

## Perrhe: A City in Commagene in the Light of Ancient Sources

### *Perrhe: Antik Kaynaklar Işığında Kommagene'de Bir Kent*

Alican DOĞAN\*


**Abstract:** Located within the borders of Adıyaman today, the ancient city of Perrhe attracts attention with its rock-cut tombs. The studies carried out in the necropolis area in the southeast of the city reveal that Perrhe was inhabited over a long period of time. The Commagene region, that includes Perrhe, was under the control of different states over the course of history, and generally served as a buffer zone against attacks from the east. In consequence, the Romans in particular placed legions at strategic points along the Euphrates, attaching importance to the security of the border regions. In this respect, Perrhe was undoubtedly affected by developments in the region both due to its proximity to the city of Zeugma, a transit point for campaigns to the east, near Euphrates, and its location on an important transport route extending in a north-south direction. The city understood to be more prominent during the reign of the Eastern Roman Empire, then lost importance and over time, was abandoned probably due to the attacks from the Sasanians and Muslims. Although the archaeological studies and surveys conducted in the city and its surrounding areas date back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there are barely any studies of the social and political history of the city. In this context, the problematic of this study is to create an urban history based upon the ancient sources and to show the political, social and religious background of Perrhe by taking into account the changing conditions. The archaeological history of the city has not been discussed in detail, but the archaeological data has been employed to the extent that it supports our suggestions.

**Keywords:** Perrhe • Commagene • Adıyaman • Romans • Anatolia

**Öz:** Günümüzde Adıyaman ili sınırları içerisinde bulunan Perrhe antik kenti daha çok kaya mezarları ile dikkati çekmektedir. Kentin güneydoğusunda bulunan nekropolis alanında yürütülen çalışmalardan Perrhe'nin uzun süre iskân gördüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Perrhe kentinin dâhil olduğu Kommagene bölgesi, tarihsel süreçte farklı devletlerin kontrolüne girmiş, genelde doğudan gelebilecek saldırılara karşı bir tampon bölge rolü üstlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda özellikle Romalılar sınır bölgelerinin güvenliğine önem vererek Euphrates (Fırat) nehri boyunca stratejik noktalara lejyonlar konuşlandırmışlardır. Bu açıdan Perrhe gerek Euphrates yakınında doğuya yapılacak seferlerde bir geçiş noktası olan Zeugma kentine yakınlığı gerekse kuzey-güney yönünde önemli bir geçiş güzergâhı üzerinde bulunması nedeniyle bölgede meydana gelen gelişmelerden şüphesiz etkilenmiştir. Doğu Roma İmparatorluğu döneminde daha ön plana çıktığı anlaşılan kent, muhtemelen Sasani ve Arap saldırıları gibi nedenlerle zamanla terk edilmiş, önemini kaybetmiştir. Kent ve çevresinde yapılan arkeolojik çalışmalar ve yüzey araştırmalarının başlangıcı 19. yüzyıl sonlarına kadar gitse de tarihsel süreç içinde kentin sosyal ve siyasi tarihi hakkında yapılan çalışmalar yok denecek kadar azdır. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın problematiği, antik kaynaklardan hareketle bir kent tarihi oluşturmak, değişen şartları dikkate alarak Perrhe'nin siyasi, sosyal ve dini arka planını ortaya koymaktır. Kentin arkeolojik geçmişi ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmamış, sadece önerilerimizi desteklediği ölçüde arkeolojik verilerden yararlanılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Perrhe • Kommagene • Adıyaman • Romalılar • Anadolu

The ancient city of Perrhe (Πέρρη), located 5 km north to Adıyaman, in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains, near the modern settlement of Örenli, was one of the major cities of the Kingdom of Commagene. At this point, Perrhe's proximity to the commercial junction point where the Euphrates

\* Dr., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Letters, History Department, Muğla.  0000-0001-5658-2183  
alicandogan@mu.edu.tr

was used as a transit point in the east and its position in a strategic location on the road connecting Melitene (Malatya) from the north to Samosata (Samsat) undoubtedly contributed to the development of the city<sup>1</sup>.

Perrhe waited to be researched for a long time, and modern researches on the ancient history, culture and social structure of the city were not given much importance due to researchers visiting the region having a focus on Mount Nemrud. However, the city of Perrhe began to attract the attention of European scientists from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1882, Karl Sester and Otto Puchstein from the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences visited the city and conveyed their impressions on the necropolis in Perrhe and the bridge, which was still used to cross the stream at that date, and the next year again, Otto Puchstein, this time with Karl Humann, conducted inspections of the necropolis. In 1883, Osman Hamdi Bey and the sculptor Osgan Efendi carried out inspections of the ancient city during their journey to Mount Nemrud<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the researches carried out in the region by Eugène Pittard in 1925 and 1928 and by Hans Henning von der Osten in 1931 revealed that the first traces of settlement in Perrhe and its surrounding area date back to the Palaeolithic Age and the fact that there are important ancient ruins in the city have drawn focused attention on the city of Perrhe<sup>3</sup>. In 1938, Rudolf Naumann and Karl Dörner during their visit to Perrhe saw a fountain frequently used by the villagers and by highlighting the beauty of its water reported that they discovered two canals dating from ancient times<sup>4</sup>. İsmail Kılıç Kökten is another one of those who researched around Perrhe. A member of the prehistoric research team, Kökten visited many ancient settlements in Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia in 1945 and had the opportunity to carry out inspections at Perrhe. Kökten discovered materials, such as small chips and a hand axe from the Palaeolithic era around Perrhe, and spoke of the existence of many caves in the region; and during his research, he could not help but be surprised when he heard Pittard's words to the locals that the foundations of eastern civilization would be discovered based on the researches at Perrhe<sup>5</sup>. In fact, although Pittard's words on Perrhe are interesting, this shows that the city has been an important centre of settlement from very ancient times. On the other hand, the researches in Perrhe continued, and Hasan Candemir and Jörg Wagner, who conducted research in the city in 1975, examined the mosaic floor there<sup>6</sup>.

It can be understood from examination of the studies of the scientists who visited Perrhe that their main purpose was not to conduct comprehensive researches in the city, but to determine the ancient settlements in the Commagene region, the characteristics of these areas, as well as the periods to which they belong. Most of the researchers who set out for inspections on the famous Mount Nemrud

<sup>1</sup> Erarslan & Winter 2008, 179; Erarslan *et al.* 2010, 91; Blömer & Crowther 2014, 343. The city of Perrhe was recorded as one of the important stopover points in the Tabula Peutingeriana, which is known to belong to the Roman Imperial period and was revised in IV century A.D. (the first preparations for the map had started in the II – III centuries A.D.). See Miller 1916, 761-763; Perrhe, Segmentum X. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For the travel report of Puchstein and his observations in Perrhe and the impressions of Osman Hamdi Bey and sculptor Osgan Efendi see Eldem 2010, 58-59; 88-89; 107-108. For inspections of Humann and Puchstein in Perrhe see Dörner 1999, 49-51.

<sup>3</sup> For E. Pittard's studies in the region see Pittard 1931, 147-154; Dörner 1999, 12; For H. H. von der Osten's studies see von der Osten 1933, 129-131; For K. Humann and O. Puchstein's studies see Humann & Puchstein 1890, 401-402.

<sup>4</sup> Dörner 1999, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Kökten 1947, 439-440. For Palaeolithic tools found around Perrhe see Kökten 1947, pl. XCIX-CI.

<sup>6</sup> Candemir & Wagner 1978, 192 ff.

had to pass through the city of Perrhe and recorded their observations made in the ancient city. Even though there were no comprehensive studies conducted in Perrhe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the fact that scientists passed through Perrhe and its vicinity during their travels shows that the city is on an important transit point within the borders of Commagene. On the other hand, the first excavations in the city were initiated in 2001 by the Directorate of the Adiyaman Museum under the supervision of the museum director Fehmi Eraslan. The excavations that continued until 2009 were mostly carried out in the necropolis area of the city. During these researches, many documents -epigraphic remains, numismatics, etc.- that cast a light on Perrhe's history were discovered<sup>7</sup>. After more than a decade, the excavations were re-initiated in 2020 by the Directorate of Adiyaman Museum under the scientific consultancy of the Kahraman Yağız from the Department of Archaeology of Adiyaman University.

Despite all these archaeological researches, our knowledge of the ancient period of the city is limited. Similarly there is little information available about Perrhe in ancient literature. Strabo (XIV. 2. 29 c. 664; XVI. 2. 3 c. 749) mentions the name of the city of Samosata and not the city of Perrhe in any way, in discussing the borders of the Commagene region, which he defines as a small country<sup>8</sup>. The fact that Strabo (ca. 64 B.C. – 24 A.D.) mentioned Samosata but not the city of Perrhe, which was probably less prominent in the first century B.C. compared to Samosata should not mean that there was no settlement in the city during this period. This is because there are traces dating back to the first century B.C. discovered in the archaeological studies carried out in Perrhe<sup>9</sup>.

When the regions came under the hegemony of different powers as part of the political process, the new hegemony mostly only changed the names of the cities due to the process of rebuilding and reorganizing the old cities from top to bottom were too expensive. This allows us to make certain conclusions about what might be the name of the city of Perrhe in antiquity. Stephanus Byzantinus, the author of the *lexicon* who lived in VI century A.D., mentions a settlement named Πέρσα (Persa) in his work called *Ethnika* and states that the city is near the Euphrates and Samosata<sup>10</sup>. At this point, the location of Perrhe partially matches the description given by Stephanus Byzantinus. The city is located around the Euphrates river and not far from the city of Samosata. Moreover, as stated above, the presence of the earliest ruins dating back to the Palaeolithic age and of traces of settlement in the city of Perrhe dating from the early periods raises the possibility that the city may have been named differently in various periods. The old name of the city may have lived on in its new name with certain changes. Hence, it can be considered the city of Πέρσα mentioned by Stephanus Byzantinus is the same settlement as Perrhe<sup>11</sup>.

In cases where the literary and epigraphic sources do not directly mention Perrhe, it is possible to obtain certain conclusions about it from the sources providing information on Commagene. Accord-

---

<sup>7</sup> Eraslan *et al.* 2010, 91 ff.

<sup>8</sup> For the borders of the Commagene region also see Plin. *nat.* V. 66; V. 85; Dio Cass. XXXVI. 2. 5; Dion. *Perieg.* 877; see also Facella 2006, 51-71.

<sup>9</sup> See Eraslan *et al.* 2010, 96.

<sup>10</sup> Steph. Byz. s.v. Πέρσα; see also Gelzer 1898, 56-57; Honigmann 1924, 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> Regarding the fact that the cities kept their old names from the period when they were established in ancient times, also see Amm. Marc. XIV. 8. 6.

ingly, pursuant to the Treaty of Apamea<sup>12</sup> concluded between the Romans and the Seleucids (188 B.C.), the Seleucids evacuated the lands of Asia Minor and withdrew beyond the Taurus Mountains to Cilicia and Syria. So the influence of Seleucids on the lands around Euphrates and probably in Perrhe weakened<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, certain important events took place that affected the history of the region in the first century B.C. At that time, king Antiochus I (70-38 B.C.), who was on the throne of Commagene, turned away from the king of Armenia and recognized the sovereignty of the Romans when the king of Armenia Tigranes II, to whom he had declared allegiance, was defeated by the Roman commander Lucullus at the Battle of Tigranocerta (69 B.C.)<sup>14</sup>. Based on this information, if we consider the events exclusively for Perrhe located within the Commagene region, it is possible to claim that the earliest period of Roman influence in the settlement and its surroundings began in 69 B.C. This is because Commagene, located to the west of the Euphrates, is an important transit point and a strategic location for the Romans to deploy their armies for campaigns to the east against the Parthians. After all, although the Kingdom of Commagene was a vassal kingdom dependent on Romans in the beginning, it was annexed in 72/73 A.D. and came under the domination of the Roman Empire<sup>15</sup>. The Roman authority in Perrhe probably reached a dominant level from this date and military camps were built around the Euphrates against possible attacks from the east<sup>16</sup>.

In the II century A.D., it is noted that the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.) carried out certain activities in the east. Having passed the Euphrates in 195 A.D. Septimius Severus took control of the uprisings by advancing upon Osroene, Adiabene and Arabia, and established new provinces in Osroene and Mesopotamia in 195 A.D. and 198 A.D., and tried to protect the borders of the empire from possible attacks by the Parthians by placing legions in the region<sup>17</sup>. Considering the wars waged by the emperor, it is clear that the city of Perrhe being located to the west coast of the Euphrates, was ruled by the Romans in late II century A.D. It is also known that importance was attached to activities such as the construction and repair of new roads in connection with the military campaigns during the reign of Septimius Severus. In relation to that, there is a bridge that is not far from Perrhe, which was rebuilt on the Khabinas (Cendere) river in line with the needs of the Romans, with a gate opening to the east of the city and dating from the reign of Septimius Severus. The bridge must have been restructured in connection with the military campaigns of the Romans to the east against the Parthians. There are honorary inscriptions for the emperor and his family (his wife Iulia Domna and son Caracalla) on the columns of this bridge<sup>18</sup>. One of these is as follows:

<sup>12</sup> Pol. XXI. 17; Liv. XXXVIII. 38. 1-17; Mem. XXVI. 3.

<sup>13</sup> See also Wagner 2019, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Dio Cass. XXXVI. 2. 5; Plut. *Luc.* XXIX. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Iud.* VII. 7. 1. See also Magie 1950, 495-496; Sherwin-White 1984, 208 ff.; Speidel 2005, 86; Yıldırım 2012, 47 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Şenocak (2014, 122) stated that in order to support the legions at strategic points not far from the eastern border of Roman Empire and to ensure road safety, auxiliary troops called *auxilia*, which are less in number than the legions, were deployed and one of these troops called *Cohors I Commagenorum* was located in the southwest of Melitene (Malatya). About the legions established around the Euphrates river see also Uzunoğlu 2012, 93-127.

<sup>17</sup> Dio Cass. LXXV. 1-3; Hist. Aug. *Sept. Sev.* IX. 9-10; Herodian. III. 9; Birley 1999, 95-96; Kienast 2004, 158; Yıldırım 2013, 170-174.

<sup>18</sup> For the inscriptions see *CIL* III, 6712-6714; *IGLSyr.* I 42-44; Humann & Puchstein 1890, 395-397. Regarding the fact

1 [Imp(eratorem)]  
 Caes(arem) L. Septimium  
 [Se]ve[r(um) Pium] Pertinacem  
 Arab(icum) Adiab(enicum) Par-  
 5 thic(um) princip(em) fe-  
 licissimum, pon-  
 tif(icem) max(imum) trib(unicia) po-  
 test(ate) XII imp(eratorem) VIII,  
 co(n)s(ulem) II proco(n)s(ulem),  
 10 quattuor  
 civitates Com-  
 [m]ag(enes) principem  
 munificentissimum<sup>19</sup>.

The examination of the abovementioned inscription shows four cities from the Commagene region were doing the honouring. The fact that Septimius Severus was described as *princeps munificentissimus* in the inscription indicates the possibility that the emperor was engaged in certain favours in the region, the nature of which could not be identified. This favour may be related to the construction of the bridge; it is probable that a certain amount of money was collected for construction of the bridge, and the shortfall was made up through the support of the emperor enabling the construction of the bridge. On the other hand, another issue is that the name Perrhe is not explicitly mentioned in the inscriptions. The cities that supported the construction of the bridge were recorded only as follows; QVATTVORCIVITATESCOMMAG· (CIL III 6713; IGL Syr. I 43). In this context, whether the city of Perrhe contributed to the construction of the bridge is unclear. In fact, there are archaeological remains showing the connection of the ancient city with the Roman Empire. Therefore, there may be a possibility that Perrhe was one of the cities mentioned in these inscriptions<sup>20</sup>.

A considerable part of the archaeological and epigraphic sources and the presence of Roman legions in the region show that Commagene became a frontier province of the Roman Empire over time<sup>21</sup>. This must have also affected the city of Perrhe, and as of the late II century A.D., it must have started to be shaped as a military and administrative city where Roman troops were deployed, like the

---

that the bridge built on the Khabinas river was built by the legion known as *Legio XVI Flavia Firma* see also Uzun-  
 oğlu 2012, 114; 127. There is a stone quarry known to have existed in the city Perrhe. Accordingly, it is possible that  
 a certain quantity of the stones used in bridge construction were cut and transferred from the quarry in Perrhe.

<sup>19</sup> “The people of the four cities of Commagene (honoured) Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax, Arabicus, Adiabenicus, Parthicus, (that who is) the happiest ruler, (that who is) the archpriest, hailed as the emperor 8 times in the 12th year of his reign, became consul twice (and) the proconsul (and) the most generous ruler” = IGLSyr. I 42=CIL III, 6712. Inscription is dated at 198 – 200 A.D. However, due to the Septimius Severus’ 12th Tribunicia Potestas (Tribunician power) (203-204 A.D.) recorded on this inscription, the inscription must be dated at after 203 A.D. See Kienast 2004, 156-158.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Jones 1937, 263-265.

<sup>21</sup> Versluys 2017, 50. The governor of Syria, Lucius Alfenus Senecio and the legatus of legion XVI, Lucius Marius Perpetuus, were assigned for the construction and repair of the bridge to be built on the Khabinas river (Eldem 2010, 89). For the argument regarding the fact that the Karakuş tumulus was destroyed by XVI. Flavia Firma Legio deployed in Samosata for the supply of the stones required for the bridge, see Dörner 1999, 45-46.

city of Samosata of Commagene<sup>22</sup>.

Furthermore, it can be argued that there were certain changes that could affect the administrative status of the city of Perrhe during the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletianus (284-305 A.D.). In this period, certain arrangements were applied in which the provinces were divided and merged and a number of small administrative and military units emerged in order to reorganize the imperial provincial system, which had become less effective. As a result of this practice, the area covered by a number of provinces changed over time. When the lands of Commagene were restructured forming a part of Province of Euphratesia<sup>23</sup> (Ἐπαρχίας Εὐφρατησίας), the city of Perrhe was probably also within the boundaries in question<sup>24</sup>.

From examination of the lists of bishops who attended the Council of Nicaea (İznik) in 325 A.D. neither the name of the Province of Euphratesia, nor the city of Perrhe can be found. It is concluded that only cities such as Hierapolis, Germanicea, Samosata and Doliche under the title Ἐπαρχίας Συρίας Κοίλης sent representatives to the council<sup>25</sup>. Although this information actually shows that Ἐπαρχίας Εὐφρατησίας had not yet been established in 325 A.D., it is unclear whether the city of Perrhe sent representatives to the

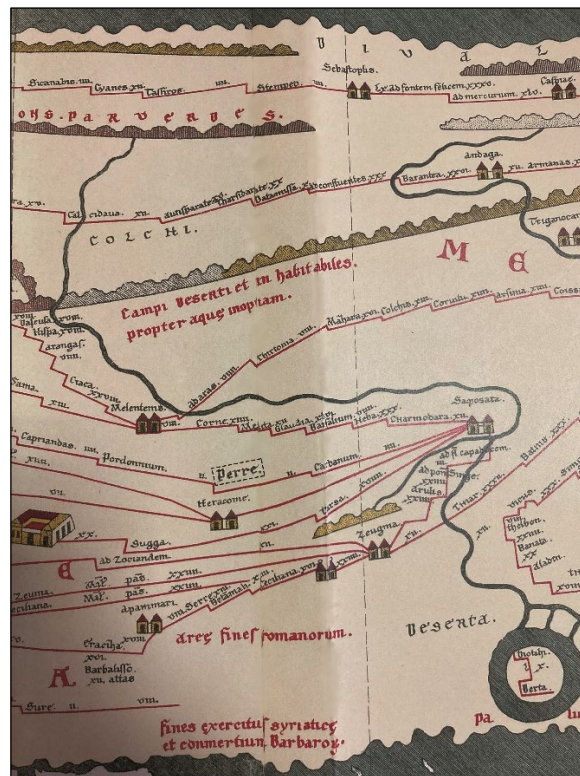


Fig. 1. Perrhe on Tabula Peutingeriana (Tab. Peut. Perrhe, Segmentum X. 2)

<sup>22</sup> In this regard, it can be argued that Perrhe had a strong affiliation with the Romans anyway as a soldier figure engraved on the walls of the underground sanctuary in Perrhe shows that the soldiers deployed in Perrhe or its vicinity may have a connection with the cult there (Blömer -& Crowther 2014, 348). Likewise, a stele built in the city in the name of Jupiter Dolichenus by a Roman commander named Gaius Iulius Paulus is important in terms of showing traces of the Roman military presence in Perrhe. See Erarslan 2003, 131 ff.

<sup>23</sup> The time when the Province of Euphratesia was established is a topic of discussion. Based on the administrative regulations of Diocletianus in the provinces, Gelzer argues that Province of Euphratesia existed before 359 A.D. (Gelzer 1898, 56; cf. Bouchier 1916, 155; Honigmann 1925, 60-61; 66). Likewise, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who conveys his observations in the middle of the IV century A.D., states that Commagene was called Euphratensis during his lifetime (Amm. Marc. XIV. 8. 7; XXIII. 6. 20). Based on this information, it is more likely that the name Euphratensis employed instead of Commagene dates from no later than the middle of IV century A.D. and that the province in question may have been founded before the middle of IV century A.D. Regarding the administrative and military government in the region also see Not. Dig. Or. XXII. Comes Orintes 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ramsay 2010, 280; also see Barnes 2013, 205-206; 224 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Honigmann 1939b, 45.

Council of Nicaea as supposed by Eraslan<sup>26</sup> since it is not mentioned in the lists. Unless the name of the city of Perrhe had been neglected in the sources for an unknown reason, and if it actually participated in the Council of Nicaea, it is possible that it was represented by nearby Hierapolis or by another city.

On the other hand, although the IV century A.D. is known in the Christian world as a period of fierce theological debates on the explanation of the relationship between Jesus and God and the divinity and humanity of Jesus, these religious debates undoubtedly affected the city of Perrhe. In the late IV century A.D., there is an important anecdote showing that the doctrines of Arius<sup>27</sup> found supporters in the city of Perrhe. In relation to that, Theodoretus Cyrillus (393-*ca.* 458 A.D.), refers to the bishop of Perrhe while providing information about an incident that took place in the synod after the death of Eusebius of Samosata (379 A.D.) in his work *Historia Ekklesiastika*. According to this, when a man named Antiochus was elected unanimously at the synod, Iovinus, the bishop of Perrhe, was also among those present. As told by Theodoretus, Antiochus expelled Iovinus from the synod for his behaviour during the ceremony, accusing him of sinfulness and of Ariusian tendencies<sup>28</sup>. Based upon this historical record, it can be argued that the city dwellers of Perrhe had an Ariusian attitude in terms of belief.

In the middle of the V century A.D., we see the city of Perrhe in sources, this time regarding a question of dismissal. The position of Perrhe's bishop Athanasius was threatened by the rebellion of his own clergy, who accused him of a series of crimes and financial irregularities. Bishop Panolbius of Hierapolis, metropolitan of the province dealt with the charges against Athanasius. Athanasius was summoned three times for investigation of the incidents, but the bishop of Perrhe resigned and retired to his property near Samosata instead of answering them. Athanasius did not let go of his case by filing objections in Constantinople and Alexandria, accusing Panolbius of being prejudiced against him. The case of Athanasius was first discussed at a meeting held in Antiochea, and the decisions approving the dismissal of the bishop were read at the session of the Council of Chalcedon on 31 October 451. Eventually, it was decided to investigate the issue again, based on the objections of the bishop of Perrhe at the council<sup>29</sup>.

Aside from whether the bishop of Perrhe, who was on the agenda of the Council of Chalcedon, was reinstated or not, we see an important detail about Perrhe's religious status in the middle of the V century A.D. Such detail is the investigation of the accusations against the bishop by the bishop of Hierapolis. This information indicates that the bishop of Perrhe is subordinate to that of Hierapolis and that Hierapolis can investigate matters such as resignation, dismissal, etc. as a supreme authority. It is unknown to what extent the accusations made against Athanasius by his own clergymen were true, but the case of the bishop of Perrhe occupied the agenda of the Council of Chalcedon for a while.

---

<sup>26</sup> Eraslan *et al.* 2010, 91.

<sup>27</sup> According to Arius, unlike God, an eternal creator, Jesus is a created being. Therefore, Jesus should be considered as a created being different from God as per his essence. Accordingly, among the clergy in the Eastern provinces, the number of believers in Arius' doctrines were too high to be underestimated (Duygu 2018, 82-83; 97).

<sup>28</sup> Theodoret. *Hist. Ekk.* IV. 13. There was a letter sent to Iovinus, the bishop of Perrhe, by St. Basil (330-379 A.D.), who defended the official doctrines of the Church against the Ariusian teaching, in late 372 A.D. or early 373 A.D. In his letter, Basil asks the bishop of Perrhe to visit him based upon their friendship (Basil. *Ep.* 118).

<sup>29</sup> Price & Gaddis 2005, 34 ff.

Again, in relation to this, it is observed that an interesting incident took place around Perrhe in 510 A.D. The incident that involved the clergy in Perrhe and was considered a heresy is described as follows:

*“At this time in the Perrhe region, the Demon inspired a heresy that some people should not eat bread or drink water. Who they were was unknown to some of the brothers in the monasteries, but others, especially the priests, got themselves caught up in vain pride and were given a false name. They falsely said that they did not eat bread or drink water, and claimed they were people who did not drink wine. However, they were actually satisfying their ongoing hunger and thirst disrespectfully with Sacred mysteries. Most of their food consisted of the Eukharistia. This is why they carefully season the unraised bread. Moreover, whenever (hunger) urged them, they offered to each other and ate ordinary bread. When they went on a long journey or campaign, they appeased their hunger and thirst with the blood and body of our Lord Christ two or three times a day. When they reached their destination, they were presented with offerings in the evening, and they took it as if they had been fasting. Even during the holy days of the forty-day fasting, they dared to do this without fear of God and shame from people. It was said that when they prepared for the Eukharistia, they could eat it freely as much as they wanted. Each of them would mix the hot water with living blood and drink it as they pleased, then refill it and serve it to their friend. The holy Rabulo of Urhoy and the holy Gemmelinos, the bishop of Perrhe, (stood and fought against) such heresy”<sup>30</sup>.*

As recorded in this paragraph, the practice of not eating bread and drinking water, once described as heresy, had also spread among the clergy in Perrhe. The people in question had begun to avoid consuming regular food, drink, bread and water for an unknown reason. Therefore, they prepared the holy bread which was only used in the sacred εὐχαριστία (*the Eukharistia* bread-wine ritual) and was consumed in minimum amount not for the purpose of feeding oneself but as a part of the ritual, instead of regular food. Again, they drank blessed wine to quench their thirst as if they were forbidden to drink regular water or other beverages. The part of the practice that is described as heresy is, in fact, to use continually the objects that are considered sacred for their own purposes. They even made the bread suitable for them by seasoning it because the bread used in the bread-wine ritual was unraised and therefore poor in nutrition for human consumption. These actions they practiced freely must have been regarded as disrespectful to the Holy since the bishop of Perrhe, Gemmelinos, made efforts to eliminate this practice in Perrhe. It is unknown to what extent the bishop was successful in doing so but this record is an important example of what was happening in Perrhe and its vicinity in early VI century A.D. and the kinds of incidents people experienced in their religious lives.

Another ancient writer who shows the history, social and political structure of Perrhe city was Hierokles. Living in the VI century A.D. and providing important information regarding Eastern Roman geography, Hierokles records the names of twelve cities within the Province of Euphratesia in his work *Synekdemos* dated *ca.* 527 A.D. Perrhe is one of the cities that he mentioned governed by this

---

<sup>30</sup> Duygu 2016, 232-233.



province<sup>31</sup>. It is concluded upon examination of the work of the geographer Hierokles that he chose to create a work based upon the episcopal centres of the Eastern Roman Empire. Therefore, considering the geography exclusively for Perrhe, it is highly likely that the city was an important episcopal centre in the region in the middle of VI century A.D. It is concluded through examination of the *Synekdemos* that Perrhe was recorded after the settlements of Samosata, Doliche, Zeugma and Germanicea, and before Nicopolis. This order suggests that there may be a religious hierarchy among the abovementioned cities<sup>32</sup>. Another writer who provided information regarding the city was Georgius Cyprius, one of the geographers who wrote in the VII century A.D. In his work entitled *Descriptio Orbis Romani* where he described the Eastern Roman settlements and administrative divisions, he also recorded the city of Perrhe under the title Ἐπαρχίας Εὐφρατησίας when recording the names of the cities in the east<sup>33</sup>. From this detail, it is clear that Perrhe was a settlement that attracted the attention of geographers from the VI - VII century A.D.

Hierok. <i>Synek.</i> 712. 10. μὴ Ἐπαρχία Εὐφρατησίας, ὑπὸ ἡγεμόνα, πόλεις ἰβ <sup>34</sup> .				
712	11	Ἱεράπολις.	6	Πέρρη.
713	1	Κύρος.	7	Νικόπολις.
	2	Σαμόσατα.	8	Σκεναρχαία.
	3	Δολίχη.	9	Σαλγενορατίξενον.
	4	Ζεῦγμα.	10	Σύριμα.
	5	Γερμανικία.	11	Εὐρωπος.

Fig. 2. Perrhe and its Vicinity According to Hierokles' *Synekdemos*

The name of the city of Perrhe is rarely encountered in late period sources. İbn Hurdazbih, one of the first Arabian geographers regarding the geography where the city is located, mentions a settlement named Hisn-ı Mansur (Adiyaman) among the castles on the Syrian border in 846 A.D., but does not provide any further information<sup>35</sup>. However, from what İbn Hurdazbih states, it is not clear whether the said castles on the border were under the rule of the Eastern Roman Empire or the Abbasids<sup>36</sup>. Depending upon the conflicts between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Abbasids in the late IX century A.D. it is likely that the region was dominated sometimes by the Romans and sometimes by the Abbasids<sup>37</sup>. On the other hand, the famous geographer Evliya Çelebi, who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D., centuries after İbn Hurdazbih, also provides important information regarding Hisn-ı Mansur. In this respect, the famous traveller, who speaks of Hisn-ı Mansur as a pleasant city, stated that there was a small castle therein, that the castle was used as a prison for those exiled by the Egyptian caliphs, that there were forty houses and a mosque in the castle, and that the lower settlement was more crowded. He also emphasizes that people could travel from the city to Malatya and from Malatya back

<sup>31</sup> Hierok. *Synek.* 713. 6. For the cities registered under the title of the Province of Euphratesia see also *Synek.* 712. 10; 713.1-11.

<sup>32</sup> Hierok. *Synek.* 713. 2-7; see also Honigmann 1925, 62; 74-79.

<sup>33</sup> Georg. Kypr. 871-878.

<sup>34</sup> For the naming of the settlements see Honigmann 1939a, 40.

<sup>35</sup> İbn Hurdazbih 2008, 85.

<sup>36</sup> Honigmann 1970, 40.

<sup>37</sup> Regarding the conflicts encountered and the military and administrative system established by the Eastern Roman Empire in the region see Güneş 2018, 85 ff.

to Hisn-1 Mansur until noon, and that Hisn-1 Mansur was two menzil distance from Ayntab in the south<sup>38</sup>. As concluded, Perrhe's name is not mentioned here either. During Evliya Çelebi's visit to the region, Perrhe was not in a condition to attract attention compared to the town centre of Adiyaman. The ancient city of Perrhe lost its importance over time after the construction of the castle of Hisn-1 Mansur located not far distant.

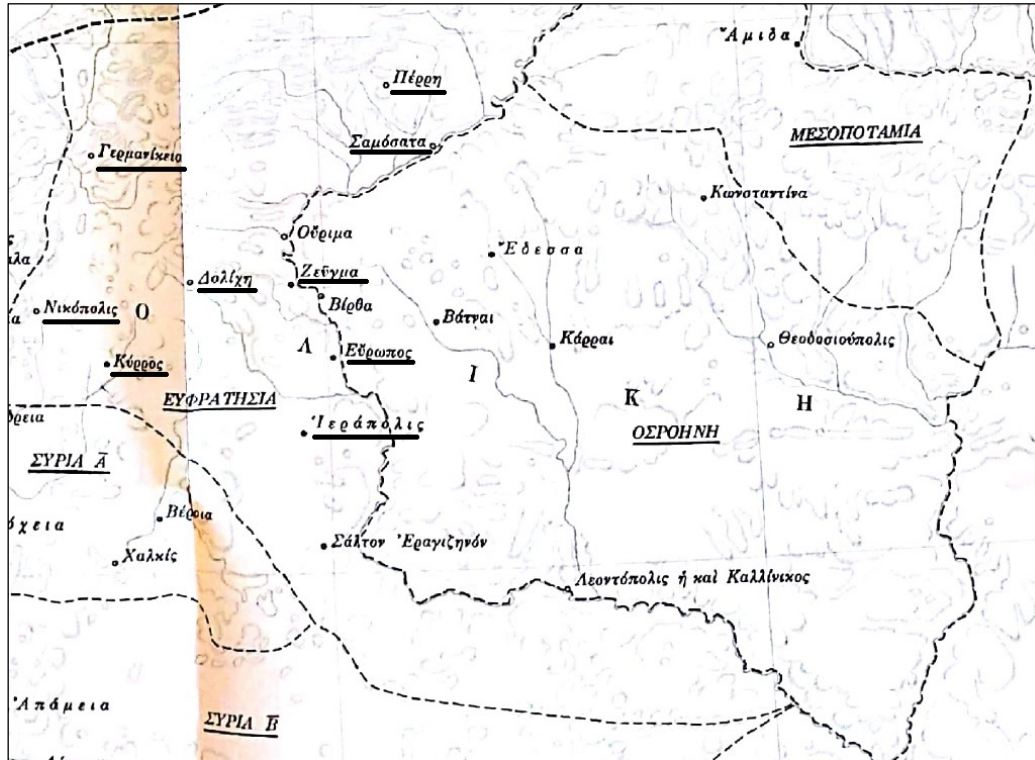


Fig. 3. Ancient Perrhe and Its Vicinity (Honigmann 1939a, 79, XLVIII)

## Conclusion

The inadequacy of sources makes it difficult to present an entire history of Perrhe. Although an attempt to show the effects of the political and military events that took place within the region in the historical process upon Perrhe, the relations with neighbouring cities or how religious factors corresponded in the city have been made in this study, there are still missing pieces regarding the history of Perrhe. However, when the literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources are examined it can be concluded that the city was inhabited albeit from time to time from the I century B.C. to IX century A.D., Perrhe appears in the ancient sources as a city emerging sometimes through its military and administrative aspects and sometimes with religious ones. The city that began rising from IV century A.D., was affected by the political, military, socio-cultural changes between the Eastern Roman Empire and Muslims as a result of the advantages and disadvantages brought about by its strategic location, then lost its importance with the coming to prominence of Hisn-1 Mansur. The extensive archaeological studies to be conducted in the future will certainly contribute to a better understanding of Perrhe's history.

<sup>38</sup> Evliya Çelebi Sey. III. 61a-61b; IV. 196a. For the information provided by the historian El-Belâzuri, who lived in IX century A.D., regarding the construction of the castle of Hisn-1 Mansur see El-Belâzuri, 223.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnes T. D. 2013, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*. Harvard.
- Birley A. R. 1999, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor*. Routledge.
- Blömer M. & Crowther C. 2014, "Eagles on Stags. An Underground Sanctuary in Perrhe, Commagene". Ed. E. Winter, *Kult und Herrschaft am Euphrat, Dolichener und Kommagenische Forschungen VI AMS 73*. Bonn, 343-371.
- Blömer M. & Facella M. 2008, "Ein Weihrelief für Iupiter Dolichenus aus der Nekropole von Perrhe". *PATRIS PANTROFOS KOMMAGHNH Neue Funde und Forschungen zwischen Taurus und Euphrat AMS 60*. Bonn, 189-200.
- Bouchier E. S. 1916, *Syria as a Roman Province*. Oxford.
- Candemir H. & Wagner J. 1978, "Christliche Mosaiken in der nördlichen Euphratesia". *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens*. 192-231.
- Dörner F. K. 1999, *Nemrud Dağı'nın Zirvesinde Tanrıların Tahtları*. Çev. V. Ülkü. Ankara.
- Duygu Z. 2016, *Süryani Tarih Yazıcılığında Geç Antikçağ*. Ankara.
- Duygu Z. 2018, *Nikomedia ve Hristiyanlık*. İstanbul.
- Eldem E. 2010, *Le Voyage a Nemrud Dağı D'Osman Hamdi Bey et Osgan Efendi (1883)*. Paris.
- Erarslan F. & Winter E. 2008, "Perrhe (Pirun)-Geographische Lage, Topographie und (Forschungs-) Geschichte". *PATRIS PANTROFOS KOMMAGHNH Neue Funde und Forschungen zwischen Taurus und Euphrat AMS 60*. Bonn, 179-187.
- Erarslan F. 2003, "Perre Antik Kenti Nekropol Alanı Kaya Mezarları Kurtarma Kazısı". *13. Müze Çalışmaları ve Kurtarma Kazıları Sempozyumu (22-26 Nisan 2002)*. Denizli, 129-136.
- Erarslan F., R. Özman, F. Şancı, M. Arslan, M. N. Karaca & M. Alkan 2010, "Perrhe Antik Kenti Nekropol Alanı 2008 Yılı Kazı ve Temizlik Çalışmaları". *18. Müze Çalışmaları ve Kurtarma Kazıları Sempozyumu (27-30 Nisan 2009)*. Sivas, 91-104.
- Erarslan F., T. H. Zeyrek, R. Özman, F. Şancı, E. Akin, M. Arslan, M. Alkan, M. N. Karaca & M. S. Koca 2011, "Perrhe Antik Kenti Nekropol Alanı 2009 Yılı Kazı ve Temizlik Çalışmaları". *19. Müze Çalışmaları ve Kurtarma Kazıları Sempozyumu (29 Nisan-1 Mayıs 2010)*. Ordu, 363-377.
- Facella M. 2006, *La Dinastia Degli Orontidi Nella Commagene Ellenistico-Romana*. Pisa.
- Gelzer H. 1898, "Geographische Bemerkungen zu dem Verzeichniss der Väter von Nikaea". Ed. H. Kiepert, *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und Geographie: Festschrift für Heinrich Kiepert*. Berlin, 45-61.
- Güneş C. 2018, "X. Yüzyıldaki Bizans Taktikonlarına Göre Bizans-İslam Güçlerinin İlk Karşılaşma Alanları: Kleisouralar ve Kleisouralardaki Askeri Taktiklere Dair". *History Studies* 10/1, 85-100.
- Honigmann E. 1924, "Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum". *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 47, 1-64.
- Honigmann E. 1925, "Studien zur Notitia Antiochena". *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 25/1, 60-88.
- Honigmann E. 1939a, *Le Synekdemios D'Hiérokles et L'Opuscule Géographique de Georges de Chypre*. Bruxelles.
- Honigmann E. 1939b, "La Liste Originale Des Pères de Nicée: A propos de l'Évêché de «Sodoma» en Arabie". *Byzantion* 14, 17-76.
- Honigmann E. 1970, *Bizans Devletinin Doğu Sınırı*. Çev. F. Işıltan. İstanbul.
- Humann K. & Puchstein O. 1890, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien*. Berlin.
- Jones A. H. M. 1937, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*. Oxford.
- Kienast D. 2004, *Römische Kaisertabelle: Grundzüge Einer Römischen Kaiserchronologie*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Kökten İ. K. 1947, "1945 Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu Adına Yapılan Tarihöncesi Araştırmaları". *Belleten* XI/43, 431-472.
- Magie D. 1950, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ I-II*. Princeton.
- Miller K. 1916, *Itineraria Romana: Römische Reisewege an der Hand der Tabula Peutingeriana*. Stuttgart.

- Pittard E. 1931, *À travers l'Asie-Mineure, le visage nouveau de la Turquie*. Paris.
- Price R. & Gaddis M. 2005, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon 45/3*. Liverpool.
- Ramsay W. M. 2010, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*. Cambridge.
- Sherwin-White, A. N. 1984, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East 168 B.C. to A.D. 1*. London.
- Speidel M. A. 2005, "Early Roman Rule in Commagene". *Scripta Classica Israelica* XXIV, 85-100.
- Şenocak B. 2014, *Anadolu'da Roma Lejyonları ve Askeri Birlikleri*. Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Konya.
- Tab. Peut. (=Tabula Peutingeriana) *Tabula Peutingeriana-Osmanlı ve Türkiye Coğrafyasındaki İzleriyle 2000 Yıllık Roma Yol Haritası*. Ed. B.Özükan. İstanbul 2017.
- Uzunoglu H. 2012, "Anadolu'da Roma Lejyonları". *Eskiçağ Yazıları* 2, 93-127.
- Versluys M. J. 2017, *Visual Style and Constructing Identity in the Hellenistic World: Nemrud Dağ and Commagene under Antiochos I*. Cambridge.
- von der Osten H. H. 1933, *Discoveries in Anatolia 1930-31*. Chicago-Illinois.
- Wagner J. 2019, "Geç Hellenistik Kommagene Krallığı'nın Tarihi". *Fırat Kıyısında Tanrı Krallar: Kommagene'de Yeni Kazılar ve Araştırmalar*. İstanbul, 38-49.
- Yıldırım E. 2012, "Roma-Parth Mücadelesinde Fırat Nehri'nin Jeopolitik Önemi". *Tarihin Peşinde Uluslararası Tarih ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 7, 45-64.
- Yıldırım E. 2013, "Roma İmparatorluğu'nun Doğu Sınırını Korumak için Fırat Nehri Boyunca Kurulan Lejyonlar". *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 13/4, 167-182.