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SINOP CITADEL THROUGHOUT HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Sinop, a strategically important city in history, has felt the need to defend against the dangers of being a widespread settlement in almost every period. Even today, traces of defensive structures can be found in the city. For this reason, it is possible to see how the inner castle changed over the years and how it was shaped according to needs from the Hellenistic period to the Ottoman period. This study aims to examine how the structure changes according to periods.

Key words: Citadel, Defence Structure, Sinop, Spolia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the geographical features of the settlements, which date back to old times and have witnessed almost every period, the factors that make them desirable areas draw attention even at first glance. Lands with sufficient fertility to sustain their lives, water resources, access to significant trade axes, and physical elements suitable for defense that will help them hold all these valuable properties make them attractive. The settlement areas, which have many of these, have been at the forefront throughout history. The settlement areas, which have many of these, have been at the forefront throughout history. The city of Sinop, which was established on a narrow land connecting the mainland to the peninsula on the southern coastline of the Black Sea, is one of these settlements.

The city, which has evidence of settlement even during the Early Bronze Age, became one of the crucial points of the trade network in the Black Sea after a colony that left Miletos in the 8th century BC settled in this region and developed on short notice. Afterward, it was necessary in the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods. The fact that other political authorities desire the city due to its geographical and commercial advantages has brought the city to a point that further increases the need for defense. As a result, in addition to the features that give Sinop a physical defense superiority, the city walls and castle, which still have their traces in the city, were built, and these helped to protect the city. Since different political authorities captured Sinop in different periods of history, traces of those periods can be found in the defense structures surrounding the settlement area. This study aims to reveal a detailed analysis of the Sinop Citadel in line with comprehensive dating studies. In line with this scope, the study is based on base research, excavation reports, and visual sources about the inner castle, and comparative examination and evaluation of texts in the literature was adopted as a method.

2. SINOP: ITS HISTORY, GEOGRAPHICAL STRUCTURE, AND CITY PLAN

The oldest known name of the settlement, which dates back to ancient times, is Sinope, and it is thought to be derived from one of the nymph daughters of Asopos, the ancient Greek river god in mythology. The city, mentioned in the records as Sinepolis by the Romans, was first named Sınap by the Ottomans and then Sinop, its current name (Üstün, 2008).

The city was distinguished as an important location for the ancient people due to its geographical features and connection with the Black Sea and the Crimean Peninsula on the northern coast of Anatolia. Thousands of years of settlement history began (Fig. 1). Although the starting point has yet to be discovered, the Hittite sources constitute the written history period. Based on the recovered findings, the dating studies associated it with the Middle Bronze Age with the metal spearhead found during a foundation excavation in the city (Dönmez, 2004). Although there are hypothetical inferences since the findings of the previous periods of the town could not be reached in the studies carried out on this subject until the recent past, the findings obtained in the archaeological excavations carried out in the citadel in 2015, 2017, and 2019 show the Early Bronze Age settlement without any doubt.

Historical records show that the city was founded by a colony that left Miletos in the 8th century BC. The town, which developed shortly after this period, started connecting the east coastal settlements and overtaking the Eastern Black Sea trade. It was ruled by other authorities from time to time in the 3rd century BC during the reign of Mithridates and the Kingdom of Pontos. The center was transferred from Amasya to Sinop, and the city became the center of the age. The town, which lived its most glorious age, was surrounded by walls during this period, and stoa, agora, gymnasium, and palace structures were built. After the end of Pontos domination during the reign of Emperor Augustus, the city passed to the Roman administration (Delaney, 1960). In the Byzantine period following this period, the town maintained its importance. Thanks to its sheltered natural harbors, it became the unloading-loading center of products from Anatolia and Russia. In 1214, Byzantine rule ended by the Seljuks. In this period, the city's church was converted into a mosque to facilitate the Turkish settlement in Sinop and its surroundings, wealthy people were selected and settled in the town to improve the economy, and the inner castle was repaired. After the Seljuk

period, which lasted until 1277, the city passed under the rule of Pervaneogullari and then Candaroğulları Principality. During this period, contact was made with the Genoese, who dominated the trade, and the Venetian and Genoese colonies settled in Sinop. The city, which became an important center in maritime trade after the principalities period, passed into the hands of the Ottomans in 1461 and became a significant naval base. In the 19th century, the city's importance decreased due to losing its role as a safe harbor (Üstün, 2008).

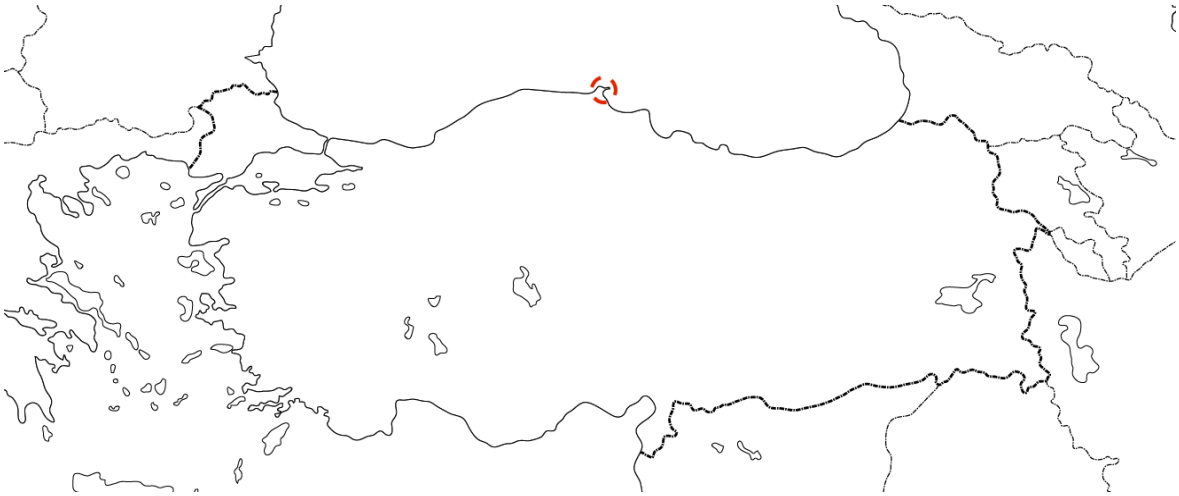

Fig. 1. Sinop's Location. Source: by author

The city was established on the isthmus, where a peninsula connects to the mainland on the southern coastline of the Black Sea. Due to this feature, it has become a geographically and strategically important settlement area, and throughout history, it has turned its face towards the sea rather than the land. Being a plateau in front of the Küre Mountains and having two ports formed by natural means, as a port city in the north of Anatolia, it became one of the important stops of the Black Sea trade, and thus, it has been a desirable settlement in every period of history. The port, located in the southeast of the peninsula extending in the east direction, is protected from all winds except the east wind, as it is deep and suitable for anchoring, making it the only natural port on the Black Sea coast. The other port is thought to be located in the northwest. Compared to the first, this port is more prone to storms and, therefore, insecure.

Sinop was one of the many colonies of Miletus, the birthplace of Hippodamos, whom the ancient world regarded as the inventor of grid planning. The city, which has a grid plan, is unsuitable for creating a regular grid because it is located in a small, irregular, narrow area. However, despite this, it is seen that the plan, which has similar features to the studies on the classical and modern urban texture made in Hellenistic examples such as Damascus and Thessaloniki, was tried to be applied to the city. Bryer and Winfield (1985) suggested how the city plan in the ancient period was. In this proposal, they argued that the settlement area could be similar to the city plan of today's Sinop in terms of its geographical features.

It is assumed that the only road used to enter the city, which is today's Sakarya Street, was also cardo in ancient times. On the north of this road, another parallel street (Barbaros Street) passes through the gate between towers 29 and 30. Considering the current settlement pattern, other streets were parallel to and perpendicular to these streets in ancient times. Bryer and Winfield (1985), based on the examples in different cities in their proposed city plan, showed their ideas about where large public buildings such as the agora, palace, and serapeum might be located and their possible shape on the plan based on the city's surviving fortification walls and towers (Fig. 2).

They also stated that the concept of the acropolis may have returned in the town's early Byzantine period because the city's old acropolis and inner castle had returned to these functions during the Byzantine and Seljuk periods.

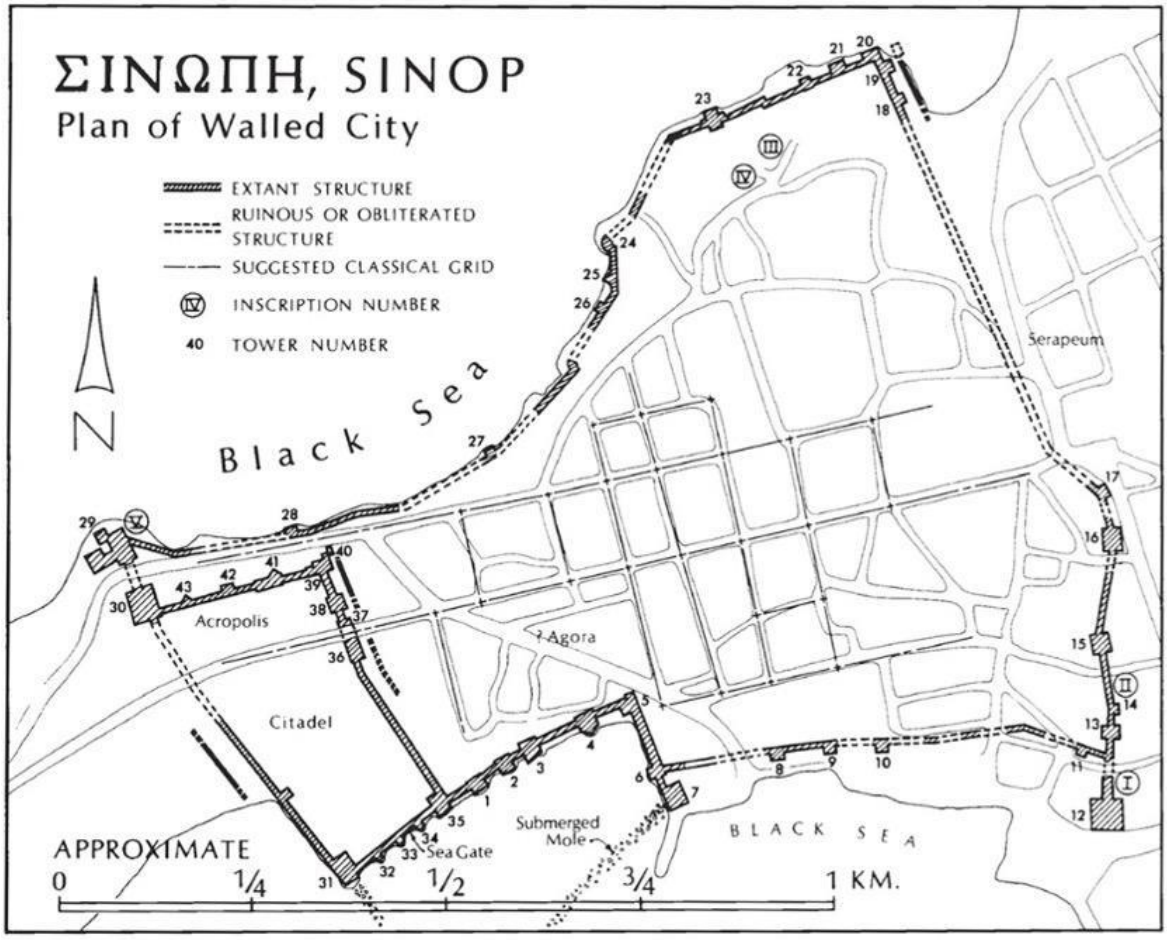

Fig. 2. Sinop City Plan. Source: Bryer and Winfield, 1985: p. 88

3. SINOP CITADEL

The inner castle was built on a high ridge at the western end of the ancient city. It was strategically placed to block the high section that connected the town to the mainland and control the access of those from the land side, which is the most vulnerable area of the settlement. The length of the western body of the inner castle, which also forms the border of the ancient city, is approximately 340 meters between Towers 29 and 31 and 273 meters between Towers 30 and 31 (Crow, 2016). Bryer and Winfield (1985) proposed a road called Kumkapı, which they thought to have been used to enter the city between towers 29 and 30, also included in the city plan. The line parallel to this road defines the northern body of the citadel, the eastern body separating the city and the defense, and the south body, directly related to the sea. In this study, the chronological classification and numbering for describing building elements, based on the construction techniques used in Bryer and Winfield's (1985) study, are taken as basis. Since the citadel has many different construction techniques and structural features, it was thought that it would be difficult to convey the entire

structure by examining it separately for each period, and the citadel was investigated by examining the bodies one by one.

3.1. Sinop Citadel in Literature

The inner castle and walls of Sinop, which have been researched many times in different aspects due to being a significant settlement in history, were examined in detail for the first time. Anthony Bryer and David Winfield prepared the dating study. In their extensive study titled "The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of The Pontos," published by Dumbarton Oaks in 1985, Bryer and Winfield gave a summary of the city's history, then discussed the grid plan in the classical period and provided information about the structures remaining at that time. Afterward, they created an up-to-date chronology by classifying the fortifications and towers in twelve different periods they made according to other construction techniques. The dating suggestions in this book, prepared in great detail, are still valid and included as a primary source in the publications. In this study, the numbering and classification designed by Bryer and Winfield were used to analyze sources through a common language.

The book titled 'Legends of Authority: The 1215 Seljuk Inscriptions of Sinop Citadel Turkey', which was prepared under the editorship of Scott Redford and published by Koc University in 2014, is another important primary source because it clarifies the generally accepted situation in many publications by revealing important information about the castle. Contrary to most references in the literature that include the views that the Seljuks built the citadel, Redford deduced that the Seljuks only repaired it. Based on the information he obtained from the inscriptions, the castle was not rebuilt. Therefore, the book has a significant place in the literature.

James Crow, in the book titled "Cities and Citadels in Turkey: From the Iron Age to the Seljuks" which was also published by Koç University in 2016, prepared the section titled "Byzantine Citadels and Castles in Sinope and the Black Sea" taking into account the data obtained by Bryer& Winfield and Redford. The chapters in these three works written by Crow, in which he interprets the information given in the primary sources and includes his inferences and questions on this subject, are invaluable as he reveals new perspectives for future studies.

Another essential publication group that should be examined in the literature is the excavation reports conducted by the Sinop Regional Archeology Project under the leadership of Owen Doonan. Excavations carried out since 1997 were carried out in the 2015-2016 and 2017-2019 seasons in Sinop Citadel, and in line with the findings obtained, significant data that could not be accessed before were reached in the early period dating of the castle. Especially in the last excavation report, the dating and interpretation of the stratigraphy related to the city wall have been revealed with more robust data, and the architectural development of the Sinop Citadel has been examined in more detail by mapping the walls in the area. The data obtained during the excavations is crucial for future studies on the building, and as in every other primary source, when evaluated with previous studies, the historical and architectural context of the citadel is formed.

3.2. Sinop Citadel According to the Classification Composed by Bryer and Winfield

In 'The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of The Pontos,' the first comprehensive study on the Sinop fortifications and the Citadel, Bryer and Winfield (1985) divided the defensive structures into periods according to the 12 construction techniques they first identified. They facilitated the identification of the inner castle with the towers they numbered. However, the authors stated they could be wrong in their inferences since this classification has almost no other material to compare. Other studies conducted this classification after this date. The new information obtained was in the same direction. The 12 construction techniques identified are Pre-Mithridatic / Mithridates, Mithridates / Early Roman, Roman, Early Byzantine to 13. century 1215, the rebuilding of the Seljuks, Candarogullari to 1461, the Ottoman period, divided into seven periods. They created a table showing the traces of which periods, according to the construction techniques they housed in the 43 towers processed on the plan (Fig. 3).

CONCORDANCE OF MASONRY TYPES AND TOWERS IN SINOPE

Type Letter:	?	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M
Tower No. 1			B	C				G					
2			B	C				G					
3			B	C				G					
4			B	C				G			K		
5			B	C				G					
6			B	C				G		J			
7									H	J			
8							F		H				
9							F		H				
10	?												
11	?												
12										J		L	
13							F					L	
14							F	G				L	
15								G				L	
16								G					
17	?												
18					D								
19					D								
20					D								M
21					D								M
22													M
23													M
24													M
25													M
26													M
27							F						M
28	?												
29		A	B	C		E		G				L	M
30		A	B	C		E		G					
31			B	C				G					
33			B					G					
34			B					G					
35			B					G					
36			B?	C?				G					
37		A						G					
38		A						G					
39		A											
40		A						G					
41		A		*C									
42		A		*C									
43		A		*C		E							

SUGGESTED PERIODS OF TYPES

A Pre-Mithridatic or Mithridatic
B Mithridatic or early Roman
C Roman: *C fifth century?—see p. 76.
D, E, F Early Byzantine to thirteenth century?
G Reconstruction of 1215; Seljuk
H, J, K Isfendiyaroğlu to 1461
L, M Ottoman after 1461

Fig. 3. Classification of towers according to construction techniques. Source: Bryer and Winfield, 1985: p. 77

According to this typological program, the inner castle's dating contains many uncertainties. However, it is possible to draw the following general conclusions based on the fact that the construction technique, which is associated with the earliest period as type A, is seen in the lower rows of the northern body between towers 30 and 37; it is possible to infer that the oldest acropolis may be in this region and that the remaining parts, between towers 30 and 36, represent the classical citadel. The eastern body is compatible with the G type, which is generally associated with the reconstruction of the Seljuk period and is, therefore, later. Bryer and Winfield (1985) stated that detection was difficult because the southern body was severely damaged as a result of the bombardment of the city during the war between the Russians and the Ottomans in 1853. However, based on the con-

struction techniques of type B, which is thought to represent the Mithridates period, and type G, it is possible to infer that the southern body of the citadel, built in the classical period, went through various repairs during the Seljuk Period.

3.3. Bodies of the Inner Castle

The western part of the inner castle, considered the oldest remaining part, bears traces of the Hellenistic period. For this reason, it is estimated that it is the location of the city's ancient acropolis. Today, the places where the western body is in the best condition are tower number 30 on the north side of Sakarya Street, which passes through the middle of the inner castle, and a 26 m long part of which is still standing. Bryer and Winfield (Bryer, A., & Winfield, D., 1985) stated that this area could not be examined sufficiently because it was formerly used as a bus terminal and was not cleaned. However, after that period, the outer surface of the wall was cleaned mainly, the bus terminal was removed, and partial restorations were made (Crow, 2014). It is seen that the facade was built using the emplecton technique, without the use of mortar, using blocks with isodomos, untreated surfaces, and lines showing the edges (Fig. 4). Not many traces are left of Kumkapı, which is thought to be from the medieval period, located between towers 29 and 30 north of the western body, due to the modern road (Barbaros Street) used to enter the city. The isodomos pattern on the main wall is also found in tower number 29 (Crow, 2016) (Fig. 5).

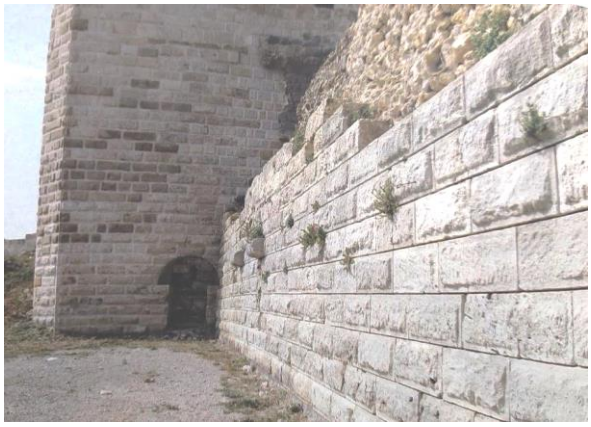

Fig. 4.. West Body and Tower 30. Source: Redford, 2014: p. 30

Fig. 5. Tower 29. Source: URL 1

There is a part with an arcade on the western body, which has yet to survive to the present day, but we know it existed based on the descriptions and engravings. Traveler William Hamilton mentioned in 1835 that there were arches supported by columns that appeared to belong to the Roman period on the inside of the western wall of the citadel and wrote that these were most likely the remains of an aqueduct (Crow, 2014). The arcaded part Hamilton mentioned is visible in the engraving prepared from Jules Laurens' watercolor (Fig. 6). After removing the bus terminal, the continuation of the western body was revealed. As a result, a remarkably well-preserved plan of the tower, which Bryer and Winfield (1985) could not show in their plans because they did not see it and which was numbered 30A by Crow (2014), emerged. It is seen that this wall was built with a series of arcades, and the lower parts of these arcades were filled with blocks glued together with mortar. Crow (2014) argues that the arcaded parts seen in old depictions are part of the fortifications and do not belong to an aqueduct, as implied by Hamilton. Finally, the western body forms the outer wall along lines 30 and 31, except for the parts to the north of the main road that bear traces of the Hellenistic period. In the southern part of the main road, rubble with large blocks and bricks combined with glazes, indicating the construction technique of the Byzantine and Seljuk periods, can be seen (Crow, 2014).

Fig. 6. View of Sinop Harbor and Citadel, Engraving based on a watercolor painting by Jules Laurens. Source: Redford, 2014: p. 24

The northern body extends eastward between tower 30 in the northeast corner of the citadel and tower 39 at the end of the line. It is seen that large blocks taken from old buildings were used in both the body and the towers. Although it is observed that the block sizes change in the body, which even includes column bodies, it is also seen that the blocks are brought together in regular rows. Finally, in his short chapter, Crow states that the quality of the elements protruding outward in a V-shape, which he shows as towers 41 and 43 in the books of Bryer and Winfield (1985), can be attributed to a late Roman or post-Roman date, and that they are closer to the elements, acting as buttresses rather than towers (Fig. 7).

While the northern body has a simple structure consisting of regular rows, it is seen that the eastern body makes excellent use of spolia materials and reused blocks. The irregular image created by the materials used in Laurens's watercolor depicting the oriental body is visible (Fig. 8). Using spolia from the Roman period was widespread in defensive structures during the Byzantine period. The Lonca Gate, through which the main entrance to the citadel is made, can also be seen in Laurens' painting. Although the Lonca Gate, tower number 38, located north of the eastern body in the city plan, is the tower where the Seljuks intervened most extensively, it belongs to the Byzantine period (Crow, 2014). Based on these, there is a margin of error in the views that the citadel mentioned in many secondary sources in the literature was built during the Seljuk period. Finally, although it has many common aspects with the northern body in terms of construction techniques, when its structural features are considered, it is seen that a double wall, moat, and frequently spaced towers were built against any danger because it was more open to attacks from the city (Crow, 2016).

Fig. 7. Northern Body. Source: Redford, 2014: p. 43

The southern body of the citadel, the border directly related to the sea, lies between towers 31 and 35. It has a similar structure with its northern and eastern bodies, but its direct connection with the port and shipyard in the south and its two large arch-shaped openings distinguish it from the others. It is possible to think that the Tersane Gate, which Evliya Çelebi (1996) mentioned while listing the names of the gates of Sinop Castle, is one of them. Bryer and Winfield (1985) mentioned that it was difficult to determine the construction techniques on the southern body, which was exposed to intense bombardment during the war between the Ottomans and the Russians in 1853 due to the extensive damage and subsequent extensive repairs. The interior of these arches was probably filled and closed during the repairs. Because after this period, Sinop began to fall into the background as a port city compared to other Black Sea cities, and as it turned into an intern, efforts were made to make it more sheltered.

3.4. Evaluation of the Function of the Citadel

A high terrace wall in the middle of the inner castle extends east-west and divides the area into two. This wall, which was not included in the city plan of Bryer and Winfield (1985), was shown in

the citadel plan prepared by Crow (2014) (Fig. 9). Although there is evidence of restorations on this wall, which extends from the 30d tower in the western body to the 35d tower in the eastern body, it is thought to date back to the Middle Ages or earlier. On this wall, there are traces of two towers facing the lower part of the inner castle in the south, but no door connecting the two parts can be found. This suggests that these two parts of the citadel have different functions (Crow, 2014; Crow, 2016).

Fig. 8. Looking Towards the Lonca Gate in the Eastern Body, Engraving based on a watercolor painting by Jules Laurens in the late 19th century. Source: Redford, 2014: p. 45

Although the inner castle is safe from the city side, it is not a very suitable place for the royal family as it is located on the first line in case of a possible attack from the land side. This situation raises the question of what purposes the inner castle was used. The lower area, which faces south where the ancient port is located and was later used as a prison, may have been used as a naval base due to the city's limited access and relationship with the sea. The area was likely used for an administrative, military function or as the residence of a high-ranking soldier, as it is located at the top and has a gate opening to the city (Lonca Gate) and is located in a more dominant position over the city (Crow, 2014).

Fig. 9. Current Sinop Citadel Plan Source: Redford, 2014: p. 54

4. CONCLUSION

The defensive structures of Sinop, which have been sought after and desired to be captured throughout history due to its many advantages, can still be seen in the modern city. It is possible to see each of these phases in the inner castle located at the western end of the city, where it connects to the mainland, from these buildings, whose traces from many different periods can be read thanks to different construction techniques.

The seven periods created by Bryer and Winfield, based on 12 different construction techniques they identified in 1985, played a vital role in the dating of the citadel. Suppose a brief evaluation is made according to this classification. In that case, the western end, which is in a dominant position over the city, is associated with the Hellenistic period, the earliest period of the area, and reveals the idea that the ancient city's acropolis may have been built in this area. The northern, eastern, and southern bodies, which are more similar to each other than the western body in terms of construction technique, are associated with the Byzantine and Seljuk periods. Bryer and Winfield (1985) did not question the Seljuk inscriptions on the eastern and northern parts of the citadel. Still, Redford's (2014) detailed study of the inscriptions revealed that the Seljuks made only a series of repairs, not reconstruction, in the citadel.

When both its formation as the city's western border and its relationship with the sea are examined, questions arise about the function of the citadel. It is certain that the upper and lower parts, which are separated by a terrace wall extending in the east-west direction, have different functions since there is no opening on the wall that would allow any passage. Despite its close relationship with the shipyard, the lower part in the south has no connection with the city, suggesting that it was used as a naval center. In comparison, the northern part is directly connected to the city. It is located at

a topographically dominant point, giving rise to the idea that it could be a military administration center or the residence of someone with a high rank.

As a result, Sinop Citadel has gone through processes that will differentiate it in many ways due to its geographical characteristics and has gained different features. For this reason, it still contains many unanswered questions since no other example of a defensive structure has been found in its immediate surroundings that would allow us to compare its features.

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