


New Inscriptions from the Settlement on Belen Tepesi at Gülmez Dağı in Central Lycia

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The settlement of Belen and its road system

In the campaigns of 2010-2011 of our field surveys, we visited Belen Hill within the research program on Alacadağ, Gülmez and Bonda mountains between Myra and Limyra.¹ The conical Belen hill is located in the southwest of the mountainous area of Gülmez Dağı between Myra and Finike/Phoinix, 10 km to the east of Myra. The ancient settlement of Belen, whose remains were visited and first mentioned by F. Stark² and then published with a topographical plan by J. Borchhardt,³ is on this hill at an altitude of 850 m overlooking the lagoon and the sea (fig. 1).

On the highest point of the hill, there is a Classical-Hellenistic fortress, the foundations of which are in part preserved to a height of about 2 meters. J. Borchhardt, stating that there were no Lycian tombs from the Archaic and Classical periods, reports that the mountain range between Myra and Limyra in the Classical-Lycian period seems not to be settled, for the other three cities found there Bonda, Damlalı and Karasakal show only Roman ruins.⁴ H. Hellenkemper and F. Hild describe the period of the settlement as “the Hellenistic – Early Byzantine settlement”.⁵ The polygonal stonework on the acropolis (fig. 2) clearly indicates a date not later than the Hellenistic Period.⁶ From some architectural materials re-used in the walls of the acropolis (fig. 3), it can be understood that the citadel was renovated and reused in the Byzantine Period. In addition, an un-inscribed rock-cut tomb with grave-niches (fig. 7–8) on a rocky slope, ca. 300 m northeast of Belen

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This contribution results from the field surveys on the ancient roads of Lycia directed with permission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. These field surveys were supported by the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Akdeniz University and Koç University – Suna & İnan Kiraç Research Center for Mediterranean Civilisations. I thank Fatih Onur, the final head of the field surveys, for his call to publish this article and his remarks.

¹ For the results of our surveys around this area see Alkan 2011a; Alkan 2011b; Takmer – Alkan 2013; Onur 2015, 95- 98; Onur 2022 (in print).

² Stark 1958, 179-180.

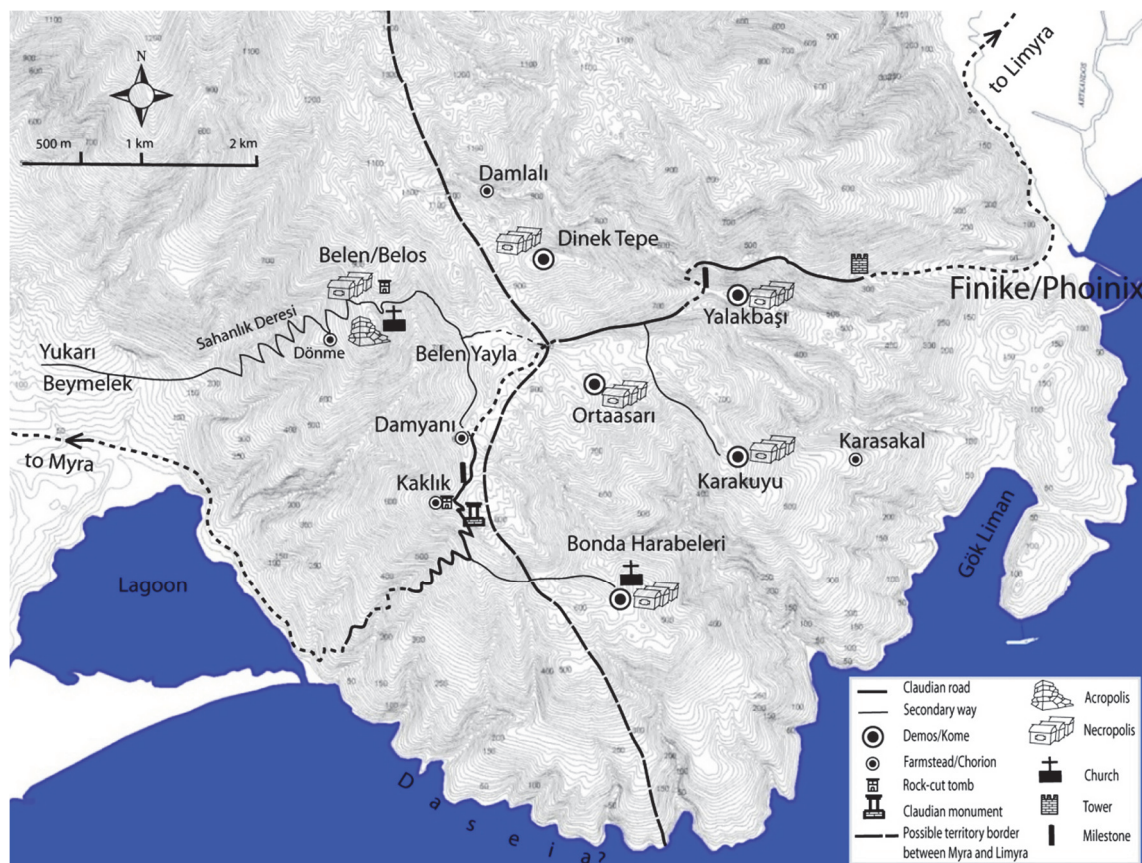
³ Borchhardt 1975b, 90-91; Zimmermann 1992, 113-114; Hellenkemper – Hild 2004, 482-483 (s.v. Belen -1-).

⁴ Borchhardt 1975b, 91; see also Zimmermann 1992, 114.

⁵ Hellenkemper – Hild 2004, 483 (s.v. Belen -1-).

⁶ The ruins of the settlement of Yalakbaşı (especially the ceramic finds) and a Lycian epichoric divinity Soumendis, which is documented by nine inscriptions from Yalakbaşı and is also known by an inscription from the city of Arykanda, show clearly that Bonda Tepesi must have been settled during the Classical Lycian Period; for the settlement of Yalakbaşı and the cult of Soumendis see Marksteiner et al. 2007.

Tepesi, perhaps dating from the Late Hellenistic or Early Roman Period, was found during our survey in 2011. It seems reasonable to think that Belen hill with its important position at the mountain pass between Myra and Limyra would have been inhabited during the Classical Period, perhaps from the Dynastic Period onwards.



The road system of Bonda Tepesi

The Hellenistic-Roman residence is to the east of the acropolis. Around this acropolis-castle, there are more than thirty buildings, thirteen of which are preserved to the top of the doorframes and windows (fig. 4–5), and eleven cisterns remain amongst these buildings.⁷ Some rooms are entirely cut from the rock. A large base with profile or an altar lies buried in the ruins near the entrance of the settlement.⁸ F. Stark speaks of some traces that should belong to a theatre on the northwest side of the settlement as, “... perhaps a little depression on the right held the theatre, for blocks of stone nearby looked like the theatre seats”⁹. There is a church, and only its apse remains (fig. 9) to the northeast side of the settlement.¹⁰ The necropolis of the settlement, including 12 sarcophagi dating from the Roman Period¹¹, is on the northwest side of Belen hill. One of the sarcophagi (fig.

⁷ For the description of the settlement also see, Stark 1958, 180.

⁸ Stark 1958, 180 records that she saw four bases dating from the Roman period in the settlement.

⁹ Stark 1958, 180.

¹⁰ Borchhardt 1975b, 90; Hellenkemper – Hild 2004, 483 (s.v. Belen -1-). This church has not been dated; but it is probably of early Byzantine date.

¹¹ Borchhardt 1975b, 90. In his plan 10 sarcophagi are drawn and no other number is provided as to the number of the tombs.

6), its carved lid carrying depictions of the heads of two bulls and two lions, has a *hyposorion* and an inscribed *tabula ansata*; which is almost entirely illegible due to its weathered condition.¹² A sarcophagus with a well-preserved lid stands ca. 200 m to the east of the necropolis,¹³ near the rock-cut tomb. In addition to these, there is a newly discovered inscribed sarcophagus (see below) on the west slope of Belen Tepesi.

There are the remains of a small farmstead house and a cistern with two ornamented drinking basins (fig. 10) at a locality called Dönme on an ancient path on the west slope of Belen Tepesi, ca. 500 m to the west of the settlement. There is also a modern shepherd's house in this same place.

The ways connecting the settlement of Belen with Myra and with Phoinix were investigated during our 2011 survey. An ancient path ascends from the village of Yukarı Beymelek up to Belen¹⁴ via a steep valley called Sahanlık Deresi on the northeast to the lagoon and passing through the necropolis and extends in an easterly direction (fig. 11) and, after ca. 1.5 km reaches a large field named Belen Yayla, including a modern house, a Muslim cemetery, some cisterns and maybe a chapel¹⁵. The way bifurcates at the west edge of this field. One branch leads south to join the Roman road¹⁶, on which the Claudian monument¹⁷ was found, descending to the mouth of the lagoon lying 4 km to the east of Myra. At this point, there is a hamlet called Damyanı including 8 modern houses and a few cisterns. There are also the remains of a Hellenistic? building (fig. 12), some ruins of walls and a cistern on a lower hill ca. 250 m to the southwest of Damyanı. These remains probably belonged to a small settlement or to a farmstead. The other branch of the way coming from Belen passes in front of the Muslim cemetery and extends ca. 1 km in an easterly direction passing to the south of Dikmen Tepe and then joins the Claudian road.¹⁸

Until a few decades ago this ancient route from the north of the lagoon to the port of Phoinix via Belen was still employed by neighbouring villagers to transport their products on pack animals to the market in Phoinix (Finike). Another ancient path, from Çağman to Belen via Alacadağ joins the ascending way from Yukarı Beymelek in the necropolis of Belen. This ridgeway was probably the route that Nicholas wanted to take when he insisted on disembarking at the port of Phoinix to reach his monastery of Holy Sion, on his return journey from Palestine recorded in the Vita of Nicholas of Sion.¹⁹

¹² Borchhardt 1975b, 90.

¹³ This tomb seems not to be given in Borchhardt's plan.

¹⁴ Borchhardt 1975b, 46 Abb.1 (a topographical delineation of Myra and its surroundings).

¹⁵ Marksteiner et al. 2007, 278 Abb. 1.

¹⁶ This road is given in the Stadiasmus Patarensis as ἀπὸ Μύρων εἰς Λίμ[υρ]ᾶ δ[ι]ὰ τοῦ Μασικύτου σ[τά]δια . . . in STR 59. The Masikytos mentioned here would have been Bonda Tepesi at the southern end of Masikytos mountain corresponding to Beydağları, which extends in a north-south direction to the west of the Arykandos valley, or it might have been a place name in the surroundings of Bonda, see Şahin – Adak 2007, 263-265; Şahin 2011, 55-56.

¹⁷ Marksteiner – Wörrle 2002, 545-562.

¹⁸ For these ways also see: Marksteiner – Wörrle 2002, 552 and Abb. 1 (in this plan the name Sakarcal is recorded instead of Belen Tepesi).

¹⁹ See Takmer – Alkan 2013, 112-113.

The inscriptions in the settlement

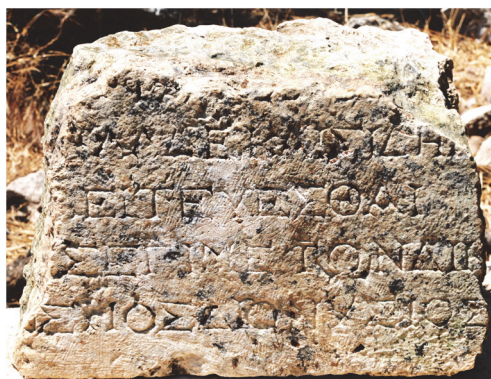
New epigraphic finds were recorded in the surroundings of the settlement during our survey in 2011: four fragmentary inscriptions near the church and an inscribed sarcophagus on the western side of Belen Tepesi. No inscriptions were previously known from the settlement of Belen, except for the illegible one mentioned by J. Borchhardt (see fn. 12 above).

Three fragmentary inscriptions were found in the ruins of the church. All these fragments belonged to different inscriptions as both the style and size of the letters differ from each other. It is not clear whether these fragmentary inscriptions were re-used in the construction or repair of the church building or were brought here from somewhere else or belonged to the site. But these inscribed stones seem to have been damaged in some illegal excavations. The missing parts of these fragments should be found in order to fully understand them, and they may lie in the ruins of the church or on the steep slope descending from its front.

No 1: Part of a limestone stele, the lower edge is intact, and the other edges are broken. However, it seems there are no missing letters on the right side. The lacuna at the end of the third line should also be taken into consideration. The style of the letters is similar to those of the Stadiasmus Patavensis²⁰ monument and this inscription may therefore be dated to the middle of the first century A.D.

H.: 0,22m; W.: 0,33m; D.: 0,20m; L.h.: 0,02m.

 ----- Φ ----- ca. 10 -----
 2 --- ὅ]πλα δὲ καὶ σιδη[ρᾶ]?
 ---πο]λειτεύεσθαι ^{vac.}
 4 --- ΣΕΠΙΜΕΤΩΝΔΙΚ
 --- ς υἱὸς Διονύσιος.



L. 4: A deciphering of the letters ΣΕΠΙΜΕΤΩΝΔΙΚ seems very difficult. It is possible to consider this line as ---]ς ἐπί με τῶν δικ[---].

L. 5: It should be understood as “[a father name in genitive case]ς υἱὸς Διονύσιος”.

This fragmentary inscription, which is a very important document for the site, may contain an administrative decision for someone who wants to be a citizen of a polis.

No 2: A limestone block fragment; found among the ruins inside the church. The stone is broken on four sides. The inscription probably consists of a single line and probably belonged to one of the architrave blocks. H.: 0, m; W.: 0, m; D.: 0, m; L.h.: 0,035-0,04 m.

²⁰ Cf. Şahin – Adak 2007, 8-11.

Surviving letters: ΩΤΩΣΙΕΡΕΥ may be restored as:

[- - - πρ]ώτως ἱερευσ[άμενον - - -]

or

[- - - πρ]ώτως ἱερεύσ[αντα - - -]

The letter style is very similar to that of inscription 1 above and suggests that the inscription can be dated to the Early Imperial Period. If πρώτως is right, that would mean the stuff of a cult.



No 3: A part of a limestone slab broken on every side which was found in the ruins of the church. H.: 0,40m; W.: 0,13m; D.: 0,26m; L.h.: 0,02-0,025m.

This fragment seems to have been on the left side of the stone and the start of each line is easily observed as there is no trace of any letter in the lacunas at the beginning of the first three lines. There are only some missing letters after the fifth line at the beginning of each line. From the style of the letters employed, this inscription can be dated to the late Hellenistic – early Roman Period. It is unclear if this fragment was from a tomb or a base, or a stele, because no word remains intact.

----- ?
 A -----
 N -----
 ΘΕΡ -----
 ΤΟΙΣ -----
 5 ΑΝΑΚ -----
 .ΟΥΚΑ -----
 .ΟΙΣΠΑ ----
 ..ΤΑΙΕ ----
 ..ΦΟΙ -----
 10 .ΙΝΚΑ -----
 ..ΝΠΟ -----
 ..ΑΣΤΟ -----
 .ΝΘ -----
 ----- ?



In addition, the thickness of the inscribed fragment is at least 26 cm.

No 4: This fragment is the upper profile part of a limestone stele found on top of the wall of a cistern 10 m to the south of the church. The start of the inscription is carved on this fragment, the rest of the inscription is missing.

H.: 0,33 m; W.: 0,45 m; D.: 0,19 m; L.h.: 0,035-0,04 m.

[- - - - -]Δ Β
 2 [- - - - -]
 [- - -]ΟΣ ^{vac.} ΜΟΡΗΝ
 4 [- - -]ΕΙΡΙΚΗΝ ^{vac.}

L. 3: The word ΜΟΡΗΝ has not yet been attested in epigraphic documents. It seems in the accusative case and is connected grammatically with the word in the accusative case in the fourth line.



It is possible that ΜΟΡΗΝ is a native feminine personal name of which the nominative case is probably Μορη or Μορης (cf. with Μορή *f.* and Μόρος *m.*)²¹. Alternatively, the Latin name Murena may be suggested, since ο (omikron) may have been used instead of the Latin letter *u*²². In this case, the completion Μο(υ)ρήν[αν] seems possible.

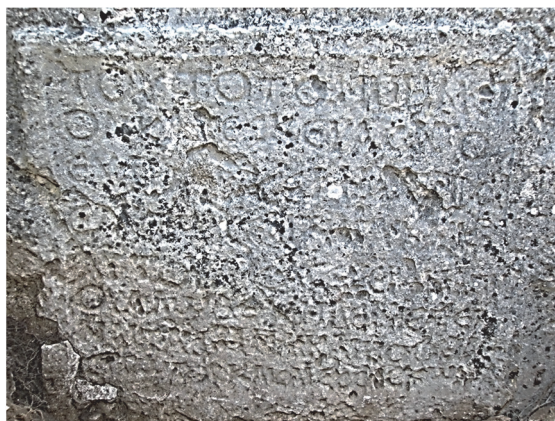
L. 4: The word in the last line may be an occupation and it is possible to suggest that μαγ]ειρικὴν the feminine form of μαγειρικός (3) “cooking, butchery”²³ which is documented in some inscriptions; two examples are: (IMagnesia 116 μαγειρικῆς καὶ ἰχθυϊκῆς; SEG 31, 1981, 983 μαγε[ιρικούς] ἐργάτας καὶ μουσικ[ούς]).

Apparently from this fragment, More/Mores/Murena was a cook or a butcher and s/he was honoured by [- - -ΟΣ which must be a masculine personal name in the nominative case.

No 5: The last inscription is a funerary inscription on a *tabula ansata* of a sarcophagus on the western slope of Belen Tepesi ca. 100 m below the settlement. The greater part of the sarcophagus is beneath the earth due to soil erosion. The lid of the sarcophagus lies nearby. On the western side of the hill, there was probably another necropolis area in addition to the northern necropolis. In the last line, Caesar’s fiscus and denarius indicate clearly the sarcophagus should be dated to the Roman Period; the style of letters shows the characters of the 3rd or 4th century A.D.

Dimensions of the sarcophagus measure: H.: presently unknown; L.: 1,73 m; W.: 0,97 m. Tabula: H.: 0,52 m; W.: 0,63 m; L.h.: 003-0,035 m.

τοῦτο τὸ μνημεῖ-
 2 ον κατεσκευάσατο
 Εὐάρ[. . .]ς Ερμ[.]τριβου
 4 ἐαυτῶ καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ
 αὐτοῦ Ἀρσασει Ερ[υ]μαπι-
 6 ου. ἄλλω δὲ μηδενὶ ἐξεῖ-
 ναι ταφῆναι ἢ ὀφειλέ-
 8 [σει] τῶ τοῦ Καίσαρος φύσκω (δηνάρια) ,α.



Eu[.]r[---]s, son of Erm[.]tribes, built this tomb for himself and his wife Arsasis, daughter of Ermapias. Anyone else is not allowed to be buried, (otherwise whoever acts against) will owe 1000 denarii to the Caesar’s fiscus.

L. 3: In the transcription the incomplete name of the person, who built the tomb, might be one of the names Εὐάρ[χο]ς or Εὐάρ[εστο]ς. His father's name Ερμ[.]τριβου, which is undocumented before, could be Ερμ[.]τριβης in the nominative case. In an unpublished inscription²⁴, in the Karaman Museum now, a personal name ending with -τριβης in the nominative case reads as [.

²¹ Zgusta 1964, § 964.

²² For examples, see Eckinger 1900, 58-65.

²³ See LSJ with supplement.

²⁴ This inscription is being studied for publication by me under the title "A newly found night watchmen (nyctophylaces) list from the Lycaonia region".

.]ΤΡΙΒΗΣ Σβαινωμιος (Sbainomis' son [. .]tribes). This new name seems divisible into two as Ερμ[.] and τριβης and its first part can be one of Ερμ[α]- /'Ερμ[α]- or Ερμ[ο]- /'Ερμ[ο]-.

L. 5: The feminine personal name Αρσασις is peculiar to Lycia²⁵. Her father Ermapias (Ερμαπιας²⁶) carries an indigenous name also commonly found in Lycia²⁷.

Concerning the name of the Belen settlement, its territory and economy

The ancient name of this settlement has not to date been documented and none of the inscriptions provides either a place name or ethnicon, nor any word indicating the settlement was a *demos*, *kome* etc. The hill of Belen is still called Belos by the inhabitants living in the area of Myra today, even though the place name Belos is not known from ancient literary sources, nor from epigraphic documentation recording Lycian toponyms. Therefore, over time, it is possible that the ancient place name might have been transformed into the name Belos. It is likely to have been recorded as the name of a settlement among the more than forty places²⁸ – the locations of most of them are presently unknown – that are recorded in the Vita of Nicholas of Holy Sion, composed in the sixth century AD. I have already suggested²⁹ that the settlement of Belen was the location of Plenion³⁰, based on the vocal similarity between Plenion, Belos and Belen although the last is a Turkish word meaning “mountain pass”. Plenion, where the shrine of Saint George was located according to the Vita of Nicholas of Holy Sion, and which was visited by Nicholas in a pilgrimage, and where he made his largest sacrificial offering of seven oxen. In the Vita the populations of only two places are given: Plakoma³¹ with a population of three hundred and Plenion³² with two hundred place settings.³³ It is possible to think that the anonymous author of the Vita emphasized the size of the populations of these two villages to highlight the miraculous character of the Saint. Amongst the settlements in the vicinity of the Sion monastery³⁴, the settlement at Belen was a place of substantial size given the *in situ* remains.

As for the status of the settlement of Belen, there is no indication provided as to its political status in the inscriptions. From the inscriptions at Belen described above and from the *in situ* remains of the settlement the classical fortification, the remains of more than thirty buildings and the necropolis including 12 sarcophagi, one can think that the settlement at Belen might have held the

²⁵ Zgusta 1964, § 107-7.

²⁶ Zgusta 1964, § 355-20; Balzat 2014, 259.

²⁷ Zgusta 1964, § 355-20.

²⁸ For these toponyms see Anrich 1917, 527-542; Foss 1991, 330-334.

²⁹ Alkan 2011a, 116-117.

³⁰ Plenion was not too far from the monastery of Sion and concerning its location, none has been suggested to date, see Anrich 1917, 537; Foss 1991, 333; Blum 1997, 115-116.

³¹ VNS 16.

³² VNS 55.

³³ In addition, the population of Tragalassos is estimated as two hundred, see Blum 1995, 58-59.

³⁴ The monastery of Sion should be identified with the monolithic Alacahisar church on Çam Dağı 10 km northwest of Myra, see Hellenkemper – Hild 2004, 852-856 (s.v. H. Sion); Alkan 2011a, 104-105. The first suggestion for the identification of this monastery is the basilica in Asarcık situated near to the village of Karabel, see Harrison 1963, 131-135, for this identification see idem 150.

status of at least a *demos* in the Hellenistic period.

There is no evidence to indicate the polis territory that Belen Tepesi belonged to, either Myra or Limyra; but it should have been within the borders of Myra as it is closer to this city than to Limyra. It seems improbable that the territory of Limyra extended over Belen Tepesi which overlooks the lagoon lying only 4 km east of Myra. The Claudian road coming from Myra and leading to Limyra via Bonda Tepesi³⁵ may be employed as a means to determine the border between these two poleis as it must have crossed the border at the Kaklık monument.

Finally, that to which city the territory of the Belen settlement belonged should be discussed within the context of the road system. The western border of the territory probably included the farmstead (see above) on the west slope of Belen hill. It is not possible to precisely determine the southern and the northern borders of Belen's territory. Its eastern extension towards Bonda Tepesi is the most important point and it seems reasonable to think the eastern part of Belen's territory would have included the large district to the connection point of the way coming from Belen and the Claudian road between the locality called Damyanı and Kaklık, where there are the ruins of the Claudian monument, on Bonda Tepesi. It is well known from the funerary inscriptions found in the settlements of Bonda Harabeleri, Kararakuyu, Yalakbaşı, Ortasarı and Dinek Tepe that the territory to the east of the Claudian road on Bonda Tepesi belonged to Limyra.³⁶ If our suggestion of the identification of the Belen settlement with the village (*kome*) of Plenion mentioned in the Vita, is correct, the hamlet (*chorion*) of Rhabbamoussa belonging to Plenion³⁷ must be within the territory of the settlement of Belen. Therefore, of the remains in the vicinity of Belen Tepesi, the remains of this *chorion* can initially be looked for within surroundings of the localities of Damyanı and Belen Yayla.

As for the economy of the settlement of Belen, it appears that the source of income of the inhabitants of Belen was not primarily dependent upon agricultural production. This is because there are no extensive cultivated lands within the vicinity of the settlement. Some terraced lands probably to grow grapes can be seen only western slope of the Belen Tepesi and there are few rock-cut workshops in the settlement area. It is possible to think that most of the inhabitants, who settled at this important mountain pass between Myra and Limyra-Phoinix, probably gained their livelihood from land or sea transportation. The importance of the lagoon within the maritime transport of the region is known from an inscription³⁸ from Myra dating from the Roman period. It is recorded in this document that at the mouth of the lagoon³⁹ and nearby Daseia⁴⁰ there were

³⁵ For the road between Myra and Limyra see Takmer 2004, 110-114; Onur 2015, 97-98; Şahin 2014, 379-387.

³⁶ Wörrle 2012, no. H II 59, 62, 64-66, 68, 70, 71, 73-76, 80, 81.

³⁷ VNS 66.

³⁸ Le Bas – Waddington 1870, no. 1311 (= OGIS 572).

³⁹ It should be Symbolon, the fifth station reached in the 25-day journey of Nicholas of Sion, see Alkan 2011a, 107-110.

⁴⁰ The location of the place called Daseia meaning “a boscaje land” is unknown (Schuler 1998, 122-123); but it is thought to lie east of the lagoon given the sequence of landing places given in an east-west direction (ἀπὸ τῆς Δασ[εί]ας μῆτε ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος τῆς λίμνης ἢ ἀπὸ Ἀνδριακῆς Daseia – the mouth of the lake “lagoon” – Andriake) in the inscription, see Robert 1963, 36; Hellenkemper – Hild, Lykien und Pamphylien 513-514. Şahin 2011, 57-59 thinks that *daseia* should be understood as meaning sinuous and proposes the

two pier-landings and some legal arrangements were taken by the demos of Myra to prevent the illegal actions upon maritime transport between Andriake and Limyra. As mentioned above, the settlement of Belen was located on the mountain pass and at a location overlooking the sea and lagoon, between the two important cities of Myra and Limyra, and also the two important ports of Andriake and Phoinix.

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Orta Lykia'da Gülmez Dağı'ndaki Belen Tepesi Yerleşiminden Yeni Yazıtlar Özet

Myra ile Limyra arasında önemli bir dağ geçidinde konumlanan ve önemli arkeolojik kalıntılara sahip Belen yerleşiminin J. Borchhardt tarafından 1975 yılında yapılan kısa yayından sonra detaylı bir araştırması yapılmamıştır. Akdeniz Üniversitesi tarafından yürütülen Stadiasmus Patarensis Projesi kapsamında 2011 yılı araştırmalarımız sırasında Belen yerleşimi ve yol ağları incelenmiş olup yerleşim ve çevresinde bazı yeni arkeolojik ve epigrafik buluntular tespit edilmiştir. Arkeolojik yeni buluntular arasında bir kaya mezarı ve birisi yazıtlı iki lahit mevcuttur. Daha önce hiçbir yazıt yayınlanmamış olan Belen yerleşiminde dört fragman ve bir mezar yazıtı ele geçmiş bulunmaktadır. Yukarıdaki makalede yeni yazıtlarla birlikte Belen yerleşimi, yol ağları, teritoryumu ve ekonomik yapısı incelenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, daha önce Hellenistik-Roma yerleşimi olarak kabul edilen Belen Tepesi'nin Klasik Dönem'de iskân edilmiş olması gerektiği önerilmektedir. Belen yerleşiminin adı bilinmemekle birlikte, Sionlu Nikolaos'un biyografisinde adı geçen Plenion'un Belen ile özdeşleştirilebileceği önerilmektedir. Yerleşimin geniş bir teritoryuma sahip olduğu ve Tepe'nin batı yamaçlarından, doğuda Bonda Tepesi üzerinden geçen Claudius Dönemi Myra-Limyra yoluna kadar uzadığı bu dağlık alandaki yol ağlarına dayanarak öne sürülmektedir. Son olarak Belen çevresinde ekilebilir veya teraslı arazilerin olmayışından hareketle Belen Tepesi yerleşiminin tarımsal üretime dayalı bir ekonomik yapıya sahip olmadığı, sakinlerinin Dalyan civarlarında deniz taşımacılığı yaparak ve ticaretle uğraşarak geçimlerini sağlamış olabilecekleri varsayılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Belen, Belos/Bellos, Plenion, antik yollar, Stadiasmus Patarensis.

New inscriptions from the Settlement on Belen Tepesi at Gülmez Dağı in Central Lycia

Abstract

The settlement of Belen has not been investigated since the brief notice made by J. Borchhardt in 1975 until last year, although there are significant archaeological remains and it is situated at an important geographical position between Myra and Limyra. Some new archaeological and epigraphic finds, one, a funerary inscription, the others, fragmentary inscriptions, were found in the settlement of Belen Tepesi during our survey concerning the research pertaining to the Stadiasmus Patarensis Project conducted by Akdeniz University. In this paper the settlement and its unknown ancient name, the road system, the extent of its territory and its economic structure are discussed together with the new finds and some new observations are made concerning the settlement and its surroundings. In consequence, this paper proposes Belen Tepesi was inhabited in the Classical period contrary to what had been previously assumed, that it was a Hellenistic-Roman settlement. Plenion is suggested for the name of the settlement at Belen, an important village mentioned in the Vita of Nicholas of Holy Sion. Based on the road system in the mountainous area of Bonda, it is proposed that the territory of Belen included a large area from the west slope of the hill to the Claudian road on Bonda. And finally this paper suggests the main economic resource, of those settled at Belen Tepesi would primarily have been shipping and trade, rather than the agricultural production.

Keywords: Belen, Belos/Bellos, Plenion, ancient roads, Stadiasmus Patarensis.



Fig. 1) Looking from Belen Tepesi to the lagoon



Fig. 2) A part of the polygonal masonry of the Classical citadel of Belen



Fig. 3) Part of the citadel reused in by the Byzantines



Fig. 4) Remains of a public building on the north side of the settlement



Fig. 5) A public (?) building constructed of bossage blocks on the east side of the settlement



Fig. 6) A sarcophagus with inscribed tabula ansata in the necropolis



Fig. 7) A rock-cut tomb above the way extending northeast from Belen Tepesi



Fig. 8) Inside the rock-cut tomb



Fig. 9) The apse and the remains of the church



Fig. 10) Ancient cistern and a watering hole on the western slope of Belen Tepesi



Fig. 11) A part of the way extending from Belen towards the east



Fig. 12) The remains near Damyanı on Bonda