TURKEY LYCIAN COAST CRUISE, Sept 26 - Oct 3, 2009

Itinerary :

Marmaris - Ekincik/Caunos - Skopea Limani/Kapi Creek - Gemiler island - Göcek - Skopea Limani/Tomb Bay - Wall Bay - Gerbekse Cove - Marmaris

Total mileage 149 nm.

Crew: Jane and Wilhelm. At Göcek, on Wednesday, joined by Catherine and Sevket.

Boat: 'Kimberley', Rodman 41 flybridge motor yacht, chartered from Sunshine Cruising in Marmaris

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Fri 25 Sept Arrival

We arrive at Dalaman airport late evening and take a taxi to the Marmaris' Netsel marina.

Friendly welcome by the team of our charter company. We are allowed to sleep on board this night, our charter starts the next morning.

VIEW FROM MARMARIS FORTRESS OVER THE TOWN QUAY TO THE MARINA



Sat 26 Sept Marmaris to Ekincik/ MyMarina

We take the boat over; as we are customers returning to the same boat this goes without introduction formalities.

The weather forecast is for calm settled weather during the next days.

I have been to the antiquities at Caunos on a land during a holiday many years ago, we are now interested to do the Dalyan river tour from the water: The most practical way is by hire boat from Ekincik, and Mymarina is the best place to stay and start from.

We leave Marmaris harbour and turn east, steering a course to the South of the Turnali Kayasi buoy and Yalincik island, to give the prohibited Karaagac bay area a wide berth.

Mymarina is an amazing place, quasi a "boutique" marina with a lot of attention to design details and fancy landscaping including a mock antique ruin. On their T-jetty they offer power and water, but it is for domestic purposes, boat washing is prohibited.

The large restaurant above, though not cheap, has of a high standard, too.

THE SETTING OF MYMARINA IN EKINCIK BAY



MYMARINA, UPMARKET AND WITH UNUSUAL ORNAMENTS. NATURAL MATERIALS USED WHERE POSSIBLE, "DRESSED" POWER AND WATER POINTS;





Sun 27 Sept Caunos tour by taxi boat, Ekincik

The Dalyan river and Caunos tours by trip boat are organized by the Ekincik cooperation, who appears to have a monopoly.
The services are well organised and safe but prices and choices are prescribed by the coop.

If you want to save money you can talk to other boaters and agree to form a small group before booking a trip boat.
Öz Ekincik Tourism Coop, Tel. +90 0252 266 0192 GSM +90 532 331 5964.

EKINCIK COOP BOAT AT MYMARINA



We book a day trip including the archaeological site of ancient Caunos and past the cliff tombs up to Dalyan village, but are not interested in the sulphury mud baths further upriver.
We are only two of us, so the price of around 100€ seems expensive; anyhow, it is a long trip, the captain is friendly, and there is no time pressure on us.

We start at around 9am to avoid the heat at the archaeological site.
Passing small Delikada island confirms that there is no safe and easy anchorage for private yachts. The pontoon is only used by large trip boats and gulets.

DELIKADA ISLAND OUTSIDE THE DALYAN RIVER ESTUARY



The entrance to the Dalyan river, next to the 'turtle' beach, is so shallow, it can only be safely passed by local boats or by dinghy. Anyhow, we do not spot any private craft anywhere inside the entrance.

TURTLE BEACH, A TOURIST ATTRACTION. THE SHALLOW ENTRANCE TO THE DALYAN RIVER IS TO THE LEFT.

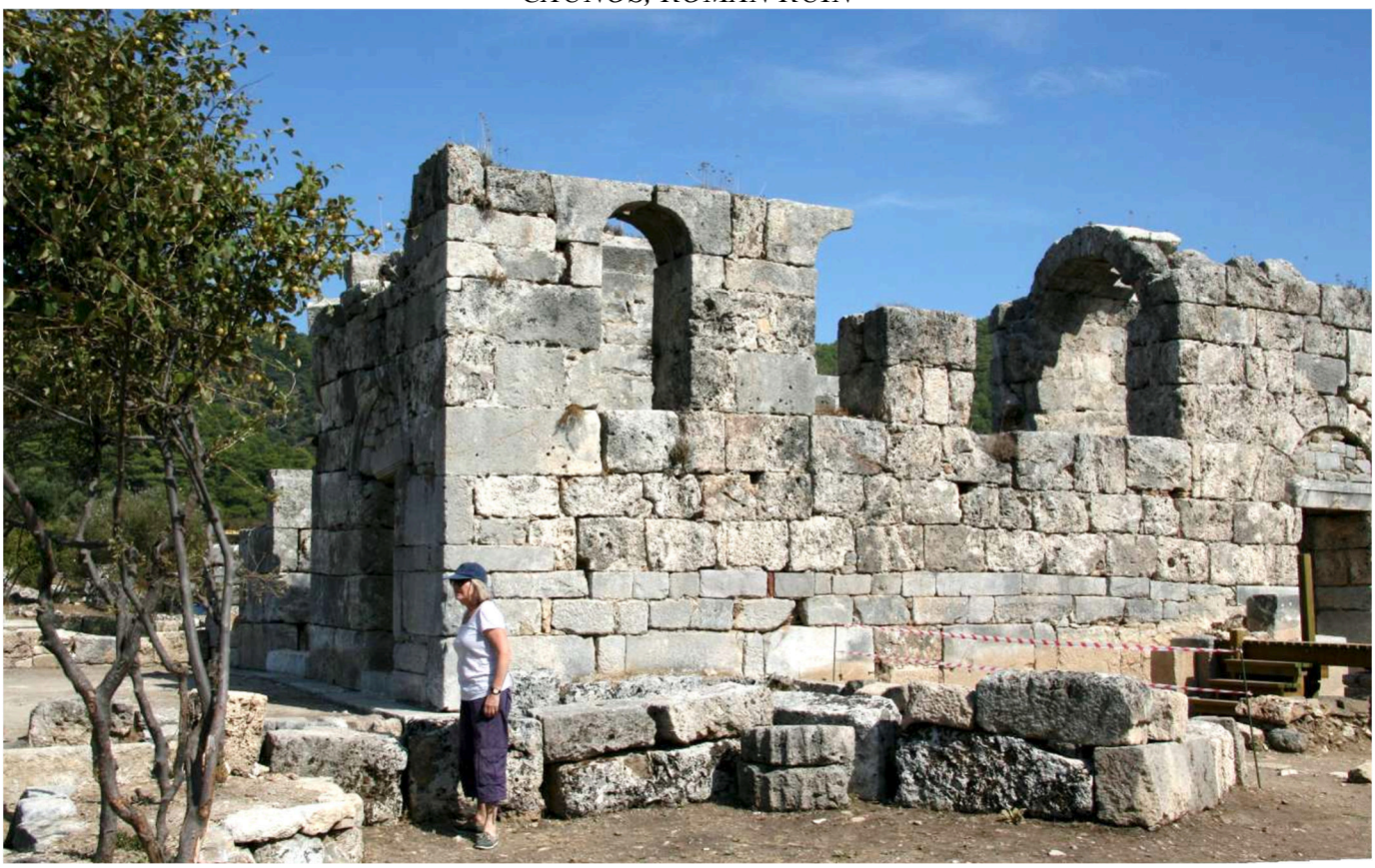


The ruins of ancient Caunos provide a good insight into how this once sizeable town was laid out, with its public buildings and harbours. This is helped by the fact that the site is surrounded by unspoilt nature.

RUINS OF ANCIENT CAUNOS, THE THEATRE. THE DALYAN RIVER IN THE BACKGROUND. THE PORT (NOW SILTED) TOP RIGHT.



CAUNOS, ROMAN RUIN



BELOW: RUINS OF ANCIENT CAUNOS. MAIN ROAD TO AGORA AND PORT. RIVER BASIN WITH THE SEA IN THE DISTANCE.



We continue the river trip through marshes towards Dalyan village and the Lycian rock tombs.

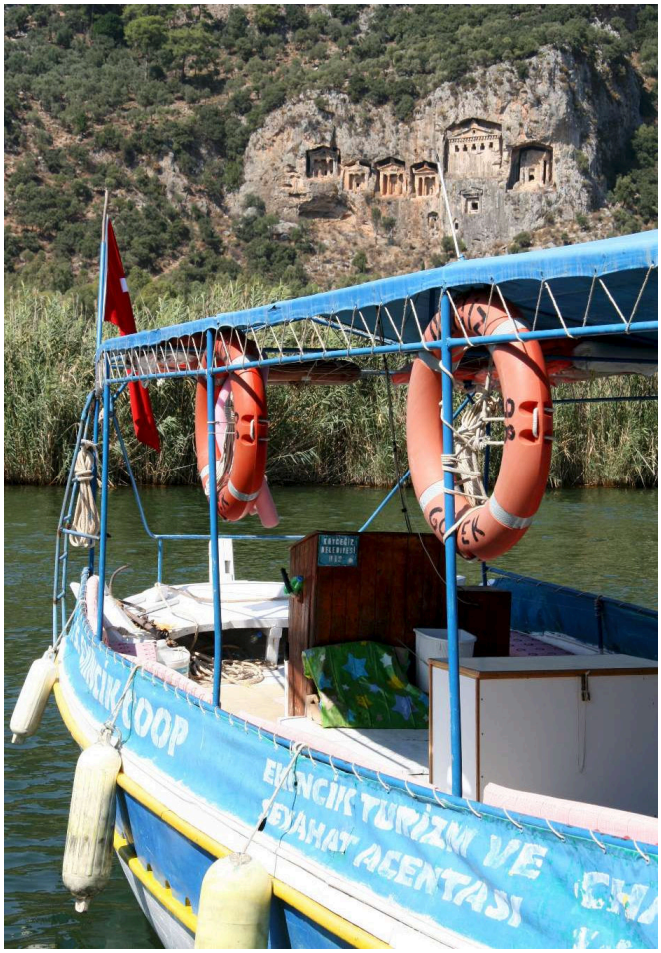
The captain takes us to a riverside restaurant he knows; a visit seems obligatory, but it's lunch time anyway and we need refreshments after the sightseeing.

DALYAN "ALBUM SHOT" (note it was before the outbreak of selfies' madness)



IN DALYAN VILLAGE





Dalyan village is worth a visit for the views to the rock tombs across the river. It has, anyhow, been mostly absorbed by mainstream tourism ...

In the afternoon our taxi boat takes us back through the maze of river marshes; on the final passage between Delikada island and Mymarina the usual day wind gets up and increases the sea state.

We aren't particularly fond of being part of run of the mill sightseeing routines but, despite all points of critique, we find the tour quite unique and are glad we did it.

Dinner at Mymarina restaurant.

Mon 28 Sept Ekincik - Kizilkuyruk Bay- Kapi Creek (Skopea Limani)

We leave Mymarina in the morning and make our way towards the bay of Fethiye, the cruising area called Skopea Limani that includes the Göcek archipelago.

Along the passage, there is a possibility to detour and anchor at Baba island, in front of Sarigerme holiday resort. Being on a fast boat, however, we decide to go directly to one of beautiful coves in the Fethye bay area.

We pass Kurdoglu point and try Kizilkuyruk cove.
There are a few boats anchored but there is still more than enough space in this nice swimming cove.
The usual way of mooring in Turkey is anchoring with a stern line ashore. This not only helps saving space, but is a necessity where water depth increases sharply away from the shore. The downside is having to get on a (rocky) shore with a rope and finding where to fix it, e.g. round a dodgy tree or lump of boulder (the tree variant is not well liked by locals I hear...). Purpose made metal mooring posts have recently

emerged in some places, they help a lot.
We are only anchoring here for a short stay - plus, we are short handed - so don't bother with a land line.

Boating is not always safe around the rocky coves. A spooky reminder can be seen on the other side, a new looking motor yacht has sunken at the tip of the cove. People are around in a dinghy and appear to evaluate the damage and take items off. The yacht might have hit a rock, or the anchor didn't hold.
We do not spot any sign of fuel pollution from the accident, so feel it's safe to swim.

KIZILKUYRUK COVE





For the night, we go round the cape and enter Skopea Limani, in particular the bay South of Göcek with its numerous coves and islands.

The first cove we visit is picturesque Kapi Creek; we are offered an alongside berth on the inner side of the restaurant pontoon.

We are amazed, when minutes later a catamaran gets squeezed in in front of us. Using every inch!
Most of the yachts around us are sailing boats, apart from one very large American motor yacht.

The sea is transparent and turquoise, reflecting the lush vegetation around; there are rocks and fragments of old walls in and under the water.
It's a wonderful late afternoon and we go swimming straight from the boat's bathing platform. Swimming here is like in a heated swimming pool, only much better.

Jane spots an old sea shell on the ground, in just 3m depth, and sets her ambition to dive for this "huge" treasure. Finally the trophy emerges, but turns out to be quite weathered and far smaller than it had appeared under water. Still a nice memory.

After a walk around the cove we have a nice dinner at the restaurant.

ON KAPI CREEK RESTAURANT JETTY





KAPI CREEK, IN THE EVENING



Tue 29 Sept Kapi Creek - Gemiler island - Göcek

Our final target for today is Göcek, where we will choose a berth in a marina, to be joined by our friends Catherine and Sevket the following day.

For the day we fancy visiting Gemiler Adasi (St Nicholas island), described as an ancient pilgrimage site with Byzantine ruins. It is situated to South of Fethiye and the Karadag peninsula.

LEAVING KAPI CREEK



The route leads along a craggy coastline with rocky small islets (the Karakaören Büku).
Guide books warn that the anchorage along Gemiler island is often crowded by gulets and trip boats, and difficult due to a rocky underwater ledge.

We still try to get there, right in front of the site entrance, and find that on this late morning there are hardly any other boats.
As soon as our intention to anchor becomes clear, helpers rush to us on a small boat and offer to take our landlines ashore (prepare 30m lines!).
In return we buy a pancake from mum who is preparing it on their boat, and offer the guy some tip.
However helpful they are, remember you are a welcome guest, not an old mate.

There is a small entrance fee to the island; the small longish island is steep and the path leads along a range of church ruins, with impressing views from the top.

We have the site almost to ourselves; the location and views of the surroundings, the quietness of the ruins of byzantine churches, with some hovering clouds over the mountains on the mainland, create a memorable atmosphere.

MOORED AT GEMILER ADASI (ST NICHOLAS' ISLAND)



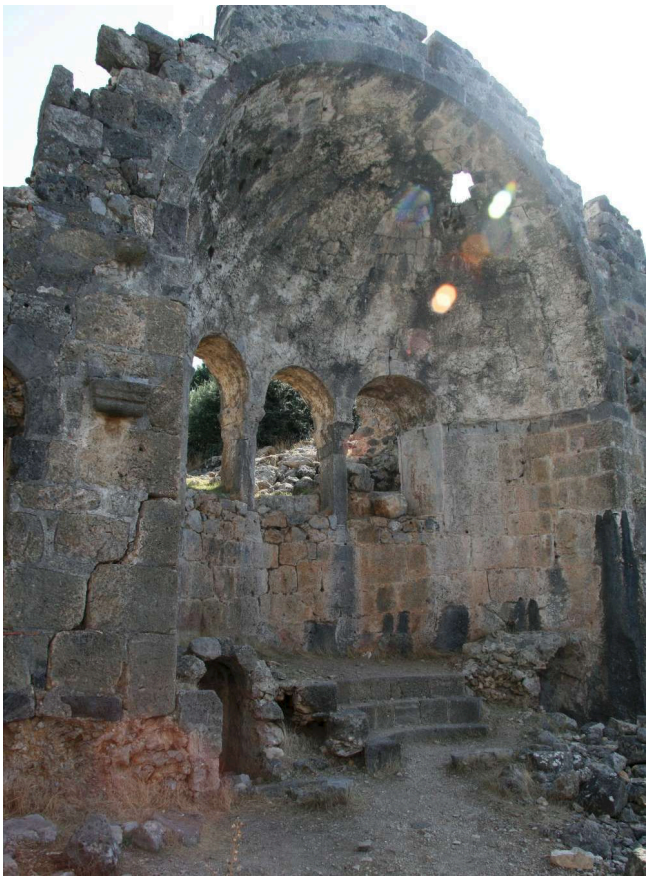
GEMILER ADASI LOOKING W



THE KARAKAÖREN ANCHORAGE (SW OF GEMILER). LOTS OF ROCKS



THE APSIS OF ONE OF THE BYZANTINE CHURCHES. *THE ONCE FULLY COVERED STAIRWAY THAT LED ALL THE WAY UP TO THE TOP SANCTUARY.*





GERMILER CHANNEL. 'Kimberley' is the boat to right'



GEMILER ISLAND, VIEW FROM TOP TO EAST



After our sunny and hot walk round the island, and relaxing with tea in the shadow of the small place at the entrance, we have an excellent swim and snorkel over the underwater walls of sunken buildings; then cast off lines.

The clouds have come closer and, keen to stay in the sun rather than getting into a storm, I open the throttles and go round the peninsula and back to Göcek bay (by which time the clouds seem to have mostly disappeared..).

Slow cruising around Tersane, Yassika Adasi islets and Göcek island, admiring craggy cliffs and nice coves, finally arriving at Göcek.

We call Skopea marina and are advised which berth to take.
Have decided to use the anchor but a small embarrassment happens: Having put down the anchor and letting out chain going astern, the chain jams in the locker, obviously a stubborn pile and loop must have formed that needs toppling to untangle; I try but cannot get it loose just operating the winch, and am stuck some 15m away from the pontoon.
So, it's anchor up and starting again, this time using their mooring line.

Later, I let out the whole chain to untangle it.

GÖCEK ADASI, LIGHTHOUSE ON THE MAIN APPROACH CHANNEL TO GÖCEK



BERTHED IN SKOPEA MARINA, GÖCEK



VIEW OF GÖCEK TOWN FROM SKOPEA MARINA



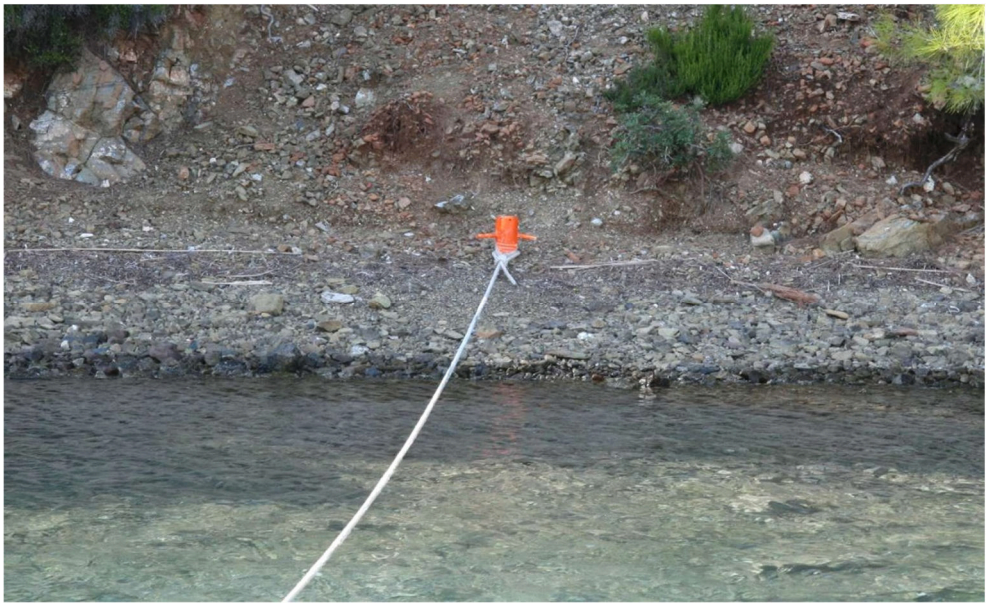
Göcek is a clean modern place, thoughtfully developed with no high rising concrete. It has four or five marinas and growing.
We have a walk along the sea promenade with plenty of restaurants to choose from.
Countless idle gulets are moored along the quays. If they all went out with customers in high season I imagine the coves must be crowded.

Wed 30 Sept Göcek archipelago - Yassica Adalari- Tomb Bay

With our friends on board, we set out to nearby Yassica Adalari (Yassica island) anchorage.
The anchorage in the N of the group of 12 low lying tiny island, looks beautiful and seems very popular; we are carefully watching the depth and choose a space, but on first attempt the anchor does not hold well. We look for a better position and anchor again.
With Sevket, as second guy on board, who swims ashore with a landline, the manoeuvre is much easier.

YASSICA ADALARI ANCHORAGE





HELPFUL POST

For the night we choose to go to Tomb Bay (Bedri Rahmi Koyu).
Restaurant Nomand is relatively quiet and we easily find a berth on their jetty. We notice a drop in temperature compared to Göcek, maybe because the cove is facing East so has no evening sun.

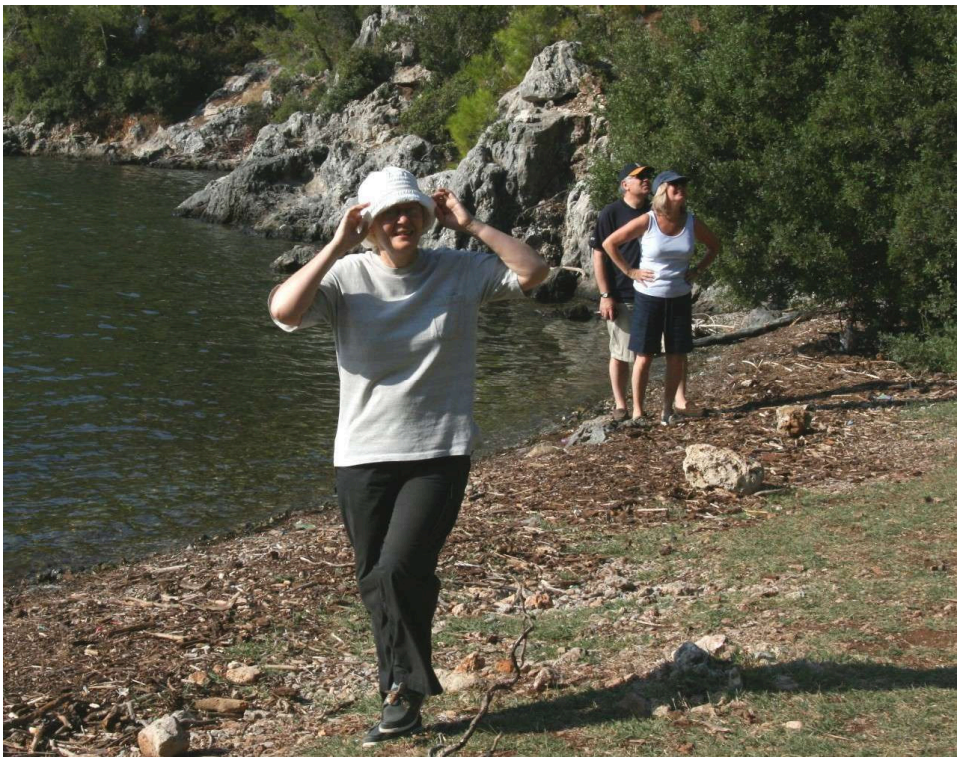
APPARENTLY ABANDONED JETTY IN TOMB BAY. NOMAD RESTAURANT AND JETTY BEHIND



Have dinner at Nomad restaurant.

Thu 1 Oct Tomb Bay - Ruin Bay/Wall Bay

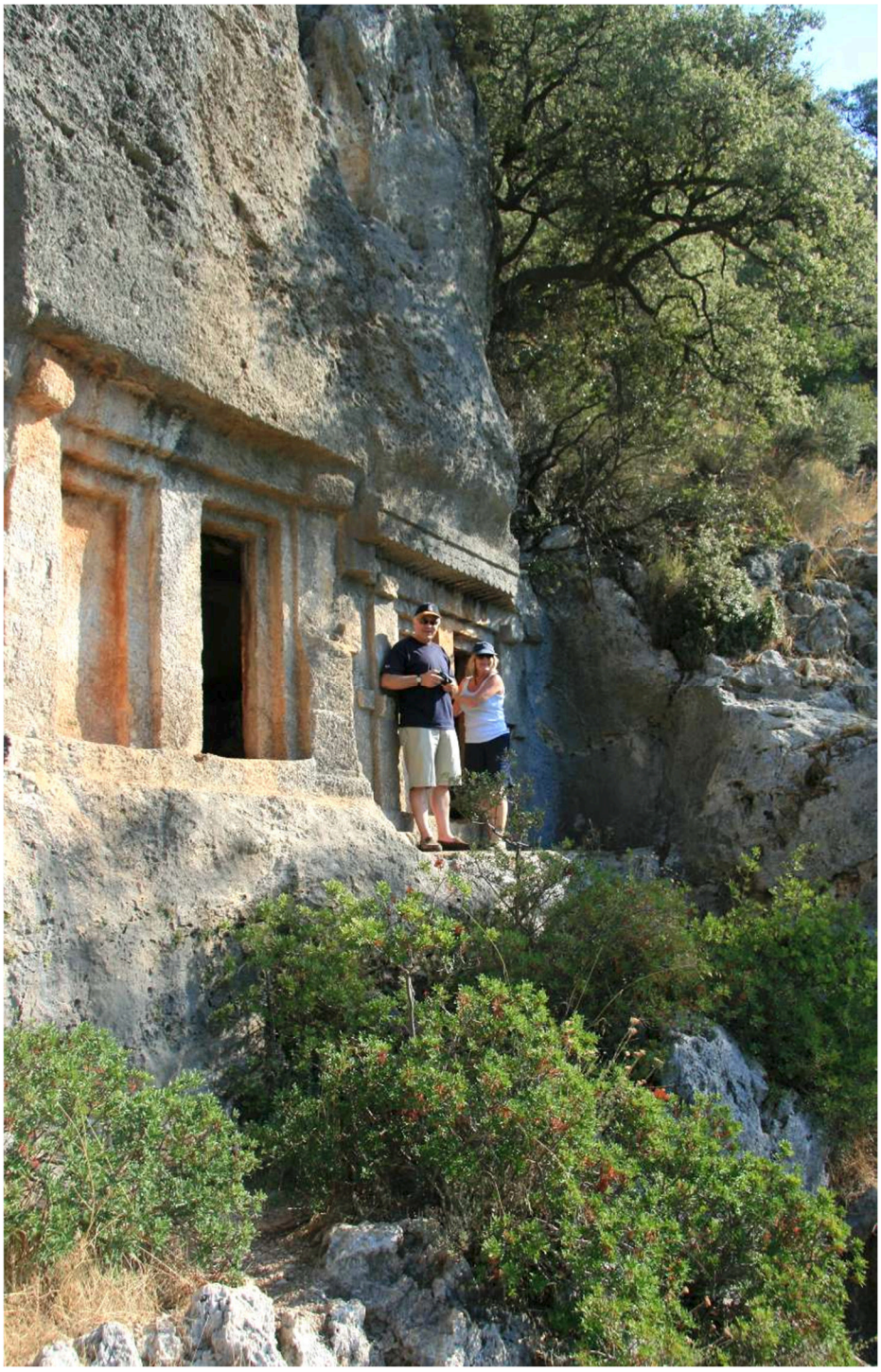
The cove is a scenic place and has its name after a couple of Lycian rock tombs in the cliffs on its N shore, which can be seen from the cove.
After breakfast at Nomad's we make a nice walk to the tombs, leading through unspoilt nature. Of course, the tombs are empty shells, but worth visiting, if for nothing else than for their dramatic setting and beautiful views over the bay.

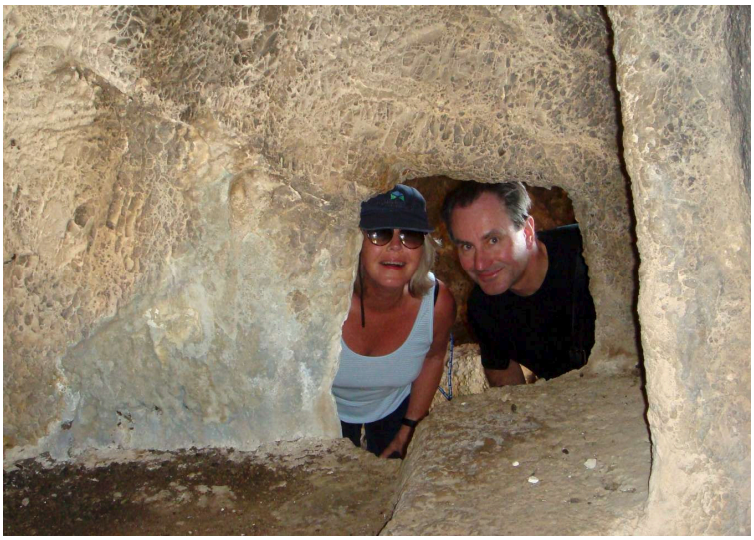


PLANNING A TOMB RAID









CLIMBING TO THE SECOND TOMB



From Tomb bay we venture on to south and have a look at Sarsala Isk and Manastir Koyu, then decide to go to Wall Bay, where we find an inviting restaurant with a long jetty. We moor alongside.

Taking out the dinghy we venture over to Ruin Bay (Hamam Koyu), named after its half submerged ancient ruins called Cleopatra's bath.

It is a magical setting under pine tress; we go for a swim around the ruins.

A restaurant, that in 2006 was reported to be here, has disappeared. Gulets anchor off the shore E of the baths' ruins.

WALL BAY RESTAURANT AND JETTY



VIEW TOWARDS RUIN BAY



ESSENTIAL SERVICES ARE CATERED FOR ...



We have a good dinner at the Wall Bay restaurant.

Fri 2 Oct Wall Bay - Gerbekse Cove - Marmaris

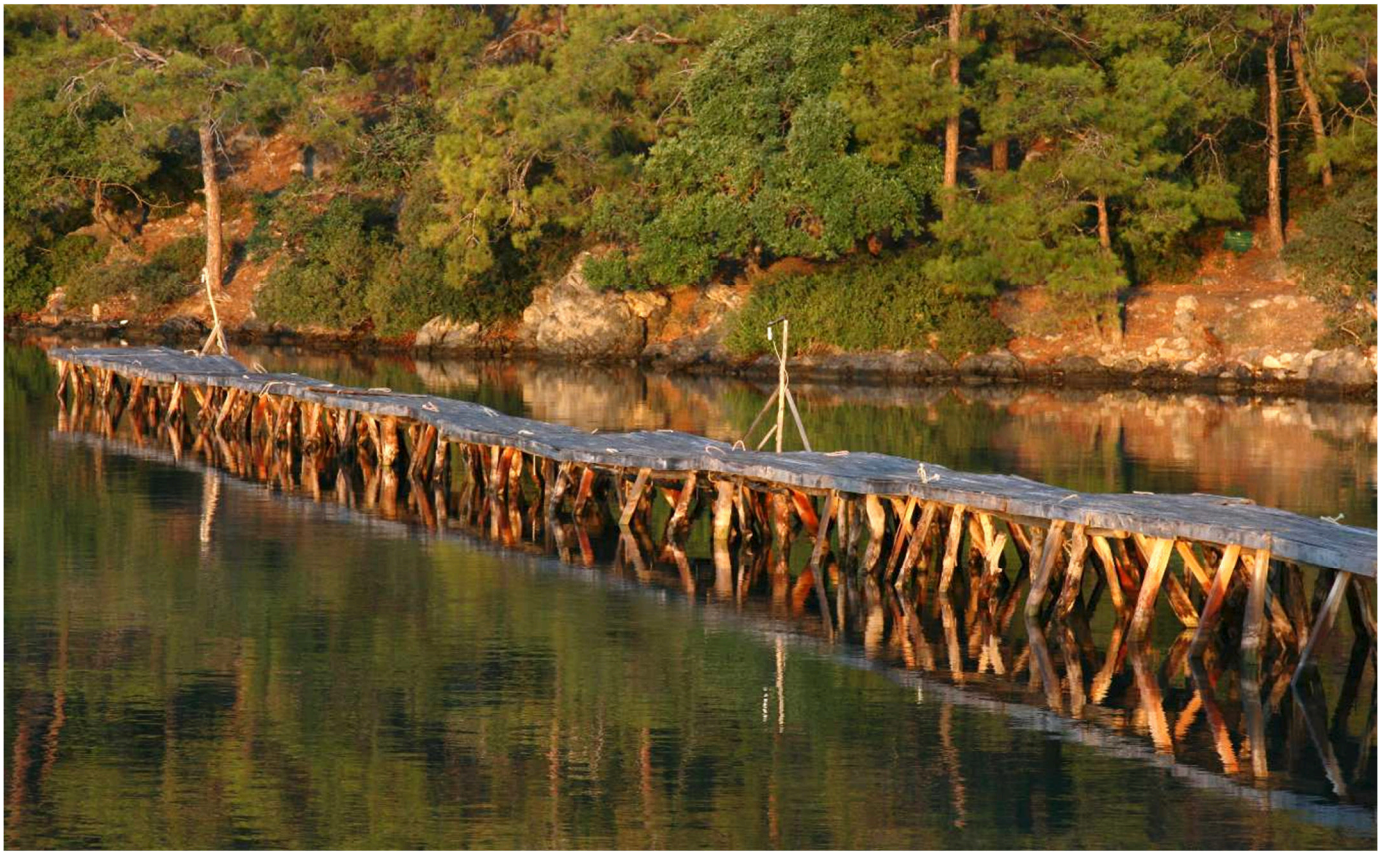
It's our last day at sea, by its end we need to be back to Marmaris.

The wind forecast has been for stronger winds with an increase in the afternoon. Given my experience of afternoon winds even without warnings, I want to get going earlier and across nearer to Marmaris by noon to ensure a comfortable passage.

When we asked in the evening, we were told that having breakfast and fresh bread would be no problem at 9am, but the staff in the morning has, annoyingly, different ideas of timing. After a considerable wait we finally get served, and shortly later leave the cove.

Thankfully, my concerns were a waste of time, the weather forecast is proving wrong. Our passage is in calm seas and at good speed.

MORNING IN WALL BAY - DISUSED JETTY



WAITING FOR BREAKFAST



NO SIGN OF SEA STATE



Arriving early in the Marmaris region, we decide to explore another cove.

The Gerbekse Cove (Ince Creek, Byzantine Creek), near Ciftlik cove, S of Kadirga peninsula, is a safe anchorage and, yet again, with some historic ruins, including a Byzantine church.

It is visited by trip boats from Marmaris, which anchor off the beach on its end. There is enough room to anchor elsewhere.
We have lunch and swim; I make the short walk to the ruins and find nice views.

From here it's a short trip back to Marmaris where we arrive in time for our friends to catch their bus.

The obligatory visit to the fuel pontoon ensues. This time there is a bit of a wait due to a queue of sailing boats ahead of us.

GERBEKSE COVE





BYZANTINE CHURCH RUIN



BACK IN MARMARIS - VIEW FROM FORTRESS OVER MARMARIS BAY



Sat 3 Oct Marmaris and return

We spend the day sightseeing in Marmaris, visiting the fortress and walking around Old Town and Quays.
Evening flight to London

This concludes a week of almost perfect cruising, in beautiful nature and with the best possible weather, clear balmy waters, picturesque ancient sites, and tasty cuisine.

Notes:

I do not speak Turkish and find the names of places sometimes confusing; I am generally using those in Heikell's Turkish Waters Pilot.
There are local names which are not in the guide, and differ in translations.
E.g. Tomb bay is called Quellenbucht (Spring cove) in a German log.
Kizilkuyruk bay is called Drachenbucht (Dragon cove) in the same log.

As a guidance, do not rely too much on descriptions of small restaurants in coves, they seen to change rapidly. Within Skopea Limani (the gulf around Göcek and Fethiye) there is much choice and distances are small, so you can always try the "next bay".

The usual way of anchoring in coves in Turkey, with a stern line ashore, is sometimes easier said than done. In narrow spaces, with side wind, if you are short handed or on your own, the manoeuvre can be tricky. For a sail boat with large sporting crew, one jumping into the water and taking a line ashore is simple, less so for a motor boat with short handed, and perhaps not as sporting, crew. Not to forget the issue of finding secure fixing points ashore, given the scarceness of mooring posts if any at all.
Anyhow, near restaurants the owners will help with anchoring.
In other popular places locals may come along on boats who sell bread, pan cakes, or merchandise, they will also offer help.

Distances motored (nm):
Marmaris - Ekincik 21
Ekincik - Kartoglu Burnu 21
Kartoglu B - Kapi Creek 7
Kapi C - Germiler island 14
Germiler - Göcek 21
Göcek - Tomb Bay 7
Tomb Bay - Wall Bay 4
Wall Bay - Gerbekse cove 41
Gerbekse Cove - Marmaris - 13
Total: 149 nm

Fuel consumption 703ltr (4.7 lit/nm @ 2000rev/21 kn approx.)

Chart: Imray G36 Marmaris - Geyikova Adasi
Guide: R.Heikell Turkish waters and Cyprus Pilot
Other brochure: The Bay Express (commercial, 2007). bayexpress.info

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End of log.