

THE ALAKİLİŞE VALLEY IN LYCIA, 1977

R. M. HARRISON

In August 1977 an archaeological survey was begun in the Alakilise Valley of Central Lycia¹. This resumes a programme to record, and study Late Roman and Medieval sites in this region, which was begun in 1959 but interrupted in 1964 by a commitment to rescue-excavations at Sarachane in Istanbul².

Historical and archaeological evidence combines to suggest that, while the coastal cities of Lycia were in decline in Late Antiquity, the rural population increased, particularly in the mountains³. Indeed, there appears to have been a demographic shift in this period from the coast to the upland countryside. Several major cities (e.g. Xanthos, Patara, Myra, Limyra, Arycanda) are under recent or current investigation, but there has so far been little scrutiny of the countryside which supported them⁴. Survey in the hinterland of Demre (Myra) and

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- (1) The team consisted of Mr. G. R. J. Lawson (Architect), By Vehbi Uysal of the Konya Museum (Representative), and myself, and we were in the field from 9 th to 22 nd August. we are grateful to the Directorate - General of Antiquities in Ankara for the necessary permit, and to Bay Tanju Özoral and his staff at the Antalya Museum and to the authorities in Kaş and Demre for their help and encouragement. Funds were generously provided by Dumbarton Oaks and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.
- (2) For reports of this earlier work in Lycia, cf. *TAD* X, 2 (1960), 25; *AS* X (1960), 26 - 8; XI (1961), 6 - 7; XIII (1963), 117 - 151; XXII (1972), 187 - 97; *JRS* 57 (1967). 40 - 44; *Yayla* 1 (1977), 10 - 15.
- (3) *The Vita Nicolai Sionitae* (ed. G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, Teubner, 1913 - 17) *Passim*, provides evidence for the 6th century. Remains at, e.g., Alacahisar, Alakilise, Devekuyusu, Dikmen, Karabel, and Muskar corroborate it. cf. my contributions to the *Acta* of the VIII Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 1976) and of a Colloque Lycien (İstanbul, 1977), both forthcoming.
- (4) W. Wurster has recently Carried out new and important surveys of major sites particularly in the Xanthos valley and hinterland of Kaş, and H. - G. Severin and P. Grossman are surveying in detail churches on Alaca Dağ. The archaeological record also includes roads, field - systems, and villages, and systematic survey and collation of these and other traces will one day permit wide - reaching inferences.

Finike (Limyra) and in the Elmalı district has suggested various forms which these new rural settlements took, and the intention is to look at some of them in more detail.

Alakilise is about 5 kilometres North - east of Muskar (Belören) village, within the district of Kale (Demre), Kaş, in the vilayet of Antalya. It is the name of an Early Medieval site about 850 m. above sea level, which is situated at the lower end of a broad, secluded valley (Alakilise Deresi) on the southern slopes of Alaca Dağ (Fig. 1). The valley at this point narrows sharply and drops very steeply to the coastal plain. The site was first reported in the Austrian *Reisen* and was further studied by H. Rott in 1906 and by myself in 1959⁵. These three expeditions concentrated on the well-preserved 6th century basilica (which an inscription records as having been rebuilt in 812) and its fine architectural sculpture; our purpose in 1977 was to study the settlement which the basilica served.

1. Roads

Access from the coast is either direct by steep and difficult ascent of the Alakilise Deresi from Köskerler, or by a longer easier route from Köskerler via Gödene and Muskar. Pack-animals nowadays must take the latter, but both follow ancient pack-roads, rock-cut and revetted and generally about 1.5 m. wide (Fig. 2).

2. Houses

The settlement consisted, in addition to the basilica, of at least thirty stone-built houses, some on the valley-floor, some terraced into the hillside, and the majority still standing to their full height of two storeys (Figs. 3 - 6). Walls are laid with the minimum of mortar in two faces of irregular masonry carefully dressed, with particular attention paid to quoins and doorways. Beam-holes and rebates mark the level of upper floors, and windows were restricted to the upper storey. Doorways have good lintels, and the arch is seldom used. There is one possible example of an external staircase of stone, but otherwise staircases were probably of timber. No fireplaces or chimneys were observed.

(5) *Reisen II* (1889), 38 - 40 (where it is called Aladschah - Kisle);

H. Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler* (Leipzig, 1908), 317 - 324 (where it is variously called Aladja Jalla, Aladjaklisse, and Aladjakisle); R. M. Harrison, «Churches and Chapels of Central Lycia», *AS XIII* (1963), 117 - 151 (esp. 125 - 9, 145 - 6)

3. Cisterns

The stream bed, which is a narrow ravine cut deep into porous limestone, is dry for much of the year, and each house has its cistern, bell-shaped, rock-cut, and plaster-lined. The basilica has at least three larger cisterns, whose form could not however be ascertained. One of these, which is replenished each winter, supports the one family which lives in the valley and their numerous livestock; all the others are dry.

4. Winepresses

Many of the houses had in addition a rock-cut installation, which with pressing - floor and tank is best interpreted as a winepress (Fig. 7). They are too small to have been olive-presses, are similar to installations elsewhere which are generally agreed to have been winepresses⁶, and were anticipated, as there is literary evidence for wine-production on Alaca Dağ in the Early Medieval period⁷.

5. Fields.

Extensive field-terracing was noted both on the densely wooded steep slopes and also on the more gently sloping valley floor (Fig. 8). In the latter case, the terrace-walls are often incorporated in modern field-walls.

6. Tomb Monuments

Two tombs were discovered on the southern edge of the settlement, both in prominent positions overlooking the steep descent to the plain. One is a sarcophagus of traditional Lycian hog's back type, but with carefully incised crosses and other decoration, which are thought to be primary (Fig. 9); the other is a large knob of rock in which a capacious chamber has been carefully cut (doubtless for multiple burials) and which is capped by a lid of debased Lycian hog's back type (Fig. 10).

7. Pottery

No surface sherds were observed. The ancient population in this rugged region which has no clay doubtless used utensils of metal and wood, and perhaps skin and leather, as does the modern.

(6) Cf. e.g., R. G. Goodchild, «Roman sites on the Tarhuna Plateau of Tripolitania» *PBSR* XIX (1951), 61-2, fig. 7, for a similar example at Hencir Salamat.

(7) References to wine in the *Vita Nicolai Sionitae*, 52, 55, 56.

8. Vegetation

The sides of the valley are covered (more densely than in antiquity) with pine, scrub-oak, sandal, and mastic; at the head of the valley are cedars of Lebanon. In the valley floor are two venerable fig-trees and several ancient olives, which may be the descendants of Medieval trees. No traces were found of settlement in the valley between Medieval times and the arrival of the present family about 1930, which built the first of three modern houses at about that time⁸.

In sum, a good start was made. The main lines of a general site-plan covering approximately 1 km². were prepared, and the majority of houses and other features were drawn, photographed, and located on the site-plan. It is hoped that the survey of Alakilise can be completed in 1978 for full publication with supporting drawings.

(8) I should like to pay particular tribute to this remarkable and very large family, especially Osman Akkaya at Alakilise and his son Durali and grandson Ramazan (whom we took with us as assistant) at Demre, for kindness and practical help. I hope to write about them elsewhere.