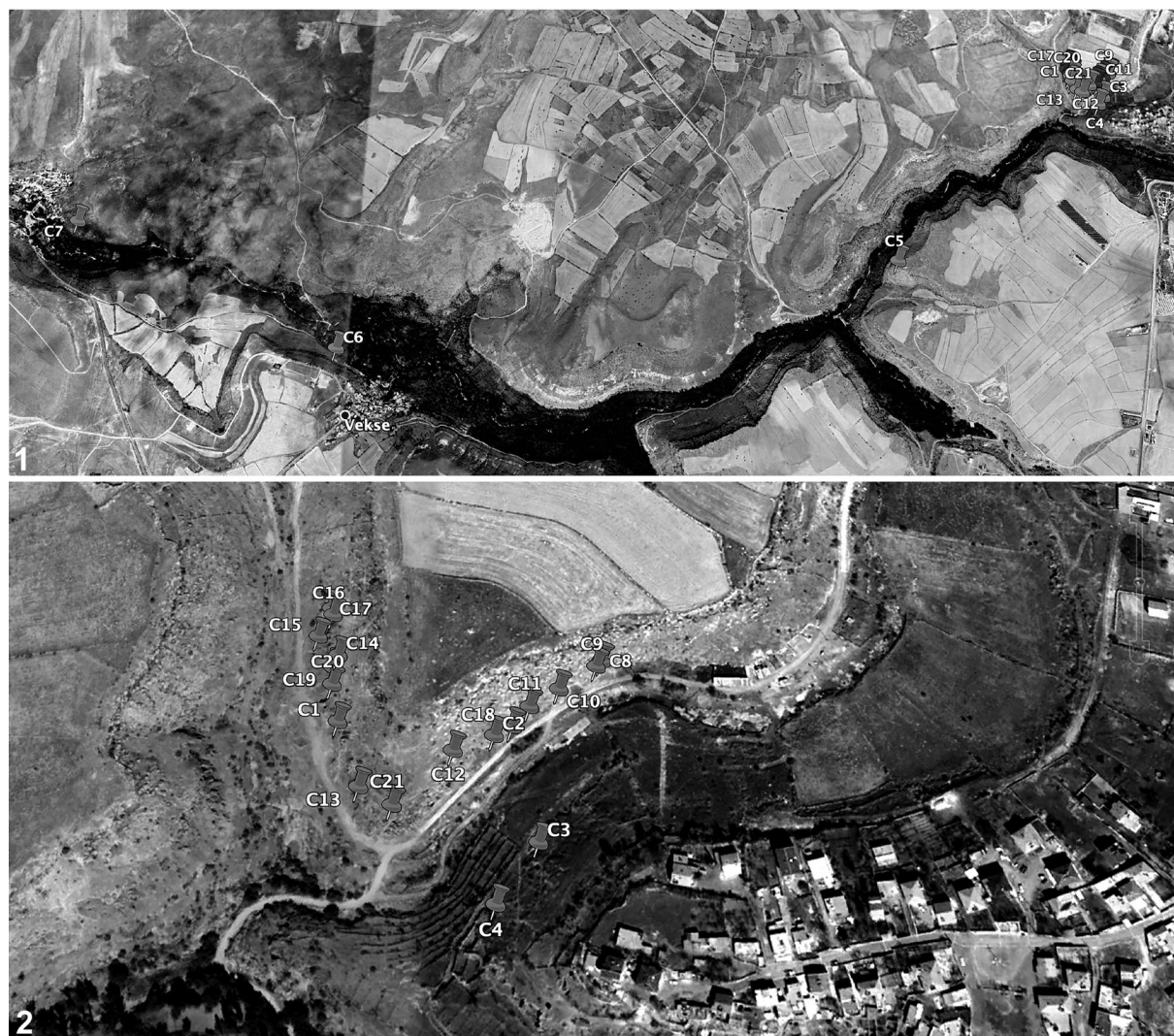


Fig. 4. Columbarium Tombs of The Koramaz Valley (from Google Earth)

Рис. 4. Колумбарии Корамазской долины (по данным Google Earth)

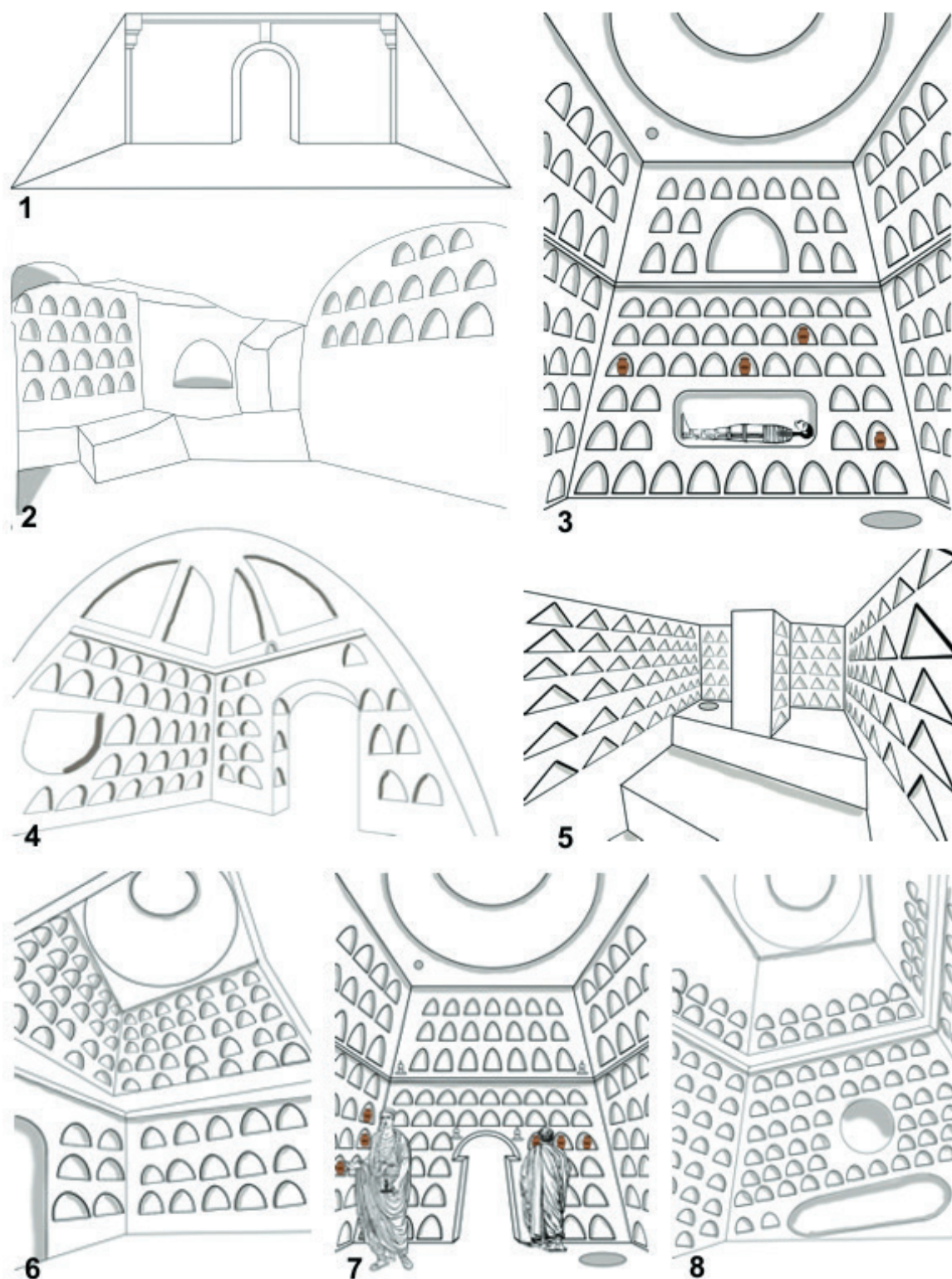


Fig. 5. 1 – An entrance door of a columbarium tomb of the the Koramaz Valley; 2 – the interior of a columbarium tomb room with a broken door; 3 – an example of a combination of niches for cinerary urns with larger niches for inhumation or mummification; 4 – half ellipse-shaped niches inside a columbarium tomb room; 5 – a columbarium tomb with triangle niches; 6 – a drawing of a columbarium tomb from the Koramaz Valley; 7 – a columbarium with a feeding hole on the ceiling and the mouth of the storage on the floor; 8 – a columbarium tomb with niches of different shape and function

Рис. 5. 1 – Портал входа в колумбарий Корамазской долины; 2 – внутреннее пространство колумбария «Комната со сломанной дверью»; 3 – пример сочетания ниш для установки урн с крупными нишами, предназначенными для размещения тел или мумий; 4 – полуэллиптические ниши в помещении колумбария; 5 – колумбарий с треугольными нишами; 6 – изображение колумбария Корамазской долины; 7 – колумбарий с жертвенным отверстием в потолке и устьем кладовой ямы в полу; 8 – колумбарий с нишами различной конфигурации и функционала

21]. In addition to this church, a rock-carved monastery in Subaşı (Üsgübü) village also draws attention [14]. In addition to the rock-carved churches, there are two large churches that have survived until today. These are Vekse Greek Church and Ağırnas Church built in 1857.

Rock-carved tombs in the Koramaz Valley also known as the Akbin Valley which is its local name, columbarium tombs and rock-carved tombs for inhumation are located on the plateau at the top of the valley (fig. 2); all of these show that the valley was used as a cemetery during the Byzantine period since the Roman period. When the Koramaz valley monumental designed tomb doors (fig. 5/1, 10/3, 10/4, 10/5), were examined carefully, compared to the similar structures it was easily found out that the structures contained the Roman period architecture. If one place the valley to the center of a circle with a radius of 5 km, it would cover ancient settlements, known as Kültepe, Höngel, Aydos, Kazlar, Andon, abandoned today and containing only superficial remains. It can be claimed that these ancient settlements harbored active life during the Roman or earlier periods. Considering the tradition of building cemeteries just outside the settlements in the Roman period to avoid diseases, it can be thought that the Koramaz Valley was the common cemetery of all these ancient settlements. Tumbrel roads and tracks of roads (fig. 10/1) in and around the Valley, confirm this claim. In addition to all of these, at least 14 tumulus can be easily observed within a 5 km radius from the plateau, which is located at the top of the valley.

The Roman period funeral — burial traditions, cremation — burial traditions and columbarium tombs

In the Roman period, it was believed that life continues after death, so one's death was celebrated just like one's birth. In Rome, funeral ceremonies included very important rituals. From this point of view, Rome had very conservative traditions. In Rome, funeral and even burial places depended on the person's social status. Mass burial became a tradition for non-elite people due to economic reasons. Although the burial procedures changed from period to period, it is known that the methods of inhumation (burying under ground), cremation (burning with fire), abandonment to nature and mummification are used as a burial tradition [4]. In the early periods of Rome, inhumation and cremation seem to be used together. The twelve tablet laws of Rome forbade the burial of the dead in the city. The main reason for this was to prevent the citizens from epidemic diseases that could be caused by the decomposition of dead bodies. That is why the cemeteries were organized outside the city in Rome [4]. In Rome, the crema-

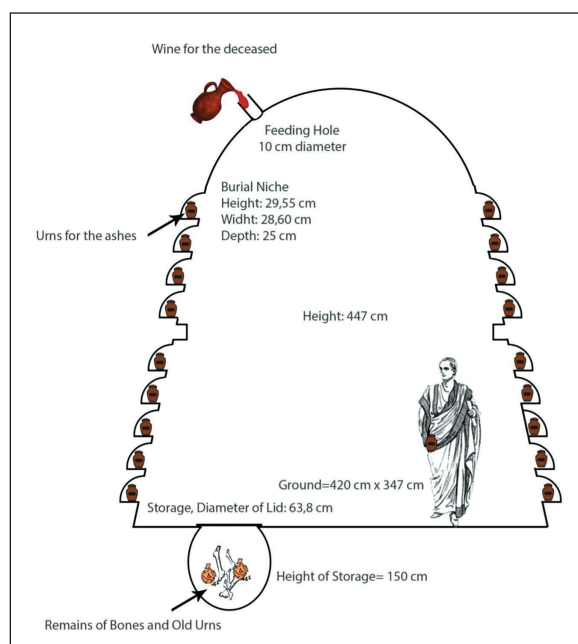


Fig. 6. A schematic section of a columbarium tomb in the Koramaz Valley

Рис. 6. Схематичное сечение типичного колумбария Корамазской долины

tion burial technique was a tradition², which was started in the 4th century BC and was abandoned in the 3rd century AD. According to the cremation burial tradition, the deceased was put on a rectangular pile of wood with a ceremony and was burned together with his/her jewelry. The entire body could not be burn completely, so bones weighing about 2.5–4 kgs always remained. The ashes were collected and placed into pots called urns. The cremation burial tradition scheme is shown in fig. 2.

The urns could be in the form of jars, with or without lids, they could be made of glass, metal or marble. On the top of some urns, there was a place to write the identity of deceased [1, 22, 23]. The urn full of ash was placed in the burial chamber or in the burial niche in the columbarium tomb (fig. 7) or was buried optionally, and the non-burned bones were kept in silos in the burial chamber. Mummification means honoring the body and is a relatively costly burial technique. For this reason, it was not applied among the folk except wealthy people [4].

The preservation of the urns, full of ashes of the cremated ones, was an important issue due to the respect that was payed to the dead. Digging a grave and burying every urn under the ground as in inhumation seems a very expensive method. Considering that the population had increased, and the cemetery areas started to fill up, the Romans began to search for solutions how to bury collec-

² Cremation was also used in the Iron Age [22, 23].

tively. In Rome, as a result of the urbanization level increasing, traditional cemeteries were overcrowded. In large cities, where large numbers of funerals and burials were carried out, it was normal for more than one person to be buried in a single coffin and to bury the coffins in stacks [2].

During the Augustan period, because of increasing burial costs and the shortage of cemeteries, the Roman society started to use the method of preserving urns in multiple niches carved in walls of underground chambers or in rocks. The structures, which were specially built for this purpose, are called columbarium tombs. This new tradition has been adopted by the community and modern organizations that manage funeral expenses. The functions such as funeral insurance have been developed, where the deceased can be buried alone in a grave with a beautiful ceremony [2].

Columbarium tombs

The word “columba” means “a pigeon” in Latin. Columbaria were used as dovecotes in the Roman period. The word “columbarium” actually means the name given to each niche in the columbarium tomb [9]. The reason why the Romans called these monumental mass graves so is that the structures essentially resemble dovecotes. Even today, it is a very difficult and technical issue to distinguish

between dovecotes and columbarium tombs. The fact that columbaria were used as dovecotes for many years and their first function was forgotten by the folk conducted toward the columbaria to be destroyed relatively less by treasure hunters. To not confuse the columbariums and the structures where pigeons are feeding, the columbarium tomb expression is used [2]. Not just unique visually, columbarium tombs are the first known organized mass graves in Rome, where mass burial services are provided to biological families and the households of the same house [2].

Columbarium tombs are unique structures that emerged as a result of the need to honor the deceased, and they also give clues about the social situation of the section they are addressing. Columbarium tombs have survived until today in a very worn state because of the grave niches that are engraved on their walls. Nevertheless, thanks to these niches, they can be easily distinguished from other burial structures. In the written sources of the Roman period, the word columbarium is actually used in the meaning of a sheltered niche in gigantic dovecotes. The tomb sign registries from the Roman and Ostia periods are the evidence of these structures usage as grave monuments. In these registries, it can be seen which niches be-

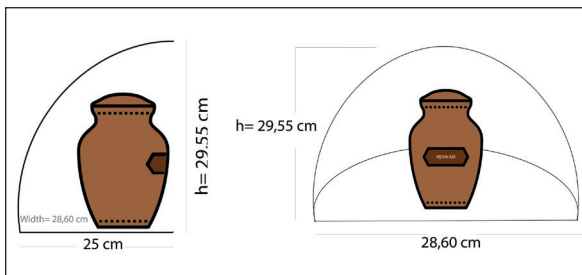


Fig. 7. A niche of a columbarium with an urn

Рис. 7. Ниша колумбария с урной

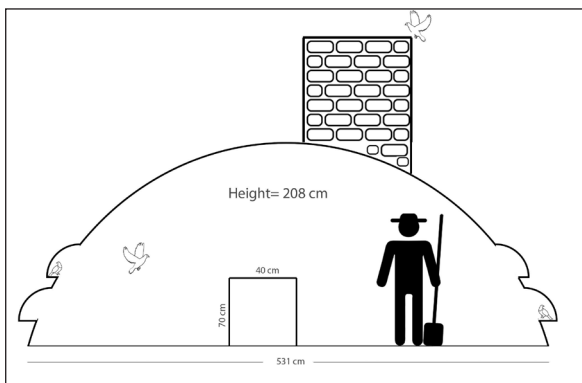


Fig. 8. A typical dovecote

Рис. 8. Типичная голубятня

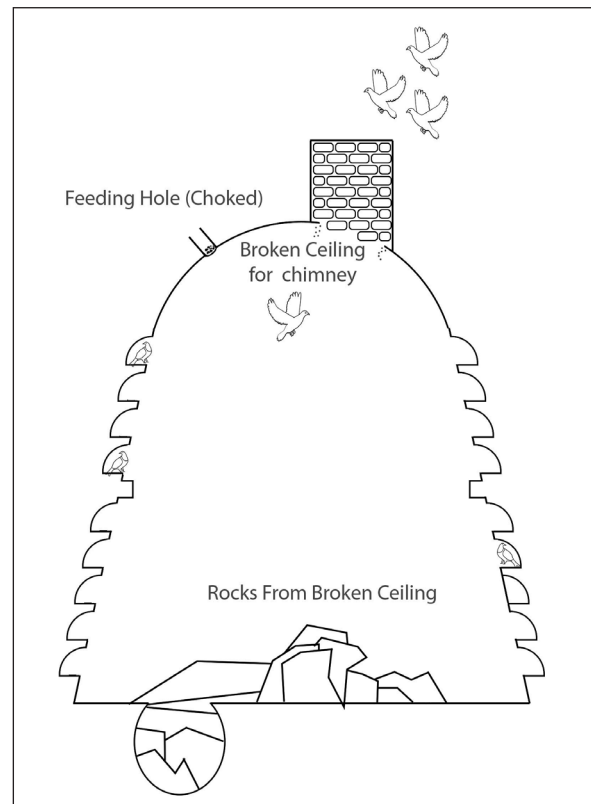


Fig. 9. An example of a columbarium tomb converted into a dovecote

Рис. 9. Пример колумбария, реконструированного в голубятню



Fig. 10. 1 – The traces engraved in the road by wagons wheels, often visible in the valley; 2 – the rock-carved tombs near the columbarium tombs; 3 – the roman period mausoleum entrance door; 4 – the entrance door to the roman mausoleum (transformed into a church later); 5 – a typical entrance door of a columbarium tomb in the Koramaz Valley; 6 – the general view of the Koramaz Valley columbarium tombs

Рис. 10. 1 – Колесные колеи, проточенные в полотне дороги тележными колёсами, часто наблюдаемые в долине; 2 – скальные погребения, расположенные недалеко от колумбариев; 3 – входной портал римского мавзолея; 4 – входной портал римского мавзолея (позже перестроенного в церковь); 5 – типичный вход в колумбарий Корамазской долины; 6 – общий вид на колумбарии Корамазской долины

longed to who. In columbarium tombs, not only ashes but also bone pieces remained from the cremated body were stored in ground storages (silos). The ashes were kept in special clay pots, in the tomb niches carved in the inner wall [2]. In fig. 3 below, a Roman period large and important columbarium tomb is shown.

It is known that each burial niche contained two ashes storage containers (urns), which were usually made of terracotta and sealed. The number of niches can give an idea of the death and burial capacity of the non-elite community that inhabited the region. The grave niches on columbarium tomb walls were carved in rows ranging from one to ten. These niches could be in the shape of a triangle in some examples (fig. 5/5).

Thanks to the isolated structures of the columbarium tombs, they have both intimate and collective death remember area properties. It is also

known that on these special days, wine was poured into the burial area through a special tunnel (feeding groove) (fig. 6) [2].

The columbarium tombs came out of use along with the cremation tradition, which was ended with the increase of Christianity in the last period of Rome. Some of the columbarium tombs were adapted to be used for inhumation. For this purpose, large burial areas were dug in the floors and walls of the columbarium tombs or the niches were enlarged and combined (fig. 5/8), and they started to accommodate the bodies [2].

The Koramaz valley columbarium tombs

In this study, rock structures that were carved by human hands, which are thought to be 21 columbarium tombs, are mostly placed in Ağırnas neighbourhood / the Akbin Valley in the Koramaz Valley, were investigated. It is seen that 18 of these structures were built adjacent in a single

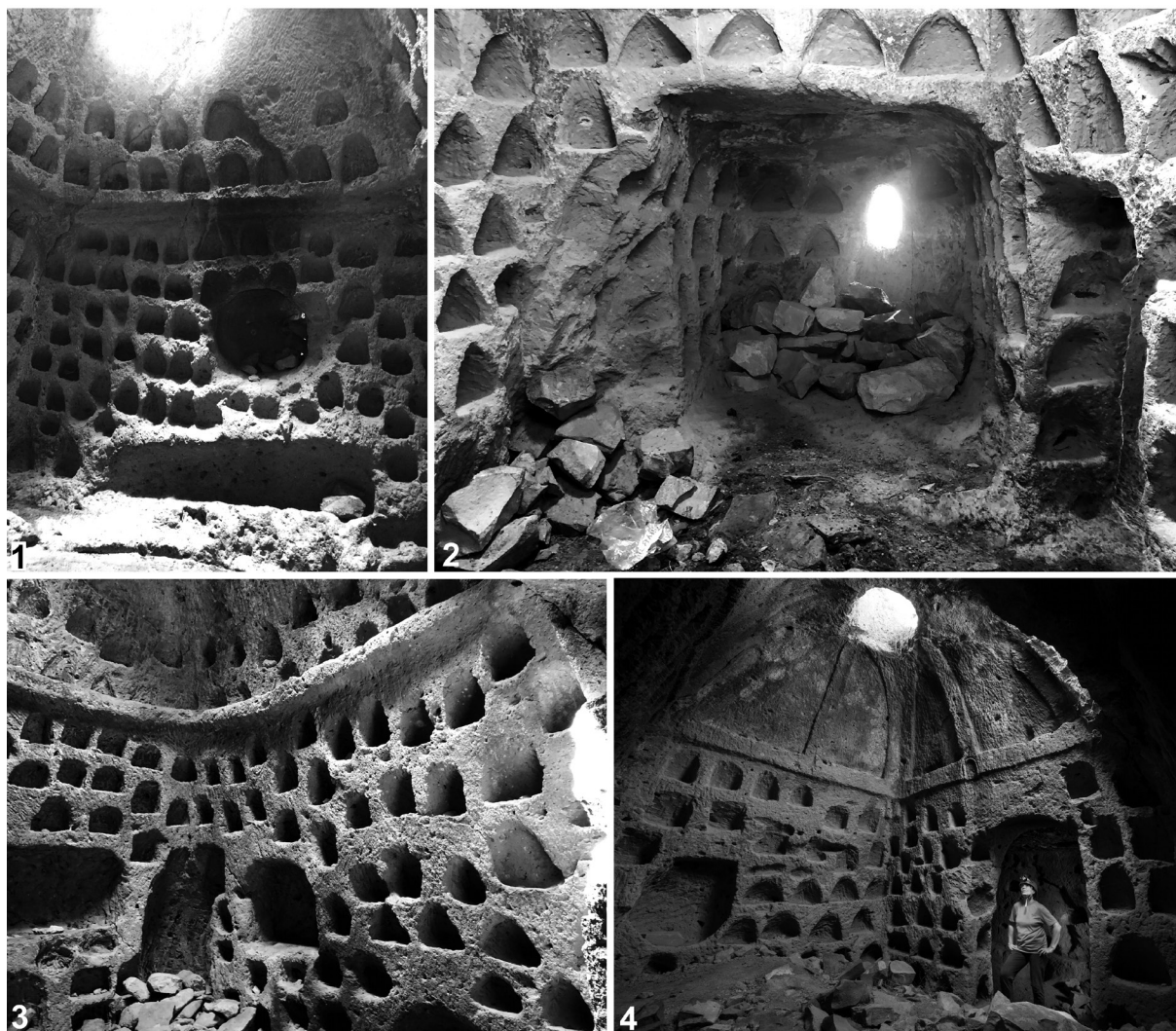


Fig. 11. 1 – Inside the C1 Columbarium Tomb; 2 – Inside the C2 Columbarium Tomb; 3 – Inside the C4 Columbarium Tomb; 4 – Inside of C12 Columbarium Tomb (photo by Reiner Straub)

Рис. 11. 1 – Внутри колумбария С1; 2 – внутри колумбария С2; 3 – внутри колумбария С4; 4 – внутри колумбария С12 (фото Р. Страуба)

area. However, 3 columbarium tombs in different locations scattered throughout the valley were also examined in this study. This situation shows that possible new columbarium tombs can be also discovered. In fig. 4/1, their distribution in the Koramaz Valley is shown. It is seen that the C5, C6 and C7 columbarium tombs are located far from the remaining 18 columbarium tombs. It is thought that new columbarium tombs can be found after detailed research around these already identified columbarium tombs.

18 columbarium tombs located out of fig. 4/1 borders are shown in fig. 4/2.

The first determination relative to the columbarium tombs in the Koramaz Valley was made by Eric Gilli. Unfortunately Gilli's study is just a pre-determination and contains only general statements [9]. When rock-carved structures in the Koramaz Valley are examined as a whole, it is seen that they have constantly changed function over time. For example, sometimes a structure that was built as a rock-cut tomb in the Roman period turned into a church later (fig. 10/4) or a structure which was used as a columbarium tomb, after losing its function, was reconstructed into a dovecote. In another scenario, the columbarium tomb could be turned into a Şirahane (a grape mashing device). In the literature, there are studies where

the structures of the region are considered as dovecotes [14].

Although firstly the columbarium tombs acted as mass burial areas, over time, with the abandoning of the cremation tradition by the Christianity movements in Rome, the structures became non-functional. People continued to use these structures as dovecotes with flues that they opened on their ceilings and with various modifications.

It is seen that burial chests were carved for inhumation on the floor of some of the columbarium tombs. Common door architecture was used in the extant examples in the Koramaz Valley. In many cases entrance parts of the tombs were destroyed due to road works and natural erosion (fig. 10/6). Next to the entrance of a columbarium tomb a rectangular room is usually situated (fig. 5/2). While the function of this room is unknown, it is thought that it can be the ceremony room of the tomb. The actual room of the columbarium is reached through another door of this first room. It can be claimed that this architectural understanding is common for all columbarium tombs, because it is observed that the entrances, which can be entered directly without a reception room, actually have been destroyed. Also, all of the columbarium tombs in the valley were built in either dome shaped or rectangular plan architecture style. Similar architectural

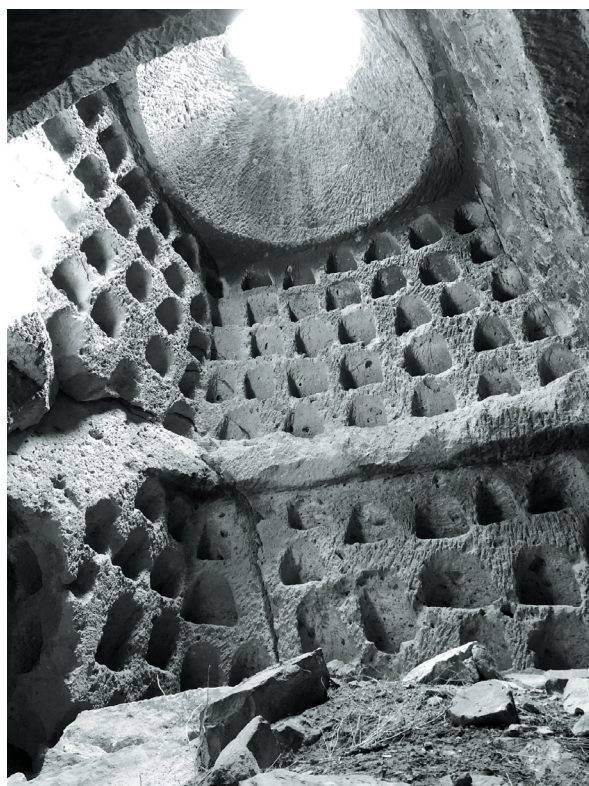


Fig. 12. Inside the C13 Columbarium Tomb

Рис. 12. Внутри колумбария С13

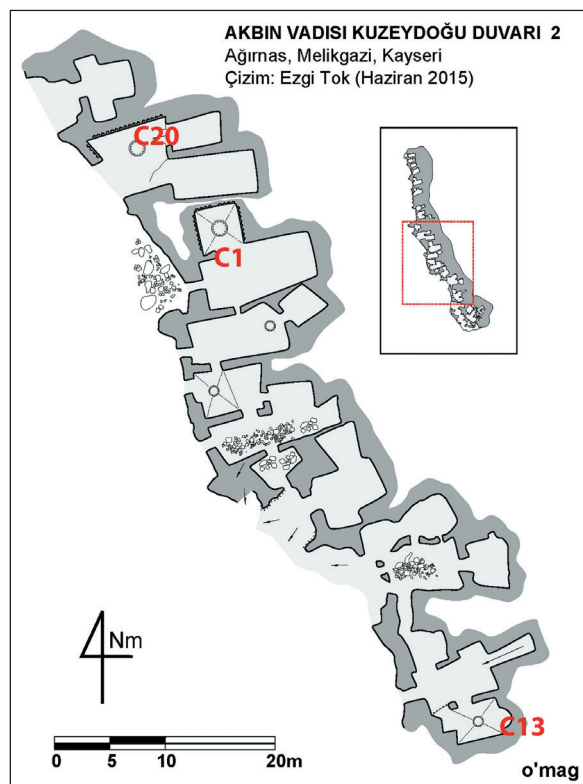


Fig. 13. A plan of the columbarium tombs C1-C13-C20 in the Koramaz (Akbin) Valley (surveyed by E. Tok)

Рис. 13. План колумбариев С1-С13-С20 в Корамазской долине (долине Акбин) (съёмка Э. Ток)

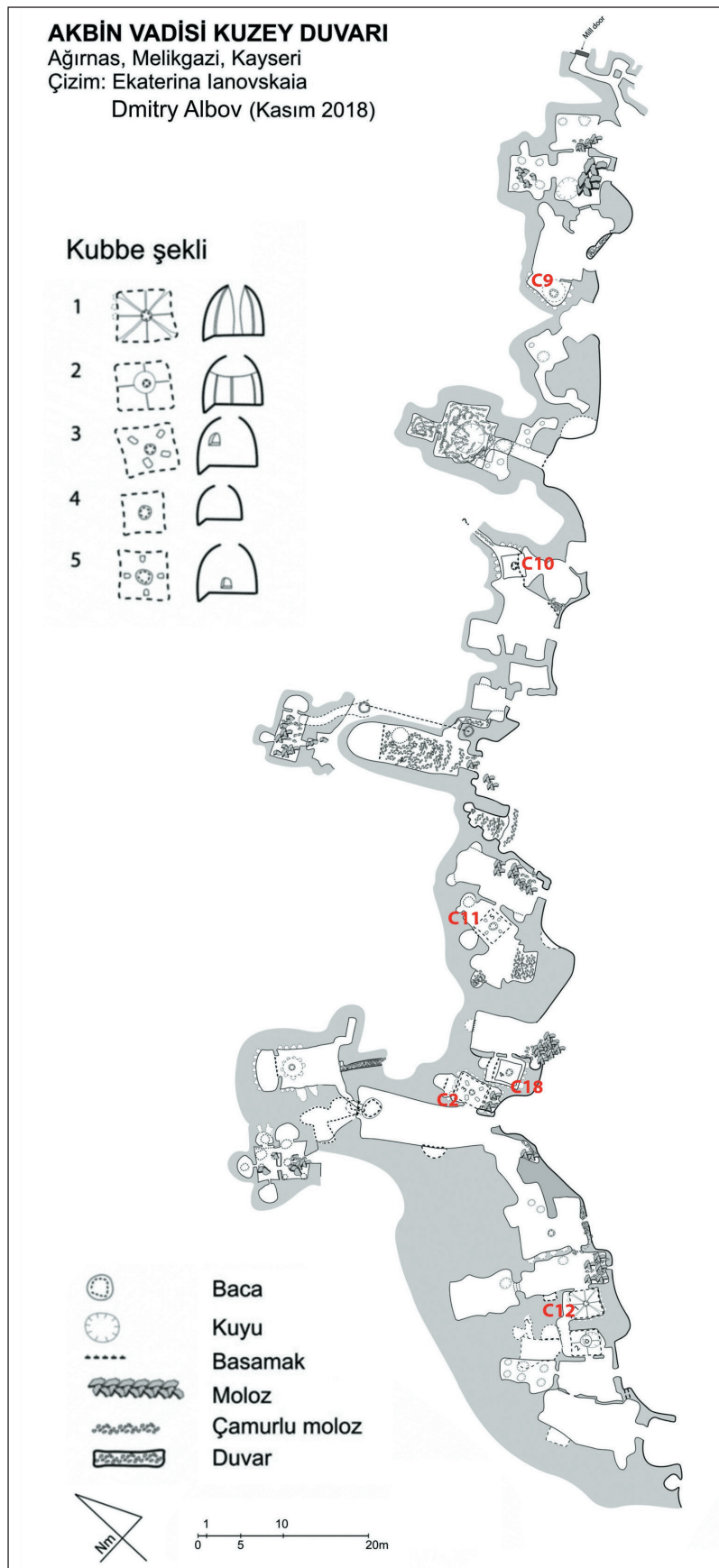


Fig. 14. A plan of the columbarium tombs C2-C9-C10-C11-C12-C18 in the Koramaz (Akbin) Valley (surveyed by E. Ianovskaia, D. Albov)

Рис. 14. План колумбариев C2-C9-C10-C11-C12-C18 в Корамазской долине (долине Акбин) (съёмка Е. Яновской, Д. Альбова)

understanding was determined in all of the columbarium tombs. Based on this, it can be claimed that all the columbarium tombs in the Koramaz Valley were built with a common architectural understanding. The common door architecture of some columbarium tombs, where the entrances remained until today is shown in fig. 5/1.

In some columbarium tombs, it is seen that niches were combined, and new large niches were created for inhumation or mummification. In fig. 5/3, there is an example that illustrates this situation.

It is seen that some columbarium tombs were used as churches or grape mashing devices later. With the poor workmanship, it can be understood that niches were added to some columbarium tombs later. Silos are observed in all columbarium tombs where floors are not covered with rubble. In some of them, the number of these silos reaches up to 6 (Columbarium C8). It is obvious that much more silos can be found on the ground with excavations and research. In the ceiling of most of the columbarium tombs in the Koramaz Valley, there are flight holes, obviously opened later. The stones used in doves' flues were cut and brought from the quarries located on the plateau above the valley. But in some columbarium tombs, there is no flue. This situation shows that not all of the columbarium tombs were turned into doves. When a columbarium tomb room is examined from the inside, it can be seen that it was built with incredibly careful workmanship worthy of a monumental structure. However, the fact that the flues are not even in the center of the ceiling and that they were opened by breaking it clearly confirms that these flues were opened later. The fig. 5/4 shows the niches

going up towards the ceiling, creating a very impressive style.

It is seen that the niches of the Koramaz Valley columbarium tombs were carved in the shape of a triangle or a half of an ellipse. Fig. 5/4 shows half ellipse-shaped niches and fig. 5/5 shows triangle-shaped ones.

In the Koramaz Valley columbarium tombs, there are also feeding holes. These thin and long flues, which have an average diameter of 10 cm, open directly into the room from the outside. It is known that, especially on memorial days, these holes were used by the relatives of the deceased to serve their favorite wine (fig. 6) [2]. It is seen that there are two of these holes (C2 columbarium) in some columbarium tombs.

Detailed measurement and identification information of the 21 columbarium tombs (fig. 13–16) examined in this study were recorded. However, considering the averages, the description of the columbarium tombs in the Koramaz Valley can be made as follows: the average floor measurements of a columbarium tomb room are 420×347 cm. The average height of the rooms is 447 cm. Each columbarium tomb room has about 144 niches. In every columbarium tombs, there are silos and feeding holes. The cover diameter of the silos on the ground is about 63,8 cm and their depth is about 150 cm. The entrance doors have a dimension of about 106×188 cm (height). The average width of the tomb niches is 28,60 cm and their height is 29,55 cm.

The differences between dovescotes and columbarium tombs

It is known that pigeon breeding has been performed in Kayseri for hundreds of years. With their highly productive fertilizer, pigeons have always been valuable for the farmers. A pigeon was a divine animal in both Rome and Byzantium. In the collection of twenty books, which are called Geoponica and were written in Byzantium in the 10th century, there is also a section called pigeon breeding. In this section, it is explained how the dovescotes should be built with an exemplary design, the door should be made small to prevent from wild animals, people should rarely enter it, and it is explained that water and drink tubs should be built for pigeons. It is also explained in this book that cicks are used in the treatment of some diseases [3]. Büyükmihçı [12] observed in his study that the dovescotes, situated in Gesi region, were built by transforming structures that were previously used as churches or monasteries [12]. Also, Büyükmihçı reports in his study that the dovescotes doors are too narrow for a person to enter and exit easily. It is known that Kayseri is an important niter production center [21]. The chemical substance

called niter (Güherçile), which is obtained from pigeon fertilizer, was used in gunpowder production. Niter (Güherçile) was so important for the Ottoman Empire that the Niter Ministry was established. The fact that Kayseri already had a columbarium tomb inventory from the past and that they could be easily transformed into dovescotes provides Kayseri to gain an advantage in niter production.

For the reasons explained above, it is quite possible to confuse columbarium tombs with dovescotes. In the Koramaz Valley, there are also structures built as dovescotes originally. When these structures are compared with the columbarium tombs, the differences can be seen obviously. The entrance doors of the dovescotes are made very small to prevent from wild animals entering. Also, the ceiling heights of the dovescotes are lower compared to the columbarium tombs. In addition, the dovescote niches were not made carefully. However, columbarium tombs have flamboyant entrance doors, relatively high ceilings, and elaborately carved interiors and niches. But today, when examining any columbarium tomb, the structure can

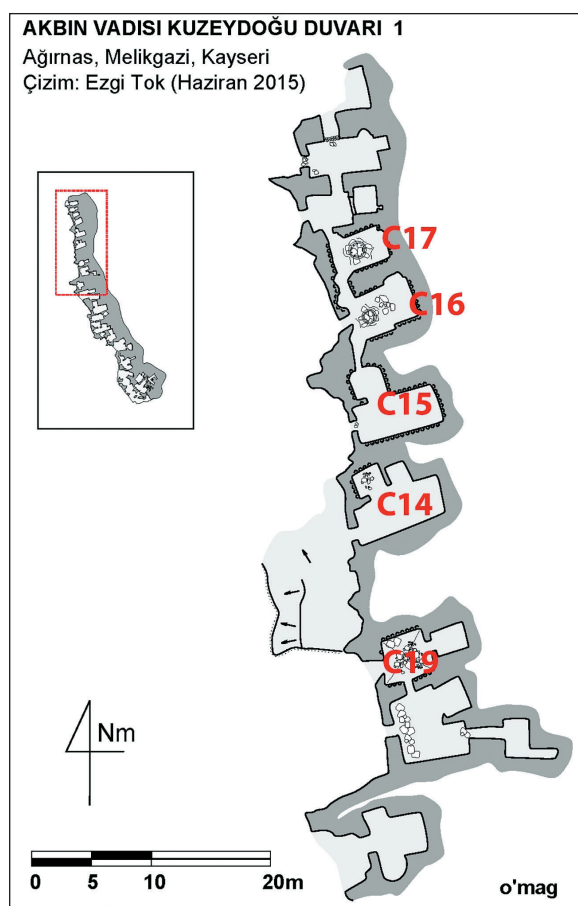


Fig. 15. A plan of the columbarium tombs C14-C15-C16-C17-C19 in the Koramaz (Akbin) Valley (surveyed by E. Tok)

Рис. 15. План колумбариев C14-C15-C16-C17-C19 в Корамазской (Акбин) долине (съемка Э. Ток)

easily be mistaken for a dovecote, because almost all of the columbarium tombs were used for breeding of pigeons: they have flues, which were opened later in ceilings by breaking the rock with poor workmanship, and also out of the center. The doors were narrowed by infilling with stones and became suitable for dovecotes.

Columbarium tomb niches were carved regularly compared to the niches of dovecotes. In addition, the interiors of columbarium tombs were clearly excavated with monumental architectural understanding. In dovecotes, naturally, high-cost labor is avoided, of course, as there was no need, so their interiors were designed poorly. On the ceilings and walls of some columbarium tombs, decorative niches are seen. It is seen that these niches start from the corners of the walls and run to the center of the ceiling: they are made with good workmanship.

Three sample structures in the Koramaz Valley originally constructed as dovecotes, were also included to this study for comparison. These three dovecotes are located within the boundaries of Vekse and Küçük Bürüngüz villages. The architecture of all these dovecotes is similar. The entrance doors of all dovecotes are very narrow, and their average size is 42,5×72,5 cm. If we pay attention, columbarium tomb doors are carved in dimensions

for a person to easily enter, but through the dovecotes doors, a person can only enter crawling. The most important reason for this situation is the desire to keep wild animals away from the loft. It was measured that the average ceiling height of the dovecotes is 156 cm, but in columbarium tombs, the ceilings are 447 cm high. While there are about 50 perches in each pigeon loft, this number is 144 in columbarium tombs. The inside space of the dovecotes is carved with low-cost and poor workmanship, the perches and interior designs are rather sloppy naturally. In columbarium tombs, there are so many silos that are buried in the ground and not seen in dovecotes. Considering all these issues, the difference between a structure originally constructed as a dovecote and a columbarium tomb, later transformed into a dovecote, can be clearly seen.

Conclusion

It is known that Kayseri has been inhabited continuously since the time of the Kanish people and was under Roman rule for a period. With its 12 km length and a history dating back to Rome, the Koramaz Valley, which is located 20 km north-east from the Kayseri city center, is one of the most important valleys of Turkey. Many rock-carved churches dated by the Byzantine period and rock-carved tombs dated by the Roman period located within this valley point to the historical depth and importance of the region. Thus, it is also known that the valley was located on important roads in the Byzantine period. In this study, a total of 21 columbarium tombs, which are located in the Koramaz Valley, were identified and technically investigated. Columbarium tombs are known to have been transformed into dovecotes in time and are often confused with them. In this study, the differences between dovecotes and columbarium tombs were also revealed in detail and 21 structures of the Koramaz Valley were measured in detail, recorded and presented with their peculiarities.

The 21 columbarium tombs examined in this study were measured and recorded. In the light of the average data obtained from the measurements made, the description of the columbarium tombs in the Koramaz Valley can be made as following: the average floor dimensions of a columbarium

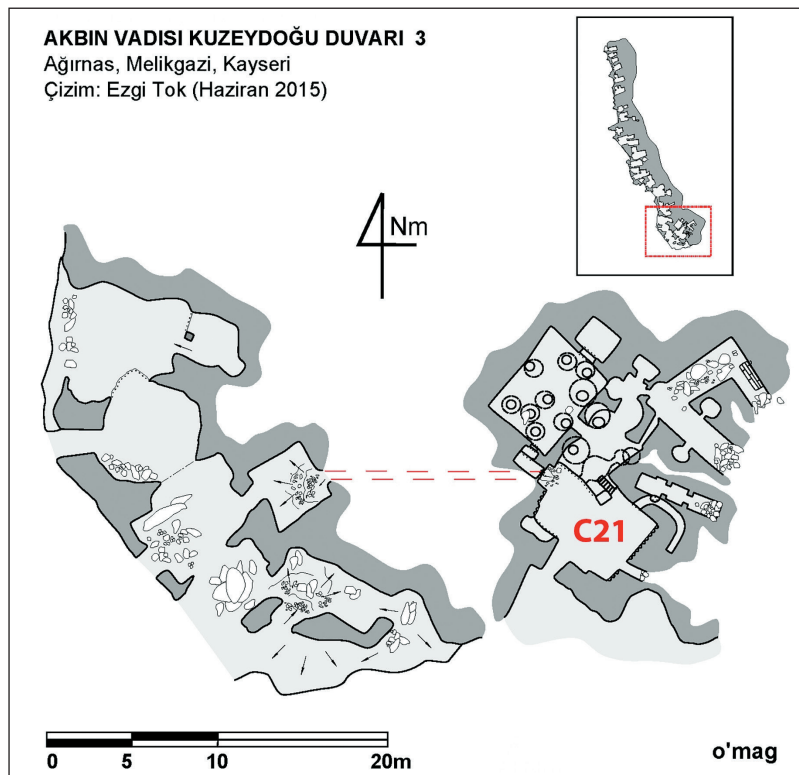


Fig. 16. A plan of the columbarium tombs C21 of the Koramaz (Akbin) Valley (surveyed by E. Tok)

Рис. 16. План колумбариев C21 в Корамазской (Акбин) долине (съёмка Э. Ток)

tomb room are 420×347 cm. The average height of the rooms is 447 cm. Each columbarium tomb room has about 144 niches. In every columbarium tomb, there are silos and feeding holes. The cover diameter of the silos on the ground is about 63,8 cm and their depth is about 150 cm. The entrance doors have a size of about 106 (width)×188 cm (height). The average width of the tomb niches is 28,60 cm and their height is 29,55 cm.

It was determined that the entrance doors of the three dovecotes, which were examined within the scope of the study, were about 42,5×72,5 cm. This entrance door is quite narrow compared to the doors of the columbarium tomb. The average ceiling height of the dovecotes is 156 cm. Compared to the columbarium tombs; this ceiling height is

quite low. Although there are about 50 perches in each pigeonhole, there are about 144 tomb niches in columbarium tombs.

In the region, detailed and advanced research and archaeological excavations, which will be carried out by the experts, can provide clearer information about the past of the columbarium tombs that mentioned in this study. The claims proposed in this study can be confirmed with archaeological materials such as pieces of urns, ash remains that will be found in the columbarium tombs. Thus, it will be possible to make exact dating. With further research, it is estimated that columbarium tombs can be found both in different parts of the Koramaz Valley as well as in different valleys in the vicinity of Kayseri.

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