THE NETWORK OF SETTLEMENTS, CHURCHES AND ROADS IN THE HINTERLAND OF MYRA IN THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

By

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To my family,

ABSTRACT

THE NETWORK OF SETTLEMENTS, CHURCHES AND ROADS IN THE HINTERLAND OF MYRA IN THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

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Keywords: Lycia, Myra, Road network, Saint Nicholas of Myra, Saint Nicholas of Sion, Hagiography, Monasteries, Pilgrimage Center.

This thesis examines the network of roads and churches in the Byzantine Period in the hinterland of Myra, which was not only the religious and administrative capital of Lycia but one of the most important pilgrimage centers. The mountainous hinterland of Myra within its rugged topography housed many small settlements and ecclesiastical buildings that were linked to each other through a rural road system and experienced a period of prosperity in the fifth to mid-seventh centuries as in other parts of Asia Minor such as the Isaurian Countryside and the Konya Plain. However, Myra can be distinguished from these other examples as it embraced a combination of three pilgrimage activities; the pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, the pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Nicholas and the local pilgrimage to the monastery of Nicholas of Sion. In this thesis, I investigate how pilgrimage influenced the built environment in the hinterland of Myra in the early Byzantine Period. This work will also present relevant data and new discoveries made in the course of the systemic field surveys conducted in the region in 2010 and 2011. In addition to the material

evidence, a sixth-century *vita*, the Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion, which illustrates the life in the countryside and provides local toponyms, which are re-interpreted for the mapping on the topography of the villages and churches mentioned in the *vita*. Further, in this work, a network graph with “nodes” and “ties” was modelled and applied to the region using textual evidence to visualize the local pilgrimage and communication network as well as the central position of the monastery of Saint Nicholas of Sion in this system.

ÖZET

BİZANS DÖNEMİ'NDE MYRA HİNTERLANDINDA YERLEŞİM KİLİSE VE YOL AĞI

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Tez Danışmanı: Alessandra Ricci

Anahtar kelimeler: Lykia, Myra, Yol ağı, Myra'lı Aziz Nikolaos, Sion'lu Aziz Nikolaos, Hagiografi, Manastırlar, Hac Merkezi.

Bu tezde Bizans Dönemi'nde, sadece dini ve idari başkent olmayıp, aynı zamanda en önemli hac merkezlerinden birisi olan Myra'nın hinterlandındaki yol ağı ve kiliseleri incelenmektedir. Myra'nın dağlık hinterlandının engebeli topografisinde, Isauria kırsal bölgesinde, Konya düzlüğü gibi Anadolu'nun diğer yerlerinde de gözlendiği üzere, birbirine yerel bir yol ağı ile bağlanmış ve beşinci yüzyıldan yedinci yüzyılın ortalarına kadar bir refah süreci yaşamış pek çok küçük yerleşim ve kilise yapıları barındırmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Myra üç değişik hac ibadeti için önem arzeden bir yer olarak bu diğer örneklerden ayrılmaktadır. Bunlar, Myra'nın deniz hac yolu üzerinde olduğu Kutsal topraklara yapılan hac, Aziz Nikolaos mezarına yapılan hac ve Sion'lu Nikolaos'un manastırına yapılan yerel hac ibadetleridir. Bu tezde, hac ibadetinin Erken Bizans Dönemi'nde Myra hinterlandındaki mamur çevreyi nasıl etkilediği inceliyorum. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, bölgede 2009-2010 yıllarında yürütülen sistematik yüzey araştırmaları

esnasında tespit edilen ilgili bilgileri ve yeni keşifleri de sunmaktadır. Bu bulunutlara ek olarak da, Sion'lu Aziz Nikolaos'un hayatının içerildiği altıncı yüzyıla ait bir Vita bulunmaktadır. Bu metinde kırsal bölgedeki yaşamı, bölgede anılan köylerin ve kiliselerin yerlerinin tespit edilmesi için yeniden yorumlanan yer isimleri bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada, içerisinde "nodes (boğumlar)" ve "ties (bağlantılar)" bulunan bir ağ grafiği modellendirilmiş ve metin verilerini yerel hac ibadetini ve iletişim ağını, aynı zamanda bu sistem içerisinde Sion'lu Nikolaos'un manastırının merkezi yerini görselleştirmek bölgeye uygulanmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

"Another month passed, and how little do I know about Lycia!"[1]. These words were an expression of amazement of a traveler, Sir Charles Fellows, towards Lycia, rather than just a self-confession. And today, after more than one hundred and fifty years, Lycia still continues to astonish scholars of the twenty-first century with archaeological data derived from both ongoing and former excavations at many sites. While these excavations draw the attention, Lycia preserves many more sites, up in the mountains, on crags, in hidden plains or concealed beneath dense undergrowth.

The inspiration of this thesis derived from the systematic field survey in the mountains "*Likya/Pamfilya Ulaşım Sistemlerinin Epigrafik ve Tarihi Coğrafik Açılardan Araştırılması* (Epigraphic and Historical-Geographic Research on the systems of the land transportation network)" which was directed by the late Prof. Sencer Şahin of the Department of Ancient Languages and Cultures at Akdeniz University with the permission of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the period from 2004 to 2014. I had the opportunity to participate in the survey between 2009 and 2011. This field survey, of which I remain a member, is now directed by Prof. N. Eda Akyürek Şahin, and has several objectives mainly concerning the Roman road system, including locating and recording the remains of the roads in Central Lycia mentioned in the lenghty inscription of the *Stadiasmus Patarensis*[2], a

[1] Fellows 1840, 209.

[2] The blocks of the monument were found in Patara following an act of arson in 1993. The inscription on the monument is inscribed on three faces of the monument. The front face contains a dedication dated 46 A.D. by the Lycians to the emperor Claudius, who was represented as the saviour of the Lycian nation and the restorer of the ancestral laws of Lycians, as he finished the Lycian civil war and organized the region as Roman province in 43 A.D. through Quintus Veranius, the first governer of *provincia Lyciae*. The other two sides of the monument carry the inscription recording a list of roads renovated/constructed and measured between the settlements of Lycia, together with the

name given by Sencer Şahin, determining the status of the settlements (city or village etc.) through investigating the epigraphic and architectural remains, and compiling a comprehensive cultural inventory of the region as a conclusion (See the related maps in Fig. 1 and Fig. 3). During this systematic field research, we found the remains of ancient roads, rock-cut or paved and most of the time supported with retaining walls, as well as inscriptions such as milestones, funerary steles, votive steles and, in addition, tower farms which formed part of a defense system and also served for agricultural activities, presses, cisterns, village settlements and ecclesiastical buildings. A part of the survey also investigated the mountainous region between the western slopes of Alacadağ, the Myros Valley and the Kasaba Plain.

Both the material remains and the textual evidence such as inscriptions and literary sources are employed in this thesis. In the case of Myra, we are fortunate to have a Vita of St. Nicholas of Sion, a holy person, who was born and lived in a village of Myra in the sixth century. This singular text is vitally important as it relates the social life in the countryside and provides a number of toponyms and the names of churches, some of which can be localized on map.

Since reading the modern translations of ancient and Byzantine texts may result in misunderstandings and consequent misinterpretations, the direct reading from the original Greek texts is preferred instead of modern translations. An inquiring point of view has been adopted, not only towards the literary sources but also to the works of modern scholarship.

distances between them in *stadion*. For the essential account on the monuments see Işık et al. 2001, Şahin and Adak 2007 and Şahin 2014. For the particular results of field surveys see, Şahin 2008; Şahin 2009; Takmer 2010; Şahin 2010a; Şahin 2010b; Şahin 2011; Onur and Alkan 2011; Uzunoğlu and Taşdelen 2011; Alkan 2011b; Şahin 2013a; Şahin 2013b; Takmer and Oktan 2013; Onur and Oktan 2013; Takmer and Alkan 2013; Uzunoğlu and Taşdelen 2013; For the general maps concerning the field surveys see Fig. 1 and Fig. 3.

A better understanding of the road system could not be accomplished through focusing only on the roads themselves and limiting the study of road network solely to the Roman period, without comprehending all of these elements, the location of which were not random, but had a close relationship to the existing roads.

This thesis investigates the built environment, mainly the roads, ecclesiastical buildings and settlements within the mountainous hinterland of Myra from Late Antiquity into the Middle Byzantine periods based upon the network between them. This area, between the western slopes of Alacadağ, Myros Valley and the Kasaba Plain was already inhabited as early as the Classical Period, and the settlements to a large extent survived into the Roman Period. The landscape with its dense forest vegetation and terraced plains enabling agricultural production was vitally important for the local economy, more importantly for Myra, a metropolis of the province of Lycia, which was dependent upon its rural lands for the supply of essential supplies such as grain, flour and wine. In the Late Antique Period this region was densely furnished with ecclesiastical buildings; churches, chapels and monasteries. This new religion with its own architectural presence was intermingled with the most important elements of the built environment of the countryside; the roads and settlements. This thesis aims at to investigate the relationships between these elements. This work will also lead us from city-oriented research into the countryside and it provides a broad overview which does not specifically focus upon the architecture of single structures.

The religion was the most important element of the social life in the countryside in Byzantium. However, the mountainous hinterland of Myra differed from many other contemporary regions in both the quantity and high quality of its

ecclesiastical structures. One of the main goals is to understand the reason for this "richness."

The first chapter provides background information concerning the history of Lycia in the Late Antique and Byzantine periods with a separate approach to the administrative and to the religious developments which also provides a brief insight into the belief systems of the Lycians, namely paganism, Judaism and Christianity. From Lycia the frame is narrowed down to Myra. The suburban settlements of Myra: Andriake, Sura and Gürses, situated within the political territories of Myra but which did not belong to the rural network of settlements between the Myros Valley and Alacadağ are also addressed.

The second chapter deals with the two major holy figures from Myra, namely Nicholas of Myra and Nicholas of Sion. First, the birth and the spread of the cult of Saint Nicholas is presented in respect to both the hagiographical literature and the art historical material. Two sections are dedicated to the complex of Saint Nicholas in Myra. The first summarizes the architectural plan in stages from a tomb into a middle Byzantine pilgrimage center. The second is a heretical endeavor which questions the function of the complex that has been acknowledged as monastic foundation in consideration of the modern scholarly approaches concerning monasteries. This chapter further examines the personage of Nicholas of Sion and his Vita. Here, the emphasis is placed upon the meaning of a rural patron-saint and his role in the life of the countryside applying the recent approaches from a sociological perspective on holy men. Moreover, the credibility of hagiographic texts as historical sources is argued in respect to the Life of Nicholas of Sion in the light of the inspiring methodological model provided by the Bollandist Delehaye who considered hagiography "une branche de la science historique". The chapter subsequently

presents the settlements and churches mentioned in the Vita. At this point, modern scholars' suggestions concerning the localizations of some of the village settlements and ecclesiastical buildings are discussed.

The third chapter focuses on the role of roads from a contextual point of view and presents the main land routes that lead to Myra. The topographical division of Myra's hinterland is examined in order to understand the layout of the elements of this complex network.

Chapter Four provides a closer look at the interconnectivity between the settlements and the churches such as Alacahisar Complex, Karabel/Asarcık Complex, Alakilise Valley and Günağı Church, by dividing the relevant geography into three regions: Nearby the main route (from Myra to Arneai), the west of the main route and the east of the main route.

The History of Research

Myra was presented to the academic world by 19th century European explorers of Lycia including: Beaufort, Fellows, Spratt & Forbes and Texier.[3] With something of an encompassing attitude, their method was basically to collect every piece of information from different materials and periods. Their works included not only notes and sketches of the archaeological remains but also includes notes on the social life, nature and geography in Myra and in the surrounding Turkish villages.

The first systematic research on Myra was conducted by Borchhardt and his team in the 1960s. Their research was published in 1975 as "Myra: Eine Lykische Metropole in antiker und byzantinischer Zeit".[4] In this work only a chapter is

[3] See Beaufort 1817, 24-29; Fellows 1840, 192-204; Spratt and Forbes 1847, I, 122-142; Fellows 1852, 355-363; Texier 1862, 690-694.

[4] Borchhard 1975.

reserved for Byzantine monuments such as the church of St. Nicholas and the other chapels in urban Myra.

The VIII. volume of the Tabula Imperii Byzantini series prepared by Hellenkemper and Hild remains the most comprehensive reference guide to the archaeology and history of Lycia in Byzantine times, not only aiming at *poleis* but also the geography, hydrography and settlements in the remote inland areas.[5] In this volume there is a section is concerning Myra, as the capital of the province after the reforms of Diocletian. In this section a historical and archaeological review from the Roman to the Seljuk period of Myra is given. Despite the absence of plans of the sites that are studied, this volume remains useful providing the reader with extensive further literature. However, it excludes excavation reports from Myra and does not support its context in reference to the new finds. The entries primarily rely upon secondary sources and literary evidence. Furthermore, it can be deduced that the volumes were not composed after intensive field surveys.

The works Concerning the Byzantine material in Myra's countryside were relatively few. Spratt & Forbes, Rott, Petersen & Luschan travelled in the hinterland and recorded the churches they saw.[6] Later in the mid 20th century Harrison discovered new ecclesiastical buildings during the course of his expedition and wrote articles on the churches and their sculpture.[7]

The work that shaped the direction of research into rural Myra has been the publication of the Life of St. Nicholas of Myra. The German scholar Anrich edited and published the hagiographic texts pertaining to Saint Nicholas in 1913 -1917:

[5] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004.

[6] Spratt and Forbes 1847, I, 139-142; Rott 1908, 75-76; Petersen and Luschan 1889, 38-41.

[7] Harrison 1963, 1979a and 1979b.

Hagios Nikolaos. Der Heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche[8]. This work was significant, for Anrich detected and classified the miracles of the two homonymous saints from Myra. Through his work, the identification of St. Nicholas of Sion, dating from the 6th century could be established. This was a St. Nicholas different from the St. Nicholas of Myra of the 4th century, the so-called Santa. The edition of the life of St. Nicholas of Sion revealed that some of the miracles, which were believed to belong to St. Nicholas of Myra, were originally narrated in the life of St. Nicholas of Sion. Miracles such as the destruction of a cypress tree with an evil spirit can be seen in the well known 13th century icon of St. Nicholas of Myra in the monastery of St. Catherine in Sina. These miracles were represented in the paintings in the no longer surviving part of the cycle in the south-eastern burial chamber of the church of St. Nicholas in Myra[9]. The dating of this burial chamber to the 11th century[10] and the 13th century icon in Sina indicate the intertwining of the miracles of these two saints occurred in the occluded dark years of the middle ages.

The Vita added a different dimension to rural studies in Myra for as its content is very rich in topographical and hagiographical information. Anrich collected and listed the toponyms that are mentioned in these hagiographic texts. Foss interpreted these place names in his article and suggested new localizations.[11] The text gained in reputation following its translation into English by Ihor Ševčenko and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko in 1984[12]. The translation lacks a commentary, but the introduction provides general insights into the identity of Nicholas and the other.

[8] Anrich 1913 and 1917.

[9] Ötüken 2010, 189.

[10] Peschlow 1990, 240; Alpaslan 1998, 166.

[11] Foss 1991.

[12] Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984.

The Greek text was translated into German in 1997 by Blum[13]. He also analysed the Vita and approached the issue from a socio-economic and demographic perspective in his article *Demographie und Kirchenorganisation in Zentrallykien: Bemerkungen zur Vita Nicolae Sionitae*[14]. This article can be considered a attempt at a commentary for the Vita. Yet it does not touch upon the religious characteristics of Myra, such as the hagiographic information and the spread of the martyr's cult in the countryside.

[13] Blum 1997.

[14] Blum 1995.

CHAPTER I: LYCIA AND MYRA

It is appropriate to begin with the connotation of Lycia in antiquity as a geographical and political term. When referring to Lycia, we usually tend to think of Lycia as it was in the Roman period occupying the peninsula at the southwestern corner of Asia Minor, which corresponds to modern Teke Yarımadası in the western part of the province of Antalya. However, the territories of Lycia in the Archaic and Classical periods were much smaller. Homer's Iliad is the earliest Greek text that contains references to the land of Lycia, whose people fought on the side of the Trojans under the leadership of Sarpedon from the Lycian city of Xanthus. It was argued by Bryce that Lycia to Homer could have corresponded to just the Xanthos Valley[15]. Further, Bryce suggests that before the Persian invasion of Lycia in the fifth century, Lycian settlements around this region shared cultural elements and traditions but they did not establish a political coherence[16] (Fig. 1). In fact, it could have been the Persians who initiated a certain level of administrative organization in Lycia through incorporating Lycia into the first satrapy in 516/515 B.C[17]. After the destruction caused through the resistance of the Lycians to the Persian troops Lycian settlements were re-established and re-populated under Persian control as the archaeological evidence from Xanthos indicates[18]. Persian influence on the culture and politics can be traced easily in Lycia through the numismatic, epigraphic and archaeological evidence[19]. The coinage demonstrates that between the sixth and the

[15] Bryce 1986, 13.

[16] Bryce 1983, 32.

[17] Bryce 1983, 33.

[18] Bryce 1983, 33, fn. 19.

[19] Marek 2010, 208.

fourth centuries local dynasties became the rulers of Lycia as representatives of Persian power[20]. Lycia appears in the Athenian Tribute's lists as a single unit. Phaselis and Telmessos, on the other hand, had their individual entries in the list, from which it can be understood that neither was considered to be part of Lycia in the fifth century[21]. In the first half of the fourth century, Perikle, the dynast of Limyra, reunified Lycia, after establishing his control over both the eastern settlements around Limyra and those of the west as far as Telmessos[22]. The rule of Lycia was undertaken by Carian satraps until the advent of Alexander the Great. Following the death of Alexander, rule over Lycia was taken by his generals. From 324 to the 168 B.C. when the Lycian League was re-established, control over Lycia was taken in succession by several rulers, Antigonos, Lysimachos, Ptolemaios, the Seleucids, - the successors of Alexander -, and the Rhodians. In this period the cities were subject to Hellenization and the epichoric language was forgotten[23]. Having been taken from the Rhodians, Lycia was "granted" independence by the Romans and the federative league of cities, called *Lykion to koinon* was established in 167 B.C.[24]. The Lycian league continued to function, but symbolically dealing with mainly internal issues after the foundation of *Provincia Lycia* in 46 A.D.[25].

It is difficult to establish the political borders of Lycia precisely since the frontiers and territories were frequently subjected to alterations and in particular border cities are usually problematic when attaches them a certain ethnic identity

[20] Fitzpatrick-McKinley 2015, 97.

[21] Bryce 1983, 40-41.

[22] Bryce 1983, 39.

[23] Behrwald 2000, 47-88.

[24] Pol. 30.5.12.

[25] For more information on the provincialization of Lycia see Şahin 2014, 65-73.

since cultural influences know no borders. Generally, the definition of the western border of Lycia, to which Kaunos was attached in the Roman period, has been the subject of scholarly debate[26]. After the provincial re-organization in the late third-early fourth century, the city was not listed under the new established province of Caria but under Lycia[27]. It can be said that the eastern end of Lycia where the flat lands of western Pamphylia meet the steeply rising Lycian mountains remained relatively fixed, as the change in topography was a strong determining factor. Here, although having acted separately in political affairs from the rest of Lycia in the Classical period, Phaselis according to the numismatic evidence was a member of the Lycian league from 130 B.C. onwards[28]. The city was included in the *provincia Lycia* in the Roman period[29] and appears in the sixth-century *synecdemus* of Hierocles.

The northern border of Lycia is problematic to determine. The northern part of Lycia was the geographical region termed the Cabalis, where the cities of Boubon, Balboura and Oinoanda were located as Ptolemaius the Mathematician in the second century A.D. notes[30]. These cities were among the Lycian cities to which that Opramos, a second century benefactor from Rhodiapolis in Lycia, made donations to rebuild their cities following the 141 earthquake and therefore are considered to be

[26] While Marek (2006, 101, 188-189) suggests that it stayed in the province of Lycia, Şahin (2014, 423) claims the contrary.

[27] Honigmann 1939, 31.

[28] Troxell 1982, 65-67.

[29] Şahin 2014, 413.

[30] Ptol. G*eog.* 5.3.8.1-9.1.

included in province of Lycia[31]. In the Byzantine period, Boubon, Balboura and Oinoanda remained as bishoprics of Lycia[32].

I.1 The Physical Landscape of Lycia

Lycia, in its territorial extent during the Roman and Byzantine periods corresponds roughly to Teke Yarımadası projecting into the Mediterranean Sea in the province of Antalya (see the map in Fig. 3). The geology of the region is defined by the western extension of the Taurus Mountains with an average altitude of 2000 metres. Three main mountain chains extent from north-east to south-west, namely Beydağları, Akdağlar and Boncuk Dağları known in antiquity as Masikytos, Kragos and Antikragos, respectively[33]. The plains in the uplands, the valleys formed by rivers and coastal alluvial plains were convenient for urbanism and agricultural activity. Fowden describes Lycia as a collection of microcosms. The distribution of these settlements was largely determined by these topographical considerations[34].

Beydağları which rise steeply from sea level in eastern Lycia consist of two mountain ranges. The eastern range runs between the Alakır Valley and the western coastline of the Bay of Antalya until the Cape Gelidonya. The western range of Beydağları lie on the western side of Alakır Valley and descends from Avlan Gölü to the region between Phellos and Myra where it ultimately meets the sea. Beydağları were the most densely occupied area of Lycia in antiquity with important coastal

[31] Corsten 2014, 8 and 14.

[32] In the acts of the Chalcedonian Council in 451 Boubon, Balboura is referred as a city of the province of Lycia, see ACO 2.1.3.91.32 and 2.1.3.91.29. For the entries of Boubon, Oinoanda and Balboura as cities of Lycia in Synecdemus, see Hier. 685 3,4 and 5 (p. 31) respectively.

[33] For a discussion on the identification of these mountain ranges see, Takmer 2002, 35-41.

[34] Fowden 1990, 347.

cities such as Patara, Myra, Limyra and Phaselis but also with cities placed up in the mountains like Arykanda, Arneai and Choma, [35].

Akdağlar are the central group of mountains in Lycia oriented in a north-south direction from the Elmalı Plateau to the Xanthos Plain. The northern section of Akdağlar separates northern Lycia into two principal plateaus namely the Seki Ovası on the west, the ancient region of Kabalis, and the Elmalı Plateau to the east which is the ancient region of Milyas[36].

Boncuk Dağları form the western ridge in Lycia. The southern section of Boncuk Dağları lies between Xanthos and Telmessos where the highest point is called Babadağ overlooking Ölüdeniz[37].

Lycia was teeming with water sources; streams, lakes and springs of vital importance for the population. The region had three principal river; the Alakır River in eastern Lycia, whose ancient name has not been securely determined[38], the Xanthos River (modern Eşen Çayı) in central Lycia, the Indos River in western Lycia whose valley formed the natural border between Lycia and Caria[39].

I.2 What is *Late* for Lycia?

After this geographic orientation, it seems essential to determine the chronological framework of this thesis. The period that is investigated begins around late fifth- sixth century and extends into the middle Byzantine period. However, the never –ending issue of finding a proper term for the centuries following the second

[35] Şahin 2014, 95-96.

[36] Şahin 2014, 96.

[37] Şahin 2014, 96.

[38] Borchhardt (1999, 23) identifies the Alakır Çayı as ancient Limyros although Keen (1998, 16, fn. 23) plausibly notes that Limyros should be the modern Göksu that now flows over the ancient city of Limyra.

[39] For more information on the hidrography of ancient Lycia see Onur 2002, 53-61.

century in the recent scholarship complels one to find and apply the most appropriate terminology. Although the concept of decline, based mostly upon the economic, political and administrative history of the Roman Empire of leading scholars such as Edward Gibbon[40] and A. H. M. Jones[41], has today been largely replaced by the definition of Late Antiquity with a more nuanced perspective which was initiated by Peter Brown[42] and has been widely adopted in subsequent scholarship, there is still no consensus as to when this period starts and ends. While Cameron limits Late Antiquity to the fifth and sixth centuries, taking the split of the Roman Empire into West and East halves in 395 as the beginning of the period[43], the volume edited by Glen Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Grabar provides a wider range extending roughly from 250 to 800[44]. In the case of Lycia, on the other hand, the approach of Hellenkemper and Hild is more based upon the administrative and political history in the comprehensive volume of *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* considering the establishment of the Cibyrrhaeot theme as marking an end to the *late antique* provinces of Lycia and Pamphylia re-organized at the beginning of the fourth century[45]. However, we can think that the social, economic and political changes after the second century did not influence all the elements at the same time in Lycia. While we can regard the administrative reforms of Diocletian as the start of change concerning the administrative history of the province, a drastic change on an urban basis did not occur swiftly and concurrently with these reforms. With the rising bureaucratization and militarization of the empire in the third century there was the

[40] Gibbon 1776-1789.

[41] Jones 1964.

[42] Brown 1971.

[43] Cameron 1993, 7-8.

[44] Bowersock et al. 1999, vii-xiii.

[45] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 109-116.

decline in the role of the city councils[46]. On the other hand, the peaceful atmosphere of the countryside already began to be disturbed towards the end of the second century through raids into the countryside by bandits. The pillaging activities of the Isaurians remained a major security problem over the course of the next three centuries not only for Lycia but for other regions of Asia Minor[47]. On the other hand, the naval Battle of the Masts off the coast of Lycia between the Umayyads and the Byzantines in 655 A.D. can be suggested as a turning point that marked the end of antiquity in Lycia[48]. I believe that an overview to the history of Lycia from the Late Roman Period into the Middle Ages cannot be considered only as a history revolving around military and administrative, without also considering, secular and ecclesiastical, issues. In particular in order to obtain a better understanding of the period, the religious structures and infrastructure of Lycia together with the geography and topography need attention in this respect.

I.3 Historical Overview

I.3.1 Outlines of the History of *Provincia Lycia*

After a period of independence of almost two centuries Lycia was annexed to the Roman Empire as an imperial propraetorial province in 46 A.D. during the reign of Claudius. The governor of the new province was Quintus Veranius who re-structured the local administration and controlling systems[49]. During the rule of Vespasian, the region of Pamphylia was split from the province of Galatia and

[46] Dimitriev 2005, 335-336.

[47] Öztürk 2012, 354-355.

[48] Mango and Scott 1997, 482; Stratos 1980, 19.

[49] For the process of provincialization of Lycia see, Şahin 2014, 65-73.

merged with Lycia establishing *Provincia Lycia et Pamphylia*[50]. It is generally accepted that at the beginning of the fourth century, Lycia underwent the new administrative reforms and became a sole province[51]. Myra became the ecclesiastical and administrative capital where *praeses*, the governor, and the archbishop resided. In the council of Nicaea in 325 Lycia is first recorded on its own[52]. The sixth-century *Synecdemus* of Hierocles lists thirty-four place names under the province of Lycia[53].

In 365, Emperor Valens came to Lycia to repulse the invasive attacks of Gomoar who was commanding the troops of Procopius the usurper[54]. The invasions of the Isaurians to Lycia in 377 were again repelled by the troops of Valens[55]. During the military campaign against the Persians in 421-422, Marcian stayed in Sidyma in Lycia at the house of Tatianus and Iulius due to a sudden illness. After being designated Caesar, Marcian appointed Tatianus as the *praefectus* of Constantinople and Iulius as the ruler of Lycia as a mark of his gratitude[56].

The Eastern provinces of the empire experienced serious Persian invasion and occupation from 602 until 626-627. After invading Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Armenia the Persian forces marched into Asia Minor and went as far as Chalcedon in 616[57]. According to Michael the Syrian, the Persians seized Rhodos in the fifteenth

[50] The name Provincia Lycia et Pamphylia is first attested on the Vespasian monument in Döşeme. For the inscription see Adak and Wilson 2012, 8; Kolb 2002, 221.

[51] However, in his chronographia, the sixth-century chronicler Joannes Malalas recounts that Theodosius II (408-450) established the province of Lycia by dividing it from Lycaonia and made Myra the metropolis of Lycia, see Mal. 364.22-365.3.

[52] Ruggieri 1993, 340.

[53] Hier. 682.12-685-6 (p.31-32).

[54] Amm. Marc. 26.9.2-6.

[55] Zos. 4.20.1.

[56] Theoph. *Chronog*. 104-105; Georg. Cedr. 1.603; Zon. 3, 113–115; see also Takmer 2010, 109.

[57] Haldon 2003, 35-46. For the accounts by Theophanes see also Mango and Scott 1997, 420-457.

year of Heraclius[58]. Although no textual evidence mentions a destruction caused by Persians in this period, it is accepted that these Persian attacks might have reached Lycia[59]. One of the most serious of the external threat to Lycia was the naval Battle of Phoinix, also called the Battle of Masts, between Umayyad and the east Roman Empire's fleets. This battle in 655 A.D. ended in the victory of the former[60]. It was followed by the repeated attacks and raids which resulted in devastation, the abandonment of coastal settlements and/or the reduction of the urban space to the fortified acropolis[61].

Most probably due to its rugged and isolated topography, Lycia was regarded as one of the safer regions to flee to in the Byzantine period. According to the Life of St. Stephen the Younger, the iconodule, during the iconoclastic persecutions by Constantine V (742-775), Stephen convinced his monks to shelter in remote and safe regions such as lower Lycia, the city of Syllaion in Pamphylia and in Syke in Isauria[62]. Joannicus, the hermit of Mount Olympos travelled to Myra overland in the ninth century[63]. After the establishment of *theme* system Lycia became part of the naval *Kibyrrhaiotai* theme and when the Macedonian Dynasty reconquered Crete in 961 a peaceful environment for Lycia was secured[64]. This recovery was interrupted by the arrival of Turkmen after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. While inland areas

[58] See in Bedrosian 2013, 120.

[59] According to a destruction layer dating from the seventh century in Xanthos Foss suggest a Persian invasion in Lycia, see Foss 1996, II, 2, 11. In order to claim a destruction on a regional basis examination of further archaeological evidence from the other cities of Lycia seems necessary.

[60] Zon. 218.12-218.14; Theoph. *Chronog.* 345.28-346.1.

[61] According to the Universal History written by Mahbūb ibn-Qūṣṭānṭīn (Agapius of Hierapolis), the Arabian troops entered and devastated Phoinix after the battle, see French translation together with the Arabic original in Vasiliev 1912, 224 [484]; also Küçükaşçı 2006, 379.

[62] VSJ p. 1117; Huxley 1977, 102.

[63] *AASS Nov.* II/1, p. 341(Vita Joannicii 10).

[64] Foss 1994, 3.

were plundered by the Turks, the coastal sites were open to the attacks of pirates. The next recovery came during the Comnenan period. The safe atmosphere of this period was limited to the coast. The southern border between the Seljuks and the Nicean Empire was the river Indos with the lands of Lycia, no longer a part of "Byzantium"[65].

I.3.2 The Administrative and Religious Capital of *Provincia Lycia* – Myra in the Late Antique and Byzantine Periods

Firstly, it should be noted that our knowledge concerning the urban space of Myra and of how the city looked in the Roman and Early Byzantine Periods is largely limited to the historical sources since the ancient city is almost entirely covered by a thick layer of alluvium and by the modern settlement of Demre except for the Roman theatre area and the church of Saint Nicholas of Myra. Since the church was the main attraction of Myra and of the region, as a pilgrimage center in the Byzantine Period, historical accounts in this era revolve around the church complex. Further, the data from the archaeological excavations conducted at the church of Saint Nicholas yield information that can shed light not only on the building but on the history of Myra.

In his *chronographia*, the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas recounts that Theodosius II (408-450) established the province of Lycia by dividing it from Lycaonia and made Myra the metropolis of Lycia[66]. The information by Malalas is not entirely credible since the division of Lycia happened at the beginning of the fourth century[67]. However, it is the first time that Myra is mentioned as the

[65] Foss 1996, 26.

[66] Mal. 364.22-365.2.

[67] The earliest document of division the fourth-century episcopal list, see Ruggieri 1993, 340.

metropolis of Lycia. In the fifth-century Life of St. Thecla, Myra is recorded as "τῆς Λυκίας μητρόπολις· βελτίστη καὶ φαιδοράτη πόλις" "Capital of Lycia: the best and the most glorious city.[68]" The city was now both the administrative and the ecclesiastical capital of the province.

The walls of the city were enlarged by Marcian with the advice of the governor Artemon and the *praefect* Palladius[69]. Malalas records that a major earthquake struck Myra causing devastation throughout the city in 526 and Justinian sponsored the rebuilding work[70]. Archaeological evidence lends support to the idea that this earthquake might have effected other coastal settlements such as Patara, Xanthos and Aperlae[71]. After its outbreak in Alexandria, the plague pandemic reached Myra in 542. The spread must have been relatively fast as Myra was one of the major stations of the sea-trade between Alexandria and Constantinople. How the city suffered from the plague is well described in the Life of St. Nicholas of Sion. The citizens were so desperate that the farmers in the hinterland withdrew from the city and rejected selling essential food products and wood, and this caused a local famine[72] in addition to the plague deaths.

In particular Myra flourished in the Byzantine period due to the increasing importance of the cult of St. Nicholas of Myra. The church of St. Nicholas which also contained his burial became one of the most prominent pilgrimage centers of the empire. However, this recovery did not concern the urban structure of Myra but was largely limited to the complex of St. Nicholas. Foss suggests that the medieval

[68] Dagron 1978, 268; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, I, 343.

[69] Foss 1996, II 23; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, I, 345.

[70] Mal. 448.17-19

[71] Duggan 2004, 131.

[72] VNS 52-53.

settlement of Myra was moved from the valley to the ancient fortress lying on the steep hilltop behind the theatre due to repeated raids beginning in the seventh century[73]. But the church of St. Nicholas which was within a separately walled compound continued to function.

Myra, similar to many other cities in Asia Minor was damaged by the Persian raids in the seventh century. A Muslim fleet attacked Myra in 809 and attempted to plunder the church of Nicholas[74]. The church was destroyed in the eighth century but a cross-domed church was constructed over the former one. Duggan associates the destruction with an earthquake that affected Myra and its countryside[75]. The repair inscription on the gate of Alakilise to the North of Myra dating to 812 can be linked to this earthquake, as well. The peaceful period for Myra was during the reign of the Macedonian Dynasty particularly after the Byzantines recaptured Crete from the Arabs. Myra was attacked by Muslim fleet in 1034. The church of St Nicholas and the walls were immediately rebuilt through the donations made by John the Orphanotrofos to whom St. Nicholas appeared in a dream[76]. The church of St. Nicholas was repaired and new buildings were added to the domed basilica on the northern and southern sides by Contantine X and Zoe [77].

The thirteenth-century Greek text *Translatio Barim Graece* which narrates the translation of the relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra to Bari in 1087 includes some details on the city of Myra. According to the text, the vision of saint Nicholas appeared to the servants of the monastery of Nicholas one year before arrival of the

[73] Foss 1996, II 31.

[74] Theoph. *Chronog*. 465, 483.

[75] Duggan 2004, 135.

[76] Foss 1994, 34.

[77] Foss 1994, 34; İşler 2010, 235.

merhants of Bari and ordered them to tell the citizens of Myra who fled twelve *stadia* into the mountains for fear of the Persians to return and dwell in Myra again, in other words to protect the holy remains of the saint[78]. This piece of evidence, in spite of its hagiographic nature, attests the abandonment of the city and the movement of the population from the city to the mountains, which were comparatively safer than the coast by the eleventh century. However, the flight in the mountains seemingly resulted in a more insecure atmosphere in Myra and in the translation of the relics by the merchants of Bari with little resistance from the citizens.

Due to the silting deposited by Myros River little is known concerning the urban site of Myra in the Roman and Byzantine periods except for the theatre, the church of St. Nicholas and the remains of a bath. The rest of the city is today buried beneath 5-6 metres of alluvial deposition. During the excavation campaign in 2010, a small chapel was unearthed 250 metres southwest of the Roman theatre. The chapel is surmounted with a dome and comprises a rectangular *naos* and a narthex and has been preserved almost intact in the silt with *in situ* altar and *templon*. On the southern wall of the gate of the naos, a fresco of the *deesis* came to light after the silt was removed. The Naos seems to have been illuminated through the window with a pointed arch in the southern wall. The window was divided into two section by a colonnade and was closed at a later time with masonry. The style of this pointed window suggests the Gothic architecture of Lusignan Cyprus according to Akyürek. Moreover, Akyürek considers that a ceramic plate with fish scale decoration which was found during the excavation has similarities to the thirteenth-fourteenth century Enkomi ware of Cyprus. Considering the fresco and other finds, is suggested the church was under the influence of the neighboring cultures during the late twelfth-

[78] Anrich 1913, 438.

thirteenth century, particularly that of Cyprus, in terms of architecture and iconography. This archaeological evidence reflects continuing building and religious activities in Myra during this period. The fatal end for the city must have happened around this time after an immense flood which covered the whole urban Myra with aluvvium. No archaeological levels subsequent to the thirteenth century until the modern era has been detected in this alluvial silt[79].

I.4 Religion

I.4.1 Pagan Roots of the Region

"… Religion is as old as language, which is to say precisely as old as humanity" wrote anthropologist Roy A. Rappaport (1926-97)[80]. Just as is the case with the epichoric language of Lycia, the belief system of the Lycians was rooted in the Luwi-Hittite Culture of the Bronze Age-Anatolia. Indeed, the earliest traces of the Lycians' belief system derive mostly from sepulchral inscriptions written in the Lycian Language between the sixth and the mid-fourth centuries[81]. The names of the Gods and Goddesses in these inscriptions indicate not only that Lycians had their own pantheon *mahai huwedri* in Lycia before the Greek Pantheon was embraced but also that many of these deities were closely related to the Luwi-Hittite equivalents of the Bronze and Iron Ages. The local deities underwent a transformation with the gradual adoption of the Greek Pantheon from the fifth century onwards[82]. Although the local Pantheon was superseded by that of Greek, and the Lycian Language by the Greek Language after the Hellenization of Asia Minor in the fourth century, Lycians

[79] For the chapel see Akyürek 2010, 153-160.

[80] Rappaport 1999, 16.

[81] Özdemir 2015, 100-101; Frei 1990, 1740.

[82] Özdemir 2015, 114-115.

continued to some extent to preserve their old beliefs and what changed was not the gods themselves but the expression of their names within this "new" culture; from Trqqas to Zeus, Malija to Athena, Erteme to Artemis. Steles of the Dodekatheoi which is associated with the Hittite relief in Çorum Yazılıkaya, and the steles of Kakasbos around the city of Telmessus dating from the second and third centuries A.D. indicate the survival of strong pagan traditions amongst the Lycians[83].

Mountains that ascend sharply from sea level manifest themselves so gloriously that they dominate the visual landscape of Lycia. With its mountains, springs and heavy vegetation, the link between Gods and nature in paganism must have been much closer in the eyes of the Lycians. While in eastern Lycia and Pisidia, Zeus Solymos taking the epithet from the ancient mountain Solymos was worshipped, the ancient mountain of Kragos in Central Lycia was associated also with Zeus[84].

Oracle sanctuaries were the noteworthy religious structures of the pagan Lycia. The most renowned amongst them was the temple Apollon Patroos in Patara which functioned as an oracle. The oracle here was considered to rival that at Delos in reputation. Servius Honoratus, a fourth-century Roman grammarian, writes that Apollon spent the six summer months at Delos and six winter months at Patara[85]. The city described itself as ἡ ἀρχιπροφῆτις τοῦ Λυκίων ἔθνους, the head prophet of the Lycian nation in an inscription dating from the second century A.D.[86]. The temple was destroyed by an earthquake and flood during the reign of Nero and

[83] On the religion of Lycians see Frei 1990, 1729-1864; Özdemir 99-120, 2015.

[84] Akyürek Şahin, *forthcoming*.

[85] Serv. 4.143.

[86] Şahin 2014, 126.

retreated into silence until its restoration in 141 A.D. Şahin suggests that the verses from the Sibylline Oracles edited in the early Byzantine period by Christians refer to this destruction[87]:

> *Fair Myra of Lycia, never shall the earth, when once it is shaken, give thee firm standing; thou shalt fall head long to the ground, and pray to find another land of refuge, as a sojourner, when in thundering and earthquake the dark water shatters the godless dins of Patara*[88].

Another oracle of Apollon was located in Sura, a suburban settlement of Myra lying four kilometers to the southwest of the city center, which was particularly famous for its fish-oracle. The temple was at the edge of a spring where the fish oracle ceremony was conducted[89]. Plutarch describes the ritual with these words "*indeed, I have heard that near Sura, a village in Lycia between Phellus and Myra, men sit and watch the gyrations and flights and pursuits of fish and divine from them by a professional and rational system, as others do with birds*[90]*"*.

Pausanias mentions an oracle of Apollon *Thyrkseus* in the city of Kyaneai in Lycia. Şahin suggests that a large ancient cistern fed with the underground water in the modern village of Yavu could belong to this oracle[91].

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[87] Şahin 2012, 16.

[88] With my personal little interventions, the English translation derives from Bate 1918, 88.

[89] There is no evidence on when exactly the temple was abandoned. However, on the same site, juat to the north of the temple, ruins of a three-aisled basilical church dating from the early Byzantine period indicate the maintenance of the religious use of the site with a spring from Pagan into the Christian period, see Hellenkemper - Hild 2004, 865-866. The reason why a new church was built to the north of the temple on a higher level instead of converting the temple can be the fact that the ground of the temple became over time marshy. Considering that the cult of Archangel Michael was associated with holy springs and fish, the church in Sura that superseded the fish oracle of Apollo, might have been dedicated to the Archangel Michael. For a discussion on the link between the Archangel Michael and holy springs/fish, see Mango 1986, 52-57.

[90] Cherniss and Helmbold 1957, 419-421 (Plut. *de sol. an.* 23).

[91] Şahin 2014, 348-349.

It is recorded through inscriptions that Zeus, Apollon, Leto, Tyche, Hekate were among the deities who were worshiped in Myra in the Hellenistic and Roman periods[92]. However, the most important cult of Myra belonged to Artemis Eleuthera, whose image appeared on the coins of Myra. The evidence for the existence of its temple derives from the Opramoas inscriptions which inform us that this temple was rebuilt after the earthqueake that struck Lycia in 141 A.D. through the donations of Opramoas, the benefactor. Furthermore, this temple is described as the most splendid and beautiful structure in Lycia.[93] The temple is depicted on the third-century coins of Myra. On a coin dating from the reign of Gordian (238-244) Artemis is depicted with a myrrh tree (*commiphora myrrha*), the sacred tree of the goddess. The tree is flanked by two men who are about to hew down the tree with the axes they are holding. Snakes emerging from the tree to defend Artemis threatening the men.[94] This iconography explicitly illustrates the close link between the pagan God and nature. It is not certain what the two men with axes trying to destroy the myrrh tree represent. However, in sixth century-Myra it was Christians cutting down trees. In the Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion, Nicholas chops down the cypress tree which was believed by the villagers to be inhabited by a demon. The cutting down of the demon possessed tree was the victory of the villagers over Paganism. On the other hand, the myrrh plant which was once associated with the cult of Artemis Eleuthera, was ascribed in the Byzantine Period to the cult of Saint Nicholas, so, in consequence the city was described by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as, “thrice blessed, myrrh-breathing city of the Lycians, where the mighty Nicolaus, servant of God, spouts

[92] Alkan 2013, 85-89.

[93] TAM II 905 XIX A 9-11.

[94] Aulock 1974, 87-88 (Tafel 19 nr. 358)

forth myrrh in accordance with the city's name[95].” Furthermore, the *Vita per Michaelem* records that Nicholas of Myra in his fight against pagan structures in the city destroyed the temple of Artemis, which surpassed other temples in the city in both in size and decoration and in consequence was thought to contain more demons in it[96].

The spread of Christianity and the existence of Christians in the cities constituted a problem for the pagan majority. An inscription found in Arykanda records a copy of a petition in Greek sent by the people of Arykanda to Maximinus, Constantine and Licinus to take action against the Christians in the city and a fragment of the response given by the emperors in Latin. A parallel text from Kolbasa in Pisidia helps to complete the fragment. Accordingly, emperors Constantine and Licinius order the citizens to let the Christians enjoy the peace that was allowed to them[97]. The peace mentioned here would refer to the edict of toleration of 311 issued by Galerius.

I.4.2 The Jews in Lycia

The Jewish presence in Asia Minor began in the Hellenistic period when Antiochus III settled 2000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia in Lydia and Phrygia at the end of the third century as part of the colonization project of the Seleucids[98]. In 1 Macc. 15:16-23 is recorded a letter dating from 139-8 B.C. which was sent by the Roman Senate to those kingdoms where Jews lived. In Asia Minor these letters were sent to Attalus II, king of Pergamum, Ariarathes V, king of Cappadocia and to a

[95] Cons. Porph., *De Them.* 14.19–21.

[96] In: Anrich 1913, 127-129.

[97] For both of the texts from Arykanda and the parallel text from Kolbasa see Şahin 1994, 12-16.

[98] Trebilco 2008, 76.

number of independent cities such as Myndos and Halicarnassus in Caria, Phaselis in Lycia and Side in Pamphylia[99]. In the first century B.C. Philo of Alexandria recorded that there were Jewish communities in most of Asia as far as Pontus. Jews were granted a number of privileges by the Roman authorities which allowed them to maintain their community and their traditions. Jews played an active role in the city's social and economic life and also held local office and made donations to the city. Two sixth-century inscriptions from the *odeium* of Aphrodisias inform us that Jews reserved seats in the *odeium* and hint of the participation of Jews in the city's social gatherings and cultural activities[100].

Recent archaeological data from Lycia provides information concerning the Jewish context within the region. The most important of these is the synagogue building unearthed in Andriake, the harbor of Myra, in 2009. In the harbor quarter the synagogue is located in front of the north-west corner of the granary, thus in a central and privileged position. The building comprises a single aisle projected with an apse, polygonal on the exterior, with two storeys and two annexed rooms. Inside the building architectural sculpture such as marble panels with menorah depictions in relief and votive inscriptions of some Jews were recovered which confirmed the identification of this structure as a synagogue. The synagogues in the cities of Asia Minor were built in the Roman period and functioned roughly until the end of antiquity. The synagogue at Sardis, where the largest Jewish community in Asia Minor lived was attached to the gymnasium complex in the heart of the city. The building, which had a basilical plan and was decorated with mosaics and frescoes,

[99] Trebilco 1991, 6-7.

[100] Trebilco 1991, 174-175.

functioned until the Persian attack in 616[101]. The structure identified as a synagogue in Priene was relatively small in comparison to that of Sardis and was remodeled from a house. It has been suggested that the building was constructed no later than the fourth-fifth centuries[102]. From the building technique, sculpture and the inscriptions, the synagogue in Andriake has been dated, considering the comparable material from Asia Minor, to the fifth century[103]. It is understood that for the Jewish Diaspora in Asia Minor there was no established canons of synagogue architecture since the synagogues in Sardis, Priene and Andriake all differ in size, plan and decoration[104].

In 2012, it was suggested that the foundations of a building unearthed in the center of Limyra belonged to a synagogue although this identification remains unconfirmed[105]. Therefore, it seems reasonable normal to expect at least one more synagogue in the center of Myra. In addition to the archaeological evidence, the Jewish presence in Lycia is also supported from epigraphic material. Among them is grave inscription from Limyra reading Εἰούδα εἰρόν[106] or according to Krauss Εἰουδαίων ἱερόν.[107] Another inscription from Tlos reveals that a certain Ptolemaios built a monumental tomb for himself and other Jews in the city who helped him to be appointed as the *archon* of the Jewish community[108].

[101] Kraabel 1998, 101-106; Trebilco 1991, 40-43.

[102] Trebilco 1991, 55.

[103] Çevik et al. 2010, 348.

[104] Trebilco 1991, 43.

[105] Seyer and Lotz 2013, 139-140.

[106] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 66 nr. 129.

[107] Krauss 1922, 235 nr. 70.

[108] Ameling 2004, 477-480 nr. 223.

An example of the combination of Christian and Jewish elements are the two *phylacteries*[109] found in a re-used sarcophagus in Xanthos. Dated to between the third and fifth centuries from the letter forms employed the exorcist texts in Greek carry words of Jewish and Aramaic origin, as well as Christian symbols such as crosses and sketches of fish[110]. The martyrdom of St Leon and St. Paregorius of Patara in the tenth-century *menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes records that a crowd of Jews and pagan Greeks gathered in the marketplace of Patara during the judgement of St. Leon[111].

In Lycia, the Jewish presence was not limited to urban site. The sixth-century Life of St. Nicholas of Sion records a hamlet called *Rhabbamousa* in the village of Plenion which lied not far from Myra[112]. It is not stated whether Jews still lived in that village at that time together with Christians. However, the Semitic name *Rhabbamousa* is sufficient to support the previous presence of Jews in the countryside in Lycia.

It is generally accepted that the Jews were the main group addressed through the missionary journeys of Paul and established the ground of the spread of Christianity in Asia Minor. It can be seen from the archaeological and literary evidence from Lycia, that Jews were not always the first ones to convert to

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[109] Phylactery (Greek *Phylacterion*) refers to any stone, material, papyrus amulet, or lamella, engraved with a spell or otherwise, which is worn about the person for protection, see Betz 1992, 338.

[110] Jordan and Kotansky 1996, 162-170.

[111] Sym. Met. p.1457. It is inferred from the passage that a certain number of Jews had an active role in the marketplace of Patara in the beginning of the third century, but also they were so involved in the social matters of the city that they could raise their voice with the pagan locals referred to as the *Hellenes* in the text.

[112] VNS 66; In the paragraph 55 of VNS, Nicholas of Sion visits the shrine of Saint George in Plenion. Alkan therefore suggests that Plenion should have been situated not far distant from Myra and localizes it to the ancient settlement which is called Belos by the modern locals on the hill of Belen ten kilometers to the east of Myra suggesting a possible phonetic adaptation from ancient *Plenion* to modern *Belen-Belos*, see Alkan 2011b, 116-117.

Christianity and at least some of them preserved their Jewish identity and their architectural presence at the center of the social and economic life in the city even in the fifth century.

I.4.3 Christianity Begins in Lycia

As Martin Harrison and Julian Bennett[113] points out the early Christian history of Lycia is not clear. Canonical Acts mentions that Paul at the end of his third missionary journey came to Patara on his way from Troas to Jerusalem[114]. The second mention describes his changing ships at Myra when he was taken to Rome as an arrested man. However, the apocryphal Acts of Paul inform that he indeed travelled to Lycia twice, both times to Myra. According to this, Thecla came to Myra and found Paul preaching[115]. Furthermore, the same source records that during his first missionary journey, Paul stopped at Myra on his way from Antioch to Sidon and stayed for a while, during which he taught the word of God and performed miracles[116].

The persecution of Christians initiated the rise of the Cult of Martyrs in Lycia as in the other regions being Christianized. The persecution was imposed particularly in the urban centers where the pagan traditions were enrooted and the political authority was more influential on the population. While Lycian cities witnessed these martyrdoms there were also martyrs with Lycian origins who were executed elsewhere. *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* records the martyrdom of Nicander and Hermas which took place in the first century A.D. Titus of Crete, had

[113] Bennett 2015, 2.

[114] *Acta* 21.1.

[115] Elliott 2005, 371-372. For the Greek text see *Acta PT*, 235-271, for the English translation see Hane 2007, 107.

[116] Elliott 2005, 374-375.

appointed Nicander the bishop of Myra and Hermas his deacon who were then sentenced to death for proselytizing by the governor of Myra[117]. Until the third century there is no report of a martyrdom in Lycia. Themistocles is recorded to have been martyred during the Decian persecution between 250-251[118]. The martyrdom of Leo and Peregrius of Patara is significant for the information it provides on the social and urban shaping of the city of Patara. The text provides no detail about how Paregrius, a friend of Leon, was martyred; but it concentrates on Leon who after his friend's death was not able to remain unresponsive. According to the text, Paregrius was buried in Patara most probably in the necropolis area which was on the way to the temple of Serapis. Upon visiting the tomb of Paregrius, Leon came to the agora of the city, to the temple of Tyche and broke the lanterns of the temple. For this reason he was judged and forced to offer sacrifice to the traditional gods by the procurator of Lycia, for his behavior was considered to be an insult to the Goddess. Those who were present, both pagans and Jews stood on the side opposite him. After being executed his body was thrown down from a cliff but was then was then devotedly buried by other Christians[119].

Another important holy martyr from Lycia was Methodius of Olympus who is distinguished from other martyrs of Lycia with his works on Christology. Hieronymus records that Methodius was the bishop of Olympus and later of Tyre[120], whereas Suda notes that he was also bishop of Patara[121]. Hieronymus further states

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[117] *Syn. Const.* p. 191.

[118] According to the *Synaxarium Constantinopolitanum*, Themistocles was martyred during the rule of Decius, see *Syn. Const.* p. 334; Schultze 1926, 200.

[119] For the Greek text see Sym. Met. 1451-1462.

[120] Hieron., *De Vir. Ill.* LXXXIII, p. 728: …Μεθόδιος Ὀλύμπου Λυκίας, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Τύρου ἐπίσκοπος

[121] Suda 432: Μεθόδιος Ὀλύμπυ Λυκίας ἤτοι Πατάρων, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Τύρου ἐπίσκοπος

that Methodius was martyred during the last persecution dating to 311 A.D. Aphhianos and Aedesius of Gagai in southeastern Lycia, were brothers who were martyred outside Lycia[122]. Aphhianos was sentenced to death in Palestine in 306 according to Eusebius. His brother, Aedesius, on the other hand, was martyred in Alexandria. As the sixth-century Vita of St. Nicholas of Sion records, a village named Partaessos within the territory of Myra possessed a church dedicated to Apphianos.

However, the most renowned holy figure that Lycia has ever produced is doubtless Nicholas of Myra. Other than the legendary stories, there is no historical surviving account either verifying his existence or confirming the accuracy of the stories about him. But we can assume that there lived a Nicholas of Myra, a *martyrion* of him existed in the sixth century as the sixth-century Life of St. Nicholas of Sion records[123].

Consequently, current hagiographic evidence reports only few martyrs from Lycia in the pre-Nicene period. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that the reception of Christianity was slow. Indeed, already in the first century there were groups in Myra which were being preached by Paul which probably led to the martyrdom of Nicander and Hermas in the first century. The petition inscription from Arykanda clearly illustrates that there was a considerable number of Christians, sufficient in number to cause serious discontent amongst non-Christian citizens. The edict of Milan was the initial step in the triumph of this new religion over Paganism; but it should be remembered that Jews co-existed with Christians in the early Byzantine

[122] Eus., *De Mart. Pal.* IV:5-5.3; see also AB 16 (1897), 122-127.

[123] VNS 8.3-5. The cult of St. Nicholas of Myra and that of St. Nicholas of Sion is further discussed in Chapter II in this thesis.

period as the archaeological evidence from Andriake indicates. The hagiographic and epigraphic evidence aside, in order to understand how Christianity shaped the urban and suburban spaces, examination of archaeological material from the Lycian cities with a comparative and comprehensive methodology is necessary, and this topic lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

I.4.3.1 Bishoprics

In the cities, the episcopal office had already developed over the first three centuries. After the re-organization of Lycia as a province of the Diocese of Asia in the fourth century and the Edict of Milan, the number of bishoprics that were established increased. Bishoprics were established in cities, which were the political and commercial focal point of their rural territories. Council lists and Notitia Episcopatuum are the main accounts recording the name of the bishoprics in Lycia. Patara which was the residence of the governor of Lycia until the establishment of provincia Lycia et Pamphylia was the only Lycian bishopric appearing at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. However, in the list of the council of Constantinople in 381, Myra comes first before Choma, Patara, Oinoanda, Limyra and Xanthos respectively. Interestingly, the second rank after Myra in the all notitiae until the twelfth century was occupied by not Patara but Mastaura, which, according to Hild, should be localized to Dereağzı where the remains of a large middle Byzantine domed church are still visible.[124] The bishops of Korydalla and Limyra, Myra, Patara, Telmessos and Phellos are mentioned in the letters of Basil of Caesarea in 375 A.D.[125]. Myra and Choma are the only cities whose bishop appear in the records of the Council of

[124] Ruggieri 1993, 349.

[125] Basil. *Epist*. 218.1.20-24.

Ephesus in 431 A.D.[126]. In addition to Myra and Choma; Balboura, Tlos, Boubon, Limyra, Patara, Mastaura, Araxa, Korydalla, Antiphellos and Phaselis were presented in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.[127] Further bishoprics that are listed in the *Notitiae* are Akalissos, Araxa, Arykanda, Akanda, Antiphellos, Aperlai, Arneai, Balboura, Eudokia, Hagiadoula, Kandyba, Kaunos, Komba, Kyaneai, Lebissos, Limyra, Lornaia, Makre, Markiane, Meloeton, Neisa, Oinoanda, Olympos, Palaioton, Phellos, Pınara, Phoinix, Podalia, Xanthos, Zenonoupolis, Tlos, Tergasos, Tata, Sidyma, Rhodiapolis, Phileta, Patara and Panormos. These lists are significant for they record names of several bishoprics for the first time such as Akanda[128], Hagiadoula[129], Meloeton[130], Palaioton[131], Tergasos[132] and Tata[133] whose locations have not been clarified. Phileta, is mentioned in a rock-cut boundary inscription found in Yarangediği near modern Elmalı in North Lycia[134] and it has been suggested, is to be sought in this area[135]. Furthermore, the notitiae are particulary significant as they reflect which bishoprics, in other words, major settlements, in the Byzantine period, survived, had changed their position or even had diminished and lost their high rank. Almost all of the Lycian harbor settlements such as Aperlai, Antiphellos, Olympos and Phaselis are only listed in the notitiae until the ninth

[126] ACO 1.1.1.7.85.45-55.

[127] ACO 2.1.1.62.4 (Balboura); ACO 2.1.1.62.8 (Tlos); 2.1.2.37.28 (Boubon); 2.1.1.62.1 (Limyra); 2.1.2.5.2 (Patara); 2.1.1.80.28 (Mastaura), 2.1.1.62.6 (Araxa), 2.1.2.151.18 (Korydalla); 2.1.1.62.5 (Antiphellos); 2.1.1.62.3 (Phaselis).

[128] Not. Ep. 1, 274; 2, 337; 3, 387; 4, 292; 7,359; 9, 241; 10,286; 13, 294.

[129] Not. Ep. 7, 337; 9, 219; 10, 268; 13, 271.

[130] Not. Ep. 1, 281; 2, 344; 3, 394; 4, 299; 7, 358; 9, 240; 10, 289; 13, 293.

[131] Not. Ep. 1, 275; 2, 338; 3, 388; 4, 293; 7, 357; 9, 239; 10, 287; 13, 292.

[132] Not. Ep. 7, 354; 9, 236; 10, 285; 13, 289.

[133] Not. Ep. 1, 254; 2, 316; 3, 366; 4, 271; 10, 265.

[134] İplikçioğlu 2002, 132 no.28.

[135] Hellenkemper-Hild 2004 II, 804.

century. Phoinix, which was the harbor of Limyra appears in the lists between the tenth and twelfth centuries whereas Limyra was not included in the tenth century.[136] Moreover, new bishoprics such as Lornaia, Tergasos, Phileta, Hagiodoula were listed in the tenth century[137].

In terms of the archaeological evidence, building complexes with an adjacent church and other additional rooms in Phaselis, Olympos and Arykanda have been identified as bishop's palaces. In Limyra, the research on a building complex, a former Roman bath complex, which had been identified as a bishop's palace due to its position close to the church, it has recently demonstrated that this complex cannot be an *episkopeion* but can be identified as a bath complex modified in the Late Antique period.[138]

I.5 Territory of Myra and the Geographical Framework

The geographical scope of this thesis is confined to the hinterland of Myra in the Byzantine period. However, it should be noted that the territorial borders of Myra were not static from the Classical to the Byzantine periods. In general, if we consider age by age, the territories expanded in direct relationship with the passage of time and the increasing political power of Myra. The Classical castle city was located on the acropolis whose slopes were used as necropolis with rock-cut tombs (Fig. 7). To the south-west, the expansion reached Andriake, the harbour, which was incorporated into Myra in 197 B.C.[139]. The cities neighboring Myra in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and their approximate locations can be determined not only through surviving remains onsite, but also through textual evidence. These cities

[136] Hild 2004, 5.

[137] Hild 2004, 13

[138] K. Sewing, in: Seyer 2014, 76.

[139] Porphyrios in: *FgrHist*. II B, 1224 F 46.

include Kyaneai to the West, Arneai to the North on the Kasaba Plain and Limyra to the East on the other side of Bonda Tepesi (see map in Fig. 4). To the north it reached to the Kıbrıs Gorge, from where the water canal for Myra began, passing through the rock-cut tombs in the eastern necropolis of Myra[140]. Epigraphic and literary evidence indicate that in the Hellenistic and Roman periods there were two more cities, Tragalassos and Trebendai, which could not be localized securely, but they shared frontiers with Myra in the mountainous region which lies on the eastern side of Demre Çayı and between Demre and the Kasaba Plain (see map in Fig. 5). A Hellenistic inscription from Arykanda records a symmachia between Arykanda and the city of Tragalassos in order to send troops to Syria to provide military assistance to Mithridates, son of Antiochus III[141]. This military alliance with Arykanda is the evidence of the autonomous status of Tragalassos. But after that, no evidence is known concerning this settlement until the time of St. Nicholas of Sion, when Tragalassos is mentioned as a chora of Myra in the sixth-century Vita of St. Nicholas of Sion. Şahin localized Tragalassos to Karabel[142], Hellenkemper and Hild to Muskar[143] also adobted by Çevik[144], İşler to Asarcık near Karabel[145], and finally Alkan to the ruins around Arapyurdu[146]. Alkan considered that Tragalassos was located at a strategic point[147], where some important roads or passages were controlled. From the vicinity of Arapyurdu both Myros Gorge and the Kasaba Plain

[140] See Borchhardt 1975, 47 and pl. 10C.

[141] Şahin 1994, no. 1.

[142] Şahin 1994, no. 1 p. 3; Şahin 2014, 278-279, 282 fig. a.

[143] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, II, 890-892.

[144] Çevik 2015, 352.

[145] İşler 2010, 238.

[146] Alkan 2011b, 101-104.

[147] Alkan 2011b, 102.

up to the Çamlıbel, where the ancient route to Arykanda led[148], can be observed. So if Tragalassos was located near Arapyurdu, then it was not on the main mountainous road from Myra to Arneai. While Trebendai is recorded in the Vita of St Nicholas of Sion as a village, it might be localized to modern Muskar/Belören 7 km. north of Myra according to Zimmermann and Alkan[149]. It was another important settlement adjacent to Myra. Though there is not much known of its history, there is some evidence indicating the autonomy of the settlement in the pre-Byzantine period. The coins from Hellenistic period with the legend of TP are ascribed to Trebendai[150]. The decree recorded in the Hellenistic inscription found in the fortress at Asarbelen Tepesi was probably issued by the people of Trebendai[151]. In the inscription of Jason from Kyaneai, it is listed with the other Lycian cities, as Trebendai issued a decree to honour Jason in 137 A.D.[152]. The sympolity headed by Myra in the Roman Period included Trebendai, as a funerary inscription from Teimiussa / Tristomon (Üçağız Limanı) records a Μυρεὺς ἀπὸ Τρεβένδων[153]. Ptolemaios mentions Trebendai as a polis amongst the cities around Masikytos[154].

Myra, which assumed metropolis status first in 146 A.D., was one of the prominent cities of the Roman province of Lycia and Pamphylia[155]. In the early Byzantine period Myra's political importance surpassed other Lycian cities and the

[148] See details of this route in Uzunoğlu and Taşdelen 2013.

[149] Zimmermann 1992, 115; Zimmermann 2002, 776; Alkan 2011b, 111-113; Alkan 2011a, 36-37.

[150] Troxell 1982, 39 nos. 55-57; cf. Jameson 1980, 842.

[151] Alkan 2011b, 111-113.

[152] IGR III 704 col. I l.10; see also Zimmermann 1992, 252.

[153] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 58 no.114 (= SIG III 1234); Çevik (2015, 350) mentions an unpublished funerary inscription from Gürses, recording a sympolity between Myra and Trebendai.

[154] Ptol. 5.3.6.1-8.

[155] Among other cities, Myra received 100.000 denarii, the largest amount of financial aid from Opramoas, a local benefactor, to rebuild public monuments that were destroyed during the earthquake in 141 A.D., see TAM II 905.

city became the sole metropolis, the religious and administrative center of Lycia during the reign of Theodosius II[156]. Myra's territorial extent must have reached its widest extent in the Byzantine period when formerly independent cities such as Tragalassos and Trebendai became subordinate settlements of the city of Myra. We can therefore think that the territorial borders of Myra, at least in the sixth century, extended to the Kasaba Plain to the North.

Myra's territory in the Byzantine period was defined in accordance not only with political but also with the topographical configurations of the landscape. It is not securely known where the border between Myra and Kyaneai was, while Bonda Tepesi formed a natural border between Limyra and Myra. Myra's territories included the Demre Valley, and the mountainous region between this valley where the urban city is located, and the Kasaba Plain to the north. Hellenkemper-Hild suggest that Myra's *chora* included some parts of the Kasaba Plain until the Byzantine period[157]. Notwithstanding this, the settlements and the church at Dereağzı on the Kasaba Plain and their political status are not examined in the present thesis. The geographical extension of this thesis is limited to the region with rugged landscape on the slopes of Alacadağ between the Demre Valley and the Kasaba Plain (Fig. 6).

Apart from the settlements on the western slopes of Alacadağ which were linked to each other through a local road system, there were three major suburban settlements of Myra, these were Andriake, Sura and Gürses.

[156] Mal. 365.1-365.2.

[157] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, II, 716, s.v. Mastaura.

I.5.1 Andriake, the Harbour of Myra

Located on the both banks of the mouth of the Andriakos (modern Kokar Çay) ca. five kilometers south-west of the city, Andriake was a natural harbor that belonged to Myra and functioned from the Hellenistic era until seventh century (Fig. 9-Fig. 10). Although we are not able to gain a fully understanding of the ancient city of Myra since it has been buried beneath a thick deposition of alluvium and by the modern town of Demre, Andriake remains relatively better-preserved for it avoided the silting to a certain extent and has not been disturbed by modern constructions. Therefore, a better perception of Myra cannot be accomplished without an understanding of Andriake.

The harbor played an important role in the economy of Myra. The vast production of purple dye and customs duties collected from the harbor[158] provided major incomes and contributed to the prosperity of Myra in the Roman and Early Byzantine periods. Constructed during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, *horreum* building and the commercial agora were the remarkable structures of the harbor (see in Fig. 9-Fig. 10). The granary served to the transportation of grains mainly between Alexandria and Rome and later Constantinople. Moreover, it should have served to facilitate the export of local products deriving from all over Lycia.

The *horreum* building functioned in the late Roman period as inferred from a late fourth-century inscription on the front wall of the building which deals with a decree on the controlling of measuring devices[159]. In the early Byzantine period Andriake experienced expansion, not only its commercial-industrial but also its

[158] Takmer 2007, 173-174; Takmer 2012, 214; for more on purple-dye see Forstenpointner et al. 2007.

[159] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 42 no. 77.

social and religious spaces and became a small settlement of Myra. In addition to workshops and shops, private houses, two bath complexes, six churches and a synagogue[160] were included within this developing settlement. The position of the synagogue building right on front of the *horreum* in a very central location can be read as an indication of the important role of the Jewish community in the commercial affairs and growing in parallel with their economic and social power. One of the factors that distinguished Byzantine Andriake from the Roman harbor was the pilgrimage traffic both to Holy Lands and to Myra, to the shrine of St. Nicholas. The harbor now welcomed not only traders but also pilgrims on their way to Holy Lands and those who came to Myra to pay their visits to St. Nicholas and to the other *martyria* in the city. As a consequence of this activity, six churches were built in the settlement where travelers could worship. The construction of the three-aisled Church B which is the only excavated church among others is dated to the early fifth century according to the excavated numismatic evidence. The church is also remarkable for the two annexed building one of which served as the baptistery[161].

The settlement was abandoned after seventh century A.D. due to Muslim raids, and the silting of the mouth of the harbor. Duggan suggested that Taşdibi Bay functioned as the port of Myra from this time until the modern period. Taşdibi Bay, which has been referred as Stamira in the medieval and modern accounts, is two kilometers east of Andriake on the eastern side of the Kum Burnu peninsula[162] (Fig. 12). Hild-Hellenkemper also notes that Taşdibi port was the landing place for the

[160] For the details on this synagogue see Çevik et al. 2010.

[161] Akyürek 2014, 55.

[162] Duggan and Aygün 2010, 162; Duggan and Aygün 2015, 246.

pilgrims coming to Myra[163]. In the thirteenth century a Seljuq-*manar,* a tall cylindrical tower used as watch-signalling tower and a lighthouse, was built on t the Kum Burnu peninsula[164] (Fig. 13). The architectural and literary evidence confirm that Taşdibi-Stamira was the port of medieval Myra. Since this was the landing place for both travelers and cargo, other remains of Roman and Byzantine buildings are expected to be found along the route between the port and the church of St. Nicholas.

I.5.2 Sura

The settlement of Sura is located 4 kilometers south-southwest of Myra on a small plateau (Fig. 14). The settlement, whose modern name remains Sura, was referred to as Σοῦρα in the ancient Greek sources. A Lycian inscription on a rock cut tomb in Sura records the *ethikon* as *surezi*[165]. There are also votive inscriptions dedicated to *Apollon Sourios* carved on into the rockface in Sura.[166]

The crag on the western side of the plateau was crowned by a Classical fortress. Traces of polygonal, isodomic and rubble masonry on the remains of its fortifications indicate the use of the site from in the Classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine periods[167]. To the north-east of the acropolis lies a large Early Byzantine basilica with a single projecting apse. In a later period probably between eight and tenth centuries, a small chapel was built inside the early basilica[168]. A three-aisled

[163] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, I, 290.

[164] Duggan and Aygün 2010, 163.

[165] Zgusta 1984, 583–584.

[166] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 45-46 nos. 82-84; Heberdey and Kalinka 1897, 15 nos. 48-50.

[167] Borchhardt 1975, 76.

[168] Borchhardt 1975, 411-413.

basilica with a single apse and an adjacent chapel is situated to the north of the remains of the Apollon oracle at the edge of the marshy valley [169].

A grave inscription from the Roman period found in Sura records that the fine in case of a potential tomb violator should be paid to the *demos* of Myra[170]. This epigraphic evidence testifies shows Sura politically belonged to the territory of Myra in the Roman period.

I.5.3 Gürses

To 2,5 kilometers to the North of Sura, lies a classical fortress on the northern site of the modern village of Gürses with remains of houses and a necropolis. The acropolis overlooks the sea; the harbor of Andriake andi to the west, as far as Aperlai and the territories of Kyaneai and Trysa. To 1,5 km from the classical settlement lies a settlement which was probably settled during the Roman and Byzantine periods where there are the remains of a three-aisled early Byzantine basilica. The basilica consists itself of a vaulted singe aisled structure built probably at a later date[171]. The traces of frescoes, which were recorded by Rott[172], no longer remain recognizable today.

The ancient name of the settlement remains in question. Borchhardt suggests its identification as Trebendai[173], giving no evidence but a funerary inscription from Teimiussa (see above fn. 153). However, this does not also seem to be possible considering the Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion which mentions Trebendai as one of

[169] Rott 1908, 342; Harrison 1963, 143-144.

[170] Petersen-Luschan 1889, 44 no. 80.

[171] Harrison 1963, 140-142 and fig. 17.viii; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004 II, 632 s.v. Kilise Alanı.

[172] Rott 1908, 75-76.

[173] Borchhardt 1975, 82.

the villages lying in the mountainous hinterland of Myra that Nicholas visited[174]. Asarbelen Tepesi in Muskar/Belören was most probably Trebendai (for the details see below p. 80-81).

Leaving aside the question of the status of the settlement in the Classical period and Hellenistic periods, which is always problem in the absence of textual evidence, the site, which lies in a position close to Myra overlooking not only the sea but also the Myros valley with its northern area, could have been added to the political territories of Myra at least in the Roman period or later, as Myra became politically prominent in the region. In this respect, we can assume that Myra whose territory was not limited to the region on the eastern side of the Myros Valley but stretched beyond the valley to the west as far as Gürses, had full control over the Myros Valley during the Roman and Byzantine periods.

[174] VNS 57.

CHAPTER II: HOLY FIGURES FROM MYRA

Among the martyrs and saints of the Roman and Late Antique periods, Nicholas of Myra, the origin of the popular figure of Santa Claus, was without a doubt the most important holy personage to have originated from Lycia, whose cult became widespread all around Christian world. Nicholas did not become a saint that was only venerated in the Greece and Aisa Minor in Byzantine Period, but his fame crossed the borders of Byzantium reaching as far as Norman Britain, Kieven Rus' and Scandinavia during the Medieval Period[175].

However, Nicholas owes this reputation mainly to the intertwinement of the miracles of another Nicholas of Myra, known as Nicholas of Sion, who, according to the last paragraph of his Vita, died in the uplands of the city in A.D. 564 during the reign of Justinian[176]. The life of Saint Nicholas of Sion is particularly distinguished from other texts relating to the former Nicholas of 4th century A.D., since it not only clearly indicates the distinction between these two persona (Nicholas of Myra and Nicholas of Sion), but also, and more importantly, provides a rich description of the life in the countryside of Myra during the sixth century. This chapter will introduce each of these two Nicholas and examine the material and textual evidence; namely the church complex of Saint Nicholas of Myra in Demre and the sixth-century Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion and in consequence, it helps us to understand how the cult

[175] For more details on the spread of the cult of Saint Nicholas see Butler 1813, 91; Muir 1981, 97-102; Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 18-24; Stepanova 2006, 185-186; Garipzanov 2010, 229-246.

[176] VNS 80: Ἐτελειώθη δὲ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ δοῦλος καὶ επίσκοπος Νικόλαος κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν μηνὶ Δεκεμβρίῳ δεκάτῃ, ἡμέρα τέταρτῃ, ἰνδικτιώνος τρισκαιδεκάτης, ἐπὶ βασιλείας τοῦ φιλοχρίστου ἡμῶν βασιλέως Ἰουστινιανοῦ ἔτους τριακοστοῦ καὶ ὀγδόου… (*The servant of God and most holy Bishop Nicholas died, by [the will of] God, Lover of mankind, on Wednesday, the tenth of the month of December, in the thirteenth Indiction, in the thirty-eighth year of the rule of our Godloving Emperor Justinian…*, trans. by Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 113); For the dating of his death in A.D. 564, see Anrich 1917, 216; Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 18; Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 136.

of Saint Nicholas led Myra into the Middle Ages and beyond as both a local and a universal Christian pilgrimage center.

II.1 NICHOLAS OF MYRA

II.1.1 The Cult of Nicholas of Myra

The earliest textual record of Nicholas of Myra derives from an anonymous text titled *Praxis de stratelatis* dating from the sixth century[177]. According to the text, Nicholas was the bishop of Myra during the reign of Constantine, to whom the saint appeared in a vision, telling him that he should release three innocent generals[178], who were sent from Constantinople to Phrygia to surpass a revolt and were unjustly taken prisoners in Myra due to an issue of bribery after they landed in Andriake. Nevertheless, there is no evidence for his attendance in the Nicaean council in 325[179]. Another account recording the saint is the *Vita Nicolae Sionitae*, The life of Nicholas of Sion, which was composed in the sixth century. In this Vita of the latter Nicholas, who was the abbot of the Sion Monastery, the tomb of the Saint Nicholas of Myra within the city of Myra is for the first time recorded[180]. In the same Vita, Nicholas of

[177] For the versions of the original text edited by Anrich and other related documents, see Anrich 1913, 67-96 and for comments Anrich 1917, 368-375.

[178] Anrich 1913, 75.

[179] Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 18; Ruggieri 1993, 340.

[180] In the vita the tomb of Saint Nicholas is noted as a *martyrium* although from the legends he is not known for having been martyred, see Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 29. It is not certain whether a church was established in connection with the tomb of Saint Nicholas by the sixth century. Furthermore, the use of the word *martyrium* instead of a tomb introduces a question as to the reliability of the source and of the perception of martyrdom and the meaning of the word *martyrium* at that time.

Sion attends the synod which was held in Myra at the time of the *rossalia*[181] of Saint Nicholas[182].

The cult remained a local cult in the fifth and sixth century as Nicholas became a folk hero of Lycia. Anrich notes sixteen or seventeen people from Lycia whose name was Nicholas in this period which explains the rising popularity of the saint as it was a tradition to name the newborns after a respectfed holy figure[183].

Further evidence of the cult of Saint Nicholas in local terms is on Gemiler Island in western Lycia which possessed several sixth-century churches dedicated to Saint Nicholas. Indeed, the island, serving as a station for the pilgrims on their route to the Holy Land, was associated with the saint from the early Byzantine period until the early modern period[184]. The fame of Nicholas reached Constantinople in the mid-sixth century at the latest, as Procopius in his *De Aedificiis* speaks of a church dedicated to the saints Priscus and Nicholas established by Justinian in Constantinople near the Blachernae district[185]. In the *Chronicon Paschale*, a church of Saint Nicholas near the fortifications is mentioned in 627 during the Avar siege of Constantinople although it is unclear as to if this was the same church that formerly

[181] Originating from the Greek word ῥόδον meaning rose, rossalia is a festival of roses that was celebrated not only by pagans but also by Christians. There are different opinions as to the meaning of the *rossalia* of Saint Nicholas. While Anrich ascribes it to the anniversary of the saint's death, I. Ševčenko and N. Patterson Ševčenko suggests that the feast could have taken place not necessarily on the death anniversary which is the sixth of December but in the spring as the traditional *rossalia* which was also a suitable time for such a synod to gather in contrast to the unfavorable winter conditions. See Anrich 1917, 442 and Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 138-139.

[182] Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 109.

[183] Anrich 1917, 449-451.

[184] Masuda 1995, 114-116.

[185] Procop. *Aed.* 1.6.4-5. This church might have located between the Blachernae Church of the Virgin and the land walls, and it was probably burned during the Avar siege in 626 and re-built. Although no definite remains from this church survive, it is thought to have located near the "Tower of St. Nicholas", which gave its name on its inscription, between the Heracleian and the Leonine walls near the "Ayios Nikolaos Ayazması", see more in Janin 1969, 369-371; Majeska 1984, 338.

dedicated to the saints Priscus and Nicholas[186]. Yet it stands as important early evidence of the cult in the capital.

The ninth century was the critical epoch when the saint came into prominence and his cult was transmitted to the West[187]. One of the accounts from the ninth century is of the Muslim attack on Myra in 809 which is noted by Theophanes. Choumeid, an Arab admiral ravages Rhodes Island and then sails to Myra to destroy the tomb of Saint Nicholas. Instead of destroying the tomb of Saint Nicholas, he damages another tomb. However, his fleet suffers a devastating storm and Choumeid then acknowledges the saint's power[188].

In addition, the ninth-century texts record churches dedicated to Nicholas. In the Life of Joannicius, the hermit of Olympus, a monastery of Nicholas (μοναστήριον Νικολάου) or an imperial monastery (βασίλειος μονή) with a chapel of Nicholas (ναός τοῦ ἁγίου Νικολάου) at the foot of Mount Olympus in Bithynia is mentioned[189]; and in the Vita Athanasiae, Saint Athanasia built the church of Nicholas on the Aegina island along with churches of Theotokos and Saint John the Baptist[190]. The latter evidence indicates the spread of the cult extended beyond Asia Minor towards the West. Nicholas I, who lived in the ninth century, was the first Roman pope to carry this name and doubtless reflects growing importance attached to Saint Nicholas by this date in the West[191]. But, surely, as the most important

[186] *Chron. Pasch.* 724.11-12; Philippides and Hanak 2011, 352.

[187] Jones 1976, 222 n. 44; Blacker et al. 2013, 252; Cioffari (1987, 49-52: *non vidi*) thinks that the Latin world might have known him even in seventh century, since the legend of "praxis de stratelatis" (see above fn. 177) was already translated into Latin. See also Anrich 1917, 460-466 for the cult in 9th century.

[188] Theoph. *Chronog*. 483.4-483.15; cf. Mango and Scott 1997, 663.

[189] *AASS Nov.* II/1, p. 370 (Vita Joannicii 44).

[190] See the translation of related section in Sherry 1996, 138 and 150.

[191] Garipzanov 2010, 230.

indication of how the cult of Saint Nicholas expanded and how much the saint became one of the most respected holy figures in Byzantium can be shown from the *Nea Ekklesia* which was built by Basil I and consecrated by Photius, the patriarch on May the 1st in 881. The *Nea* was dedicated to Christ, Theotokos, Archangel Gabriel, the Prophet Elias and to Saint Nicholas[192]. He was also added to the mosaic program of the southern tympanum of Hagia Sophia, additions made under either by Basil or Leo[193]. Skylitzes records that Constantine X was buried in the monastery of Saint Nicholas when he died in May 1067[194].

One of the indications of how much Saint Nicholas was favored and respected derives from Byzantine lead seals. Among the other saints represented on the seals dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries the figure of Saint Nicholas was the most popular after the image of the Theotokos, and St. Nicholas was followed by the Archangel Michael and other military saints Demetrios, George and Theodore[195].

In 1087, the merchants from Bari removed the relics of Saint Nicholas and transported them to Bari. The Normans built the Basilica di San Nicola in Bari to shelter the stolen holy remains. The church then became one of the most renowned pilgrimage attractions in the West. Nonetheless, the complex in Myra retained its reputation as the pilgrimage place for the Byzantines since there was the belief that the merchants from Bari had taken the remains from the wrong tomb[196].

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[192] Anrich 1917, 465; Antonopoulou 1997, 47; Theo. Cont. 325.8-325-13

[193] Antonopoulou 1997, 47. The mosaic which is now destroyed was recorded by Fossati, see Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 21.

[194] Sky. Cont. 117.24-118.4

[195] Oikonomides 1985, 14.

[196] Anrich 1913, 435-449; Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 23-24.

II.1.2 A Brief history of the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra

The church of St. Nicholas is one of the best preserved ecclesiastical buildings in Asia Minor. The church which underwent several restorations, repairs and additions between the sixth and the nineteenth centuries is a unique example of the continuity in use outside Constantinople and thus reflects the great respect awarded to the saint throughout the course of the middle ages and even in the modern era.

The church is not only significant for its well preserved structure with its architecture, but also for its decorative elements including wall painting, *opus sectile* pavements and sculpture. Urs Peschlow proposes three main building phases; although it has not been precisely verified, the fragments of construction material and technique from various parts of the church suggest that there might have been a vaulted basilica in the sixth century[197]. A structure unearthed in the northern section of the complex was dated to the first phase after an examination of the material and the building technique employed. It was suggested that it was built for secular purposes and was identified as the bishop's residence[198].

In the second phase, a three-aisled domed basilica was constructed which has survived to the present day. Peschlow suggests a date in the eighth century in regard to other similar examples such as the Koimesis Church in İznik, H. Sophia in Thessaloniki[199], while Doğan et al. date this second phase to the ninth-tenth century after the damage caused by Muslim raids or to the earthquake that struck the city and the countryside. After this phase, new annexes were added to the main body of the

[197] Borchhardt 1975, 342. The main textual evidence for this suggestion is the sixth century - Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion. In the Life, Nicholas of Sion goes off to Myra from his monastery in the uplands and visits the martyrium of the Saint Nicholas, see Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 29; Doğan et al. 2014, 33; Hellenkemper-Hild 2004, 356.

[198] Ötüken 1997, 473.

[199] Borchhardt 1975, 345.

church[200]. Two important figures; Saint Cyril of Thessalonica and Saint Joannicius paid visits to the shrine of Saint Nicholas in the ninth century[201]. John the Orphanotrofos, brother of Michael IV, was one of the notable pilgrims of the eleventh century. After the saint appeared to him in a dream, Orphanotrofos is known to have come to Myra to be cured. After being healed, he made donations to the church for the damage that was caused by the Muslim raiders and to fortify Myra in the early eleventh century[202]. A stone inscription with the date September the 1st 1042 records Constantine IX Monomachos and Empress Zoe renewed the church[203]. The northern additions, the two southeastern chapels and the *opus sectile* floor panels are considered to have been work executed in this period[204]. The inner narthex was also decorated with wall paintings in the eleventh century. The church expanded towards the north in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when new rooms were added and the so-called bishop's palace was rebuilt[205]. A grave inscription painted on an *arcosolium* with the date August the 6th 1118 reads of Constantine *chartolarios*[206] and his son Leon *chartophylax*[207] and hints that the church might have functioned as a monastery in the twelfth century[208]. The lavish wall painting decoration of the

[200] Doğan et al. 2014, 33.

[201] Nakatani 1995, 47-48, f. 21.

[202] Foss 1994, 34; Ötüken 2002, 445.

[203] Rott 1908, 340.

[204] Doğan et al. 2014, 52. Ötüken dates the *opus sectile* panels to late ninth – early tenth centuries and considers them to be contemporary with the construction of the domed basilica, see Doğan et al. 2014, 55.

[205] Doğan et al. 2014, 34 and 64.

[206] *Chartolarios* had a similar meaning to that of *chartophylax*, see ODB I p. 416, s.v. Chartolarios.

[207] *Chartophylax* is the supervisor of archives but it also means monastery's clerical officer keeping track of monastic documents, see Encyclopedia of Monasticism 2000, 545; Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100) 1914, 1161; ODB I p. 415-416, s.v. Chartophylax.

[208] Doğan et al. 2014, 37. The inscription which is now lost was noted by Hans Rott, see Rott 1908, 340.

southern burial chamber is likewise dated to the twelfth century[209]. The burial chamber is particularly distinctive as it contains the life cycle of Saint Nicholas which is the only example of its kind that is known from Asia Minor[210].

Myra and the church suffered a great flood caused by the overflow of the Myros River in the thirteenth century. As a result, the northern additions were filled with alluvial fill up to six meters deep. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the third southeastern chapel, which is decorated with scenes of the *deesis* and annunciation were added to the church[211].

In the nineteenth century the church drew the interest of the Orthodox world. In 1858-68, the Russian Institute of Archaeology conducted excavations and restorations in the church. In this period, the outer narthex was built and the roofing elements were renewed[212]. It is known from a letter of Hrisantos, designated as the bishop of Myra in 1876 that the building was called the Monastery of Sion and a bell tower was built along with the repairs. With the abandonment of the Greek orthodox community of Myra as a result of the exchange of populations in 1922 the church remained derilict until the modern attempts at cleaning and repair in 1963-64[213].

II.1.3 The Church of Saint Nicholas of Myra as a Pilgrimage Center

In addition to the architectural phases of the complex, it is necessary to touch upon the functional phases of the shrine of Saint Nicholas of Myra. With this aim, I

[209] Doğan et al. 2014, 37; Karakaya 2005; 293-294.

[210] Doğan et al. 2014, 66; Karakaya 2005, 290-292.

[211] Doğan et al. 2014, 66. However Çorağan Karakaya (2003, 286) dates the wall paintings of this chapel to the twelfth century.

[212] Rott 1908, 328.

[213] Doğan et al. 2014, 41-43; Demiriz 1968, 21.

will discuss the development of the complex and try to clarify its somewhat obscure nature (for the plan of the complex see **Hata! Başvuru kaynağı bulunamadı.**).

Firstly, there is the tomb, the very heart of everything. There is no evidence whether Nicholas of Myra himself, if we assume that he lived around late third-early fourth centuries, built a shrine here. The sixth-century Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion is the first source that mentions the existence of a building but records it as the martyrion of Saint Nicholas[214]. Archaeological evidence from the excavations at the church has not detected the foundations of a typical martyrion and the general opinion accepts a basilical church as the first phase. Be it a basilica, it was a building with a strong funerary context. Moreover, we are not sure whether the church stands on the original place of burial. In late antiquity, there was usually no distinction between the burial site of pagans and Christians. In Asia Minor, Christians would also be buried in the necropolis of the city both before Constantine and afterwards[215]. The question is "was the site of the church a part of the necropolis of Myra at the beginning of the fourth century?". Or were the relics of the saint transferred from another necropolis, together with the other Roman sarcophagi which are now at the church?

While rock cut tombs, which were carved into the massive rock slopes, were the characteristics elements of the Classical and Hellenistic necropolis of Myra, the Roman necropolis was down in the valley but was almost entirely covered in alluvium. The only archaeological evidence indicating Roman tombs in the valley

[214] VNS 8.

[215] The nearest example is the necropolis of Patara, which has graves of pagan citizens but was preferred by Christians as well. Another example is the necropolis of the city of Juliopolis in Galatia which was used by pagans in the Roman period but was filled with graves of Christians in the early Byzantine period, see Onur 2014, 85-99.

were 6 Roman sarcophagi which were found along the Myros River during archaeological rescue excavations in 2006-2007, and some fragments of sarcophagi along with a grave podium unearthed at a nearby site in 2010[216]. Indeed, topographically speaking, if we assume that tombs were usually placed outside the urban area and on the main roads that lead into the city. We should not expect only one Roman necropolis in Myra and there might have been tombs located to the west and south-west of the city on the way to the suburbs, such as on the road to Sura and to Andriake. Unfortunately, due to the alluvium deposit, it is difficult to detect the exact southern and western borders of the urban space of Roman Myra. The center, however must have been close to the bath and the theatre which lie to the north of the church. Regarding the distance between the church and the bath, the church seems to have been situated to some extent outside of Myra. From a bird's eye view, the church seems to lie on the main road that leads from the city center to Andriake. A late Roman milestone was reused as *spolia* inside the church[217]. Milestones were erected on main roads, and very often at crossroads. Such a heavy piece of stone would not have been transferred to the church from some distant spot and its original location would have been very close to the church. With this epigraphic evidence, we can suggest that the church lies on the main road, possibly at a junction point for the roads, leading to Andriake, Myra and Limyra. Yet, on the other hand, during the

[216] Çevik and Bulut 2010, 34.

[217] Takmer 2004, 109-110 No. 2a-c. The milestone has three inscriptions inscribed at different dates, no numbers of miles survives. In the first, the metropolis of Myra erects the milestone in honour of Galerius Valerius Maximianus in 293 A.D. The second is for Valentinian, Valens and Gratian, erected at sometime between 367-375 A.D. The final one is for Gratian, Valentinian, Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius, erected sometime between 383-393 A.D. Takmer considers that the milestone belonged to the road from Myra to Limyra, but it is also probable that it belonged to western road of Myra (in the direction of Kyaneai), since location of the Church of St. Nicholas is to the west of the center of Myra.

excavations in the church area, no evidence of an existence of a Roman necropolis or a group of Roman tombs has been revealed.

In addition, the structure in the northern area of the complex was identified as the bishop's residence. Ötüken bases this suggestion upon the domestic pottery found in the structure and on the textual evidence from the Life of Saint Nicholas[218]. According to the Vita, Philipp, the archbishop of Myra, ordains Nicholas to come down to the episcopal residence. Nicholas was then endowed with the garb of priesthood at the cathedral and apostolic church of *Peace* and was appointed by the archbishop as the bishop of Pinara[219]. This evidence, to which Ötüken refers, indeed mentions a bishop's palace in Myra but does not clearly show that the bishop's residence was located beside the martyrion of Saint Nicholas. It seems most probable that it was situated close to the church of Peace, which the archbishop preferred for the ceremony of the appointment.

The shrine was a pilgrimage center at a local level in the sixth century. In subsequent centuries, as the cult spread, it began to attract pilgrims from not only Byzantium but also from the West. Surely, the shrine was so attractive because it contained the tomb of the *myrrh-flowing* body of the saint. Oil would be poured into the tomb where it was sanctified by contact with the holy relics. The pilgrims would then fill their little flasks with this sanctified oil flowing through the open holes on the sarcophagus and keep it as a means of protection and a relic through having had physical contact with the holy saint[220]. Ceramic *unguentaria* and pilgrim's flasks made of glass were found during archaeological excavations in the church area,

[218] Ötüken 1997, 473.

[219] VNS 68.

[220] For the description of post-humous healing by physical contact see, Talbot 2002, 159-160.

which confirm the cult of oil between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries[221]. The holy oil cult was so strongly established that the myrrh was now mainly associated with Saint Nicholas and his shrine that it began to be known as *a healing and curing place for the sufferers* (ἐν ὅλω τῶ κόσμω ἰατρεῖον καὶ θεραπείον τοῖς πάσχουσι)[222]. In this respect, we can assume that the complex functioned as a healing shrine.

Textual evidence informs us of a number of pilgrims who visited the shrine. Among these were Joannicus, the hermit of Mount Olympus[223] and John the Orphanotrophos. Saewulf, the pilgrim, records in the account of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which took place in 1102-1103, that he came to Myra and worshipped at the tomb of Saint Nicholas. This record is particularly important as it shows that the shrine was still attracting pilgrims as a place of worship of the saint subsequent to the removal of the saint's relics to Bari in 1087[224].

In 2002, in the northwestern area of the complex, a basin was unearthed. The basin is connected via a pipe to a stonework container in which an in-situ clay pitcher was found. Ötüken identified this basin as part of the myrrh press. According to Ötüken, the room (K5) which is one meter to the north-east of the basin should be the *myrophalion* chapel where the oil was sanctified and the adjacent space (K6) should be *myrophylakion* employed to store the sanctified oil[225].

The church comprises a number of *arcosolia* and sarcophagi in the side aisles and annexed chapels. Yet, where the relics of the Saint were kept within the complex

[221] For the ceramic unguentaria see Çaylak Türker 2005, 311-327 and for the pilgrim's flasks made of glass, see Çömezoğlu 2008, 351-353.

[222] Anrich 1917, 516, f. 2-3.

[223] *AASS Nov.* II/1, p. 341 (Vita Joannicii 10).

[224] D'Avezac 1839, 16.

[225] Ötüken 2005, 265.

in the Middle Ages remains as a question. Among the suggestions for its location are the sarcophagus in the southern funerary chapel and the sarcophagus in the southern external aisle. On the other hand, the room attached to the main apse to the North (C2) is identified as the original burial chamber of Saint Nicholas in consequence of the narrow pipe system under the floor pavement and an analysis of the samples from the densely greasy soil of the ground which revealed that the oil inside the soil was myrrh oil[226]. A number of tombs at the church might have contained relics of holy saints that were translated to the church or of some of the bishops who preferred to be buried side by side with Saint Nicholas.

The connection between the church and the city of Myra was provided through a processional road that would end at the podium with stairs to the east of the arcaded structure surrounding the northern side of the church. Although the modern entrance is made through the third south-eastern chapel, pilgrims in the medieval period would have proceeded to the shrine from the north[227].

The pilgrimage to the shrine was most probably the main reason for its enlargement with additional structures having a pilgrimage context, such as the rooms where the myrrh oil was consecrated and stored, or other funerary chapels, which along with other sections of the church welcomed a circulation of pilgrims.

It has been largely accepted that the complex functioned as a monastery on the basis of the aforementioned twelfth-century grave inscription of Constantine and his son Leon, both of whom were a monastery's clerical officers. Plus, the complex meets some of the criteria for its identification as a monastery that Stephen Hill lists

[226] Doğan et al. 2014, 109-110; Ötüken 2005, 263-264.

[227] Doğan et al. 2014, 114.

in his article *When is a monastery not a monastery*; it has an unusual plan with later added chapels, it was enclosed by a precinct wall, there is a courtyard and it has lots of little rooms. Hill argues that a building which meets one or more than one of these criteria should not necessarily be a monastery presenting the examples such as the Cappadocian church at Persek, the Basilica of St. Thekla at Meryemlik and the Alahan complex[228]. Indeed, archaeological excavations at the complex have not revealed structures that can be securely identified as certainly serving a monastic function, e.g. living quarters, refectory. It is perhaps probable that these clerics were from a monastery in Myra but preferred to be buried at this holy place. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to note that a certain identification of the complex as a monastery requires further archaeological evidence or other evidence.

II.2 NICHOLAS OF SION

II.2.1 The sixth-century Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion

In the sixth century, there was another saint in Lycia whose name was also Nicholas. According to the Vita, he is an inborn saint, as reported in the text "Glory be to Thee, O God, for a servant of God has been born to us" and "For he was born by the will of God and he shall glorify God in this [very] place"[229]. Nicholas was the founder and *archimandrite*[230] of the Holy Sion Monastery in the mountainous countryside of Myra[231]. His life was written by one of the monks of the Sion Monastery after his death in 564. However, the Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion was

[228] Hill 1994, 137-145.

[229] VNS 2; translations by Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 23.

[230] Archimandrite (Greek ἀρχιμανδρίτης, ου, ὁ) is the chief of a monastery, see GLRBP p. 258, s.v. ἀρχιμανδρίτης; Lampe p. 240, s.v. ἀρχιμανδρίτης.

[231] The sixth-century Nicholas is referred as Saint Nicholas of Sion in regard to his monastery of Holy Sion in order to distinguish him from the fourth century-Nicholas of Myra.

intermingled with hagiographic texts concerning Nicholas of Myra in the middle ages when the cult of Saint Nicholas of Myra was consolidated, embracing the miracles performed by Nicholas of Sion who in consequence descended into obscurity[232]. The church historian Gustav Anrich (1867-1930) compiled and edited the hagiographical texts of the *composite* Saint Nicholas in *Hagios Nikolaos Der Heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche. Texte und Untersuchengen*. One of the main outcomes of Anrich's work was the separation of the Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion from the other accounts concerning Nicholas of Myra.

The Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion carries the typical features of a Christian biography, the earliest example of which is the life of an Egyptian hermit Saint Anthony the Great (c. 250-356)[233]. Firstly, it is a biography that depicts the saint's life from his childhood to his death in which his miracles are woven into the narrative. Similar to that of Saint Anthony, it illustrates the saint's monastic life, his exorcism of demons and his healing miracles[234].

Moreover, it includes several recognizable historical references thereby contrasting with the ambiguous, legendary and posthumous characteristics of the hagiographical texts concerning Saint Nicholas of Myra. One of these concerns is the bubonic plague which broke out in 541-542. The author of the Vita records the arrival of the plague in Myra[235]. The visit of Saint Nicholas of Sion to the tomb of Saint Nicholas of Myra can be counted as a piece of historical evidence since it is

[232] Anrich 1917, 208.

[233] For the life of Saint Anthony, see Athanasius 1976.

[234] Talbot 2008, 863.

[235] VNS 52.

known the shrine of Saint Nicholas in Myra had a sixth-century phase[236]. Lastly, the author notes that the saint died in the thirty-eight year of Justinian that is 564[237].

The historical data contributes to the historicity, thus the reliability of the Vita to a certain degree. In this respect, we should question the notion of historicity. Peter Turner states that the modern understanding of truthfulness and historicity differed from the late antique sense of historical reality[238]. Here, we witness that hagiography serves history. This critical approach of hagiography is well-stated in the words by Hippolyte Delehaye (1859-1941), a member of the Bollandists, "l'agiographie critique est une branche de la science historique"[239]. This approach began to be more widely embraced during the twentieth century[240]. Delehaye notes that the recognition of late antiquity as a field of study did accelerate the interest in hagiography[241]. François Halkin acknowledges and lays emphasis upon the significance of the rich content of hagiography[242]. Unlike chronicles and other historical accounts which mostly focus on grand issues such as wars, the imperial court, diplomacy etc., hagiography can shed light upon the every-day life from the perspective of provincial authors, ordinary monks, etc.

The Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion is not only a collection of miracles but it is also a remarkable source, rich in information concerning the social, economic, and political life in the countryside in sixth-century Asia Minor. It is clear that Gustav Anrich's major work concerned not only the philological aspect of the texts but he

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[236] Peshlow 1975, 342.

[237] VNS 80.

[238] Turner 2012, 231.

[239] Delehaye 1934, 7. See also Efthymiadis 2011, 3.

[240] ODB II, 898-898, s.v. hagiography.

[241] Efthymiadis 2011, 5.

[242] Halkin 1967, 352.

also made the attempt to present and discuss the religious, historical, geographical and even art historical dimensions of the information contained in the work. After the edition-oriented tradition of the *Bollandists*, Anrich's methodology can be regarded as being innovative for its period. It is certain that his work paved the way for further research on the Vita.

II.2.2 Nicholas of Sion, a Monk, Bishop and a Saint

Our knowledge of Saint Nicholas of Sion is limited to his Vita. His life is based on the stereotypical models of vitae. Nicholas was born in the district of Tragalassos in the hamlet of Pharroa which lies in the hinterland of Myra in Lycia (VNS 1). He was the nephew of Nicholas, who was the abbot of the monastery of St. John in Akalissos (VNS 2) and the initial founder of the monastery of Holy Sion (VNS 4). Nicholas was an inherent saint whose infancy and childhood were already of a supernatural character (VNS 5). Owing to his spiritual attachment he was appointed priest in the monastery of Sion by his uncle Nicholas (VNS 7). However, when he undertook the responsibility to rule the monastery, the construction of the monastery had not been not entirely completed and therefore, Nicholas committed himself to completing the building and decoration. In the meantime, he began to produce miracles through the power he was given by the Holy Spirit. Similar to other late-antique saints[243], Nicholas owned a superiority over demonic beings. One of his important miracles is the exorcism of the evil cypress tree[244]. In late antiquity, people of the countryside believed that trees could have demonic spirits in them for being worshipped in the pagan past. Cutting down evil-sacred trees became a phenomenon

[243] ODB II, 771; Hägg 2011, 21.

[244] The incident which is described in the vita was adopted in the cycle of the Saint Nicholas of Myra in later periods, see Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 91-94.

of late antique hagiography, as in the case of Nicholas of Sion[245]. His control over nature was mainly for the benefit of the inhabitants of the countryside. For the villagers, the most vital element of life has always been the water supply. In the description made by Libanius, the good patron of the countryside is obliged to provide and distribute water[246]. Saint Nicholas, at this point, was the key figure ensuring the needed water source[247].

During the course of his life, Nicholas made pilgrimage to the Holy Land twice by boat. His second journey is particularly important for his hagiography as he performed the miracle of saving the ship from being sunk[248].

When the bubonic plague affected Myra the local farmers of the countryside refused to go down to the city to sell their products. As a result, the city of Myra was left without provisions such as grain, flour, wine and wood. Nicholas was accused by the local administers and the archbishop of Myra for not allowing the farmers to go down to the city. Clearly, the reason behind this accusation was the fact that the people of Myra were aware that Saint Nicholas was acknowledged as being the patron of the villagers[249].

Two years after the plague, Nicholas was inspired by the Holy Spirit to visit the shrines in the neighboring villages and sacrifice animals at each church to glorify God[250]. Thereupon Nicholas visited a number of villages in twenty-five days. However his visits was not only undertaken with a religious motivation. But

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[245] Caseau 2004,133-134.

[246] Lib. *Or. XLVII*.

[247] VNS 20-24.

[248] VNS 28-31 and 38; The incident of saving the ship is one of the miracles that was adopted by Saint Nicholas of Myra, see Patterson Ševčenko 1983, 95-104.

[249] VNS 53.

[250] VNS 56.

Nicholas, as an influential, respected and rich person of the countryside communed with the local people during the course of his travel. He gathered the inhabitants of each village and arranged banquets with the sacrificed oxen, together with wine and grain he had brought from his own monastery.

Nicholas in following years was ordained the bishop of Pinara by the archbishop of Myra. The Vita informs that he had a conflict over the building of the church of Saint Mary with the local magistrates and the clergy of Pinara. In the end, Nicholas was obliged to purchase the site, where the building was planned, and met all the expenses of the work. Subsequently Nicholas returned to his monastery where he spent his last years. Nicholas died in the thirty-eight year of the rule of Justinian. He was buried by the bishop of Phellos, a Lycian city to the West of Myra, inside the *martyrium* of the monastery[251].

The Vita of Saint Nicholas illustrates that Nicholas was not a person pursuing a secluded monastic life ignorant of the outside world. Occasionally, he spent days in his cell[252] but was never indifferent to either the people, who came for blessing or healing, or to the built environment. In order to maintain good relations Nicholas did not stay in his monastery on the top of a hill but rather, he paid visits to the neighboring villages and churches and thereby won everybody's favor. While the archbishop was the official dominating power in the city, Nicholas was the rural patron of Myra, a benefactor of the countryside who made generous donations for the restoration and building of churches and was a true fighter for Christianity against the demons and faithlessness. Moreover, it is clear from the Vita that his fame spread

[251] VNS 79-80.

[252] VNS 43.

beyond the borders of Myra and that he attracted visitors from others parts of Lycia[253].

II.2.3 The Monastery of Holy Sion

Apart from the heavenly figures such as the Theotokos and Michael the Archangel, who appeared to Nicholas, the other holy persona of the Vita is not only Nicholas but also his monastery which, as we understand from the text, is as sacred as the saint. In chapter 10, the reason for this sanctity is well-revealed. The author notes that angel of Lord appeared on the site of the church saying "Οὗτος ὁ τόπος ἐστὶν ἀντίτυπος τῆς ἁγίας Σίων Ἰερουσαλήμ (*This spot is the counterpart of Holy Sion in Jerusalem*)[254].

The saint and his monastery which are in a spiritual and physical unity form the focus of the Vita. Indeed, the Vita begins not with the birth of the saint but with the decision of the saint's uncle, whose name is also Nicholas, to found a monastery of Holy Sion in Tragalassos in the hamlet of Pharroa nearby to his monastery of St. John in Akalissos[255]. After the site of the shrine was consecrated, his nephew Nicholas, the saint, was born. Therefore, the initial founder of the monastery of Holy Sion was Nicholas, the elder. To consecrate the site, Nicholas invited the archbishop

[253] A couple came to the monastery from Zenoupolis, which was a bishopric listed in the Notitia Episcopatuum until the ninth century, see VNS 40; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, II, 923. A certain women came from the village of Sokla VNS 77. Sokla is identified as the city of Soklai near modern Elmalı, for the localization, see Tüner 2002, 74; Şahin - Adak 2004, 198-199. A certain man came from the district of Eneanda which is also called Oinoanda, a city in northern Lycia, see VNS 61. A man came to Nicholas from Akarassos, see VNS 22. Akarassos according to the Stadiasmus Patarensis, lies between Choma and Soklai although a precise localisation has not been determined, see Tüner 2002, 75; Şahin and Adak 2007, 197-198. The city is listed as a bishopric in the *Notitia Episcopatuum* until twelfth century, see Hellenkemper and Hild 2004 II, 425; Hild 2004, 8. A certain women came to the monastery from Edrasa, see VNS 75. Although Hellenkemper-Hild leaves the location of Edrasa as unknown Takmer and Alkan suggest that it might correspond to modern Adrasan in eastern Lycia, see Takmer and Alkan 2013a, 114.

[254] VNS 10; translation by Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 31.

[255] VNS 4.

of Myra and began outlining the apse[256]. He appointed Saint Nicholas as the priest of the shrine of Holy Sion only when he was nineteen years old and with the work on the shrine of Holy Sion about to be completed[257].

According to the text the building of the monastery was not completed in a short span of time but the overall construction and decoration took much time. After all, the church was a monolithic rock-cut structure quarried from the limestone rock slope[258]. Chapter 39 provides more hints concerning the process and the technique of construction. The hill in front of the apse was being quarried when Nicholas had a desire to visit the Holy Land. The saint wanted to dismiss the craftsmen (τεχνίται) and the stone-cutters (λιθοτόμοι) in his absence. After the saint left, new craftsmen whom Artemas, brother of the saint hired, began quarrying but they were unable to turn the block since they lacked the spiritual power of Nicholas who, among others, could only dominate the natural landscape through the will of God [259]. In chapter 45, we read again that the work of the craftsmen still continues in the shrine.

The text yields some further details of the monastery. We learn that it had a refectory (εὐφραντήριον[260]) with benches (ἀκούβιτα) where the clerics gathered to have their meal and a storeroom (κελλάριον) where the supplies such as loaves and wine were being stored[261]. In addition, it contained a kitchen (μαγειρεῖον). We understand that food was not only being prepared for the clerics but also for the

[256] VNS 4.

[257] VNS 7.

[258] VNS 11.

[259] VNS 39.

[260] I. Ševčenko and N. Patterson Ševčenko translate εὐφραντήριον as “refectory” into English, see Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 48-49.

[261] VNS 25.

visitors who stay in the monastery[262]. Further in chapter 77, it is noted that a woman came to the monastery to visit Saint Nicholas in order to be healed and the woman stayed in the monastery and was cured by the saint. From these two passages we infer that the monastery might have contained rooms, or a guesthouse for the visitors. In addition to the main church, a kitchen, a refectory and a guesthouse are mentioned in the Vita, the monastery also possessed a cell where Saint Nicholas would seclude himself[263]. However, Nicholas did not always maintain an ascetic life in his cell as he was rather occupied with "wordly" affairs. In chapter 63, a certain man called Zeno from the village of Arnabanda came to the monastery and found Nicholas planting the vineyard with the other clerics[264]. We learn from this that vineyards formed parts of the monastery's properties and the clerics including Nicholas himself were working in the vineyard, instead of hiring workmen from a nearby village.

Another distinctive section of the monastery of Holy Sion was the *martyrium*. In Chapter 6, the author mentions the martyrium of Saint John at the monastery of Nicholas' uncle in Akalissos, which is the reason of the naming of monastery as that of Saint John. Here, the monastery of Holy Sion also contained a martyrium where the remains of Saint Nicholas of Sion were deposited. Other than his relics, there were remains of several martyrs, such as Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist, Saint Stephen the Protomartyr, Saint Theodore, Saints Sergius and Bacchus and the Holy Forty Martyrs[265].

[262] VNS 44.

[263] VNS 43.

[264] VNS 63.

[265] VNS 80.

One of the main conclusion that can be deduced from the Vita in general is that the monastery of Holy Sion owned a considerable amount of prosperity, in terms of both money and private properties. Nicholas was able to afford the construction of the monastery, particularly the rock-cut church, hiring workmen which must have caused much expense. In order to sustain the monastic life for himself and for the other clerics, money was also needed. But Nicholas, seemingly was able to afford all of these expenditures. Further, he was always a generous benefactor towards others. Indeed, it is his generosity that is presented as his main virtue if we exclude his performances of miracles. At almost every shrine he visited in the nearby villages in the hinterland of Myra, Nicholas sacrificed oxen and arranged feasts for the inhabitants. Most probably he would buy the oxen from the villages. Yet, he would carried wine and bread with him for the feasts[266]. On one occasion, when Nicholas was appointed the bishop of Pinara, a city in western Lycia, he wished to build a church dedicated to the Theotokos in the territory of Pinara, After the oppositions from the administrator and clerics of the city, since perhaps the site was private property, Nicholas was obliged to buy the site. The cost for Nicholas of building this church was four hundred *nomismata*[267].

II.2.4 The Churches and settlements recorded in the Vita

The Vita of Saint Nicholas of Sion teems with toponyms of different types of settlements. To begin with, Myra, Arneai, Phellos, Oinoanda, Pinara, Zenoupolis, Askalon and Jerusalem are the cities which still preserved their independent city-status by the time when the Vita was written. The Vita also records harbors such as

[266] VNS 55.

[267] VNS 69.

Andriake, Phonix, Tristomon and the sea-port of Askalon. But what makes the Vita so distinctive is its rich content of toponyms of settlements which were smaller than cities in scale and which were located within the territorial borders of cities.

Before proceeding to the toponyms recorded in the Vita, we should make a brief note of the terminology that the author of the Vita employed. Three different territorial terms are used in the Vita. Κώμη is the Greek word for a village whereas χωρίον means a settlement smaller than village. Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko translates χωρίον into English as hamlet[268]. Χώρα, on the other hand, means district or precinct. Ἐνορία refers to the surrounding territory of a city or a village[269]; but it can also mean simply a defined district[270].

II.2.4.1 The Monasteries

II.2.4.1.1 The Monastery of Holy Sion in Tragalassos

Surely, the monastery of Holy Sion lies at the very heart of the story line of the Vita. The monastery was founded in the hamlet of Pharroa which was within the district of Tragalassos[271]. Nothing is known about Tragalassos between the Hellenistic Period, when it was in military alliance with Arykanda, and the middle of 6th century A.D, when it re-appeares as a village (κώμη) located in the mountainous region within the territory of Myra, equidistant from the city of Myra and Arneai[272] (see above pp. 36-37 for the references on sources and the proposals concerning localization). Yet, the name Tragalassos was not limited to the borders of the village

[268] Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 18.

[269] As the territory surronding a city VNS 19, 59, 61. As the precinct of a village, VNS 1, 26, 41. Ἐνορία as a district VNS 15 and 52.

[270] VNS 52

[271] VNS 1 and 4.

[272] VNS 9 and 53.

settlement, as its district was also named after Tragalassos[273]. Pharroa, is a hamlet, a small village (χωρίον) which lies in the *chora* (χώρα) of Tragalassos.

Clearly, the localization of Tragalassos and of the monastery of Holy Sion should be approached together, as one can contain a clue concerning the other. For example, the strongest evidence for the localization of the monastery of Sion is its description in the Vita. For its localization, there has been a debate over two different churches, both of which are tri-conch, three-aisled grand churches close to each other. Harrison proposed that the church complex at Asarcık which lie 1,2 kilometers northwest of Karabel and 12 kilometers northwest of Myra can be identified as the monastery of Holy Sion[274]. Blum and Foss find Harrison's suggestion convincing and note that the burial chapel in which the relics of Nicholas of Sion was buried should be the burial chapel which is attached to the church at Asarcık on its southern side[275]. Recently, İşler agrees with the suggestion of Harrison mainly regarding the burial chapel[276]. On the other side of the debate, stands the identification of the monastery as the Alacahisar Church which lies on top of Çamdağ ca. 3,5 kilometers southwest of Karabel, a localization, which is supported by several scholars such as Niewöhner[277], Hellenkemper and Hild[278], Chronz[279], Şahin[280] and Alkan[281]. The main argument for its identification as Alacahisar is

[273] VNS 1.

[274] Harrison 1963, 150.

[275] Blum 1997, 12, 93; Foss 1991, 309.

[276] İşler 2009, 313-314.

[277] Niewöhner 2003, 128-132.

[278] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004 II, 852-853.

[279] Chronz 1985, 75.

[280] Şahin 2014, 280-281.

[281] Alkan 2011b, 104-105.

based upon a “better” reading of the Vita and understanding of the site description recorded in it.

The designated site for the construction project was a mountain-top which must have been a noteworthy place within the region due to its centrality, height and dominating position[282].

The eastern part of the building took the advantage of the massive limestone rock forming the hilltop and it was cut out of it. The Vita describes the monastery as τό κτίσμα μονόλιθον, καί ὁλον τό όρος λάμπον ἦν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος (*a structure made of all stone and the whole mountain shining like the sun*)[283]. The rock cut, monolithic structure described by this description explicitly evokes one specific structure, namely, the Alacahisar Church. The Vita elaborates, noting that the hill in front of the apse was quarried[284]. Indeed, it is the case that the room right behind the main apse of Alacahisar church seems to have formed by cutting stone-blocks out of the massive rock. Niewöhner moreover, examining the architecture of Alacahisar states that the southern aisle could have been the *martyrium* of the monastery considering the mention in the Vita that the relics of Saint Nicholas were deposited on the right section of the church along with remains of many holy and glorious martyrs (ἐν τῶ δεξιῶ γυναικίτη δεξιά κατασταθείς)[285].

İşler states that Harrison bases his argument on evidence from the Vita and the inscription on the baptismal font in the baptistery of the church at Asarcık which

[282] VNS 11 and 13.

[283] VNS 11; translation by Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 33.

[284] VNS 39.

[285] VNS 80; Niewöhner 2003, 131; VNS 80. Niewöhner translates the Greek word γυναικίτης as side aisle (seitenshiff) referring to the medieval use the term, see Niewöhner 2003, 131, f.44.

reads as ἡ εὐχ]ὴ Νικο † λάο[υ] ναυκλήρου μεσάτου[286] (Vow of Nicholas the sailor and arbitrator)[287]. In reality, there is no such mention by Harrison, nor does it seem plausible to produce such a conclusion upon the basis of an inscription that carries the name Nicholas[288]. After all, we are dealing with two grand churches of similar plans. It is not surprising for a late antique church to have an adjacent room for burials, namely, a *martyrion*[289], as likewise there were additional spaces attached to the churches in North Syria. While these rooms might have functioned for the storage of liturgical equipment or as a baptistery, those which contained reliquaries clearly served for the display of saint's relics and were therefore identified as martyria[290]. Yasin notes that these martyria were frequently located on the south of the church[291]. It is, therefore, plausible to claim that the architecture of the early Byzantine churches in this part of Lycia was influenced by the rising cult of the martyrs and its reflection in the development of architecture in Syria, considering the present material and the textual evidence provided by the Vita.

II.2.4.1.2 The Monastery of St. John in Akalissos

The second important site in the Vita is the monastery of St. John in Akalissos. The Vita does not inform us as to its exact location, neither does it provide details as to in what kind of a settlement it was established.

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[286] For the word μεσάτος in the genetive case, Harrsion proposed that instead of the personal name of Nicholas' father, may mean simply arbitrator, see Harrison 1963, f. 102

[287] İşler 2009, 282; İşler 2010, 242.

[288] As is indicated above, the name Nicholas was much favored in Lycia after fourth century due to the spread of the cult of Saint Nicholas of Myra, see Anrich 1917, II, 449-451.

[289] Yasin 2009, 161.

[290] Aydın 2009, 75.

[291] Yasin 2009, 165.

Akalissos is the name of a city located in eastern Lycia, to the north east of Arykanda near the modern village of Karacaören[292]. The city was a member of the Lycian League and established *sympoliteia* with the neighboring cities of Idebessos and Korma[293]. The Stadiasmus Patarensis records the route from Idebessos to Akalissos and the route from Akalissos to Korma[294]. The bishopric of Akalissos is listed in the Notitia Episcopatuum until ninth century[295]. However, according to the narrations provided by the Vita, the monastery of St. John Akalissos seems to be located not so far from the monastery of Holy Sion, but rather, it must be situated very close to it. Therefore, it is suggested that there was another settlement which was also called Akalissos in the hinterland of Myra[296]. Furthermore, Hellenkemper-Hild identifies the remains of the church-complex in Batı Asarcık, 12 km. northwest of Myra, as that of the St. John monastery in Akalissos[297]. This suggestion is not only based on the fact that these two monasteries should be in close proximity to each other but also upon some specific similarities between them. The building of the monastery of Holy Sion was initiated by Nicholas, the elder, who most probably followed the same model for Holy Sion, as was the case for his own monastery. Thus it is reasonable to expect two churches having similar plans. Indeed, the monolithic church complex in Alacahisar and the Batı-Asarcık church conform to this explanation[298]. Both churches are tripartite basilicas with a triconch sanctuary. In the Asarcık church, a northern annex flanks the triconch which is identified as the

[292] Şahin 2014, 291.

[293] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 422.

[294] Şahin 2014, 290-292.

[295] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 422.

[296] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 422; Hild 2003, 315.

[297] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 423.

[298] Hild 2003, 316.

baptistery from the baptismal font it contains. In the Alacahisar church, similarly a large chapel is attached to the triconch on the north which Niewöhner suggests could have served as the baptistery, although no surviving baptismal font can be seen[299]. A burial chapel is attached to the Asarcık Church on the south, while, similarly, the remains of an annex entered from the main nave can be seen in Alacahisar church on this same side.

As a result, the localization of the monastery of St. John in Akalissos to the church-complex in Asarcık seems most plausible, considering both the topographical and the architectural evidence.

The settlement in Asarcık is divided into two settlement groups which are distinguished from each other as the Batı Asarcık settlement and the Doğu Asarcık settlement. The Doğu Asarcık settlement is located on the hilltop on the western slope of Alacadağ. The hilltop commands a dominant position overlooking the Kasaba Plain and Arneai and dates presumably from the Hellenistic period. The site was extensively inhabited in Late Antiquity. The settlement is encircled by an enclosure wall and occupies an area which meausres 7. 540 m^2. At the center of the settlement, on the summit, is an early Byzantine basilica with three aisles. Around the church are located forty-nine structures that are mostly rectangular in plan with five cisterns and a few presses. The settlement does not have a proper planned layout. Most of the structures are attached to or are located very close to each other[300].

[299] Niewöhner 2003, 131.

[300] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 423; İşler 2009, 29-39; Harrison 2001, 30.

100 meters down from Doğu Asarcık in a southwest direction lies the settlement of Batı Asarcık and occupies an area of 7.900 m^2. This settlement is likewise fortified by an enclosure wall. The settlement includes the church complex which is identified as the monastery of St. John in Akalissos above, along with twenty structures and a cistern. The structures have a simple rectangular plan and do not follow a proper planned layout but instead are attached or are very close to each other, similar to the case at Doğu Asarcık[301].

II.2.4.2 The Churches and settlements visited by Saint Nicholas of Sion during his Charitable Journey

Saint Nicholas began his first journey after the end of that particular plague outbreak and sacrificed oxen at the churches nearby to express gratitude to God for lifting the pestilence[302]. The second local journey took place two years later and lasted for twenty-five days[303]. What is important for us is the fact that the author lists the names of the churches and the related settlements that Nicholas visited.

II.2.4.2.1 The Shrine of the Archangel Gabriel in Karkabo

The first stop on the saint's journey was the Archangel church in the village of Karkabo. Nicholas of Sion sacrificed three oxen at the church of Gabriel and he gathered all of the people of the village to feast with the grain and wine he brought from his monastery[304]. Amongst the other churches mentioned, this is the only one that can today be securely located on the map. In the Alakilise valley, on the gate of the so-called Alakilise church, there survives a ninth-century repair inscription[305],

[301] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 423; İşler 2009, 70-73; Harrison 2001, 30-31; İşler 2010, 242-244; Harrison 1963, 131-135.

[302] VNS 54.

[303] VNS 56-57.

[304] VNS 56.

[305] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 41 no. 77.

which records the name of the church as that of the Archangel Gabriel. Due to this vital piece of epigraphic evidence the Alakilise church has been acknowledged by modern scholars as the church of Archangel Gabriel. Moreover, the surrounding settlement was in the same way identified as being the village of Karkabo[306] .

The Alakilise valley, which is one of the largest valleys in the uplands of Myra, is located 7 km northwest of Myra, ca. 1000 meters above the sea level. The valley extends in a north-east – south-west direction secluded between the steep ridges of Alacadağ.

In the middle of the valley stand the remains of a church complex. The church underwent at least two building phases; an early Byzantine phase and the ninth-century phase, dated through the repair inscription.

At the eastern end of the church complex, a cross-in-square chapel with four domical –vaulted chambers at the corners can be seen. This chapel is made of large finely cut blocks and therefore is dated to the early Byzantine phase of the building[307].

The use of this cross-in-square plan for an early Byzantine church in Lycia seems rather unusual. This type of plan was generally applied to baptisteries and other annexes. Similar examples are at Akkale and Boğsak Island in Rough Cilicia and Side[308]. Petersen and Luschan, the first western travelers to record the site, noted that this chapel was a baptistery from the traces of a baptismal font[309].

[306] Foss 1991, 311; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 609; Alkan 2011b, 107; Alkan 2013a, 102.

[307] Harrison 1963, 127-128.

[308] Koch 2007, 55; Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 166. For a discussion of the cross-in-square plan see, Ousterhout 1999, 15-22.

[309] Petersen and Luschan 1889, 39.

On the south west edge of the valley, there survive the remains of an ancient village which should be identified as the village of Karkabo. Over forty houses built from irregular rubble stone and fine blocks at the corners strengthening the structure were recorded by Harrison, some of which have been preserved up to height of the second story. The settlement does not follow a plan and is divided by a gully. On the east side of the gully there are houses on the terraced slope[310].

II.2.4.2.2 The Shrine of Saint Theodore at Kausai

After the church of Archangel in Karkabo, Saint Nicholas went on to the shrine of Saint Theodore at Kausai. There he slaughtered a pair of oxen and arranged a feast in the same manner as at Karkabo[311].

Anrich identified Kausai with the modern town of Kaş on the basis of a phonetic resemblance[312]. This identification seems unconvincing in respect to the distance between Myra and modern Kaş, but can be ascribed to the fact that Anrich had not been in Lycia and his geographical and topographical knowledge of the region was limited mainly to the textual evidence and probably Kiepert's maps.

In contrast to Anrich's suggestion, Kausai should rather be sought in the vicinity of the monastery of Holy Sion and it should be situated close to the village of Karkabo. Alkan localizes the church of Saint Theodore to the church at Dikmen Tepesi which is the closest church to Alakilise, lying only 1 kilometer southwest of it[313]. The church is on the top of a hill, ca 100 meters above Alakilise[314]. Foss notes that traces on the slope of the hill might indicate that there was a settlement around

[310] Harrison 2001, 20-25; İşler 2013, 291.

[311] VNS 56.

[312] Anrich 1917, 534.

[313] Alkan 2011b, 108.

[314] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 520.

the church[315]. However, there are insufficient remains that can be identified as houses to suggest a village settlement, and the field systems could have belonged to the church. Therefore, while it seems plausible to localize the shrine of Saint Theodore at the church on Dikmen Tepesi, the question as to the location of the place where the people of Kausai lived remains a question.

II.2.4.2.3 The Shrine of the Archangel in Nea Kome

After the Church of St. Theodore in Kausai, Nicholas of Sion came to the Church of the Archangel in Nea Kome (ἀπ' ἐκεῖθεν παρεγένετο εἰς τὸν εὐκτήριον οἶκον τοῦ ἁγίου ἀρχαγγέλου είς Νέαν Κώμην[316].) Hellenkemper and Hild, and also Foss record the localization as unknown[317]. On the other hand, Alkan localizes the church of the Archangel to a three-aisled basilical church ca. 2,5 kilometers to the south-east of Alakilise. The church is situated on a slope overlooking the valley of Myra and the sea. It was first documented during the Stadiasmus Patarensis Survey in 2010. In his article, Alkan referred to the church as "Günağı", a name that was given to its surrounding area by the local people in consequence of the whitish stony pattern of the slope. Furthermore, Alkan mentions the presence of an ancient settlement district called Karacaören ca. 700 meters to the northeast of the Günağı church. The settlement, which is situated on a slope, includes the foundations of a number of houses, cisterns and presses. Considering proximity to Alakilise, Alkan identifies the three-aisled basilical church in Günağı as the shrine of the Archangel and the remains of the village in Karacaören as Nea Kome[318].

[315] Foss 328-329; Harrison 1963, 130-131.

[316] VNS 56 and 57.

[317] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004 II, 744; Foss 1991, 332

[318] Alkan 2011b, 108-109.

II.2.4.2.4 The Shrine of Saint Apphianos in Partaessos

The next stop of Saint Nicholas after visiting the shrine of the Holy Archangel in Nea Kome was at the shrine of Saint Apphianos in Partaessos (ἀπὸ Νέας Κώμης ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸ εὐκτήριον τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀπφιανοῦ ἐν Παρταησσῶ[319].) It is of note that Saint Apphianos was a martyr who was born in Gagae in eastern Lycia but was martyred in Palestine according to Eusebius[320]. From the evidence provided by the Vita, we see that he was venerated as a martyr in his homeland of Lycia in the sixth century. Alkan suggests the localization of this village to the ancient settlement on the hill called Yılanbaşı ca. 1,5 kilometers to the southwest of Günağı Church[321]. The settlement in Yılanbaşı which was first surveyed by Wurster[322], lies on the southern slope of the ridge extending in a southwest-northeast direction. The settlement was fortified, having late Classical-Hellenistic walls which were partly rebuilt with irregular limestone masonry in the early Byzantine period. Numerous cisterns and the foundations of houses suggest a late antique-early Byzantine phase at this site[323]. To the southwest of the settlement is a three-aisled basilica dating from the early Byzantine period. The basilica was subsequently reduced in scale to a one-aisle church utilising the main apse[324].

II.2.4.2.5 The Shrine of the Archangel and Saint Demetrios in Symbolon

After Partaessos, Saint Nicholas came down to Symbolon, to the shrine of the Archangel and Saint Demetrios (καὶ ἀπ' ἐκεῖθεν κατήλθεν εἰς τὸ εὐκτήριον τοῦ

[319] VNS 57.

[320] Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* 4.5.

[321] Alkan 2011b, 109.

[322] Borchhardt 1975, 87-89.

[323] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 921, s.v. Yukarı Beymelek.

[324] Grossmann and Severin 2003, 54-56.

ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου ἐν τῶ Συμβόλω[325].) Foss, and also Hellenkemper and Hild provide no suggestion as to its exact location[326]. On the other hand, Alkan notes that the word Symbolon derives from the ancient Greek verb συμβάλλω meaning "to join, unite" and was used as a geographical term to refer to junction, junction of rivers or sometimes small harbors with a narrow-uniting entrance and even lagoons. In this case, Alkan states that Symbolon might have referred to the ancient name of the lagoon of Myra. This suggestion is supported by him from further evidence in the Vita. The author uses the verb κατέρχομαι which means "to go down" and consequently, the saint should have descended from Partaessos to the lagoon[327]. No churches dating from the early Byzantine period have been found around the lagoon, while there are the four medieval chapels on the northern bank of the lagoon dating from the eleventh-twelfth centuries[328]. However, we cannot ignore the possibility that the church of the Archangel and Saint Demetrios mentioned in the Vita and which should be searched for in the area of the lagoon, might have been destroyed by a natural disaster or in the course of Muslim raids[329].

II.2.4.2.6 The Shrine of the Theotokos in Nautes

The Shrine of the Theotokos in Nautes was the next church that Saint Nicholas visited after the shrine of the Archangel and Saint Demetrios in Symbolon (ἀπ' ἐκεῖθεν ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸ εὐκτήριον τῆς Θεοτόκου εἰς τὸ Ναύτην[330].) Foss finds such a toponym meaning "sailor" strange within a mountainous area and, in consequence

[325] VNS 57.

[326] Foss 1991, 333; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 869.

[327] Alkan 2013b, 83-97.

[328] Borchhardt 1975, 419-424.

[329] Alkan 2013a, 144-145

[330] VNS 57.

proposes it may derive from a local statue or a relief. However, Alkan believes that Nautes should not be searched up in the mountains but on the coastal area and suggests Nautes should be located near to the lagoon, on the basis that Nautes is the next stop after Symbolon, which Alkan identifies as the lagoon.

The lagoon has been one of the remarkable elements of the landscape of Myra. According to a second century inscription[331] found in Myra which records a regulation forbidding illegal maritime transportation between Myra and Limyra, there was a landing place at the mouth of the lagoon. The lagoon in this inscription is mentioned as "limne" (λίμνη). This inscription indicates that the mouth of the lagoon was an active landing place in the maritime network of the region in the Roman period. As is plausibly suggested by Alkan, Nautes could have been located near to the lagoon[332].

II.2.4.2.7 The Shrine of Eirene in Serine

Saint Nicholas came to the shrine of Eirene in Serine after leaving Nautes (εἰς τὸ εὐκτήριον τῆς ἁγίας Εἰρήνης εἰς Σερινή[333].) Alkan localizes Serine to Turant Asarı on top of a hill called Turant Dağı 5 kilometers north-east of Myra[334]. The settlement here overlooking the valley of Myra includes a roman necropolis with Lycian-type of sarcophagi, a late roman vaulted structure and a three-aisled basilica constructed of finely cut blocks[335]. It worth noting the lingual-phonetical connection between Eirene and the name Serine, the name given in the Vita to the ancient settlement.

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[331] LBW 1311; OGIS 572.

[332] Alkan 2011b, 109-100; Alkan 2013a, 179.

[333] VNS 57.

[334] Alkan 2011b, 114.

[335] Harrison 1979a, 205; Harrison 1979b, 232; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 898; Schweyer 1996, 58.

II.2.4.2.8 The Shrine of Archangel at Trebendai

From Serine Saint Nicholas journeyed to Trebendai (εἰς τὸν εὐκτήριον οἶκον τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου εἰς Τρεβένδας[336].) The ruins on Asarbelen Tepesi in the modern village of Muskar/Belören most probably belonged to Trebandai (for the details on the location of the settlement see above pp. 37-37).

The modern village of Belören lies 7 kilometers to the north of Myra. It is situated on a plateau in a central position. This plateau is the junction point of the roads connecting the rural settlements of Myra but it is also on the main route from Myra to the city of Arneai. Asarbelen Tepesi is ca. 500 meters to the northwest of the modern village. On top of Asarbelen Tepesi is a classical fortress constructed with polygonal masonry. The walls underwent several repairs until the early Byzantine period[337]. The necropolis of the site extends to the southern and eastern slopes of the hill. The plateau of Belören village was inhabited in the Roman and early Byzantine period. The topography here is relatively smooth and terraced land is feasible for agricultural production.

At the center of the modern village are the remains of a three-aisled early Byzantine basilica. The only surviving part is the main apse which has a polygonal ending. Grossmann and Severin suggest that the church originally had a transept whose southern and northern conches were polygonal on the exterior[338].

The church was constructed from ashlar masonry. Continuous habitation of the village from antiquity to the present day may provide one of the reasons for the dismantling of the church. The fine blocks were most probably re-used in the

[336] VNS 57.

[337] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 891, s.v. Tragalassos.

[338] Grossmann and Severin 2003, 27.

construction of modern houses. To the west of the church stands an intact vaulted structure of two storeys dating from the Byzantine period, the function of which is unclear.

If we assume that the ancient settlement in Belören and the fortress on Asarbelen Tepesi formed the parts of one settlement that is Trebendai as Alkan has suggested, the early Byzantine church in Belören can be identified as the shrine of the Archangel which Nicholas visited.

II.2.4.2.9 The Shrine of Saint Nicholas in Kastellon

After Trebendai, Nicholas came to Kastellon to the shrine of Saint Nicholas (εἰς τὸ Κάστελλον εἰς τὸν εὐκτήριον οἶκον τοῦ ἁγίου Νικολάου[339].) Kastellon is mentioned in a further narrative in the Vita. One day as he was travelling down to Myra from his monastery, he turned off to Kastellon to pray. In respect to this record, Kastellon should be localized somewhere near to the road between the Monastery of Hagia Sion and Myra[340]. Alkan proposes that Kastellon can be localized at or around Devekuyusu, which is on a secondary route from Belören to Karabel towards the monastery of Hagia Sion[341]. If that is the case, the shrine of Saint Nicholas can be identified as the triconch church in Devekuyusu[342].

II.2.4.2.10 The Shrine of Melissa in Hemalissoi

The last station visited by Nicholas before his return to his monastery was the shrine of Melissa in Hemalissoi (εἰς τὸν εὐκτήριον οἶκον τῆς Μελίσσης ἐν

[339] VNS 57.

[340] VNS 58.

[341] Alkan 2013a, 133.

[342] For the description of the church in Devekuyusu, see Harrison 1963, 137; Grossmann and Severin 2003, 49-54.

Ἡμαλίσσοις[343]. The exact location of Hemalissoi is unknown. While Hellenkemper and Hild, and also Foss suggest Devekuyusu[344], Alkan proposes the ancient settlement in Karabel for Hemalissoi, as it is thought to lie close to the monastery of Hagia Sion[345].

II.2.5 Conclusion

As stated above the Vita is rich in toponyms as well as with the names of the contemporary ecclesiastical foundations. Small settlements, such as villages or hamlets form the largest group of these toponyms. Harbours and cities were also recorded within the narrative of the Vita. It seems that the author of the Vita was attentive in noting the hometown of each visitor to the monastery. These people were either from villages within or outside the territories of Myra or from other cities. Further, the author also recorded on occasion Nicholas' visits to individual churches or districts.

The Vita well illustrates the degree that Christianity had become integral to life in the Lycian countryside not only material terms as almost every small settlement had its own shrine, but also spiritually into the faith of the villagers. The local holy man was the highest living representative of God and who took the responsibility for being the agent between God and the people. Having faith in God and having faith in the saint was so closely connected to each other that a lack of faith in a saint could mean a lack of faith in the power God[346].

[343] VNS 57.

[344] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 558; Foss 1991, 331-332

[345] Alkan 2011b, 116.

[346] The faith in the Saint is well reflected in VNS 22.

But in the period of late antiquity, in addition to the rise of Christianity, there was the evolving state of the cities. While new cities were founded or were rebuilt on a former settlement, some settlements that once had large territories and had independent status lost their political power and were subdued by other cities. Zenonoupolis was one of these newly founded cities and is recorded both in the Vita and in the Notitia Episcopatuum as a bishopric in Lycia until the ninth century. On the other hand, the Vita reveals that Tragallassos and Trebendai came under the dominance of Myra, with their status reduced to villages by the sixth century.

The mention of harbors such as Andriake, Tristomon, Phonix and Askalon are equally important, providing evidence concerning the functioning ports of the harbor network of the eastern Mediterranean in the sixth century.

CHAPTER III: NETWORK OF ROADS

III.1 The Use of Roads in Lycia from the Hellenistic Era into the Byzantine Period

With around fifty cities within an area of 5083 km^2 Lycia was one of the most densely inhabited regions of Asia Minor. The rough topography provided a suitable environment for the defense of the cities in the insecure atmosphere of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. However, the challenging character of the geography was no impediment to social and political relationships and communication between them. Lycian cities always cooperated with each other for the common wealth of their nation. In 188 B.C., Lycia was placed under Rhodian control by the Romans, following the treaty of Apameia. After only 20 years, they regained their indepence when it was returned to them by the Romans. They then re-organized the federative Lycian League in 168 together with this freedom and, enjoyed independence for more than two centuries, until in 43 A.D it was annexed by Claudius to the Roman Empire. In the system of this federative league, the representatives of the city states, large or small, coastal or inland, attended an assembly where they discussed issues in common, foreign policy, tax-collecting, etc. In addition to the federative union, many cities usually those neighboring each other, made treaties establishing collaborative groups termed: *sympoliteia*, i.e. a political alliance for diplomatic or economic reasons; *symmachia*, a coalition for military purposes or *isopoliteia*, a treaty of equal citizenship. If their ethnic identity as forming a single nation and religion as elements of their cultural background were substantial factors in their will to unite, the roads were the tangible agent that facilitated this union and which ensured the maintenance

of their common prosperity[347]. There is no doubt that the role of the roads was vitally important, not only for Lycia but was also the case for other regions. However, the roads must have been an indispensable part of the lives of Lycians due to the extremely rough topography with these roads enabling access into the *inaccessible*.

Numerous Hellenistic towers were constructed, most importantly to provide a degree of security through line of sight communications for travellers on the roads against banditry in the remote zones and to limit border violation between cities, provide evidence of a road network in the Hellenistic period[348]. An inscription found in Letoon which records a treaty between the peoples of Tlos and Termessos at Oinoanda to put to an end the land conflicts and border violations between these two cities. The inscription, which is dated to ca. 150 B.C., mentions roads as well as many border inscriptions and a wooden Herma statue which is also to be associated with roads.[349] However, it was during the Roman Period that the importance of roads for Lycia found expression in the monument termed *Stadiasmus Patarensis,* which was erected at Patara in 46 A.D., three years after the organisation of Lycia as a Roman province (for the description of the monument see above fn. 2). At the top of the inscription on side B of the Stadiasmus Patarensis reads: ... ὁδοὺς .... ἐποίησεν ... ὧν ἐστιν μέτρον τὸ ὑπογεγραμμένον, namely "... made roads/routes, the length of which has been written below...". The verb ποιέω of ὁδούς seems to give a generic description, not providing a clear definition concerning what was actually done. It is

[347] There is no doubt concerning the vital role played by the roads into modern times, as the construction of highways were often targets of political investments, such as: the roads through the highlands of Scotland constructed as part of the English pacification program in the 18th century, and the construction of the freeway system in the Republic of the United States of America and the major project of *Reichsautobahn* in Nazi Germany being some of the most striking examples of this.

[348] For the further study on Farm-towers in Hellenistic Period, see Konecny 1997;

[349] For the inscription and its French translation see Rousset 2010, 5-13, for Turkish see Şahin 2014, 215-218.

of course impossible to say that all the roads listed on the Stadiasmus Patarensis were new, since the country should already have had a road network prior to this date (see above fn. 348). According to Biagi, Claudius actually did not build any new roads but created a Roman network as part of the *cursus publicus,* reflecting Roman power through this monument[350]. Polla and Rinner also point out that all of these roads cannot be newly constructed.[351] Lebreton remarks that all this road construction could not have been completed within the space of only three years between43 and 46 A.D.[352]. Rousset also has a similar approach and states that Roman power and annexation of Lycia could have been symbolized even if only through the measurement of the roads, requiring no actual construction, since the roads given on the Stadiasmus Patarensis actually recorded the already existing Lycian roads, simply renovated and measured.[353] However, in the road list the meaning of "construction" is to be read, such as in κατεσκεύασται[354] ("… has been constructed") given for the road from Idebessos to Kitanaura in side C, line 5. Furthermore, the inscription of the Claudian monument on Bonda between Myra and Limyra, clearly records it was Claudius the emperor to whom the Lycians were grateful for κατασκευὴ τῶν ὁδῶν ("construction of roads")[355], confirming that there was road construction (some of which was perhaps new). As to the distances recorded on the Stadiasmus Patarensis, while Şahin believes that the distances between the settlements were not always given between the centers of the settlements themselves, but rather, especially for the mountainous settlements, between the *mansiones* which would be located on the

[350] Biagi 2008, 306-307.

[351] Polla and Rinner 2009, 85-86.

[352] Lebreton 2010, 67-74.

[353] Rousset 2013, 68-70.

[354] Şahin 2014, 47.

[355] For the inscription see Wörrle 2002, 545-555, c.f. Şahin 2014, 48.

main roads in alignment with the settlement[356]. Onur opposes this opininon and claims the distances given were between centers, townzones or between the gates of settlements, in accordance with the traditional Roman array of milestones[357]. *Mansiones* or *mutationes* in Lycia are not well known, there are two *mansiones* recorded on the Tabula Peutingariana (see Fig. 17), one in Patara and one in Phaselis[358], but of course many should have been situated (preferably by a water supply) by the roads in several places between the settlements, as it was a necessary stopover for travellers and traders, for accomodation, for feeding the animals and for the change of horse.

The construction of roads was the essential element of Roman rule, especially in the newly annexed provinces, to consolidate power as well as to maintain economic and cultural activities. As likewise in the new province of Lycia, the roads were furnished with milestones, although none have been found that date from the Claudian Period. Bridges were built where road needed to cross streams and formed a part of the road network. As without bridges, the road's function would be incomplete, particularly during the winter and spring seasons when the water level of the rivers increased from rainfall and snowmelt. Bridges were also constructed along with the construction of roads, forming part of the road network project of Claudius, as an inscription from Oinoanda clearly records[359]. Many bridges, both urban and

[356] Şahin 2014, 25 and 123.

[357] Onur 2015.

[358] The remains of a building between the centre of Phaselis and modern coastal main road are understood to have belonged to this mansion by Phsaselis field survey team, for details see http://www.phaselis.org/phaselis-arastirmalari/teritoryal-arastirmalar/2014-guncesi

[359] The Latin inscription was found near an Ottoman bridge in the district of Kemerarası to 2,5 kilometers north of Oinoanda, see Milner 1998, 117-123, esp. 198. Ti. Claudius Drusi f(ilius) | Caesar Deus Aug(ustus) Ger|manicus, pontife[x] | max(imus), tr[i]buniciae p[ot(estatis)] | X, co(n)s(ul) V, imp(erator) XIIX |, p(ater) p(atriae), pontem per T. [Cl.] (?) | Eprium Marcellum | [l]eg(atum) Aug(usti) pro pr(aetore), so(dalem) a(ugustalem).

non-urban, must have been constructed in the Roman period in Lycia. However most of these bridges were either rebuilt in subsequent periods, have fallen completely or been demolished, only a few of them have survived.

In the early Byzantine period, special attention was directed to the sustainability of roads with the damage to them over the course of time. The *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the map of the Roman Empire upon which the distances between cities are shown, derives originally from the third century[360] and, on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Lycia is depicted as a peninsula with only four cities marked; Patara, Antiphellos, Korydalla and Phaselis through which a coastal route appears to be recorded on this map (Fig. 17).

The level of maintenance of the roads declined in comparison to early centuries and the construction of roads became a local responsibility[361]. The Theodosian Code includes imperial mandates concerning the construction and the repair of roads. A rescript of Arcadius and Honorius notes that the roads were immensely ruined and therefore they are required to be repaired and all persons are urged to undertake this work[362]. The milestones from Lycia dedicated to Arcadius and Honorius are evidence that in Lycia this law was implemented; additionaly, numerous milestones from Xanthos, Tlos, Aperlai, Telmessos, Cadyanda, Myra, Limyra and Gagai dating from the third and fourth centuries are remarkable, providing indication of the strategic importance of the coastal route in the late Roman period[363].

[360] Wilkes 2005, 234.

[361] Maas and Ruths 2012, 255.

[362] *Cod. Theod*. 15.3.4.

[363] French 2014, 632 no. 27 (Xanthos); ibid., 63-64, no. 28 (Tlos); ibid. 72, no. 34 (Aperlai); ibid., 65-66, no. 29 (A), 29 (B) (Telmessos); ibid., 67, no. 30 (Cadyanda); ibid., 74-76 no. 36 (Myra); ibid., 70-71 no. 32(B) (Limyra); ibid., 73 no. 25 (B) (Gagai); Takmer 2004, 109-110 (Myra); ibid., 107 (Limyra); Another milestone from the Severan period was found on the route between Myra and Kyaneai in the district of Çakalbayat, see Onur and Oktan 2013, 98; There also several unpublished

Justinian entrusted the management of public works to bishops and to other local authorities such as *praetors*[364]. The local governors were responsible for the construction and the repair of roads as well as aqueducts, bridges, ports, statues, walls, and buildings of their cities. In addition to the imperial governors, a local official called *father of the city* (pater poleos) took care of such public works with municipal funds[365]. As their political power in the cities increased, the bishops became more engaged with public matters. Justinian ordained that bishops would expend a certain portion of the income of the cities on public facilities: the heating of baths, the grain supply, the building of walls and towers and the repair of bridges or pavements[366]. Moreover, in collaboration with the *pater civitatis* "father of the city" and several prominent citizens, mostly landowners, bishops were required to ensure that no one would damage these works[367]. This was not only due to their privileged position but also because of their extensive financial resources at hand. In addition to their episcopal activities, the bishops supervised or directly financed the construction or the repair of the essential structures of civic life, such as aqueducts, granaries, walls, etc[368]. As a matter of course, bishops must have been involved in the repair of roads. We can assume that these roads could be either pavement of urban roads (ὁδοστρωσία), the main roads connecting cities, the highways or even minor rural roads within the episcopal see of the particular bishop.

milestones found on Bonda Tepesi between Myra and Limyra, see Şahin 2014, 384-385; For the milestones in Lycia, see also Şahin 2014, 115-120.

364 Bury 1923, 351.

365 Just. *Nov.* 17. IV; 24.III, 26.IV, 30.VII.

366 *Cod. Iust.* 1.4.26.

367 *Cod. Iust.* 1.4.26.9.

368 Rapp 2005, 222; Liebeschuetz 2008, 219.

Military forces and merchants remained, as they have always been, one of the main users of the land and sea routes of the empire during the early Byzantine period. However, most importantly, with the spread of Christianity, these routes served the clergy, holy men and pilgrims who made heavy use of the roads. Bishops frequently left their episcopal residents in the cities to attend church councils, either local or ecumenical and also travelled throughout their episcopal sees to fulfill their official duties[369]. Monks on the other hand, could be equally mobile, although they lived in seclusion. Two late antique vitae from Asia Minor, the life of St. Nicholas of Sion and the life of Theodore of Sykeon illustrate how mobile a rural monk could in fact be. They not only continually paid visits to neighboring villages when they were needed, but they also wandered to other cities and made several pilgrimages to the Holy Land. While Nicholas stayed within his province, except when he was in Jerusalem, Theodore of Sykeon went so far as to visit Constantinople twice.

Travel acquired a religious dimension with the rise of the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage in late antiquity. Pilgrims journeyed to Palestine to visit the holy places including the tomb of Christ at the *Holy Sepulchre* and other sites linked to the Old and New Testaments using land and sea routes. The main highway crossed through Asia Minor from Constantinople to Antioch, which was called *the Pilgrim's Road* by Ramsay and French, carried a very heavy traffic of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem[370]. For those who preferred to travel by sea from Asia Minor, harbors in cities such as Constantinople, Ephesus, Myra or Attaleia were the meeting places of

[369] Dietz 2005, 24.

[370] Ramsay 1890, 197. This route was described in detail in French 1981i The best example of a route guide for pilgrimage is the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* or *Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum,* the oldest known Christian itinerary reaching from Bordeaux to Jerusalem dating from 333-334 A.D., containing the cities, villages, *mansiones* and *mutationes,* for the English text and comments see Stewart and Wilson 1887, see also Sartin 2014 for the Latin original, Italian translation and comments.

pilgrims where they could find a vessel sailing to Alexandria or to Palestine. The harbors of Lycia must have been preferred by a considerable number of pilgrims, Lycian in origin or from other neighboring regions in western Asia Minor. This was mainly due to its harbors well connected to the interior by a good network of roads. Furthermore, as a result of its central position on the sea-route between Constantinople and Alexandria, Lycian harbors functioned as ports of call for vessels from the West, following the safer coastline route as much as possible, instead of sailing across the open sea. However, among other harbor cities, Myra had an exceptional place, not just another port of call on the route to the Holy Lands, due to the presence of the cult of Saint Nicholas of Myra. Due to the cult, focused upon the tomb of Saint Nicholas in Myra, Myra firstly became a local and subsequently a universally acknowledged pilgrimage center of Byzantium.

III.2 Myra in the *Stadiasmus Patarensis*

The related section on the monument is as follows[371]:

Road No.	*Line*	*Road*
57	C, 19	ἀπὸ Κυανεῶ[ν εἰς Μύρα στάδια ...′]
58	C, 20	ἀπὸ Μύρων [εἰς …]I . . . . . I . .
59	C, 21	ἀπὸ Μύρων εἰ[ς Λί]μ[υρ]α δ[ι]ὰ το[ῦ] Μασικύτου σ[τά]δια ...′

These lines of the *Stadiasmus Patarensis* record the main roads, which arrived in Myra, and their distances. In line 19, i.e. Road 57, the origin is Kyaneai while the following part is missing, in which the destination and the distance between them are supposed to be given. Şahin completes the destination here as Myra, since Myra is the first city to the east of Kyaneai and the next line begins with Myra. In line 20, i.e.

[371] Şahin 2014, 47, 336 and 370, detailed information on these roads are at: pp. 347-349 (No. 57), pp. 371-379 (No. 58) and pp. 379-387 (No. 59).

Road 58, the origin is Myra and the destination is again missing. Lastly, in Line 21, the text reads as "…from Myra to Limyra via Masicytus stadia …"[372].

In conclusion when we look on the main roads in general, Myra is linked to the rest of Lycia by three main routes. The road from Kyaneai connected Myra with the Western Lycia while the road between Myra and Limyra was the easiest and shortest option for those who travelled to Myra from the cities of Eastern Lycia. Finally, a road through the Myros Valley and a mountain path provided connection with the northern cities.

III.2.1 The Road from Kyaneai to Myra[373]

A road that is partly paved and partly rock-cut starts in Kyaneai goes down to the Yavu plain.[374] From this point the road leads through the modern village of Davazlar, site of an ancient settlement, where several traces of the ancient roads and many cisterns in ancient tradition indicate a road passage and a stopover remain visible today.[375] In the village, two inscription concerning church donations was discovered.[376] There are also the remains of a church, dating from the sixth century A.D.[377] After Davazlar the road continues through the Mıhlıpınar pass and Çakalbayat where an in-situ Severan milestone was found on the ancient path.[378] It then descends through Eğridere Valley and eventually reaches Sura, the suburb of

[372] Şahin 2014, 47.

[373] For the description of the road between Kyaneai and Myra, see Onur and Oktan 2013, 97-100; Şahin 2014, 347-348.

[374] Kolb 1995, 247; Kolb 2008, 185; Hülden 2010, 185-186; Onur and Oktan 2013, 100.

[375] Onur and Oktan 2013, 100; Şahin 2014, 347.

[376] One is employed in the wall of a house, see Behrwald et al. 1998, 202-203 no. 27 and Kolb 2008, 397–398; the other was found in the graveyard of the village, see Onur and Oktan 2013, 100 No.1.

[377] Kolb 2008, 399.

[378] Onur and Oktan 2013, 101 No. 2.

Myra. From Sura, the road descends to Myra passing by the *Heroon* at the western corner of the plain. After the Heroon, no trace of a road remains visible due to the alluvial deposition. Şahin, suggests that the road should proceed to the theater following the edge of the slope where the ground is firmer.[379] The late Roman milestone at the church of Saint Nicholas[380] hints that the road from the *heroon* could have led to this area, where the shrine was built over.

III.2.2 The Road from Myra to Limyra

According to the SP, the road from Myra to Limyra led over Masicytus[381]. Masicytus is the ancient name of the mountain system, today called Bey Dağları, in the eastern Lycia, orientated in a northeast-southwest direction[382]. However, Şahin deems it likely that this Masicytus might rather have also been a name of a particular settlement[383]. Ptolemaius lists that the cities on the Masicytus were Korydalla, Sagalassos[384], Rhodia, Arabendai[385], Phellos, Myra and Limyra[386]. The Masicytus mentioned in the SP does not seem to refer to the whole of the Beydağları mountain range, but rather to the southern extension of it, a rocky peninsula, which is today called Gülmez Dağı, as the name Masicytus was not used in any other section of SP, including for the northern roads passing over Beydağları.

[379] Şahin 2014, 348.

[380] Takmer 2004, 109-110.

[381] Şahin 2014, 47, line 21.

[382] Takmer 2002, 36; Şahin 2014, 99-100.

[383] Şahin 2014, 383-384.

[384] Sagalassos, a Pisidian city, must have become confused with Akalissos due to a scribal error, see Şahin-Adak 2007, 100.

[385] Again due to the copyist's mistake, Arabendai should be understood as being Trebendai, to the north of Myra, see Alkan 2011b, 113.

[386] Ptol. *Geogr*. 5.3,3.

The road starting in Myra crossed the Myros River by a convenient place on the river, which was most probably connected with the ancient road called "Gavuryolu"[387] to the south of Muskar, and leads to the east following the northern coastal line of the lagoon. At a place close to the lagoon's mouth, it climbs in sharp zigzags to the top of the mountain to an altitutude of ca. 800. The remains of the paved road and the retaining walls are here well-preserved. The road eventually reaches the monument dedicated to Emperor Claudius on the top of the hill[388]. A milestone from the first tetrarchy was discovered 1 km to the north of the monument and its number recording the distance, which would be from Myra, is lost[389]. Another milestone, from the first tetrarchy, was found, not far from the former, in a place called Damyanı[390]. Its distance, from Limyra, is read as 6 miles (ca. 11 km), a length that does not conform with the actual distance (ca. 22 km) between Damyanı and Limyra via Turunçova. Then the road, passing by a small ancient settlement in Yalakbaşı[391], descends to Phoinix, the port of Limyra, and from here reaches to Limyra through Turunçova/ Çavdır. A late Roman milestone found near Çavdır, to the northwest of Limyra, at the mouth of the Arycandus valley, suggests that the road from Myra followed the slopes after Phonix, instead of passing through the alluvial plain, and the findspot of this milestone could also have marked the crossroads where the two roads, one from Myra to Limyra, the other from Arykanda to Limyra, joined[392].

[387] For Gavuryolu see Konecny 1997, 33; Takmer 2004, 114; Şahin 2014, 277.

[388] For the detailed publication of the monument and its inscription, and also for the road between the mouth of the lagoon and the Claudian monument see Marksteiner and Wörrle 2002.

[389] Şahin 2014, 384.

[390] Şahin 2014, 385.

[391] See the details in Marksteiner 2004, 276 and Marksteiner et al. 2007; also in Şahin 2014, 385.

[392] Takmer 2004, 107-108 and 110-111.

III.2.3 The Road from Myra to an Unknown Destination (to the *North*)

The block upon which the destination was inscribed on Stadiasmus Patarensis is unfortunately lost, but since Limyra is given in the following line, Şahin suggests Mastaura, which is thought to have been located at Dereağzı by Hellenkemper and Hild[393], for the lacuna as being the most plausible destination to the north of Myra, rather than Arneai, and gives the route along the banks of the Myros River[394]. Şahin proposes that the destination could also have been Arneai which lies to the northwest of Myra across the modern Kasaba Ovası[395], since there is already an ancient route over this mountainous section[396]. However, to either Dereağzı (Mastaura?) or Arneai, the road must have led to a destination lying to the north of Myra. This road leading to the north must have been a vital route for Myra since it linked the cities of Northern Lycia with the coast through Myra. The question is whether this road in line 20 of the Stadiasmus Patarensis passed over the mountainous hinterland of Myra through Alacadağ, or, if it passed along the Myra valley via the banks of Myros River. Regardless of which destination was given in the *Stadiasmus Patarensis*, there are the remains of roads on both the valley-passage and the mountainous route[397]. Unlike the coastal route passing Kyaneai, Myra and Limyra, this route must have been in a northern direction and had a major importance since it not only linked Myra with the central inland cities of Lycia, but also it connected these cities with the coast.

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[393] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, II, 716-718.

[394] Şahin 2014, 371-372.

[395] Şahin 2014, 371-372.

[396] See details in Takmer and Alkan 2013.

[397] For the roads on both banks of the Myros River see, Morganstern 1968, 224; French 1993, 87-90; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, I, 267 and III, figs. 262-264; For the mountainous road in the direction of Arneai see Takmer and Alkan 2013, 110-113.

Regardless of the epigraphic evidence and the hypothetical restorations of the Stadiasmus Patarensis, we should note that there were two main routes leading to the north with the remains of a road system; a mountainous route over the western slopes of the Alacadağ Mountain and another route along the banks of Myros River. I will first describe the road running along the Myros Valley. However, the route which ran across the mountainous hinterland of Myra was not only a main inter-city road linking Myra and Arneai but it also formed the core of the rural road network of the uplands. The mountain path was remarkable since it led not only to Arneai, but as it passed right across the hinterland of Myra, it must have had an essential impact on the network of settlements and the ecclesiastical-monastic setting. Therefore, I will examine the mountainous main route in another section, together with the other minor paths and describe the influence of topography on them.

The Myros valley which extends in a northwest-southeast direction not only contained a road from Myra to Kasaba Plain, but also the water channel which transported water from the Kıbrıs Stream to the Myra Valley and hence to Myra[398]. However, due to modern constructions and marble quarries, the remains of most of the ancient water channel in the valley have been destroyed[399]. A rock-cut road can also be traced at the north-western mouth of the valley, on the eastern bank ca. 80 meters higher than the river bed[400]. 1,5 kilometers south of the mouth of the valley, the road descends to the level of the river and the road here is rock-cut and supported through retaining walls and is relatively well-preserved. Until the southern mouth of the valley the path does not follow a straight track but conforms to the topography of the valley, partly right along the river bed, partly on the slope at a certain level above the river.

[398] Borchhardt 1975, 47 and pl. 10C; Zimmermann 1992, 109-110 with fn. 43; French 1993, 87; Şahin 2014, 373-374.

[399] Şahin 2014, 375-376.

[400] Şahin 2014, 435 figs. a-b.

CHAPTER IV: SETTLEMENTS AND CHURCHES IN MYRA'S HINTERLAND AND THEIR INTERCONNECTIVITY

The topography, which defines the territorial boundaries of Myra, is also a determining factor in the distirbution of the settlements and the churches in the uplands of Myra on the western section of Alacadağ. The churches and the settlements scattered through the hills and small valleys seem to follow a certain geographic/topographical grouping. Therefore, I divided the region into three presumptive sections in order to obtain a better understanding of the grouping and the network of the churches and roads to aid in the mapping of this network.

IV.1 The Region Near the Main Route (from Myra to Arneai)

The middle area highlighted with red on the map (see Fig. 16) marks the approximate route of the main road, that leads from Myra to the direction of Arneai on a south-north axis, passing through the mountainous land along a natural corridor composed of plateaus and plains with slight climbs on the western slopes of Alacadağ. The remains of the road in the Demre Valley have to a large extent not survived due to modern construction developments. Traces of the road known as Gavuryolu (see above fn. 387) climbing to the village of Muskar/Belören from Dere Mahallesi on the eastern bank of Demre Çayı are relatively well preserved and visible. The road is flanked by two towers at different locations which must have functioned to control the road and ensure its security.[401] Muskar/Belören is located on a plateau to the 2 km. north of Myra at an altitude of 650 m. This plateau was on the main route to Arneai. Further, it was at the junction point of several other local roads. The remains from the Classical, Roman and Byzantine periods on Asarbelen

[401] Konecny 1997, 22-24 pl. 13-16 and 54-57; Şahin 2014, 372.

Hill show this site had a central and important position within the region. This ancient settlement is identified either as Tragalassos (see above pp. 36-37) or as Trebendai (see above pp. 37-37), the latter being the more probable. According to Takmer and Alkan[402], the road, which leads north from this point, can be traced for ca. 1300 m. to the northwest of the village of Muskar/Belören. After 5 km., the road reappears in Karabel situated between Muskar and Arneai and continues for about 250 m. The modern road runs along the same south-north axis as the ancient and it can be seen that its construction caused the destruction of some parts of the latter. From Karabel, the road reaches İnişdibi where three ancient cisterns can be seen. From here, the road descends following the slope and passing through Çağman, Dağbağ and Gökçealan villages ultimately reaches Arneai.

This main route from Myra to Arneai is the central element of the road network system within the region. Since the road network shapes the distribution of the churches, cisterns and towers existing along the road, it should be considered as integral to their organization. To the north of Muskar/Belören, the district of Karabel is another focus of settlements and churches on the main road and, in the area called Kızılleğen on the west side of the road in the vicinity of Karabel there are the remains of a Byzantine settlement together with two early Byzantine basilicas. The most important settlement that should be examined within the context of the main road is the acropolis settlement and the church complex at Asarcık 1200 m. north-west of Karabel on the eastern side of the ancient road. The ecclesiastical buildings to the north of Karabel along the road include a three-aisled basilica with a triconch

[402] Takmer and Alkan 2013, 107-110.

apse on a high hilltop called Güceymen Tepesi[403] and a basilica which lies 1 km. north of Çağman on the track to Arneai[404].

IV.2 The Region to the West of the Main Route

The section highlighted with blue on the map (Fig. 16) marks the mountainous terrain on the western side of the Myra-Arneai road. This elevated area compriss Çam Dağı whose highest peak reaches 1250 m, the highest in Myra's hinterland. The Demre Çayı and the Kasaba Plain form the western and northern natural borders of Çam Dağı. The gorge of the Demre Çayı is so steep the altitude ascends vertically from ca. 50 m to 1000 m. To the north, the elevation descends to the Kasaba Plain. Çam Dağı has a dominant position over both the Myra plain to the south and the gorge of Demre Çayı to the west and also over the Kasaba Plain to the north. On top of Çam Dağı is a rock-cut church complex called Alacahisar Kilisesi, the probable idenfication of which with the Monastery of Holy Sion is discussed above pp. 68-69. The monument is significant both for its immense rock-cut architecture and exclusive position on the highest point in the region. The church has a magnificent view over the Kasaba Plain and the mountains beyond the valley, in which Arneia is located.

Around 20 settlements and 15 churches near these settlements in this region are linked to each other through secondary/local roads[405]. Further, several roads starting from the Demre Çayı and the Kasaba Plain provide access to these settlements. One of the roads starts from Karabel and extends along an east-west axis between the main track to Arneai and Demre Çayı. This road starts from Karabel at the junction

[403] Harrison 1963, 137 no 14; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 550–551, s.v. Güceymen Tepesi. Hellenkemper and Hild identify this sanctuary as a monastic church due to its high position and the foundations of the adjacent buildings.

[404] Harrison 1963, 137 no 15; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 492, s.v. Çağman.

[405] Takmer and Alkan 2013, 110.

with the main road to Arneia and climbs up to Alacahisar Church at top of Çam Dağı. The ancient road largely overlaps with the modern road. From the Alacahisar Church the road descends to the west, first to the district of Kumlukaklık Dere and then to the Demre Çayı. In the district of Kumlukaklık Dere, on the ancient path between Alacahisar church and the Demre valley, a three-aisled basilica is preserved to the height of its second storey[406]. There must have been another secondary/local ancient path beneath the modern road which starts from Muskar/Belören leading to Kumlukaklık Dere and from here to the village of Ahmetler 2 km. to the north-west of Kumlukaklık Dere intersecting the west-east path between the Demre Çayı and Alacahisar. On the modern road ca. 2.5 km. northwest of Muskar/Belören lies a press-complex cut into a raised rock bed. Around the press there are two cisterns and ruins of ancient buildings constructed of irregular stones. The rock bed of the press is supported by retaining walls at some points. On top of the press is a half rock-cut single-aisled chapel[407] (Fig. 18). The apse is destroyed and only its foundations can be traced today. The rest was converted into a goat shelter covered by plastic sheeting and branches. The northern wall is rock cut whereas the southern wall is made of rubble stone except for its corner joining the entrance which is constructed from relatively fine blocks. The entrance on the west is filled irregularly with stones. The southern wall was plastered and very small fragments of the wall painting of red and blue colors remain visible today. A cross (anachronistically termed a Maltese cross) is carved in the rock at the northern corner of the entrance, while one of the blocks on the other corner of the entrance carries an carved christogram. The

[406] Takmer and Alkan 2013, 112.

[407] The chapel is not recorded in any of the publications. I saw it by chance it on a daytrip in 2014. This fact tells us that the hinterland of Myra, at the heart of the area of Lycia visited by travelers and researched by scholars since the eighteenth century, still requires further and detailed systematic field survey.

‘Maltese’ cross is very similar to those found in many other early Byzantine churches in the region. I suggest the chapel was built in the early Byzantine period and was rebuilt and redecorated in the middle Byzantine period. The christogram is a further example of the use of the early Byzantine sculpture, which ceased after the Quinisext council in the seventh century[408]. The early and middle Byzantine evidence in this place confirms the existence of a possible road between Kumlukaklık and Muskar/Belören.

The modern village of Ahmetler is on a plateau on the western slope of Çam Dağı. The plain suitable for cultivation should have been settled in the Byzantine period, although there are no visible surviving ancient remains. Yet, pieces of elaborate sculpture reused in the walls of the modern houses indicate a church should have once stood nearby (figs 5 and 6). The destruction caused by a large quarry that swallows the western slope of Çam Dağı, can be seen from the village of Ahmetler. The quarry on the top of the slope dumps its debris downwards sweeping down a considerable part of the forest.

The north-western edge of the Çam Dağı massif has districts with churches and ancient settlements; namely Arapyurdu, Ayıveliler and Bağlararası. Presumably a road lead from Ahmetler to the district of Bağlararası 1. km northeast of the modern village of Palamutçukuru. In the courtyard of an abandoned school building in the village of Palamutçukuru are two composite capitals doubtless brought from a nearby church. The capitals have two rows of acanthus leaves with the acanthus decoration of one of the capitals rimmed by an egg and dart molding. Their design does not imitate the design of other capitals found in the hinterland of Myra. Yet they can be

[408] ODB II, 441 s.v. christogram.

roughly dated to the sixth century. In Bağlararası there survives an apse of a church on a terrace to the west of the modern road[409]. Between the village of Palamutçukuru and Ayıveliler the foundations of a church can be traced at a place called Aladibek. In the vicinity of this church, an ancient fortification, rectangular in plan constructed of fine ashlar blocks is on a hill. A cross relief is carved in the lintel of the door on the northern façade[410] (Fig. 21). Overlooking the Kasaba Plain, this fortification must have been a part of a defense and security system ensuring the security of the region against possible threats from the north. The christogram carving does not indicate the building was used as a fortification after the Roman period and, in the Byzantine era it may well have been used for storage.

Ca. 2 km. west of Palamutçukuru lies the village of Ayıveliler. Here stands a Hellenistic tower with a large cistern inside it. 300 m. to the southeast of the tower are the remains of several ancient houses and two *chamasoria* (rock-cut sarcophagi). About 1 km. to the west of Ayıveliler is Arapyurdu, an area which had been settled from classical times to the Byzantine period. In this area two *chamasoria*, three cisterns and two workshops are recorded. The settlement includes an acropolis with two Hellenistic buildings overlooking the Demre Çayı, one of which has been proposed to be a Hellenistic fortress, which was restored and extended in the Byzantine period[411]. The later restoration indicates a continuing use in the Byzantine era. However, as in the case of Aladibek, it is not certain whether it was restored to be used as a storage or as fortress. The location of the Arapyurdu settlement is significant, not only for its ruins dating from Classical and Hellenistic times, but also for its strategic position situated right on the eastern side of the mouth of the northern

[409] Takmer and Alkan 2013, 111.

[410] Takmer and Alkan 2013, 111.

[411] Alkan 2011b, 103.

gorge of the Demre Çayı. The fortress here must have been constructed, like the fortification in Aladibek, to control the northern mouth of the gorge of Demre Çayı. Arapyurdu is linked to the fort at Dereağzı by an ancient local road descending from Arapyurdu along the Pınarcık Valley opposite the middle Byzantine church at Dereağzı. The road is flanked by a necropolis together with a settlement consisting three cisterns, a small chapel, a workshop and the ruins of houses.

To sum, the western section of Myra's hinterland highlighted with blue on the map (Fig. 16) contains its own local road network which link the settlements and churches. The road system can be divided into three geographic divisions, which I have attempted to describe above. These include a road from Karabel to the gorge of Demre Çayı in an east-west direction and the another track starting from Muskar/Belören leading to Kumlukaklık Dere, Ahmetler, Bağlararası, Ayıveliler and Arapyurdu following the western slope of Çam Dağı. The ancient path descending from Arapyurdu to Dereağzı can be well traced. This path is significant since it links the settlements in Myra's hinterland to Dereağzı; but it also provides essential access to the Kasaba Plain from these settlements.

IV.3 The Region to the East of the Main Route

The eastern section of Myra's hinterland highlighted, in yellow on the map shows another group of settlements. The geographic limits to the area occupied by the settlements is defined by topographic elements like those of the western section. Alacadağ with an altitude of 2300 m forms the northern border. On the other hand, Gülmez Dağı, the southern extension of Alacadağ, lines the eastern border between the settlement and Limyra, located in the valley of Limyros to the east of Bonda Tepesi. To the south, the area is linked to the main road between Myra and Limyra by a local road. This path joining the main road near the lagoon is important since it

is an alternative track leading to the uplands of Myra from the lagoon. In addition, another ancient path follows a track on the western slope of Alacadağ and reaches an ancient settlement area on the top of Bonda Tepesi. This place is the junction point of the local road and the main road between Myra and Limyra which climbs from the lagoon up to this point. From Belen the path crosses Bonda Tepesi leading to the harbor of Phoinix and from here ultimately to Limyra[412]. This path on Bonda Tepesi is a direct and shortcut route for those who come from Limyra and head for the uplands of Myra without having to go down to the Demre Valley to use the path from the valley to Muskar/Belören. Regarding this, the eastern section of Myra's mountainous hinterland is not isolated in itself but is linked to the other settlements on the west via the junctions at Muskar/Belören and at Karabel. But moreover it is also connected to Limyra through a path on Bonda Tepesi and to the main road between Myra and Limyra via another path descending to the lagoon.

The settlements and churches on the western slope of Alacadağ are located mostly in the valleys between the steep ridges of Alacadağ and on small plains. From Muskar/Belören one local road extends to the east and after 2 km. reaches Turant Asarı on the top of a hill. The ancient settlement in Turant Asarı has a necropolis of typical Lycian tombs. The remains from the Byzantine period include an early Byzantine three-aisled basilica built from fine ashlar blocks with decorative carvings and a late-antique two-storey building. A small chapel was constructed in the nave in the middle Byzantine period[413]. A local road descends on the eastern side of the hill into the Demre Valley. From Muskar/Belören another road extends northwards

[412] A narrative in the vita of St. Nicholas of Sion verifies the use of this road in the sixth century. Sailing to Myra from the Holy Lands, St. Nicholas asks the captain to land him and his servants at the harbor of Phoinix, saying "Here is our place, where we should disembark and go up to our monastery". See Ševčenko and Patterson Ševčenko 1984, 65.

[413] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 898, s.v. Turant Asarı; Foss 1991, 329.

and on this route is Zeytin, an ancient settlement in the first valley to the west of Mukar/Belören[414]. 1 km. southeast from Zeytin, it climbs the hill, called Dikmen Tepe, where on the hilltop is a triconch church constructed with large ashlar masonry. In the nave of the church is a chapel with a new apse, synthronon and a narthex built in the middle Byzantine period. The masonry of this later building is of stone-faced rubble[415].

Descending to the eastern slope of Dikmen Tepe the road extends to the Alakilise valley with the church lying in the middle of the valley. A renovation inscription dated to 812 A.D. found in the church records that it was the shrine of Archangel Gabriel (see above p. 73 and 305) and the valley was inhabited in the early Byzantine Period. The Vita of St. Nicholas of Sion mentions the church as the shrine of the Archangel Gabriel in Karkabo. From this evidence the settlement here can be securely identified as the early Byzantine village of Karkabo. Hellenkemper and Hild suggest that several houses, graves together with the terraces of fields date to the early Byzantine period and were in use at least until the middle Byzantine period. The church was identified as a monastery, largely rebuilt in the ninth century. The church consists of a basilica and a domed cross-shaped chapel with four chambers at the corners. The chapel belongs to the early Byzantine period, but its function has not been defined[416].

Although no ancient traces have been detected of the road should continue from Alakilise, 2 km. southeast of Alakilise, on the other side of the ridge is an ancient settlement called Karacaören by the local people. The settlement consists of

[414] Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 923, s.v. Zeytin; Alkan 2011b, 115.

[415] Harrison 1963, 130-131; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 520, s.v. Dikmen.

[416] Harrison 1963, 125-129; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 607-609, s.v. Karkabo.

the foundations of several houses, thirteen cisterns, terrace walls and a press. Ca. 600 m. to the southwest of the Karacaören settlement is a three aisled basilica. The church was first introduced to *academia* in 2011 by M. Alkan and was named Günağı church as the locals term the surrounding area[417] from the terrain which is open and relatively unwooded and covered largely with small whitish broken rocks which in sunlight forms a shining area of land in the middle of the surrounding woods. The Günağı Church lies ca. 7 km to the northeast of Myra and 2,5 km to the southeast of the Alakilise Valley on a sloping open terrain overlooking the Myra Plain and the sea. The church was first documented during the systematic field surveys conducted by Sencer Şahin in 2010 and was briefly introduced in an article by Alkan in 2011[418]. Of the church only the three apses of the basilica remain standing, the rest of the building is destroyed and the area covered in heavy architectural blocks and dense vegetation. Fifty meters to the west of the church is a modern threshing field elevated with stones. Trenches show illegal excavations have been undertaken by treasure hunters. Some material from the church has been removed and reused in the walls of the modern threshing field. On the eastern side of the modern threshing field are two in-situ fallen columns with capitals and blocks of architrave which must have belonged to the entrance of the atrium. The total width of the apses makes 14.60 m. and the overall length reaches ca. 20 m. The main apse terminated in a polygonal wall with the masonry of the main and southern apses of high quality craftsmanship with the stone blocks finely cut. The high standard parallels other masonry work in the region, namely at Alakilise, Muskar and the church at modern Asarcık A row of the upper bench of the synthronon can be traced

[417] Alkan 2011b, 99-124.

[418] Alkan 2011b, 109.

in the main apse, while the masonry of the northern apse lacks the order and quality found in the other two apses. The remains of plaster and frescoes can be seen on the walls of the northern apse. On the southern side are the foundations of a structure with a small cistern following the line of the southern wall of the church. The capitals scattered throughout the site differ in size, diameter and style. The diameter of those situated in the naos is ca. 28 cm. Their carving is deep and elaborate which suggests a dating to the mid-fifth century. In addition, there are two columns with their capitals, and pieces of architrave at the westernmost point of the site. The two capitals here are relatively large of ca. 40 cm diameter. Their size and carving with slightly wind-blown acanthus leaves seem different than from those in the naos. The comparanda of these two capitals which were dated to the mid sixth century by Hild-Hellenkemper derive from Muskar and Alakilise nearby. This apse is plastered and carries the fresco remains of seven figures. The figure on the north edge of the apse is flanked by inscription. At first sight, it appears that the fresco or the apse was the dedication of a certain Nicholas. Yet the male figure here is probably St. Nicholas, as we can understand from the shape of his head with a wide forehead which is typically emphasized in other representations of him. The figure next to him holds a spear. Therefore we can assume that this is one of the warrior saints/martyrs or an archangel. The entity of frescoes and the incongruence of the masonry with those of the other two apses indicates the northern apse was destroyed and rebuilt in a later period roughly around the tenth century, four centuries later than Alkan's dating of the church to the sixth century. Three fragments seem to be parts of parapet slabs. Interlaced circles and floral border with bunches of grapes look very similar to the decoration of one of the parapet slabs of the Rhodiapolis Episcopal church[419]. The

[419] Akyürek – Tiryaki 2010, fig. 15 and 15.

‘Maltese’ cross carved on a simple block can be recognized behind the main apse. This cross matches the cross on the lintel in Alakilise[420]. In general the internal decorative elements are of high quality and show the local importance of the church. Moreover, some of the dating elements of the church are the figural carvings. A figure of a peacock occurs under a piece of architrave. The peacock was a favorite figure of Byzantine art[421]. The closest examples of peacock figures are recorded in the Archangel Gabriel church at Alakilise[422]. On the other hand there are parapet slabs with similar elaborate peacock carving in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Nezih Fıratlı dates these slabs to the eighth to tenth centuries[423] and, the peacock figure in the Günağı church can likewise be dated to the middle byzantine period. A stone carving of a dove and a pair of doves on a possible parapet slab piece was documented during the survey and they too recall the continuity of the church in the middle Byzantine period. There are the remains of a rectangular structure to the southwest of the church and this could be a later addition to the church building. 25 meters to the west of the apses there is a larger cistern with finely cut blocks. The closest settlement to the church, the modern Karacören district ca. 600 m. to the northeast, was localized as Nea Kome village which is mentioned in the Vita and the church was identified by Alkan as the archangel church in Nea Kome. The high quality internal decoration of the church indicates its importance and supports this identification.

The road bifurcates around Karacaören, one leading southwards to Yukarı Beymelek passing through the Yılanbaşı settlement, the other continuing in a

[420] Harrison 1972, 189.

[421] ODB III, 1611 s. v. peacock.

[422] Harrison 1963, 148, pl. XXXVIIc.

[423] Fıratlı 1990, 164-165, pl. 100.

southeast direction to Belen on top of the western slope of Bonda Tepesi. Yılanbaşı lies 2 km. southwest of Karacaören and is 4 km. the north of the lagoon. Like Arapyurdu, Turant Asarı and Muskar/Belören, Yılanbaşı, had been settled from Classical times until at least the middle Byzantine period. The settlement is surrounded by late Classical/Hellenistic defensive walls. The walls were later repaired in the early Byzantine period with pieces of limestone. The road descends in zigzags to Yukarı Beymelek where Ision Pyrgos, a Hellenistic tower is located. The road must have continued further and joined the main road between Myra and Limyra somewhere near the lagoon. The road climbs in zigzags the steep slope of Bonda Tepesi and reaches the Belen settlement[424]. Belen is a Classical-Hellenistic fortress with a necropolis, buildings some of which survived with their door frames and windows. To the southeast of the settlement is an apse of probably an early Byzantine basilica. From Belen the local road leads in both a south and easterly direction which finally reaches the main Claudian road between Myra and Limyra on Bonda Hill. This main road was built after Lycia was incorporated a Roman province in 43 A.D. during the reign of Claudius the emperor. Remains of this main road can be traced in zigzags from Bonda Tepesi down to the lagoon (see above fn. 388). The road must have run along the inner shore of the lagoon towards Yukarı Beymelek. Near the lagoon on this track four chapels can be found. From Yukarı Beymelek the main road continues to the Demre Valley.

[424] For more on Belen see Stark 1958, 179-180; Borchhardt 1975, 90-91; Zimmermann 1992, 113-114; Hellenkemper and Hild 2004, 482-483, s.v. Belen 1.

CONCLUSIONS

The countryside of the Eastern Mediterranean experienced prosperity during the fifth to seventh centuries A.D. As was the case for many other rural landscapes in Asia Minor, such as Isauria[425], Konya Plain, and Sagalassos[426], where our knowledge of countryside is supported by the results of recent surveys and research, Lycia flourished during this period. However, it is the mountainous hinterland of Myra on the western slopes of Alacadağ where we observe a high density of inhabitants and architectural activity unlike any other rural areas of Lycia. Moreover, in addition to their abundant number, the ecclesiastical structures are also remarkable for their high quality of architectural sculpture, maintenance of the structures into the middle Byzantine period through restoration and remodeling and adoption of the triconch plan.

The high quality of craftsmanship evokes a Constantinopolitan influence through the preference of motives and techniques such as the open work technique, although local limestone was used in stead of marble[427]. In addition to the influence of the capital, it seems that in the light of the textual evidence from the life of Nicholas of Sion and the material evidence there were local mobile workshops which resulted in a unity of motives.

I have tried in this thesis to show that this was due to the rough topography of this particular region, an elevated landscape stuck between the deep valley of the Myros River and the steep slopes of Alacadağ that sharply ascends from the sea

[425] Varinlioğlu 2008; Ceylan 2009.

[426] Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004

[427] Doğan 2006, 214; Alpaslan 2001, 188.

level. However, this area despite its relative inaccessibilty, was like a watchtower for its city, Myra, overlooking its wide plain. There is no doubt that the most precious presence on this plain was the holy body of Saint Nicholas. The mountainous hinterland of Myra provided pilgrims for centuries with the path overland, not only to the holy martyrium of the Saint but also to the Holy Land. Andriake, Myra's harbour and after seventh century Stamira were the landing ports of Myra where pilgrims could find a vessel that would eventually, under the guidance of St. Nicholas of Myra, patron saint of sailors, lead them to the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The two major ecclesiastical complexes flanking the main northern route that lead to Myra, the Alacahisar complex and the Karabel complex were landmarks in the rural landscape that signalled the entrance into a holy landscape reflecting the wealth and the privilage derived not only from the bodily presence of Saint Nicholas of Sion, but also from the direct connection to the Holy Land.

However, in addition to the traffic of pilgrims passing through to the tomb of Saint Nicholas or to the Holy Land, there was another pilgrimage route within in the hinterland of Myra during the sixth century. The monastery founded by Nicholas of Sion, born in a village of Myra and who became a local patron and a Saint, at the "New Sion" quarrying the rocky summit of the highest hill in the region, was a local attraction, not only for the god-fearing people of Myra but also for other villagers from all around Lycia. Apparently, Myra experienced the overlap of three pilgrimage routes itself. The pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Nicholas, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the local pilgrimage to the monastery of Nicholas of Sion. The Vita of Nicholas of Sion is no doubt together with the Vita of Theodore of Sykeon, the most important piece of textual evidence that is concerned with the life in the countryside in Asia Minor during the early Byzantine period.

On the basis of this text and new data from scientific surveys, I tried to provide suggestions concerning the localisation of the settlements and churches mentioned in this text. However, while doing this, this thesis aimed not only to explicate the relationship between these sites, but also the relationship between the ecclesiastical buildings and the settlements.

Finally, different from earlier works focusing on the churches and settlements in this area, I have attempted to apply a network approach and created a network model employing the Vita of Nicholas of Sion. This network graph, which will be able to be accessed online, will provide us with a visualization of the mobility and communication system revolving around the Monastery of Nicholas of Sion in the form of graphs with "nodes" and "ties" with summary information concerning the sites mentioned in the Vita (Fig. 23-Fig. 24); villages, cities and harbours, and reference to them in the primary and secondary sources will be inserted into these graphs. The life of Nicholas of Sion is distinctive for providing a number of visitors and the information on where these visitors of the monastery of Sion came from. It seems that there was a considerable mobility, an influx of visitors, to the monastery as the text illustrates. Some of the toponyms, on the other hand, were the places visited by Nicholas himself for several purposes. As a mobile monk, Nicholas paid visits to the nearby villages and churches, and made pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The current network graph was created by *Graphcommons*, an accessible online platform for collaborative network mapping, on the basis of the complex data of the journeys mentioned in the Life. In this model, settlements, either cities or villages, and harbors are indicated through nodes while ties between these nodes represent journeys. This graph intends to reflect the important position of the monastery of Sion and how it fostered a local mobility in the hinterland of Myra and to visualize the textual information (See at https://graphcommons.com/graphs/c8c959ef-e282-4af6-93f8-7002b679fc9f).

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Bibliographic Abbreviations

AB: Analecta Bollandiana

ANMED: Suna - İnan Kıraç Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Araştırma Enstitüsü, Anadolu Akdenizi Arkeoloji Haberleri

ANRW: Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt

AS: Anatolian Studies

AST: Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı

CAH: Cambridge Ancient History

CRAI: Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres

CSBH: Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae

DOP: Dumbarton Oaks Papers

GLRBP: E. Sophocles, Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from 146 B. C. to 1100), New York 1900.

GOTR: The Greek Orthodox Theological Review

GRBS: Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies

IGR: R. Cagnat, Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas peninentes, Paris 1911-1927.

IGSK: Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien

IstForsch: Istanbuler Forschungen

IstMit: Istanbuler Mitteilungen

JAJ: Journal of Ancient Judaism

JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JÖB: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

KST: Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı

Lampe: G. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, Oxford 1961.

LBW: Ph. Le Bas – W. H. Waddington (ed.), Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Asie Mineure I–II, Paris 1870 (ND Hildesheim – New York 1972 [Subsidia Epigraphica 1, 2]).

LCL: Loeb Classical Library

MJH: Mediterranean Journal of Humanities

MPG: ed. J. P. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca.

MPL: ed. J. P. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina.

OCP: Orientalia Christiana Periodica

OGIS: W. Dittenberger (ed.), Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1903-1905.

OJA: Oxford Journal of Archaeology

ODB: A. Kazhdan (ed.) The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, 3 vols., New York/Oxford 1991.

PO: Patrologia Orientalis

RA: Revue archéologique

SIG: W. Dittenberger, Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum. Leipzig, 1915-1924.

TAD: Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi

TAM: Tituli Asiae Minoris

TIB: Tabula Imperii Byzantini

PLATES

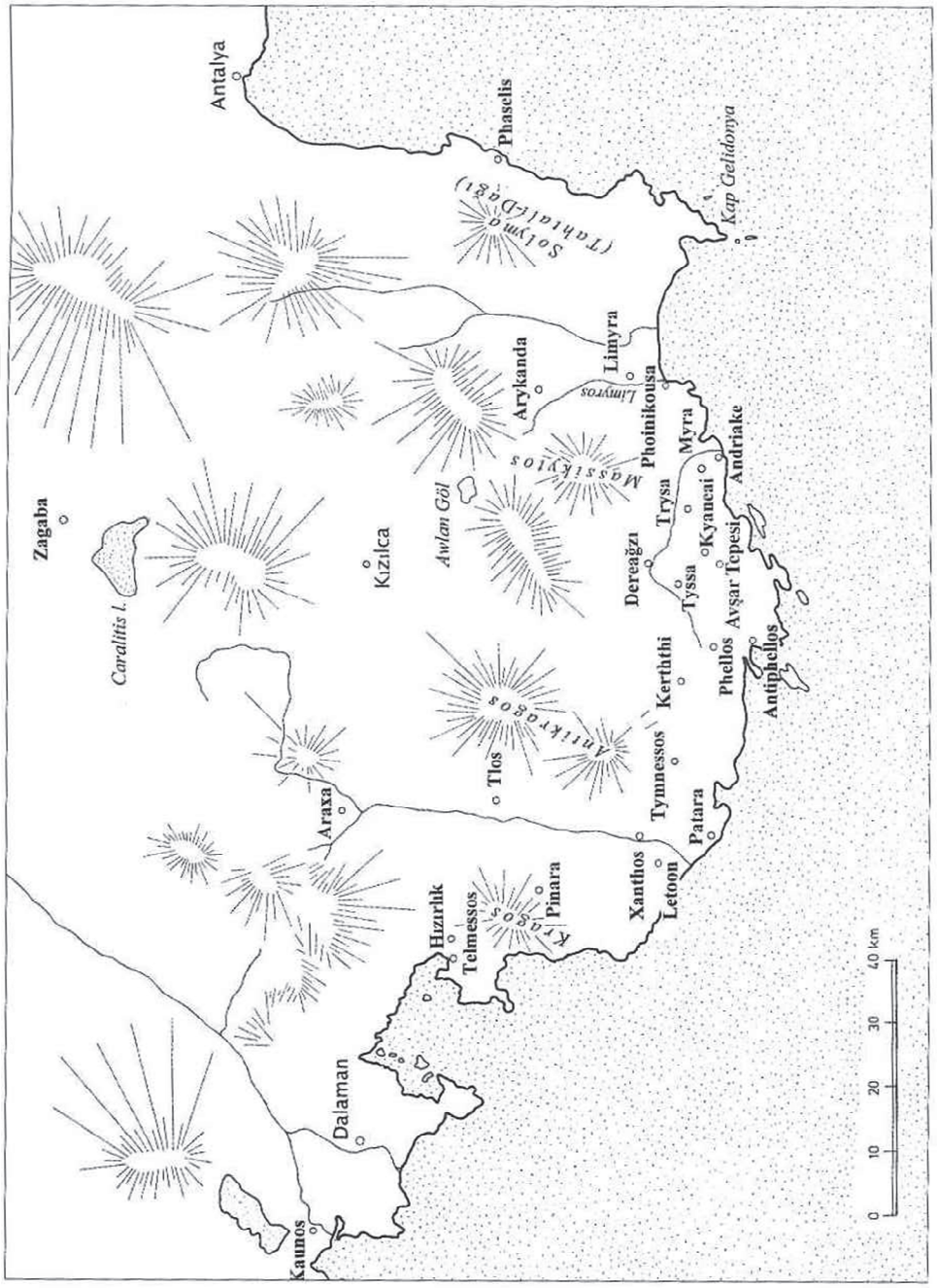


Fig. 1) Lycia in the Persian era (Borchhardt and Bleibtreu 2013, 4)

Fig. 2) Schematic representation of the Roads in SP (Şahin 2014)

Fig. 3) The map of Lycia basing on the results of field surveys (Şahin 2014)

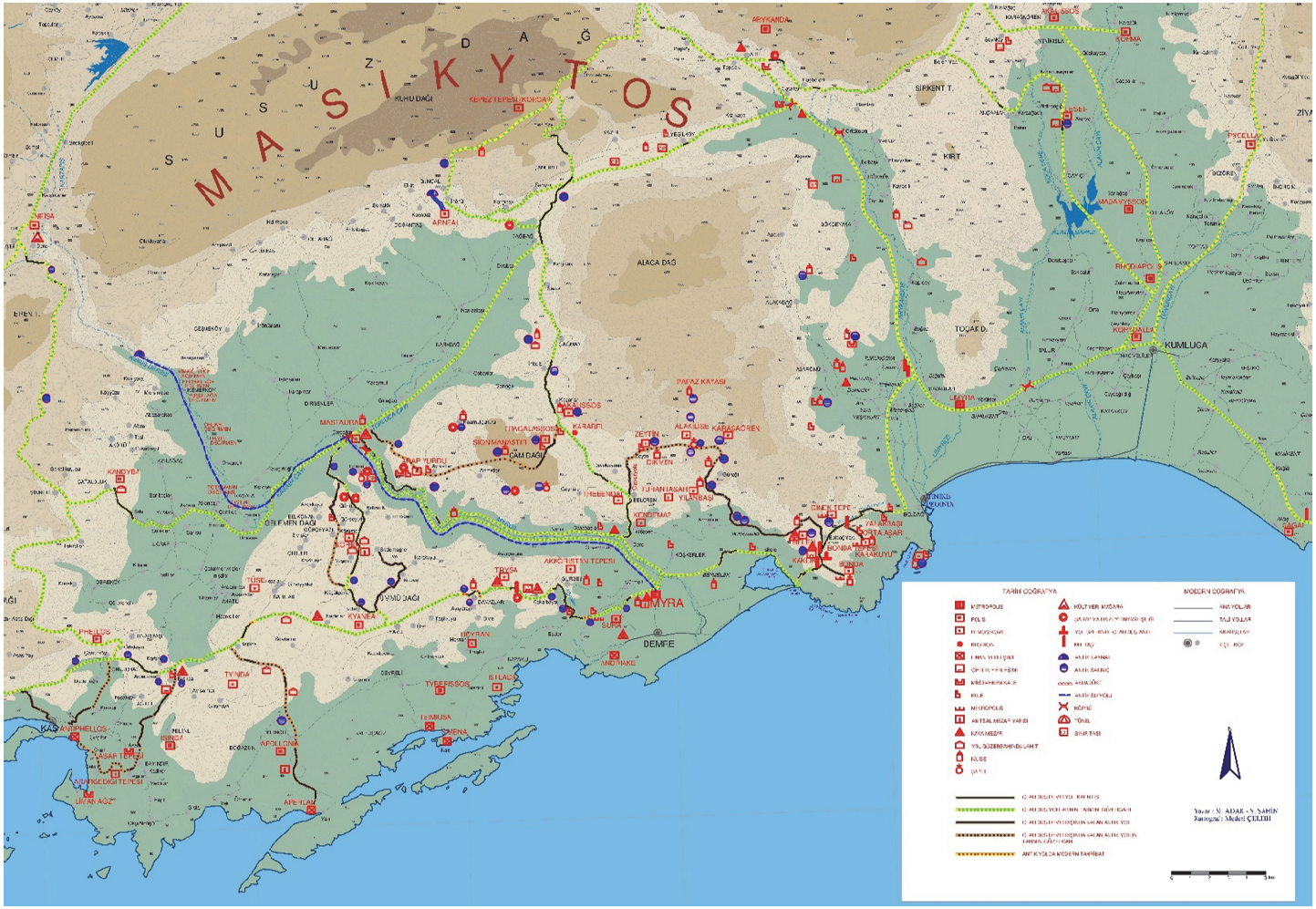


Fig. 4) Myra and neighbouring settlements (Şahin 2014)

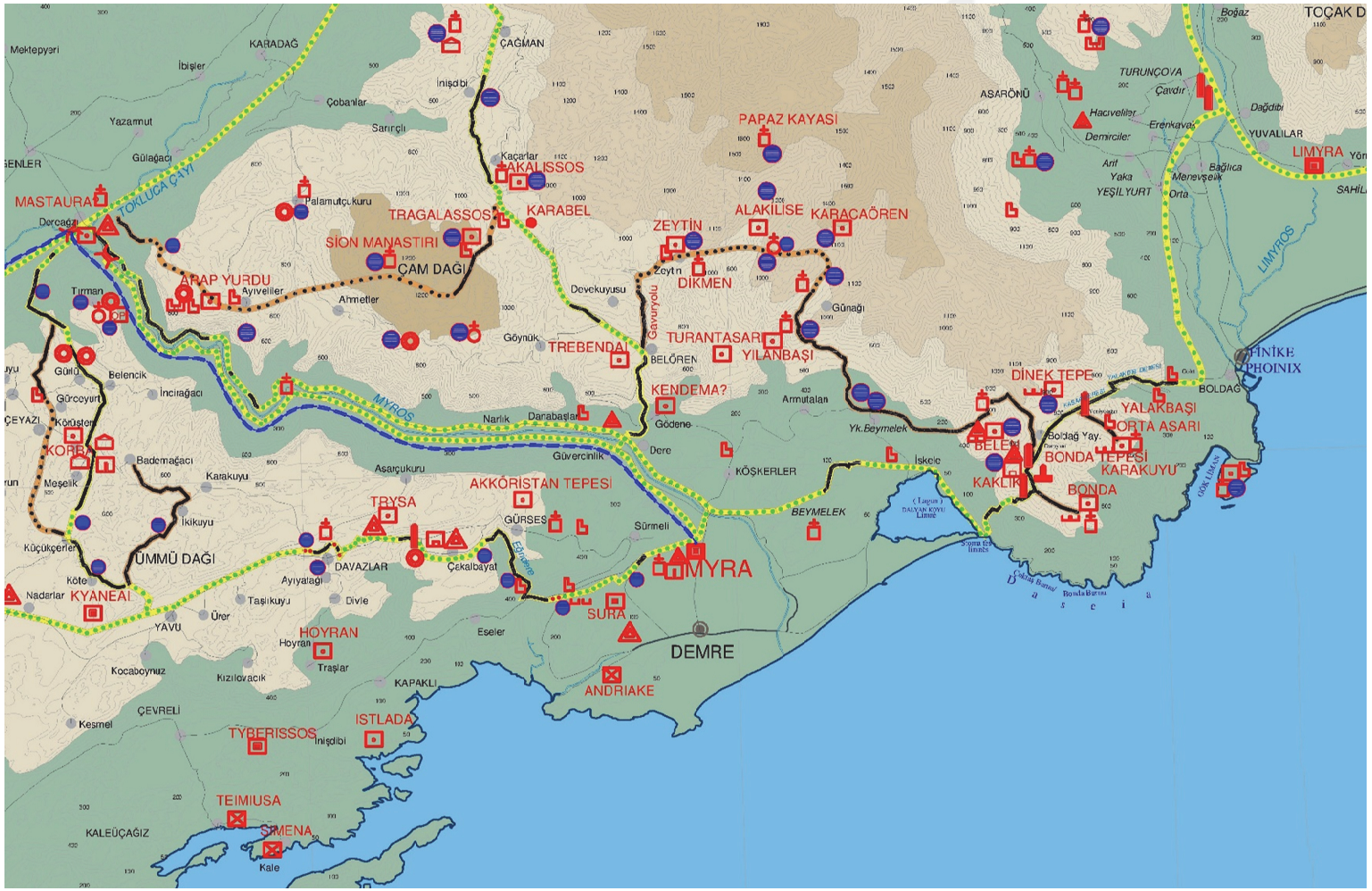
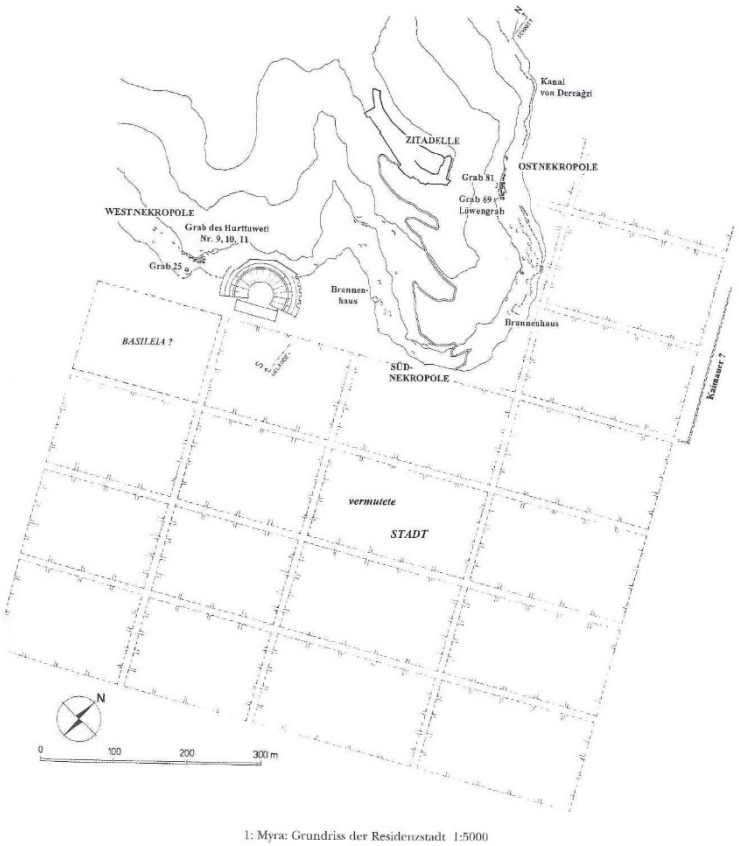


Fig. 5) Myra and its close vicinity (Şahin 2014, for the legend see Fig. 4 above)

Fig. 6) Tentative outline of the settled hinterland of Myra on the East of Demre Çayı in the Byzantine period.



1: Myra: Grundriss der Residenzstadt 1:5000

Fig. 7) Central plan of Myra (Borchhardt and Bleibtreu 2013, Taf. 59)

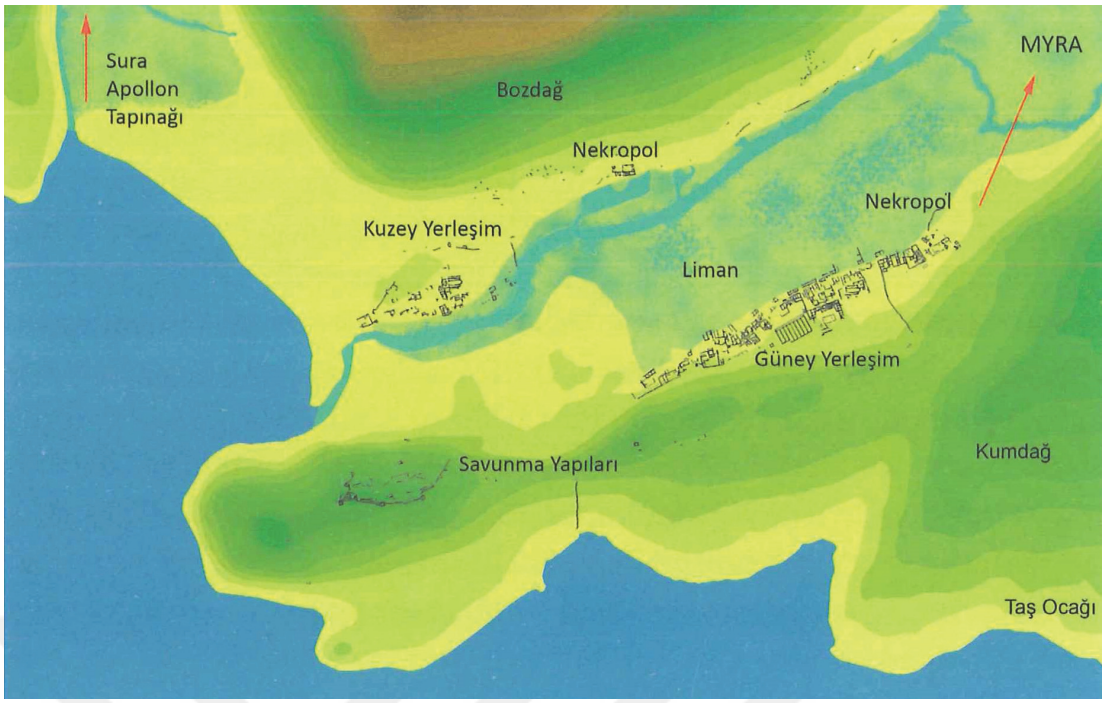


Fig. 8) Topographic map of Andriake (Duggan and Aygün 2014, Res. 2)

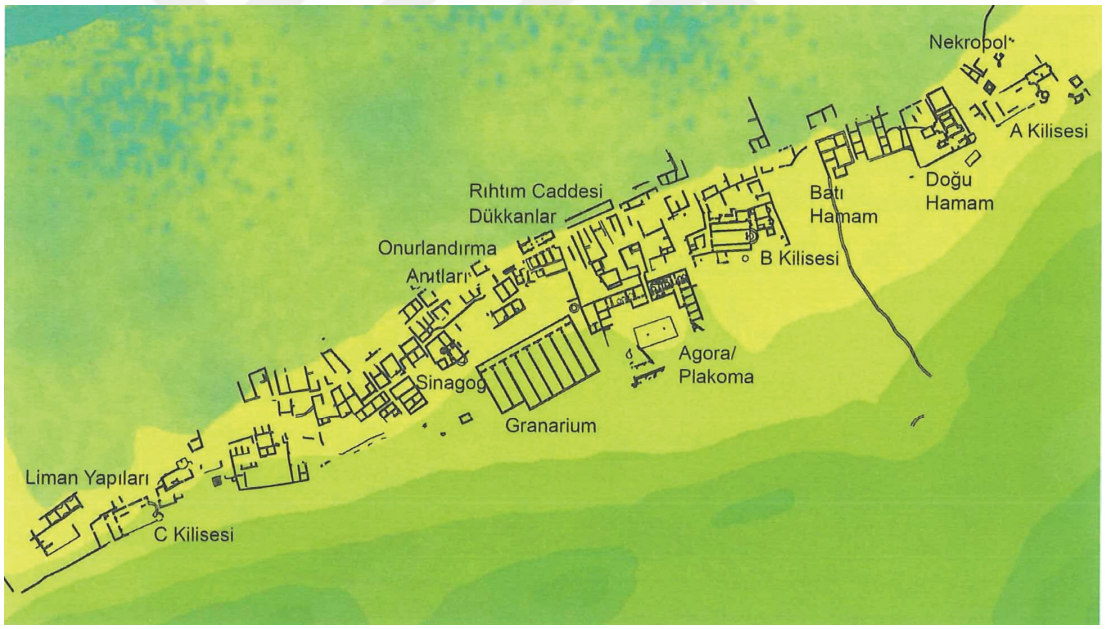


Fig. 9) Andriake. The plan of the central settlement in the south (Duggan and Aygün 2014, Res. 3)

Fig. 10) Andriake. View from the east to the west (Çevik et al. 2014, Fig. 6)

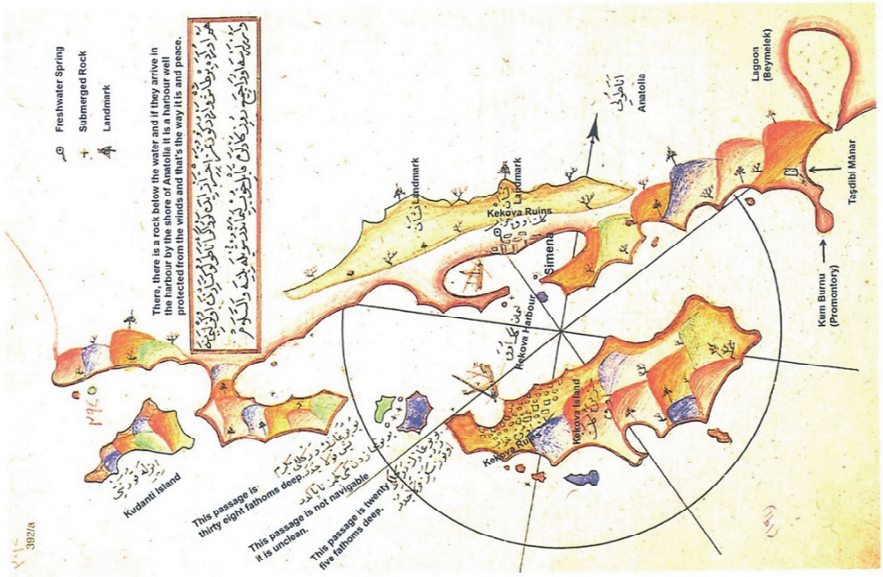


Fig. 11) The port of Taşdibi / Stamira in the map of Piri Reis (Duggan and Aygün 2010)

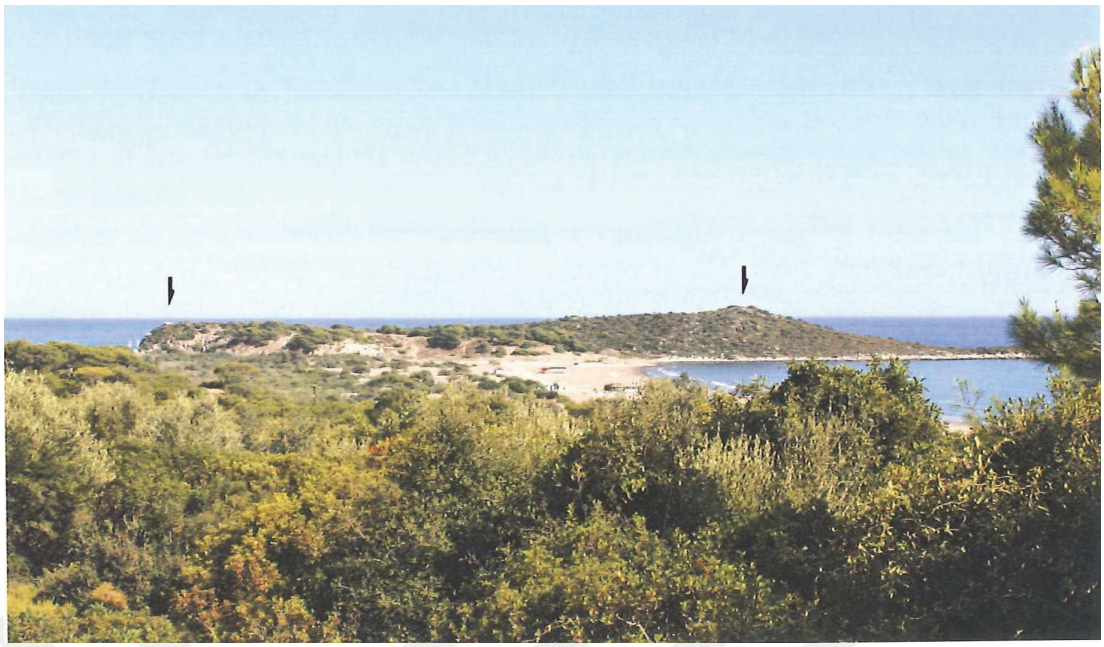


Fig. 12) Taşdibi / Kumburnu peninsula (Duggan and Aygün 2014, Fig. 2)

Fig. 13) The port of Stamira and reconstruction of the mânar (Duggan and Aygün 2014, Fig. 13)

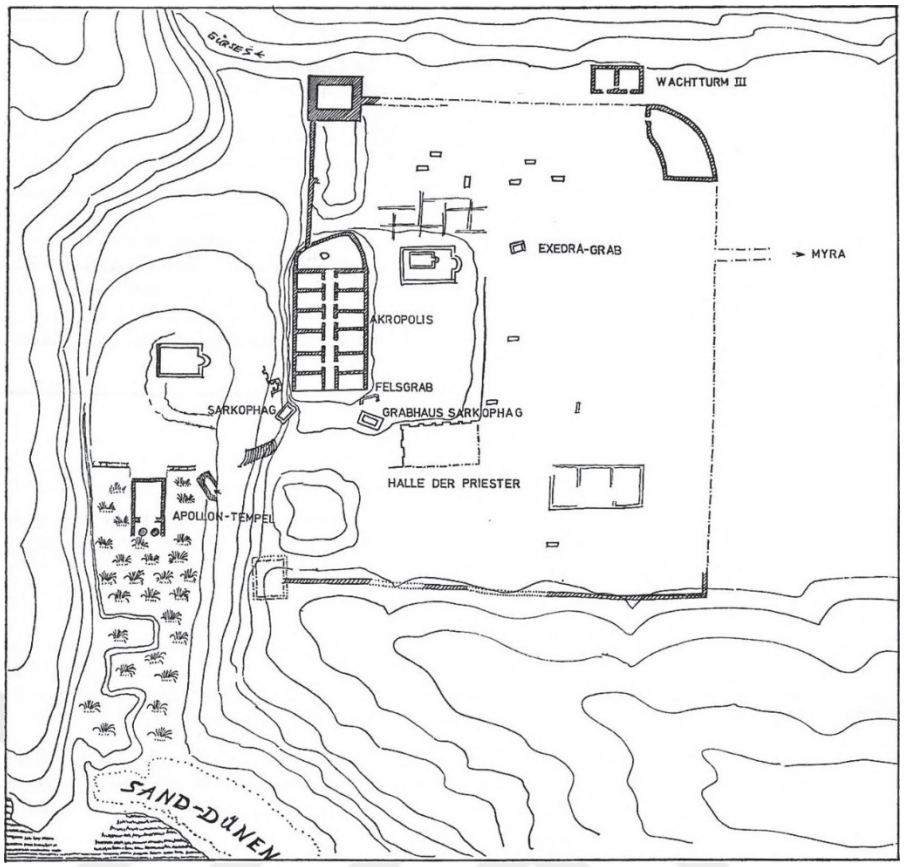


Fig. 14) The plan of Sura (Borchhardt 1975, Abb. 16)

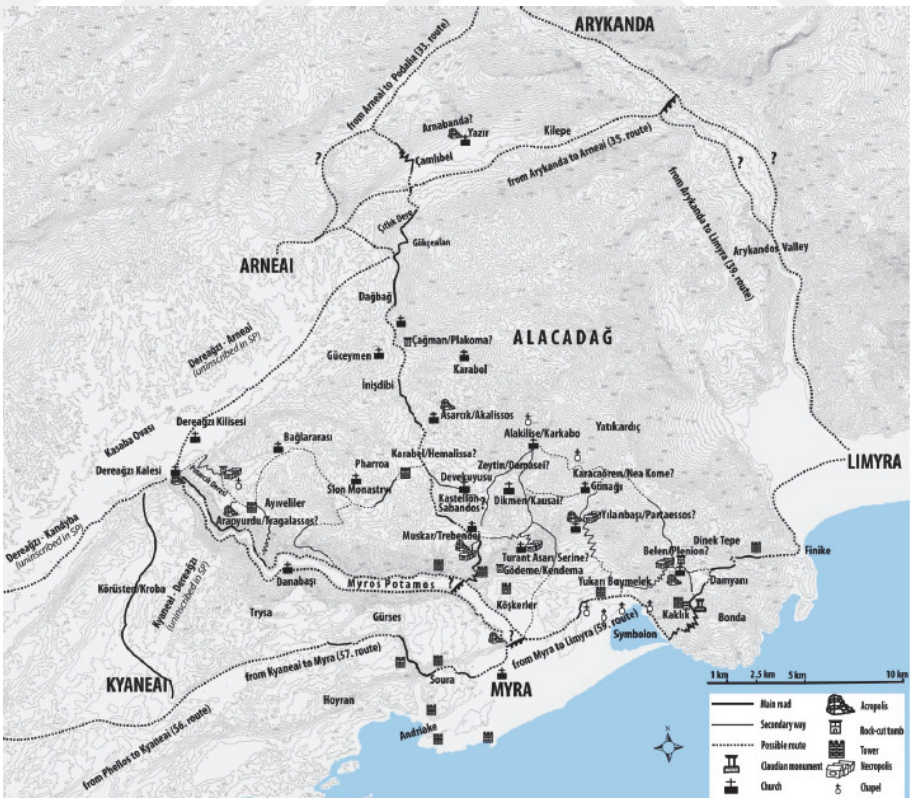


Fig. 15) Map showing the settlements, churches and the road network with theoretical routes and surviving parts (Takmer and Alkan 2013, 108).

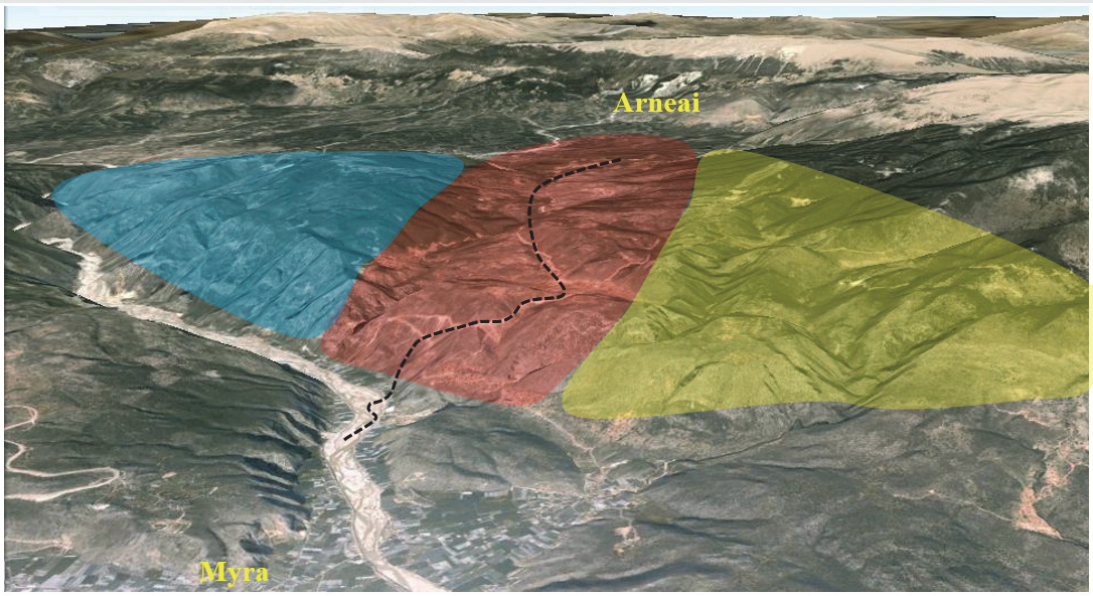


Fig. 16) Division of the mountainous hinterland of Myra and the tentative route of the main road between Myra and Arneai.

Fig. 17) Lycia in Tabula Peutingeriana

Fig. 18) The chapel to the ca. 2.5 km. north-west of Muskar/Belören

Fig. 19) A carved early Byzantine block reused in a modern house in the village of Ahmetler

Fig. 20) A middle Byzantine templon pier reused in the village of Ahmetler

Fig. 21) The gate on the northern façade of the fortification in Aladibek.

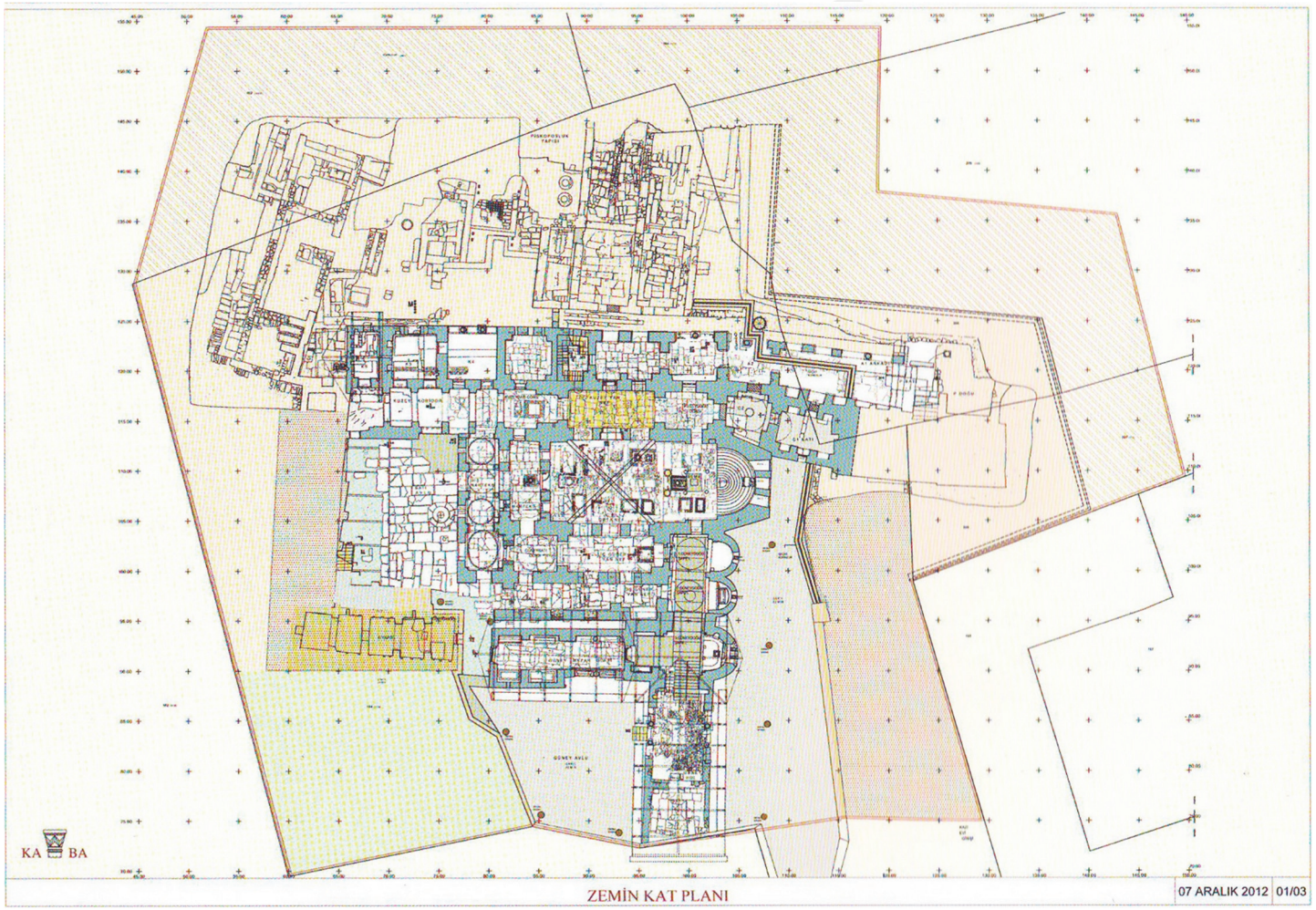


Fig. 22) The plan of the Church of St. Nicholas and of the excavation in the area, 2012 (Doğan et al. 2014, 48).

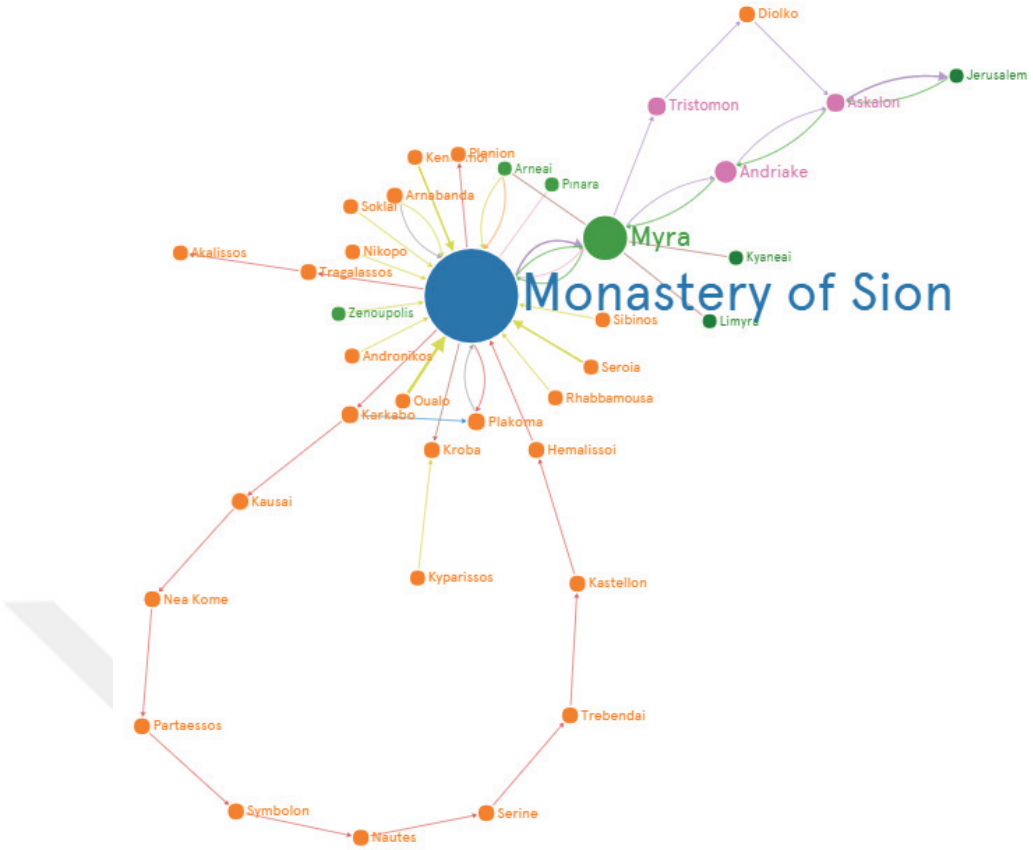


Fig. 23) A Snapsot from the Local Mobility Network Graph of Myra at https://graphcommons.com/graphs/c8c959ef-e282-4af6-93f8-7002b679fc9f

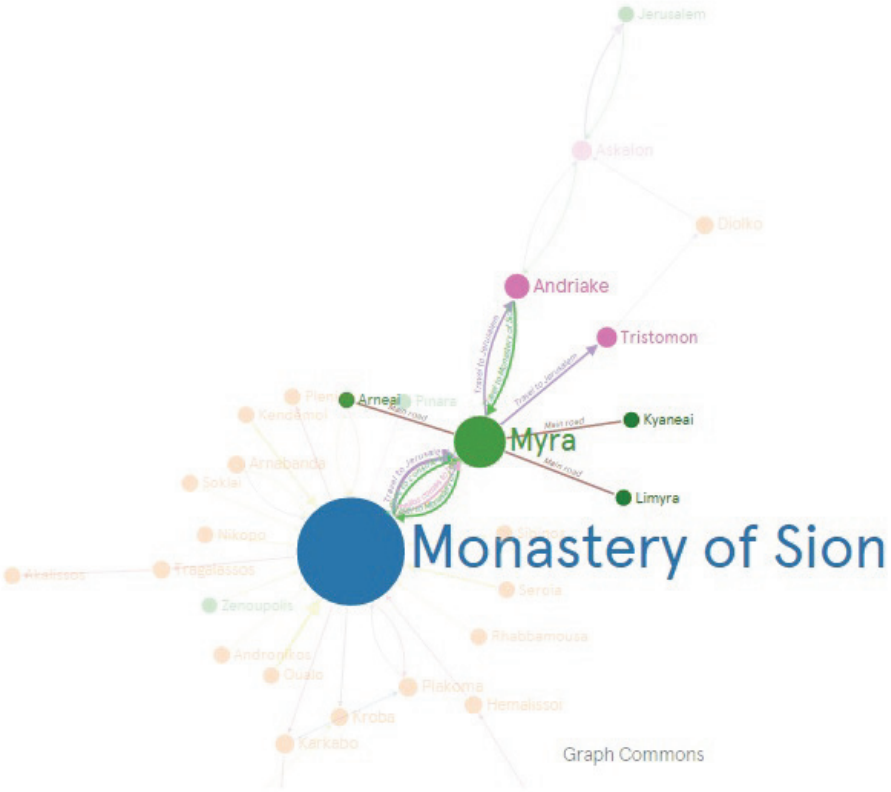


Fig. 24) A Snapsot from the Local Mobility Network Graph of Myra at https://graphcommons.com/graphs/c8c959ef-e282-4af6-93f8-7002b679fc9f