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Halûk ÇETİNKAYA*

ARAP CAMİİ IN ISTANBUL: ITS ARCHITECTURE AND FRESCOES

Despite being one of the most important monuments of the city, Arap Camii, which is located in Perşembe Pazarı / Galata district, was studied less than it deserved*. Frescoes, which partially became visible after 1999 earthquake were studied by the author and Stephan Westphalen in 2005 and the preliminary results were published by the latter party shortly¹.

In 2007 the author was invited to be the scientific advisor for a restoration project during which new frescoes were discovered in the triumphal arch between modern ceiling and the roof. This is a preliminary report which will be part of the monography in progress.

MOSQUES IN CONSTANTINOPOLIS DURING THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

As the Muslim armies were advancing towards the Byzantine empire cultural exchanges occurred both in the provinces and major cities. As a result of Muslim sieges of Constantinople Muslim prisoners and their beliefs influenced the locals. One of the most interesting folkloric examples is Abu Ayyub al Ansari who died during the siege of Yazid. Within a century his grave was discovered by the Byzantines and regularly visited in time of drought in particular².

One of the earliest mentions of a mosque is from 8th century. Arabs laid a siege under Caliphs

Sulayman and Umar II under the leadership of Maslama in 717-718 for fifteen months which ended as a failure³. A mosque built in the City during this time seems not credible.

Prisons for Muslims were numerous and the oldest one believed to be from the siege of Maslama. Some of these prisons were near the Hippodrome as it was noted in the early 10th century⁴.

10th-11th century treaties between the Byzantines and Fatimids concerning the protection of a mosque in Constantinople confirms the existence of such a structure⁵.

A twelfth century Arab traveler, Abu Hasan Ali al Haravi, mentions of the mausoleum of Ayyub al Ansari and the mosque built by the Arab general Maslama ibn Abd ul Malik⁶.

Another source for a mosque in Constantinople is a letter of Pope Innocentius III addressed to the Latin patriarch of the City in 7 December 1210⁷.

Secondary sources mentioning the existence of a mosque in the City in the 14th-15th centuries⁸ should be taken with caution.

HISTORY OF THE GENOESE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Genoese settled in Constantinople officially in 12 October 1155. Two years later they were permitted to build churches. Their presence provoked a group

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**) Several people contributed to this work in different fields. I would like to express my gratitude to: Elvis Shala, Serdar Akkaya, Özkan Acar for graphic drawings, Serhan Güler and Özgür Ediz for architectural drawings.

1) Stephan Westphalen, "Pittori greci nella chiesa domenicana dei Genovesi a Pera (Arap Camii)", *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e l Mediterraneo (secoli XI-XIV)*, Venezia 2007: 51-62.

2) C. E. Bosworth, "Byzantium and the Arabs war and peace between two world civilizations", *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 3-4 (1991-92): 3.

3) Warren Treadgold, *A history of the Byzantine state and society*, Stanford 1997: 346-349.

4) C. E. Bosworth, *op. cit.* : 15-16.

5) Walter Emil Kaegi - Anthony Cutler, "Mosque", *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford 1991, vol. II: 1418.

6) A. A. Vasiliev, "Quelques remarques sur les voyageurs du Moyen Age à Constantinople", *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, Paris 1930, vol. I: 294.

7) Benedetto Palazzo, *L'Arap-Djami ou église Saint-Paul à Galata*, Genova 1946: 30.

8) Walter Emil Kaegi - Anthony Cutler, "Mosque", *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford 1991, vol. II: 1418.

of rival citizens, namely Pisans, and Genoese were expelled from their quarter by Pisans only to return in 1198⁹.

After recapturing the City from the Fourth Crusaders, Byzantines exiled all foreigners staying behind in 1261. Same year marked an official alliance signed at Nymphaion between Byzantines and Genoese¹⁰.

Fearing from the increasing power of Genoese, emperor Michael VIII Palaeologos decided to re-settle the ones in the City at Heracleia, but changed his mind to allow them to settle in Galata instead¹¹.

Dominicans arrived at Constantinople in 1233. Soon after their arrival a church was reserved for their use¹².

Gravestones found in Arap camii as early as 13 November 1260 support the theory that this was the building for Dominicans' use¹³. Some of these gravestones are re-used Byzantine marble slabs. Such as the one made in the 6th century and reverse side of it re-used in 1330, or another made in the 10th century and re-used in 1388¹⁴.

In 1299 a house in Constantinople was granted to Guillaume Bernard de Gaillac to be used as a Dominican monastery¹⁵. But location of this institution was mistaken and commented that it was the monastery of San Paolo e Domenico in Galata¹⁶.

On 1 May 1303 a Byzantine imperial decree was given to the Genoese with the new borders of Galata¹⁷. In March 1304 Genoese obtained a permit to build walls around their city¹⁸. This permit was renewed every year. Last renewal was recorded on 6 May 1352¹⁹.

Upon ascending to patriarchal throne for the second time Athanasios expelled Dominicans to Galata in 1305²⁰.

There were exchange of population at times of crisis. Monks, who were followers of Patriarch Athanasios, a well-known Anti Western figure, took refuge with the Italian friars at Galata in 1309 fearing reactions against them²¹.

Bubonic plague, believed to have originated from Central Asia travelled through Crimea and the cities along the coast of Black sea with Genoese ships, reached Constantinople in 1347 where it was absent for last six centuries²². Because of their stronger financial situation Genoese had lesser impact of the bubonic plague, which was known in Europe as Black Death²³.

Byzantines intended to cut customs duties collected by the Genoese to end their financial difficulties especially caused by the bubonic plague. To force Genoese for an agreement, a makeshift navy was shaped by public money, which was destroyed in 1349. As a result of it Byzantines allied themselves with their former enemy, Venetians²⁴.

In the battle of 6 May 1352 combined Genoese-Turkish forces defeated Byzantines. As a result, Constantinople had no say on Galata anymore²⁵.

In 1396 former enemies Venice and Genoa together with Byzantines defended the City against Ottomans. In the same year Genoa was captured by French kingdom and Genoese colonies became part of French kingdom²⁶.

9) A. Belin, *Histoire de la latinité de Constantinople*, 2nd edition, Paris 1894: 18.

10) Georg Ostrogorsky, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi (history of the Byzantine state)*, tr. to Turkish by Fikret Işıltan, 3rd edition, Ankara 1991: 415.

11) Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice, A study in diplomatic and cultural relations*, Cambridge 1999: 190.

12) Rinaldo Marmara, *Bizans imparatorluğundan günümüze İstanbul Latin Cemaati ve Kilisesi (Latin congregation and its church from the Byzantine empire to present)*, tr. to Turkish by Saadet Özen, Istanbul 2006: 19.

13) Eugenio Dalghe d'Alessio, *Le pietre sepolcrali d'Arab Giami*, Genoa 1942: 27 n° 1.

14) Siegrid Düll, "Unbekannte Denkmäler der Genuesen aus Galata II", *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 36 (1986): 247-248.

15) Georgius Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, Bonnae 1835, vol. II, II.536-537.

16) Reşad Ekrem Koçu, *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. II, Istanbul 1959: 940.

17) Rinaldo Marmara, *op. cit.* : 29.

18) Donald M. Nicol, *op. cit.* : 222.

19) A. Belin, *op. cit.* : 129-130.

20) Georgius Pachymeres, *op. cit.* : II. 536-538.

21) Donald M. Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*, Cambridge 2002: 104.

22) Warren Treadgold, *A history of the Byzantine state and society*, Stanford 1997: 773.

23) Georg Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.* : 483.

24) Donald M. Nicol, *op. cit.* : 267-268.

25) Donald M. Nicol, *op. cit.* : 276.

26) Donald M. Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*, Cambridge 2002: 306-308.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

Arap Camii was believed to have been built by Justinian I, under the name of Hagia Eirene²⁷. The spolia used in and around the building indicate existence of a Byzantine building in the area.

Traditionally it was believed that a mosque was built during the siege of general Maslamah in 717 and later converted into a church by the Byzantines²⁸. Not far from Arap Camii there is a mosque called Yeraltı Camii (underground mosque) where there is a burial of Amr al As, the conqueror of Egypt. He has never been to the City. Similar case is valid for a former Byzantine church known today as Hazreti Cabir Mosque. According to tradition Cabir İbn Abd Allah died and was buried during an Arab siege. But in Islamic world there were two Cabir's who would fit into the time frame. None of them participated to a siege of Constantinople²⁹.

To name a mosque after a prominent Islamic figure was due to respect. Their burials are in fact "makam" (cenotaph) not an actual grave.

According to a theory the building was constructed in the first half of 13th century and dedicated to Saint Paul³⁰. It was also suggested that it was founded by a disciple of Saint Dominic, Hyacinthus, and named after him³¹. Basing on the gravestones it was suggested that the church was constructed either in 1225 or 1228 on the former site of a graveyard³². Similar to this view suggested that on the spot of a Byzantine building the church of Saint Paul and Dominic was constructed between 1225-1230³³.

A popular view suggested that the former Byzantine building was given to the Dominicans and dedicated either Saint Dominic or Paul in 1232³⁴.

A chrysobull of emperor Andronicus II in 1303 declares that the site of the church of Saint Irene to be used as a cemetery³⁵.

Basing on the Byzantine construction material in the area it was believed to have been built between 1315 and ca. 1350³⁶. It has been suggested that the construction of the church S. Paolo e Domenico was after the fire of 1315, between the years of 1323-1337³⁷.

According to a decree of pope Gregory XII in 1407 people who help restoring buildings will be freed from their sins³⁸. Probably this was the last pre-conquest restoration of the building.

One of the most interesting claims were made about the northern and southern section around the sacristy. According to this, section in north was the funerary chapel of Antonio de Via, dedicated to Virgin Blessed Mary, whereas section in south was the funerary chapel of Petrus de Persio and his family members and dedicated to Saint Nicholas³⁹.

Vakfiye (foundation document) of Mehmed II, indicate name of churches converted into mosque after the conquest including Mesadomenko, which is San Domenico⁴⁰. Although most of the churches in the list were converted into mosques immediately after the conquest, the building most probably continued its function as a church until 1475, as there are gravestones from its floor from that year⁴¹.

Dominicans moved to the nearby monastery of San Pietro by June 1476⁴². Moors expelled from Spain in 1492 were relocated in the area, and former church was given to their use with the name of Arab Camii⁴³.

In 1631, G. B. Mauri della Fratta, described the building being beautiful and single aisled⁴⁴. This

27) Raymond Janin, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire Byzantin, Première partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat œcuménique, Les églises et les monastères*, tome III, 2nd edition, Paris 1969: 591.

28) P.G. Inciyan, *18. asırda İstanbul (Istanbul in the 18th century)*, tr. to Turkish by Hrand D. Andreasyan, Istanbul 1976: 105.

29) Semavi Eyice, "Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii", *Dünden bugüne İstanbul ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul 1993, vol. I: 407.

30) Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur topographie Istanbul*, Tübingen 1977: 79.

31) A. Belin, *Histoire de la latinité de Constantinople*, 2nd edition, Paris 1894: 214.

32) Louis Mitler, "The Genoese in Galata 1453-1682", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. X n° I (February 1979): 86.

33) A. M. Schneider - M. I. Nomidis, *Galata topographisch archäologischer Plan*, Istanbul 1944: 25.

34) Ernest Mamboury, *The Tourists' Istanbul*, Istanbul 1953: 319-320.

35) Eric A. Ivison, "Latin tomb monuments in the Levant 1204 - ca. 1450", *The archaeology of Medieval Greece*, eds. Peter Lock-G.D.R. Sanders, London 1996: 91, n. 4.

36) Johannes Kramer - Siegrid Düll, "Baubeobachtungen an der Arap Camii in Istanbul", *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 35 (1985): 317.

37) Semavi Eyice, *Galata and its tower*, Istanbul 1969: 53.

38) Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur topographie Istanbul*, Tübingen 1977: 79.

39) Eugenio D'Allessio, *op. cit.*: 17 / 20.

40) Ahmed Akgündüz - Said Öztürk - Yaşar Baş, *Üç devirde bir mabed Ayasofya (one monument in three periods Ayasofya)*, Istanbul 2005: 259.

41) Benedetto Palazzo, *Le pietre sepolcrali di Arab giami Antica chiesa di S. Paolo a Galata*, Genova 1942: 38.

42) R. Loenertz, "Les établissements dominicains de Pera-Constantinople", *Echos de Orient* 34 (1935): 333.

43) Semavi Eyice, *Galata and its tower*, Istanbul 1969: 53.

44) Benedetto Palazzo, *L'Arap-Djami ou église Saint-Paul à Galata*, Genoa 1946: 8.

confusing description could be due to changes made by the Ottomans for their need in the building.

In April 1660 a conflagration laid waste ¾ of Galata including churches⁴⁵.

After another conflagration in 1731⁴⁶ not only the building was restored by the princess Adile Sultan who was the daughter of Sultan Mahmut II, but also a cistern was added as well in 1734/1735⁴⁷.

These restoration works and existence of another cistern⁴⁸ were recorded on the inscription of the shadirvan⁴⁹.

A Byzantine arch was recorded by Eyice underneath the mouth of the well by shadirvan⁵⁰.

An 18th century traveler notes that stained glass windows and Gothic inscriptions were still visible on the building⁵¹. In fact part of Gothic inscription consisting of twelve letters on the northwestern part of the wall which is OL....TONMI.

A poetic long inscription which describes the history of the building was written by Hacı Emin efendi and mounted onto a southern wall inside the building⁵².

Another restoration was held in 1854/1855 after a major fire⁵³.

According to a previously unpublished document, on 12 June 1900 an amount of 7000 kurush were reserved for the restoration of the building⁵⁴.

Drawings of architect Kemaleddin showing the state of the building in 1910 are vital, especially from the perspective of lost and added sections of the building⁵⁵. For instance the former location of the Sultan's Kiosk gave way to the "makam" of Maslama.

The restoration project of architect Kemaleddin with the date of 26.6.1913 was partly undertaken⁵⁶.

Most of the gravestones found during this restoration between 1913-1919 under the supervision of Hasan bey of Crete were brought to Istanbul Archaeological Museums⁵⁷.

Basing on a dream of Inayet Hanım, wife of Hasan Bey of Crete, it has been decided to pull down the already ruined Sultan's kiosk's stairs and create an area for the grave of the Arab she had been seeing in her dreams. This incident was recorded on the column by the grave⁵⁸. Some detailed studies about the gravestones and other lesser known Genoese buildings were made in 1980's.⁵⁹

ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUILDING

Accessing the courtyard of the building complex is through a long brick wall parallel to the eastern part of the church starting underneath belfry (Fig. 1). Both, the wall and marble architectural fragments on western wall of the entrance to courtyard are Byzantine. Basing on these and earlier literature it has been suggested that the wall is Early Byzantine and share the same style as some of the early Byzantine buildings such as Hagia Sophia⁶⁰. On the other hand marble arcossolium piece is akin to the ones in Chora. Probably once it served as part of the pseudo-sarcophagus inside the building.

Architecture of the building had major changes throughout its history. It was built in the manner of a Gothic church in the early 14th century (Fig. 2a-b). Unlike other Gothic churches this building was con-

45) Necdet Sakaoğlu, "Yangınlar" (fires), *Dünden bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1994, vol. VII: 430.

46) Necdet Sakaoğlu, *op. cit.* : 433.

47) Mustafa Cezar, *19. yüzyıl Beyoğlu'su (Beyoğlu in the 19th century)*, İstanbul 1992: 94.

48) Ayvansaraylı Hüseyin Efendi-Ali Satı Efendi-Süleyman Besim Efendi, *Hadikatü'l Cevami, İstanbul Camileri ve diğer dini-sivil mi'mari yapılar (gardens of the mosques and the other religious and civic buildings)*, ed. Ahmed Neziha Galitekin, İstanbul 2001: 427.

49) Semavi Eyice, "Arap Camii", *Dünden bugüne İstanbul ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1993, vol. I: 294.

50) Semavi Eyice, "Arab Camii", *İstanbul ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1959, vol. III: 942.

51) Pitton de Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant*, Amsterdam 1718, tome II, XVII: 7.

52) Semavi Eyice, "Arap Camii", *Dünden bugüne İstanbul ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1993, vol. I: 294.

53) Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur topographie Istanbul's*, Tübingen 1977: 80.

54) T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı, Evkaf 6 / 915 (Prime Ministry-Ottoman Archives).

55) *İstanbul Vakıflar Bölge Müdürlüğü Mimar Kemaleddin Proje kataloğu*, eds. Afife Batur-Gül Cephaneçigil, Ankara 2009, fig. 17 f.

56) *İstanbul Vakıflar Bölge Müdürlüğü Mimar Kemaleddin Proje kataloğu*, eds. Afife Batur-Gül Cephaneçigil, Ankara 2009, fig. 17 c.

57) Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur topographie Istanbul's*, Tübingen 1977: 80.

58) Semavi Eyice, "Arab Camii", *İstanbul ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1959, vol. III: 942-943.

59) Siegrid Düll, "Unbekannte Denkmäler der Genuesen in Galata", *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 33 (1983); Johannes Kramer, "Einige Handelsbauten des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts in Galata", *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 34 (1984); Johannes Kramer und Siegrid Düll, "Baubeobachtungen an der Arap Camii in Istanbul", *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 35 (1985); Siegrid Düll, "Unbekannte Denkmäler der Genuesen aus Galata II", *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 36 (1986).

60) A. M. Schneider - M. I. Nomidis, *Galata topographisch archäologischer Plan*, İstanbul 1944: 25 n. 22.

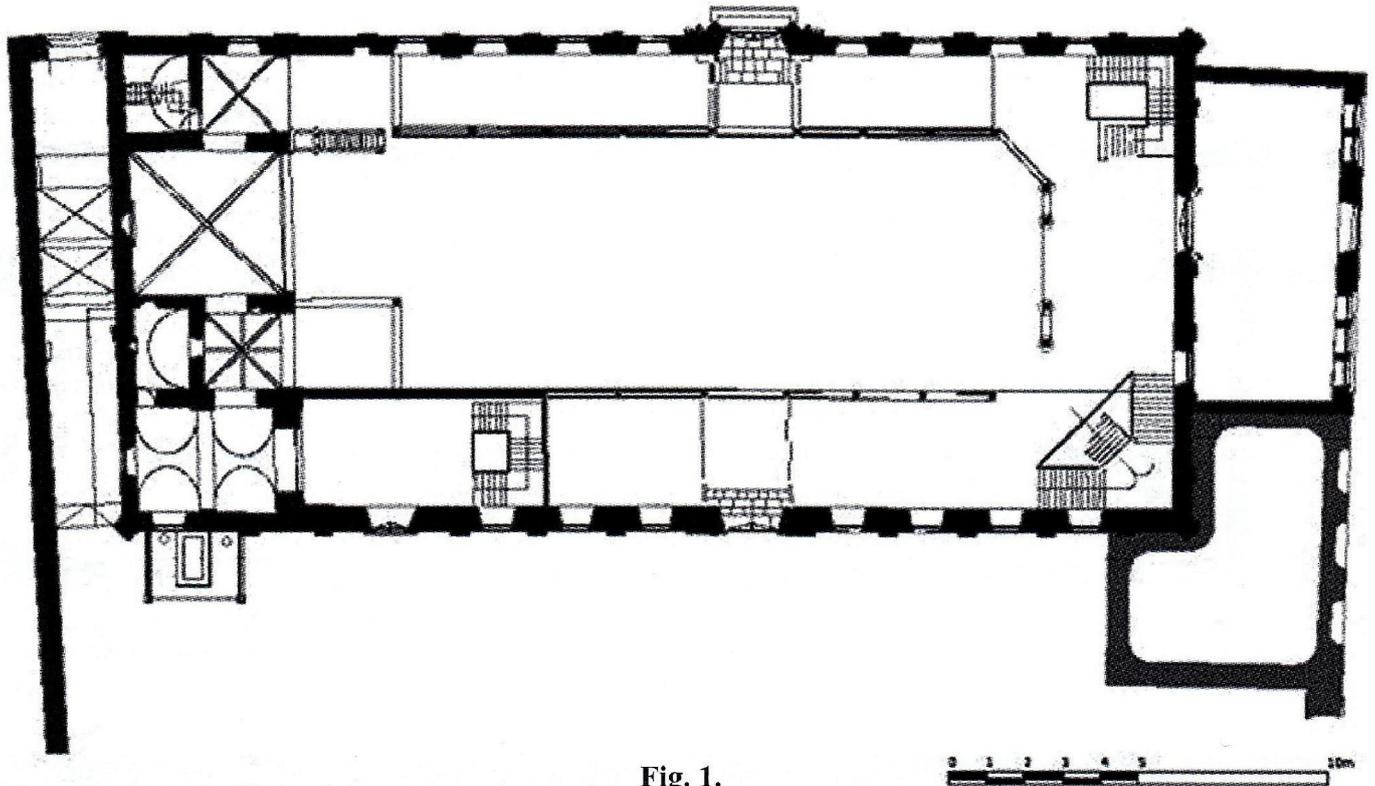


Fig. 1.

constructed by bricks and stone. This was probably because of employing local masons. In its original the building was constructed as a Gothic church with three aisles. Two sets of columns between the nave and the aisles were most probably of wood. Ceiling on nave was higher than the ones on aisles. Before the apse there is the arch where the roof was mounted. Main entrance of the church was in the west, whereas northern and southern sections had gates as well. On its western and eastern walls there were two rose-windows, which still exist.

In the history of the building most important changes happened at the beginning of 20th century. It was enlarged towards north as it can easily be traced from the floral ornamentations on ceiling level. The floral patterned paintings would not have been outside the building, hence it gives the limits prior to major enlargement. Sultan's kiosk, which was located in the northeastern part of the building have been pulled down to give way to the cenotaph of Maslama.

A small dome in the northeastern part was made, basing on the project of architect Kemaleddin. Currently it is invisible except for the section between ceiling and roof. This dome was made in Baghdadi technique, simply to lessen the weight. The area

below this dome corresponds well with the private prayer area with its own mihrab in the northeastern part of the building.

FRESCOES

Description of frescoes is based on observations on site. Due to falling pieces of plasters or different humidity conditions, in particular on roof area, there might be new figures added to the existing scenes which may cause different ways to comment on them.

Apse area

During restorations of the first quarter of the 20th century frescoes of male figures with haloes were observed. Alas their location was not mentioned⁶¹. Another source reports a certain location for them though; belfry⁶². Not far from them was the Late Ottoman floral pattern, exactly the same one as the one on the northern part between the ceiling and roof. They were made with a pre-designed pattern mould. Frescoes, which were visible by the beginning of the 20th century, were suggested to have been painted by the Byzantine painters⁶³.

In order to apply plaster on apse and vault area frescoes, surface of them have been chiselled. Due

61) Jean Ebersolt, *Mission archéologique de Constantinople*, Paris 1921: 40.

62) Eugenio Daleggio d'Alessio, *Le pietre sepolcrali d'Arab Giami*, Genoa 1942: 160 ff.

63) Benedetto Palazzo, *L'Arap-Djami ou église Saint-Paul à Galata*, Genoa 1946: 46.

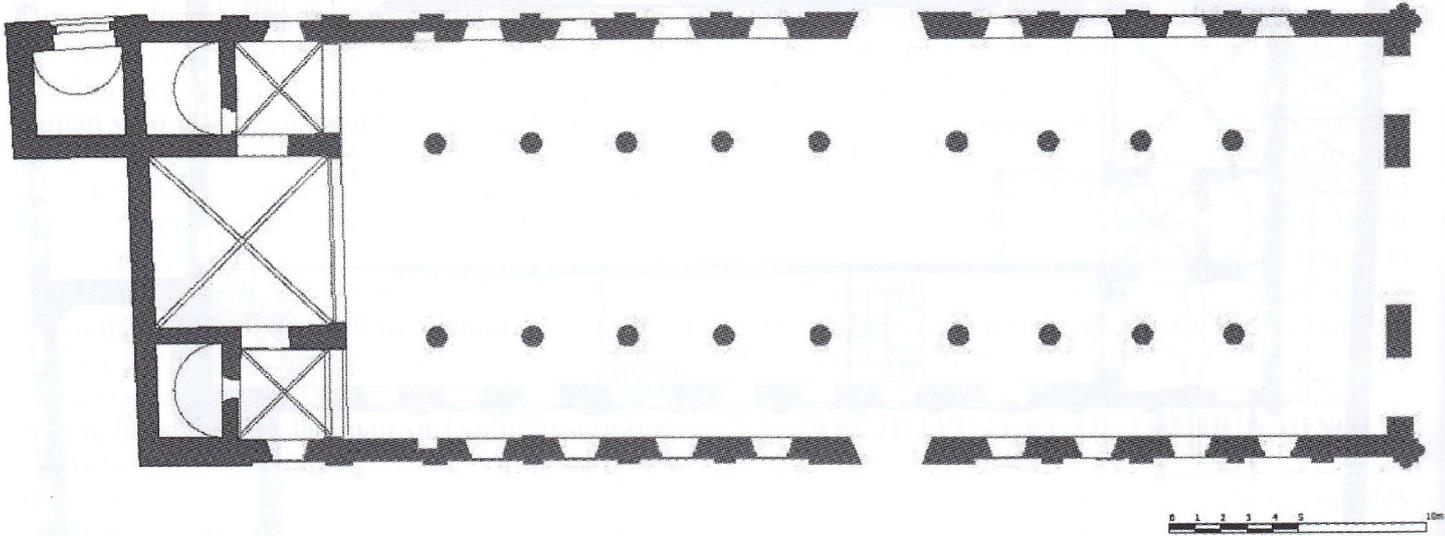


Fig. 2 a.

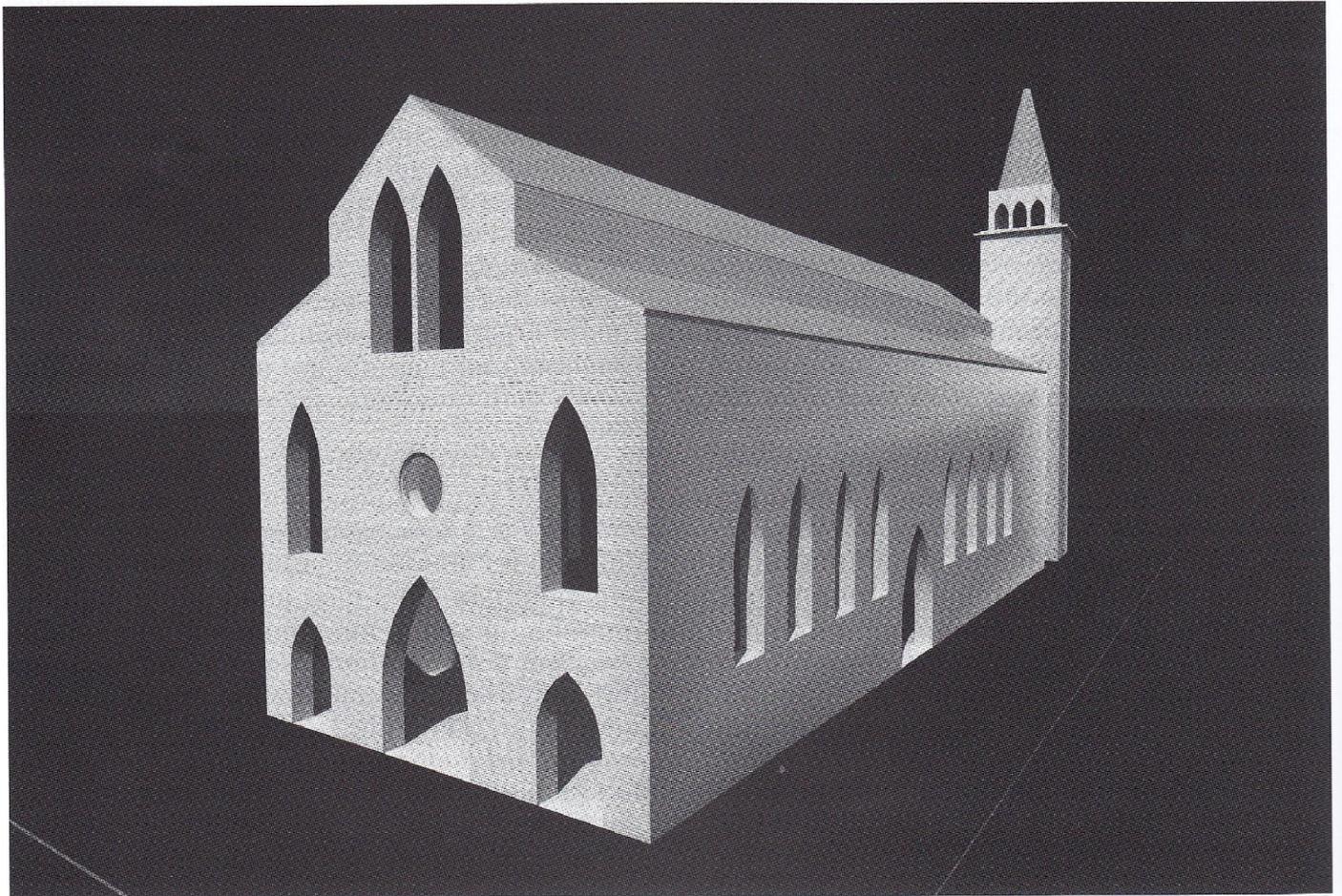


Fig. 2 b.

to chiselling and the fishing net, which was put to protect the congregation during prayer, identification of the figures cause great difficulty.

Frescoes in the southern wall of the apse contain three scenes (Fig. 3 a-b), two of which are identified as Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ. A female figure related to a third scene to the right of Nativity is not clear. She is depicted wearing light brown dress. She wears no halo. She could be part of the Presentation of Jesus to the Temple scene. Since it is next to the Nativity it could be commented to be part of the Massacre of the Innocents as well.

All the scenes were framed by brown-ochre band. Nativity scene is on top of Baptism of Christ on the wall. The colour palette in the frescoes include; brown, ochre, yellow, white, blue. Background of the Nativity scene is light brown (Fig. 4 a-b). It is packed with figures which normally should have been elsewhere iconographically. On the left hand side of the scene are the Three Magi riding their horses. They appear again, riding their horses guided by an angel on the right hand side of the panel. Figure of the angel is light brown colour with dark brown contour lines. In the mosaics of church of Holy Apostles at Thessaloniki the Three Magi were depicted in a similar manner entering the scene from the left hand side corner, though their departure is not depicted.

Below, at the bottom on the left hand side is Joseph. Next to him on his right are two midwives, the one on the left is standing, next to her is a basin, then comes the other midwife to the right of it. On top of them is Blessed Mary, reclining on a bed, depicted in the counter perspective manner. She is depicted wearing a dark blue dress. Her bed is purple. To her right is a shepherd with his thick cloak. The Nativity scene is the second one after Chora from the Byzantine period in Istanbul.

The scene below the Nativity is the Baptism of Christ. This is the third example of this scene from the Byzantine period in Istanbul other than, Chora and Pammakaristos. Background colour of this scene is blue (Fig. 5 a-b). Saint John the Baptist is depicted on the left, higher than Jesus Christ, with his right arm baptizing Christ who is in the river. He wears a light brown dress, his shoulders are covered with a grey cloth. Only the head and shoulders of Jesus Christ are visible. On top of Jesus Christ's head is

the Holy Spirit flowing towards his head. To his right are the rocks and two haloed figures, judging from the other examples they must have been the angels. Colours of the truncated rocks and the haloed figures are different shades of brown.

Second group of frescoes are at rib vault (Fig. 6). At southwestern part of the rib vault in the pendentive is Evangelist Marc, having his name written in Gothic letters in white on blue background as "S MARCUS". Under him is his attribute, Lion (Fig. 7 a-b). Although illegible partly, there is a vertical inscription which contains letters INITIU[M EVANGELII]. Beginning words of Bible of Marc. Addressed is the fresco of AMBROSIUS, one of the most important doctors of the Catholic church (Fig. 8 a-b). Facing him is a standing male figure. Identity of this figure is not clear since he is not wearing a halo and there is no inscription. Between them is an eight pointed star. There are examples of doctors of the Catholic church being depicted together with the Evangelists sharing the same part of the rib vault. One of the best examples is from the 14th century church of San Giovanni Evangelista at Ravenna. Another example is a contemporary church of San Nicola at Tolentino, where Evangelists and Doctors were depicted facing one another. In both examples towards the center of the rib vault are the attributes of the Evangelists. Although it is rare, there are examples of catholic and orthodox saints in the same area as well. One of the best examples is the baptistery of San Marco in Venice. The dome on altar has four doctors of the catholic church whereas the dome on the baptismal font has four orthodox saints.

In the case of Arap camii each one of the quarters of the rib vault is most probably reserved for one of the four doctors of the catholic church. For the case of AMBROSIUS it is difficult to make a suggestion of the person facing the saint. Although there is not enough evidence to reach a conclusion, one tends to suggest an orthodox saint.

At the far end of the rib vault are six of the Old Testament prophets of which only one name can be read. This is the third figure with the name of [ZACH]ARIAS". This name was wrongly read as MALACHIA in a previous report⁶⁴. Letters are dark blue on white background. Colours on the frescoes are brown, white, dark blue and yellow.

64) Stephan Westphalen, "Pittori greci nella chiesa domenicana dei Genovesi a Pera (Arap Camii)", *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e l Mediterraneo (secoli XI-XIV)*, Venezia 2007: 53.

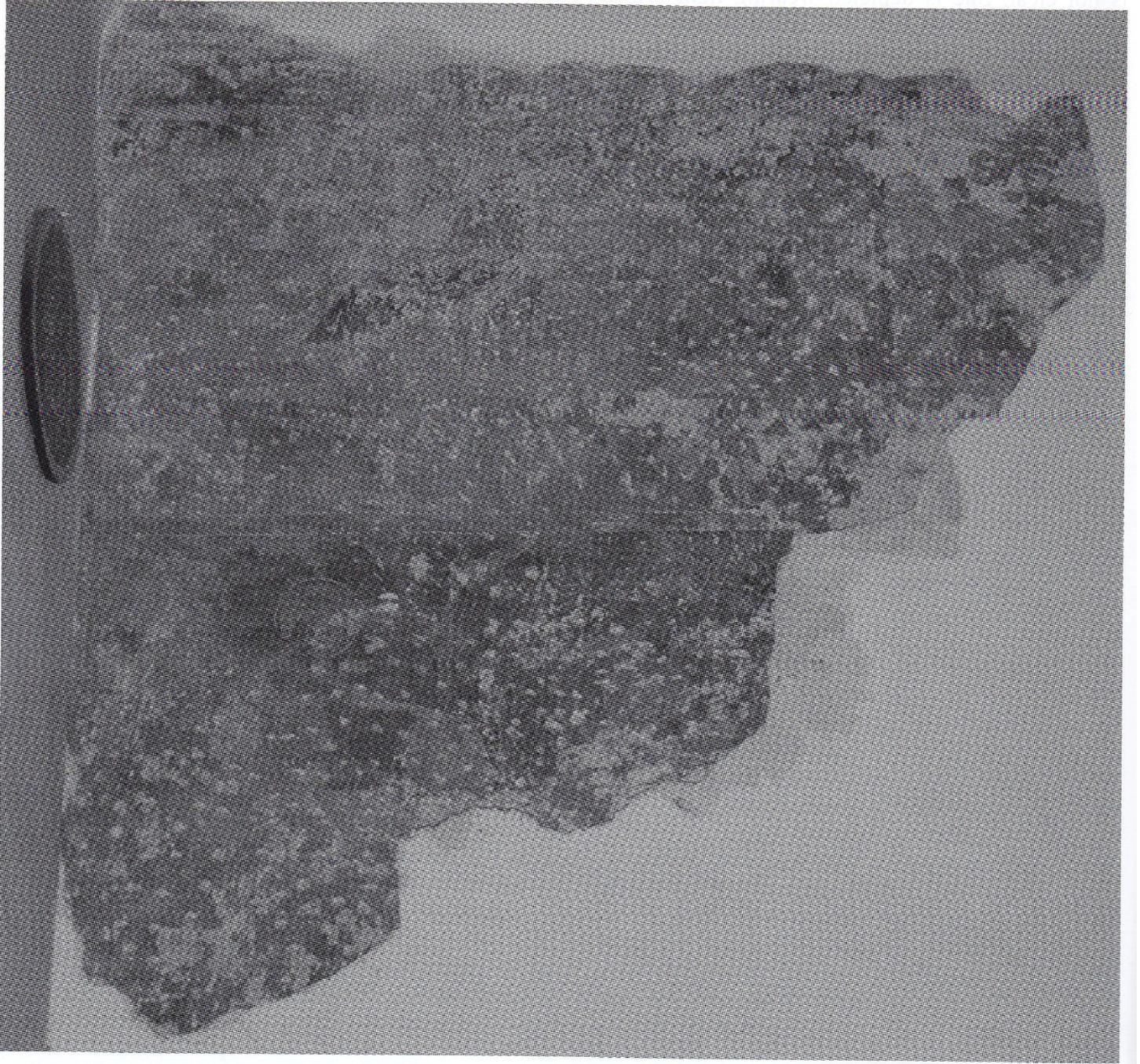


Fig. 3 a.

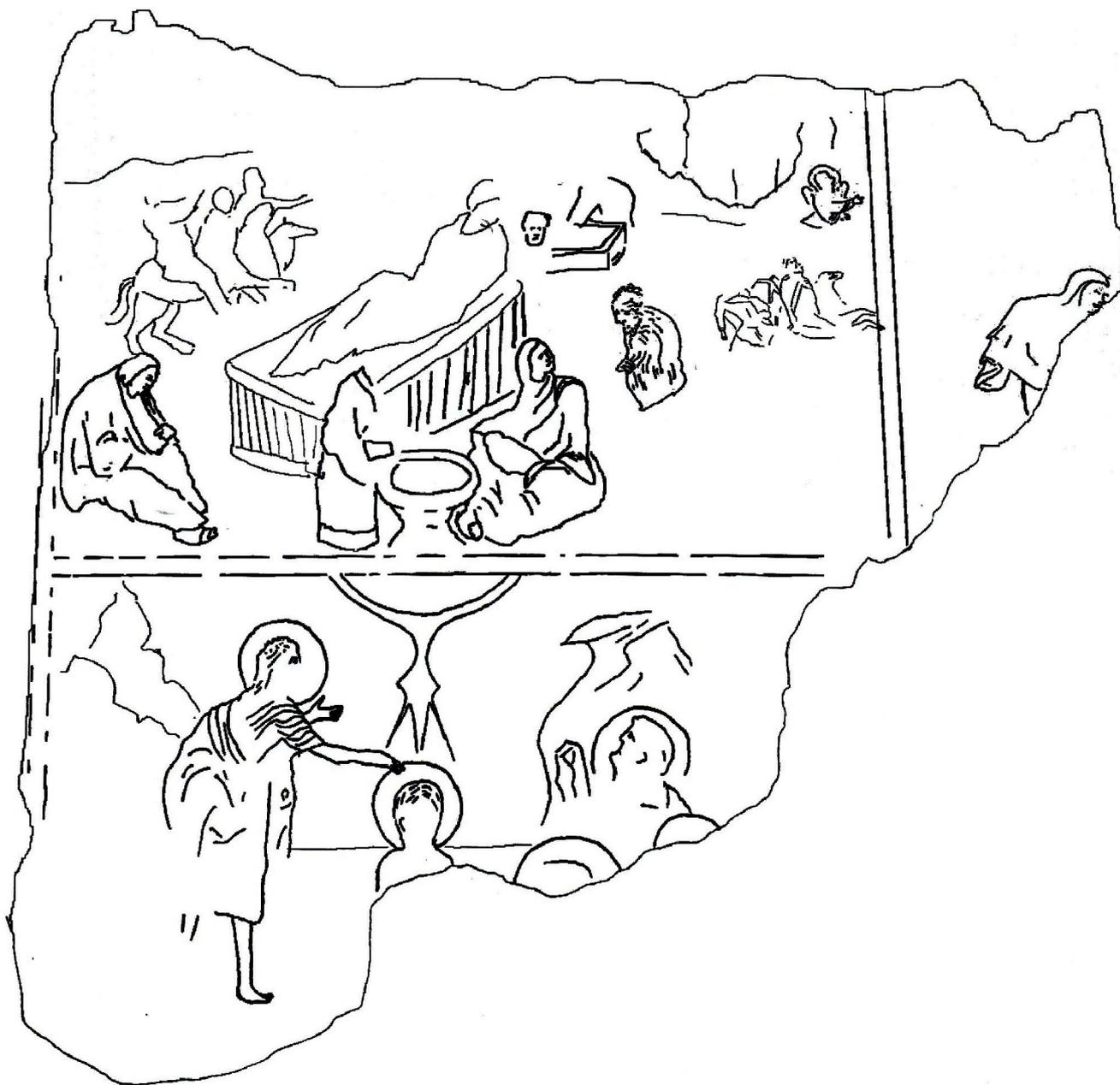


Fig. 3 b.



Fig. 4 a.



Fig. 4 b.

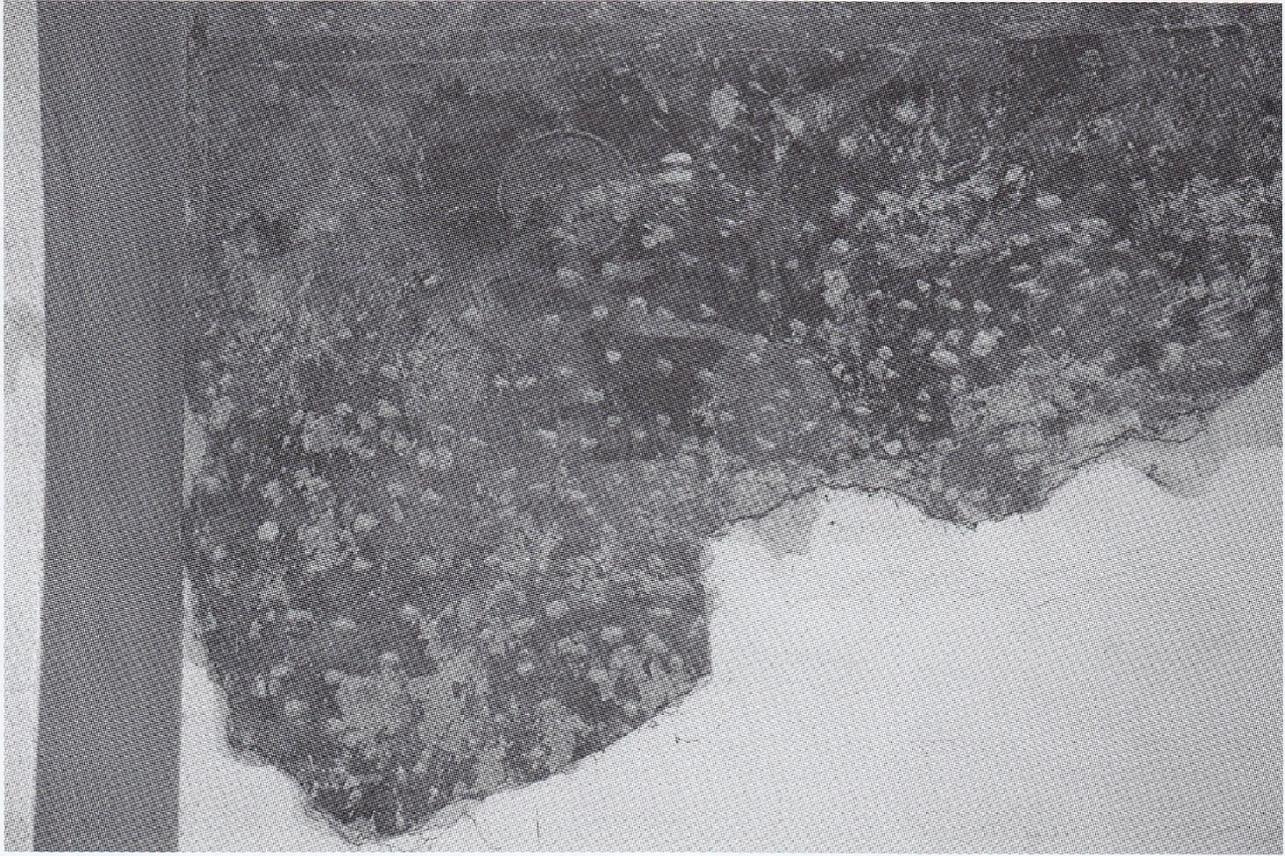


Fig. 5 a.

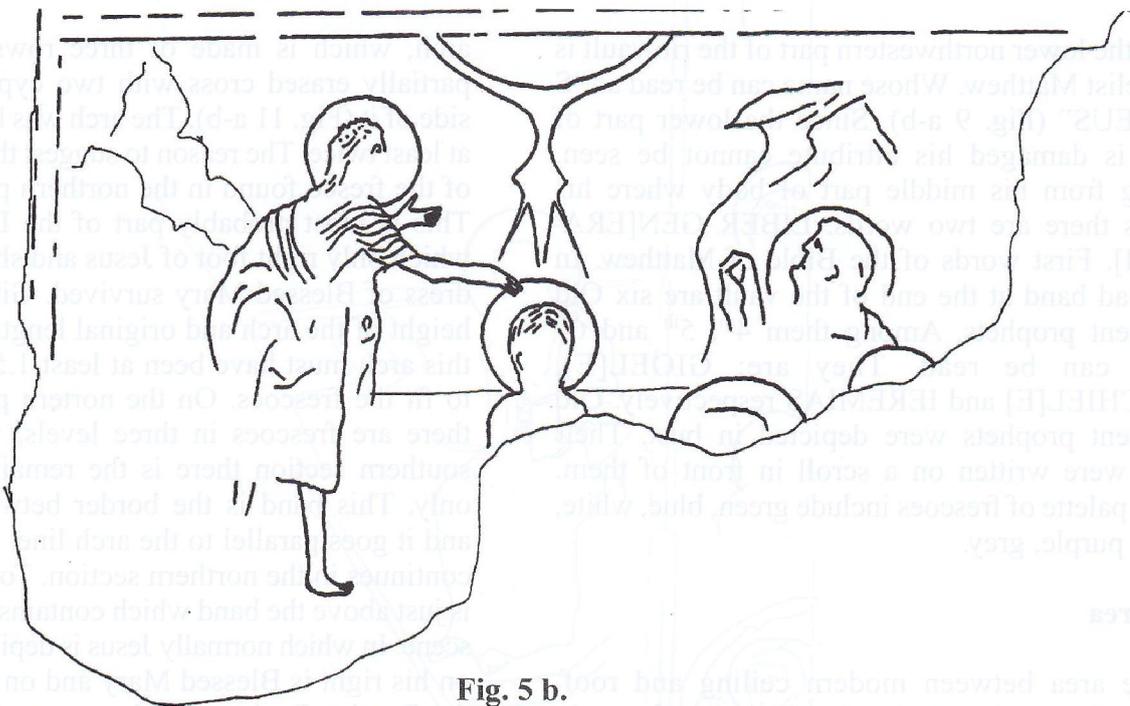


Fig. 5 b.

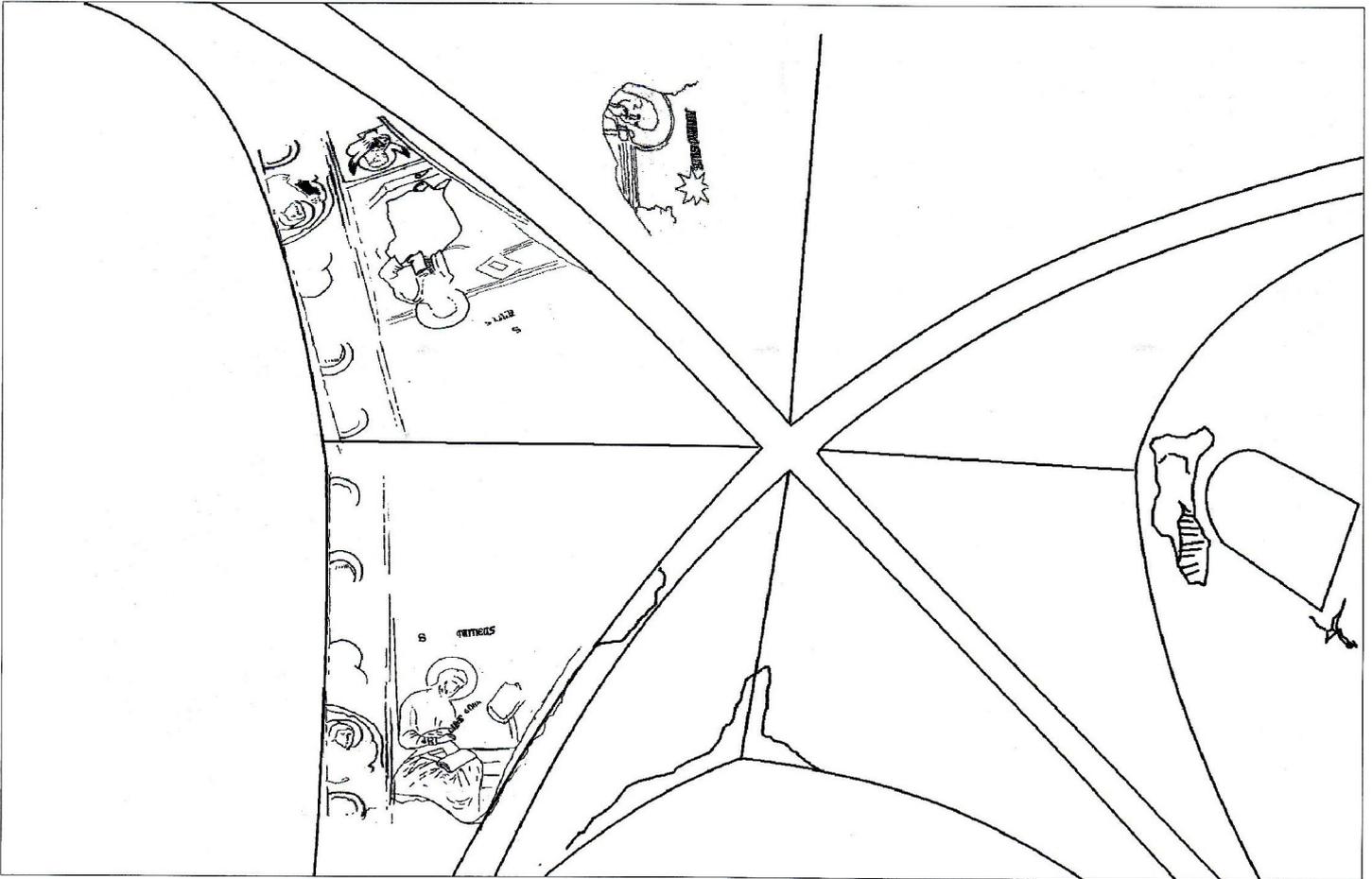


Fig. 6.

At the lower northwestern part of the rib vault is Evangelist Matthew. Whose name can be read as "S MATTEUS" (Fig. 9 a-b). Since the lower part of fresco is damaged his attribute cannot be seen. Starting from his middle part of body where his hand is there are two words. LIBER GEN[ERATIONII]. First words of the Bible of Matthew. In the broad band at the end of the vault are six Old Testament prophets. Among them 4th, 5th and 6th names can be read. They are: GIOEL[E], [E]ZECHIEL[E] and IEREMIAS respectively. Old Testament prophets were depicted in bust. Their names were written on a scroll in front of them. Colour palette of frescoes include green, blue, white, brown, purple, grey.

Roof area

The area between modern ceiling and roof, houses a large triumphal arch which was formerly supporting the roof (Fig. 10 a-b). Keystone of the

arch, which is made of three rows of brick, has partially erased cross with two cypresses on each side of it (Fig. 11 a-b). The arch was built or restored at least twice. The reason to suggest this is a fragment of the fresco found in the northern part of the arch. This is most probably part of the Deesis scene in which only right foot of Jesus and shoes and part of dress of Blessed Mary survived. Given the current height of the arch and original length of the figures this arch must have been at least 1.5 metres higher to fit the frescoes. On the northern part of the arch there are frescoes in three levels, whereas in the southern section there is the remains of the band only. This band is the border between the scenes and it goes parallel to the arch line. The same band continues in the northern section. Top level in north is just above the band which contains parts of Deesis scene. In which normally Jesus is depicted barefooted, on his right is Blessed Mary and on his left is John the Baptist. Basing on other examples a suggested appearance was made (Fig. 12 a-b). Middle level of

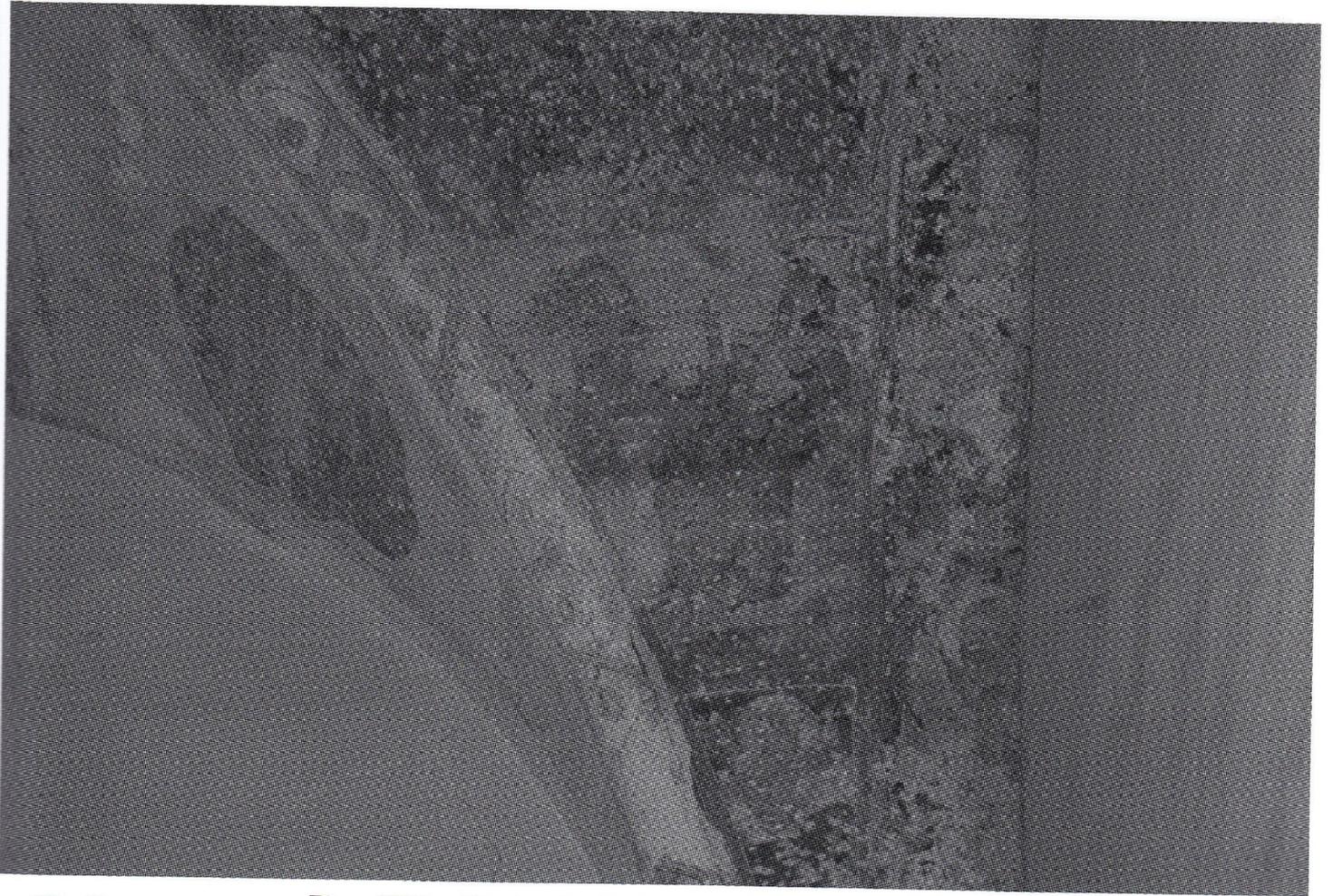


Fig. 7 a.



Fig. 7 b.

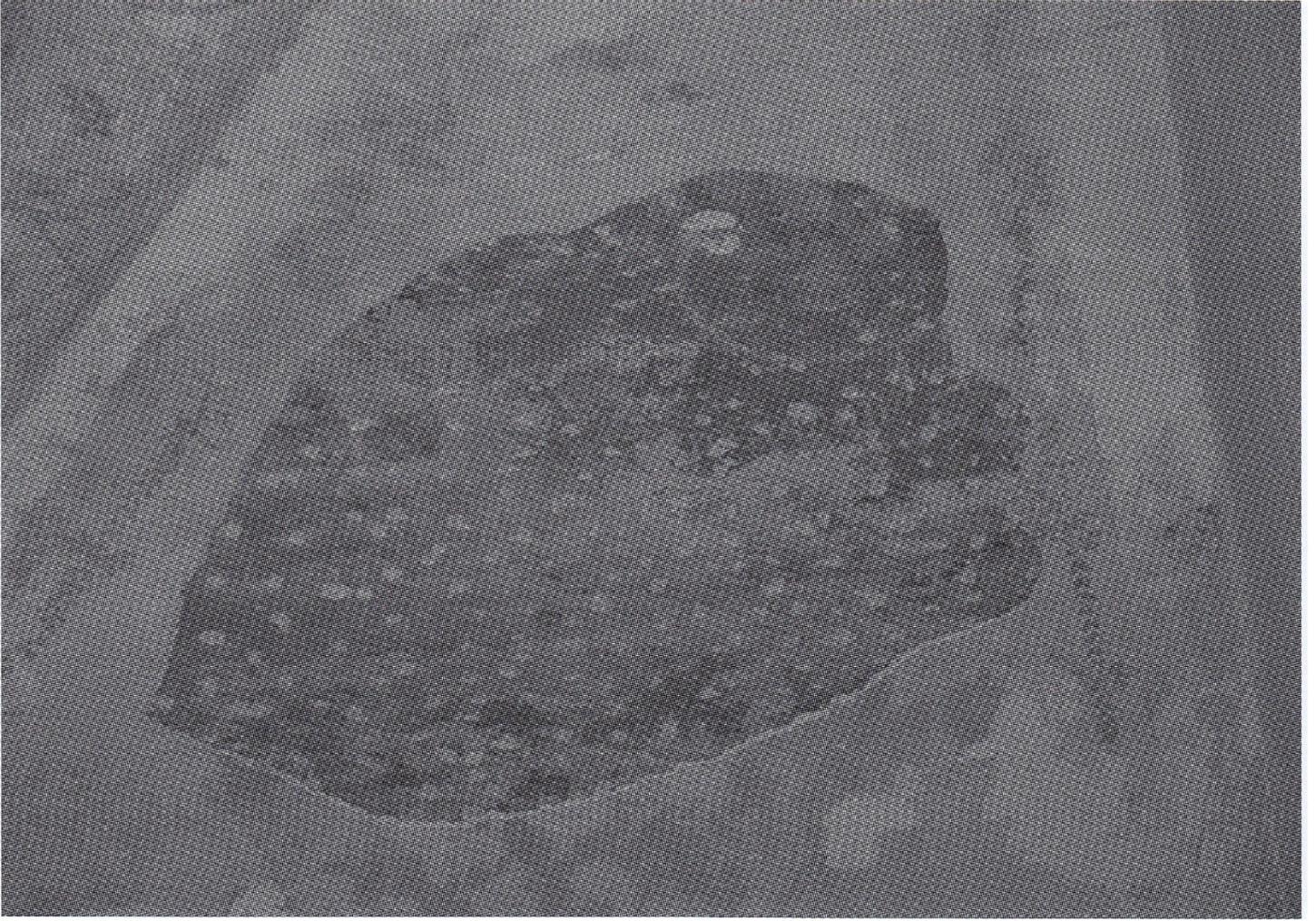


Fig. 8 a.



Fig. 8 b.

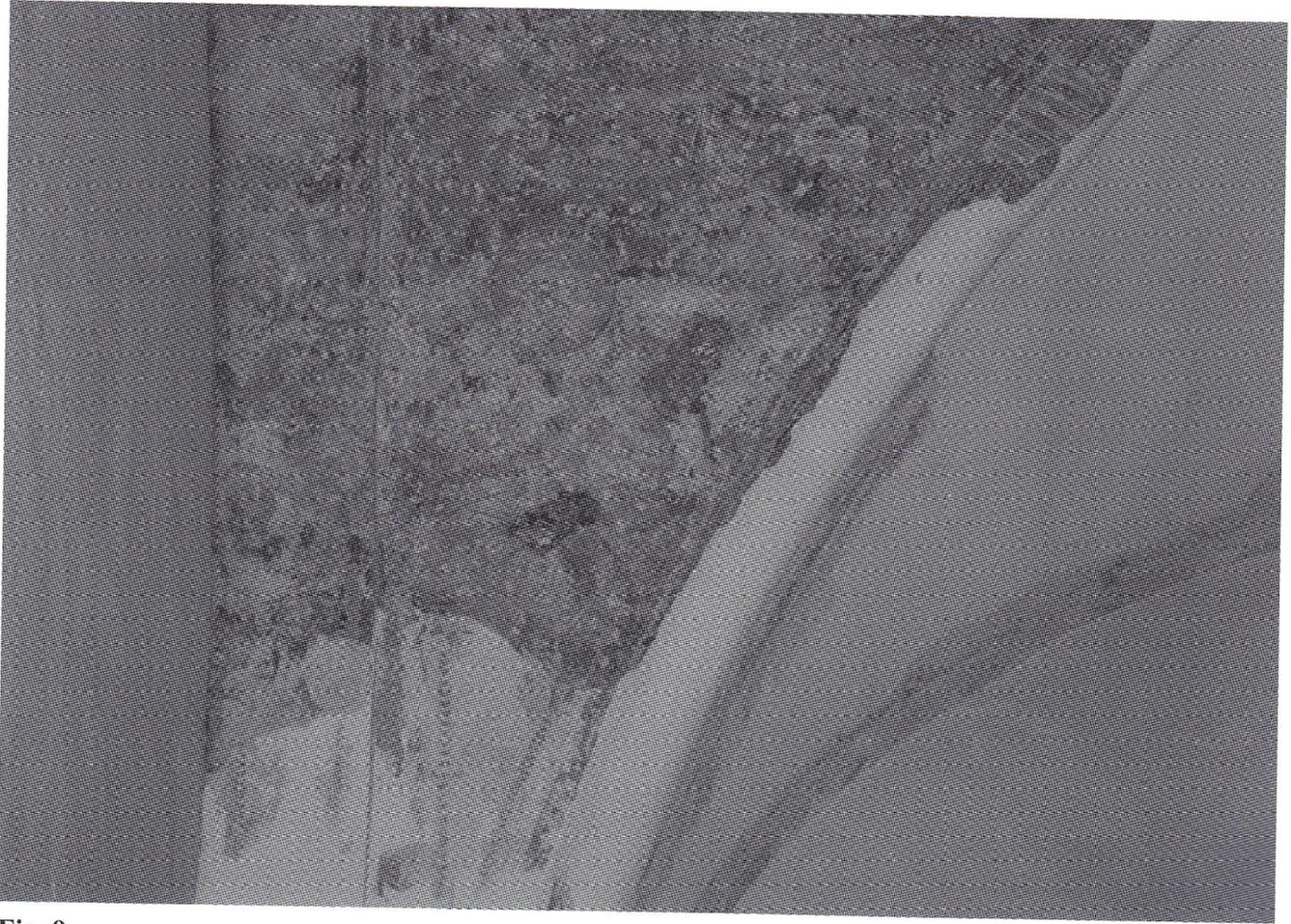


Fig. 9 a.



Fig. 9 b.



Fig. 10 a.

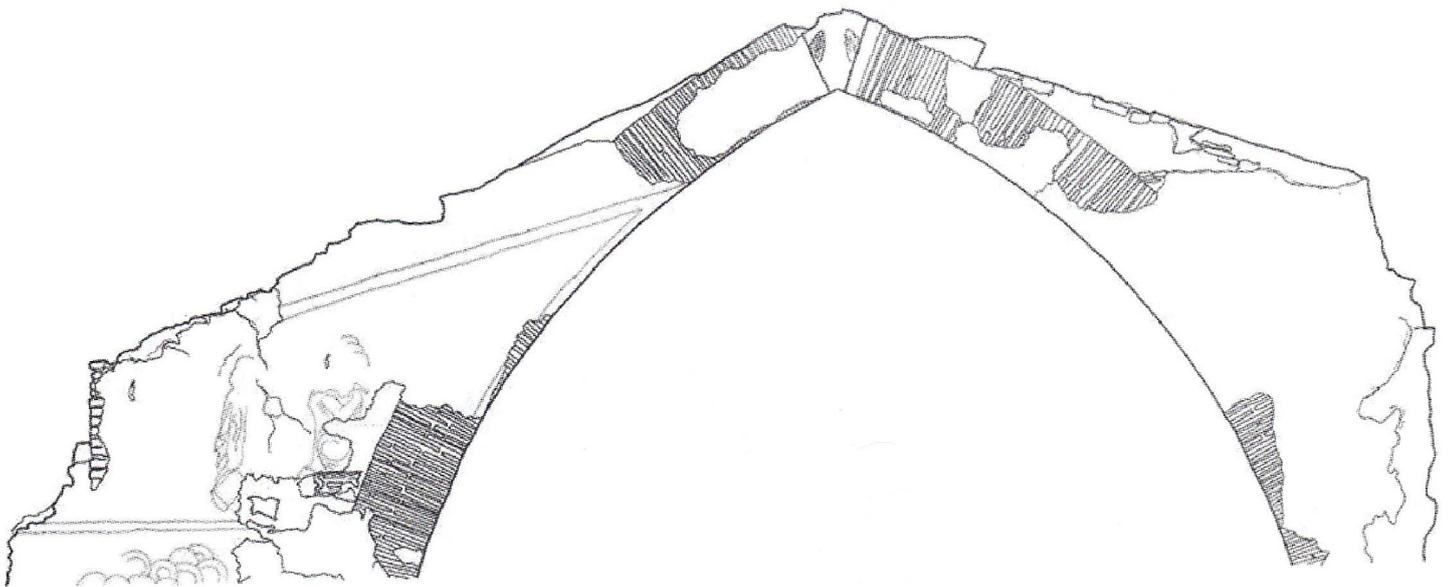


Fig. 10 b.

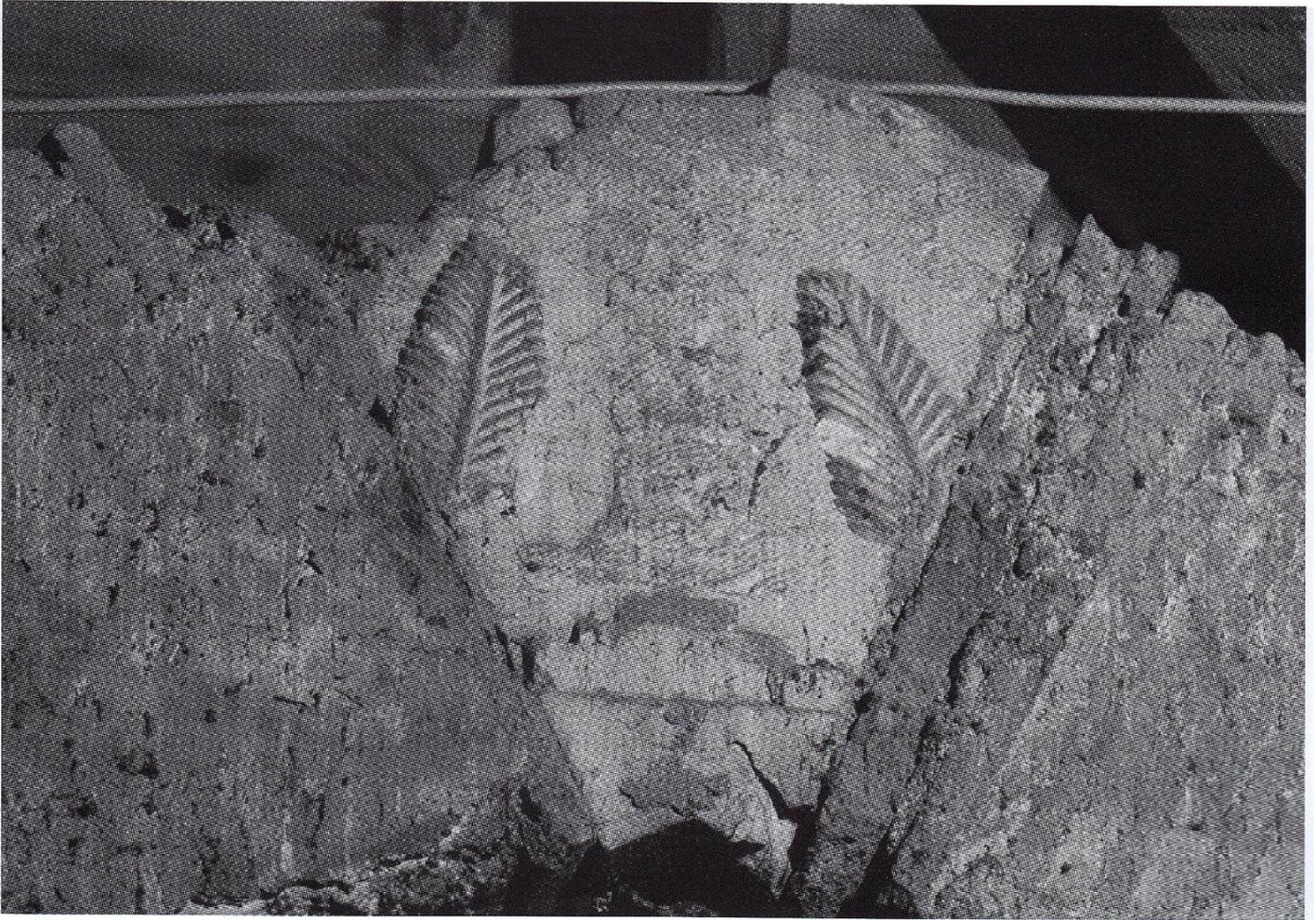


Fig. 11 a.

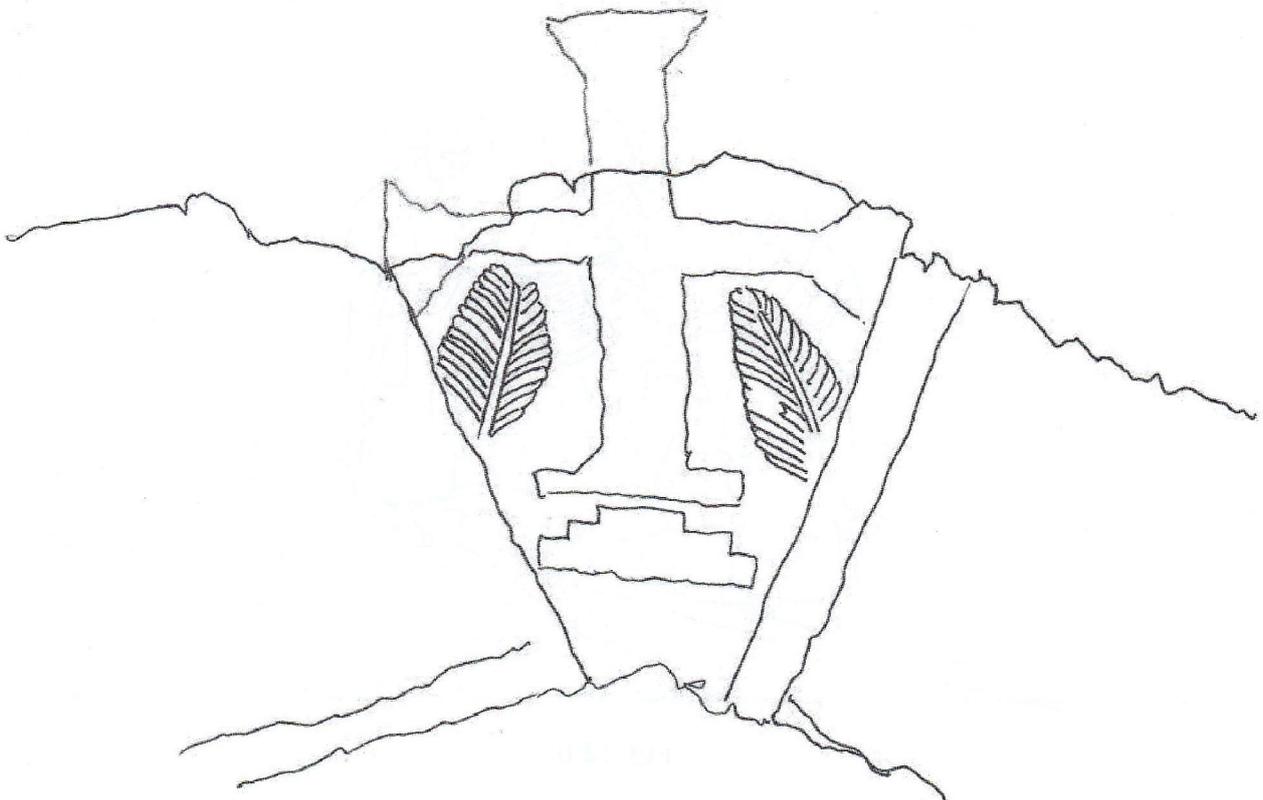


Fig. 11 b.



Fig. 12 a.



Fig. 12 b.



Fig. 13 a.

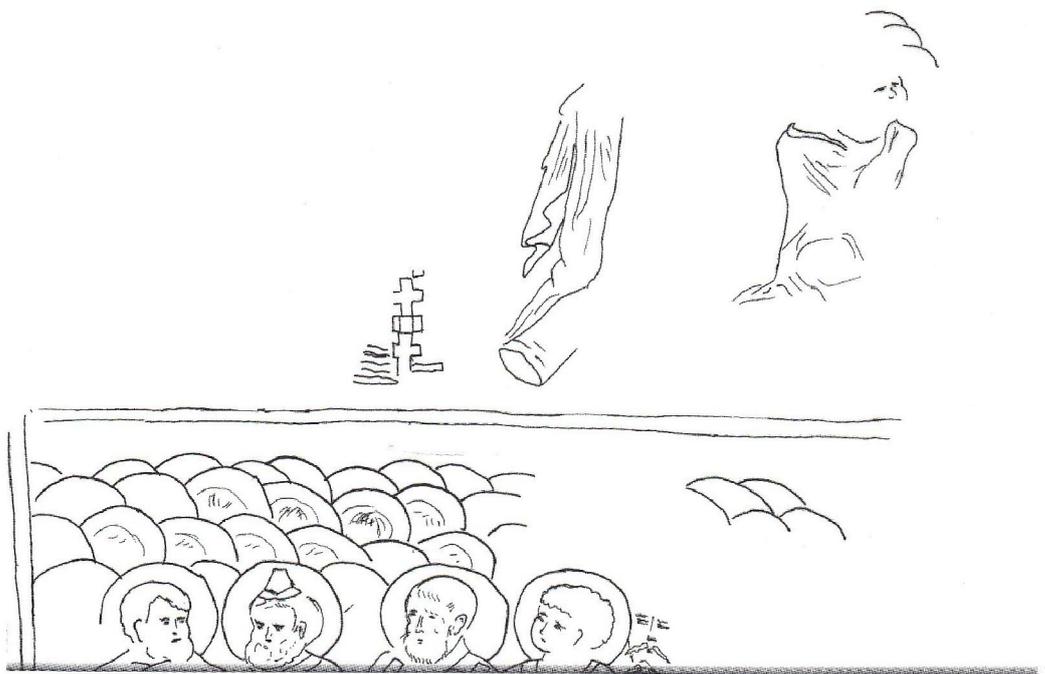


Fig. 13 b.

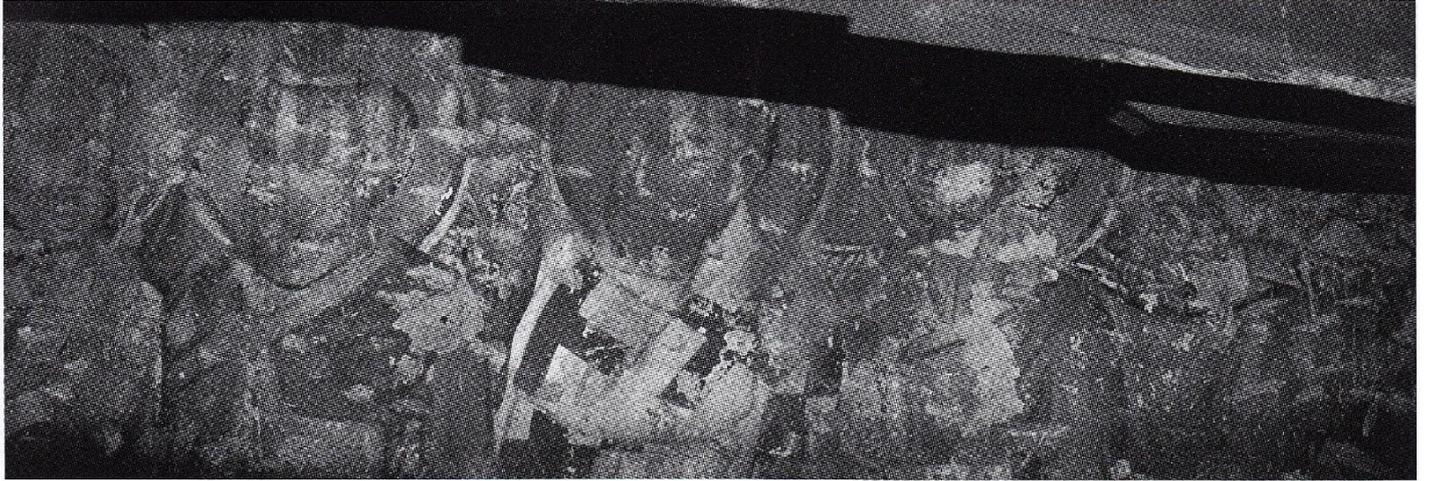


Fig. 14.

frescoes contain five male figures facing towards south. A kneeling figure on the left is separated from the rest of the figures. His hands are covered with part of the costume. One face can be seen clearly, behind him are the contours of others. Considering the fact of the Deesis on top of the arch this scene should be related to the Last Judgement cycle of frescoes. This is one of the Choirs of the Elect. Since there are no inscriptions these figures cannot be identified with certainty. Though they must be either Apostles or Prophets (Fig. 13 a).

Lower section has five male figures in front, behind them are about fifteen haloed figures (Fig. 13 b). Among the front line five figures the one on the northernmost point faces south, to the other four. Behind him is the depiction of a Gate of Paradise. There are no inscriptions to indicate the names of the depicted figures. Three of the frontline figures deserve special mention. Costume of one of them is typical for Eastern church fathers. It has sets of large black and red crosses. The figure himself is with short hair and beard. He must have been one of the Hierarchs. Other two were dressed with red cloaks with yellow ends. Similiar cloaks can be observed on the Magi in the Nativity scene. It is also common to depict the Old Testament prophets with such cloaks as well (Fig. 14).

The Last Judgement scene was depicted in a small area. Because of limited space, several scenes were combined. The Elect were depicted very close to one another and sometimes, as was the case with the Hierarchs and Apostles, within the same frame. Depiction of the Elect is typical to the Byzantine world. A contemporary monastic church Chora has in its *parekklesion* a very similar arrangement. Due to lack of space the Elect were fit into one domical vault before the apse. Loyalty to the Byzantine

iconography, colour palette, use of different shades of colours and counter perspective, definitely indicate Byzantine painters' involvement in the frescoes of the Arap Camii.

In western churches the Last Judgement scene is generally depicted on the interior part of western door to the nave. One of the most famous frescoes from the beginning of the 14th century is the work of Giotto in Arena chapel at Padua.

CONCLUSION

Built on a former Byzantine site, church of San Domenico e Paolo is a typical early 14th century Gothic church with non-typical construction material and techniques. Basing on these, it is clear that the building was constructed by the Byzantine masons. They were also employed in another monastic complex, Saint Benoît, in the vicinity. Some tombstones with characteristic Byzantine crosses and contemporary Byzantine pseudo-sarcophagi slabs and marble carvings belonging to arcosolium type graves are clear indications of Byzantine cultural influence as well. With the Arab camii frescoes it is safe to suggest there were Byzantine painters working for the Catholic church. Though there were attempts to unify churches during which Byzantine masters might have been employed in the 15th century it is safer to assume an earlier date for frescoes. First decade of the 14th century would fit perfectly, given, the monks taken refuge at catholic monasteries on Galata would create a perfect atmosphere.

It is interesting also to note that the Byzantine artists and artisans were more tolerant than their politicians and clergymen.