

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ – RESEARCH ARTICLE

SETTLEMENT CONTINUITY IN RURAL CENTRAL ANATOLIA: THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF A SETTLEMENT FROM THE BYZANTINE PERIOD TO THE PRESENT (NİĞDE-MURTAZA VILLAGE, TÜRKİYE)*

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ÖZ

Although rural settlements play a crucial role in understanding the settlement history of Anatolia, historical and archaeological studies have generally neglected these areas and focused more on urban centers. How rural Anatolia adapted to changing political regimes, environmental conditions, and socio-economic transformations throughout history, and how these processes affected cultural continuity, remains largely unknown. In this context, by examining the historical development and spatial memory of the village of Murtaza in the Melendiz region of Central Anatolia, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of rural settlements in Anatolia shaped by historical, environmental, and cultural interactions and to fill the gap of knowledge in this field. The study emphasizes the strategic importance of the village of Murtaza as a military and defensive settlement during the Byzantine period. Archaeological research, historical documents, and the remains of Byzantine castles in the village of Murtaza (Murtaza castle) and other Byzantine castles in the Melendiz region indicate that the region served as a buffer zone against Arab invasions during the Byzantine period. Abundant water resources and pastures supported the sustainability of the settlement and enabled the development of animal husbandry in the village. During the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, the village underwent a demographic and cultural transformation with the arrival of Turkish nomadic groups. Ottoman cadastral records show the continuity of settlement and the integration of Turkish groups with Greek communities. Today, the village of Murtaza continues to carry the spatial and cultural memory of its historical past. The adaptation of traditional water management systems to modern agricultural needs and the continuation of pastoral practices demonstrate the impact of historical processes on contemporary village life. Particularly striking is the architectural texture that has emerged with vaulted masonry structures that reflect the interaction of Greek and Turkish builders. These architectural features demonstrate local craftsmanship shaped by historical interactions, environmental conditions, and the practical needs of rural life. The community's connection to its historical roots is also evidenced by the maintenance of oral traditions and the continued use of old place names. This study shows that Murtaza village is a remarkable case study of how rural settlements adapt to environmental and socio-economic changes while maintaining cultural continuity. Such studies will provide a broader perspective on the historical dynamics of the Melendiz region and the rural past of Anatolia.

Keywords: Rural Settlements Central Anatolia, Rural Anatolia, Byzantine Period, Ottoman Period

ORTA ANADOLU KIRSALINDA YERLEŞİM SÜREKLİLİĞİ: BİZANS DÖNEMİNDEN GÜNÜMÜZE BİR YERLEŞİMİN TARİHSEL SÜRECİ (NİĞDE-MURTAZA KÖYÜ, TÜRKİYE)

ÖZ

Kırsal yerleşimler, Anadolu'nun yerleşim tarihini anlamada kritik bir role sahip olmalarına rağmen, tarihsel ve arkeolojik çalışmalar genellikle bu alanları ihmal etmiş ve daha çok kentsel merkezlere odaklanmıştır. Anadolu

* This article aims to contribute to the existing problematics and limited knowledge on rural settlements in Anatolia during the Early (300-610 AD) and Middle Byzantine (610-867 AD) periods, as well as during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. For this purpose, the author reanalyzed the data in his doctoral thesis within the framework of this problem and enriched it with new sources and data to produce this article. In addition, the maps produced in the GIS software for the thesis study were reproduced and detailed for this study.

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kırsalının, tarih boyunca değişen siyasi rejimlere, çevresel koşullara ve sosyo-ekonomik dönüşümlere nasıl uyum sağladığı ve bu süreçlerin kültürel sürekliliği nasıl etkilediği büyük ölçüde bilinmemektedir. Bu bağlamda, Orta Anadolu'nun Melendiz bölgesinde yer alan Murtaza Köyü'nün tarihsel gelişimi ve mekânsal hafızası incelenerek, Anadolu'daki kırsal yerleşimlerin tarihsel, çevresel ve kültürel etkileşimlerle şekillenen dinamiklerinin anlaşılmasına ve bu alandaki bilgi boşluğunun doldurulmasına katkı sağlanması hedeflenmektedir. Çalışma, Murtaza Köyü'nün Bizans döneminde askeri ve savunma amaçlı bir yer olarak stratejik önemini vurgulamaktadır. Arkeolojik araştırmalar, tarihi belgeler, Murtaza köyündeki (Murtaza kalesi) ve bulunduğu Melendiz bölgesindeki diğer Bizans kale kalıntıları bölgenin Bizans döneminde Arap istilalarına karşı bir tampon bölge işlevi gördüğüne işaret etmektedir. Bol su kaynakları ve otlaklar, yerleşimin sürdürülebilirliğini destekleyerek, köyde hayvancılığın gelişmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Selçuklu ve Osmanlı dönemlerinde ise köy, Türk göçebe grupların gelişile demografik ve kültürel bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Osmanlı kadastro kayıtları, yerleşimin sürekliliğine ve Türk grupların Rum topluluklarıyla bütünleştiklerine işaret etmektedir. Günümüzde Murtaza Köyü, tarihi geçmişinin mekânsal ve kültürel belleğini taşımaya devam etmektedir. Geleneksel su yönetimi sistemlerinin modern tarımsal ihtiyaçlara uyarlanması ve pastoral uygulamaların sürdürülmesi, tarihsel süreçlerin günümüz köy yaşamına olan etkisini göstermektedir. Rum ve Türk yapı ustalarının etkileşimin yansıtan kemerli yığma yapılar ile ortaya çıkan mimari doku özellikle dikkat çekicidir. Bu mimari özellikler, tarihsel etkileşimler, çevresel koşullar ve kırsal yaşamın pratik ihtiyaçları tarafından şekillendirilen yerel zanaatkarlığı göstermektedir. Topluluğun tarihsel kökleriyle olan bağı, sözlü geleneklerin sürdürülmesi ve eski yer adlarının sürekli kullanılmasıyla da kanıtlanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Murtaza Köyü'nün, kırsal yerleşimlerin kültürel sürekliliklerini korurken çevresel ve sosyo-ekonomik değişimlere nasıl uyum sağladığına dair dikkate değer bir örnek yerleşmedir. Bu tür çalışmalar, Melendiz bölgesinin tarihsel dinamiklerini ve Anadolu'nun kırsal geçmişine dair daha geniş bir perspektif geliştirilmesini sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal Yerleşimler, Orta Anadolu, Kırsal Anadolu, Bizans Dönemi, Osmanlı Dönemi

INTRODUCTION

Researchers are conducting excavations, surveys, and historical research in various regions of Anatolia (including the Sinop peninsula/Paphlagonia, Konya plain, Cappadocia, Göksu Valley, Sagalassos region, and around the ancient centers of Aphrodisias and Ephesus) to expand our limited understanding of the settlements during the Late Roman – Early Byzantine (end of 4th century CE) and Medieval (5th-15th century CE) period in Anatolia.¹ However, the majority of research has focused on significant harbor settlements and cities such as Ephesos, Amastris, Pergamon, and Ankara, whose historical background is widely recognized.² Settlements in rural areas with low population and settlement density have largely remained undiscovered. The disparity in research focus between rural and urban settlements poses challenges in determining the settlement hierarchy and characteristics of Anatolia over these time periods. Therefore, the existing knowledge regarding the rural settlements during these periods is considerably incomplete. Recent research, including archaeological excavations, historical studies, geo-spatial analyses, and environmental surveys in small and unpretentious settlements dating to the Late Roman – Early Byzantine and Medieval periods of Central Anatolia and its surroundings, have contributed to a better understanding of rural settlements.³ In this context, Euchaita, a small provincial town inhabited during the Late Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods;⁴ Çadır Höyük, a rural settlement of the Early-Middle Byzantine period to the south of Euchaita;⁵ Kilise Tepe (Isauria), a rural Byzantine settlement;⁶ and research on Late Roman and Byzantine settlement patterns in northern Anatolia offer valuable data.⁷ These studies contribute to the comprehension of how the political, economic, cultural, and environmental changes of the period in Anatolia shaped the formation of settlements in rural areas.⁸ The strategic location of

¹ John Haldon, Hugh Elton, and James M.L. Newhard, "Introduction," in *Archaeology and Urban Settlement in Late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Euchaita-Avkat-Beyözü and Its Environment*, ed. John Haldon, Hugh Elton, and James M.L. Newhard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

² Haldon, Elton, Newhard, *ibid.*, p. 2.

³ Adam Izdebski, "Rural Settlements," in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia from the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. Philippe Niewöhner (Newyork: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴ John Haldon, "Euchaita: from Late Roman and Byzantine Town to Ottoman Village," in *Archaeology and Urban Settlement in Late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Euchaita- Avkat- Beyözü and Its Environment*, ed. John Haldon, Hugh Elton, and James M.L. Newhard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); John Haldon, Hugh Elton, and James Newhard, "Euchaita," in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia from the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. Philippe Niewöhner (Newyork: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵ Marica Cassis et al., "Regional Patterns of Transition at Çadır Höyük in the Byzantine Period," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 7, no. 3 (2019).

⁶ Mark Jackson, "2007–2011 Excavations at Kilise Tepe: A Byzantine Rural Settlement in Isauria," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69 (2015).

⁷ Kristina Winther-Jacobsen and Latife Summerer, *Landscape Dynamics and Settlement Patterns in Northern Anatolia during the Roman and Byzantine Period*, (BiblioScout, 2015).

⁸ Marica Cassis et al., "Evaluating Archaeological Evidence for Demographics, Abandonment, and Recovery in Late Antique and Byzantine Anatolia," *Human Ecology* 46, no. 3 (2018); Cassis et al., "Regional Patterns of Transition at Çadır Höyük in the Byzantine Period.," Haldon, "Euchaita: from Late Roman and Byzantine Town to Ottoman Village.," Neil Roberts et al., "Not the End of the World? Post-Classical Decline and Recovery in Rural Anatolia," *Human Ecology* 46, no. 3 (2018).

Central Anatolia as a transitional area between the eastern and western parts of Anatolia in terms of human and spatial mobility plays a crucial role in identifying the interactions and differentiations between urban and rural settlements. Thus, research in the Central Anatolian countryside is important for determining the impact of Late Roman/ Early Byzantine (4th– 7th c. CE), Intermediate (7th–9th c. CE), and Middle Byzantine (10th–12th c. CE),⁹ Seljuk, and Ottoman period populations on the landscape, their settlement processes, changes in the settlement areas and the long continuity between these periods and present-day settlements.

This article aims to make a contribution to the research on the rural settlements of Anatolia throughout the Late Roman – Early Byzantine and Medieval periods, considering the constraints and approaches discussed earlier. Therefore, it presents a study on the ethnographic, archaeological, historical, and environmental data of the present-day Murtaza village in Niğde, which has been inhabited since the Byzantine period in rural Central Anatolia, and the Melendiz region where it is located. This research aims to elucidate the settlement processes, changes and effects on the landscape of Murtaza village during the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods. Furthermore, it analyzes the effects of this long historical process on the settlement of Murtaza village today.

SITE AND MATERIAL: MURTAZA VILLAGE (NİĞDE, TÜRKİYE)

The research site, Murtaza village (38° 9'56.34 "N, 34°35'52.58 "E), is located in the south of the olcanic Cappadocia region, within the borders of Niğde Province (Figure 1). The settlement is located in the Melendiz region, which is home to several volcanic mountains including Hasandağ, Keçiboyduran, Melendiz, Tepeköy, Çınarlı, and Göllüdağ (Figure 1).¹⁰ Murtaza village is located within these borders in a valley between volcanic mountains of Çınarlı and Tepeköy (Figure 2a-b). The surface of the valley where the settlement is located is covered with pyroclastic and other volcanic rocks erupted by the volcanic mountains in the region during their active phase. The Murtaza stream, which originates when the Suludere and Ağsak streams combine and is fed by the waters of the dam built in the 1990s, flows through the valley (Figure 3a-b). The stream bed serves as a means of irrigating agricultural lands. The springs around the settlement fulfil the village's drinking water requirements.

The settlement comprises 200 households and has a population of around 650-700 individuals. The village's architectural texture adheres to a plan that aligns with the topography of the valley slope. The rocks of the valley were cut to build rock-carved spaces, and masonry structures were built with andesite and basalt stones obtained around the settlement (Figure 4). The subsistence economy of the settlement is mainly based on animal husbandry activities. Husbandry activities are conducted in temporary settlements established in the pastures in the vicinity of the settlement (Figure 5). Agricultural production is conducted within limited cultivation areas for household consumption. Daily activities are performed within the settlement, including preparations for both the summer and winter seasons. For this purpose, they dry the food they would consume on the rooftops of their houses, as well as drying the grass for their livestock, in order to prepare the food. Furthermore, the turd, which serves as the fuel for the tandoor and stoves used for heating and cooking, is also dried and stored. In this context, Murtaza village is a settlement that has maintained its traditional characteristics through its physical structure and lifestyle.

METHODS

The data presented in this article on the village of Murtaza is based on fieldwork conducted in the village of Murtaza between 2014 and 2016. This fieldwork took place over three seasons between 2014 and 2016, 32 days in each season, for a total of 96 days. The Tepecik-Çiftlik Archaeological Excavation Project (<https://www.tepecik-ciftlik.org>) in the region also contributed to the process by providing infrastructure support for the fieldwork. In this article, the field data from the village of Murtaza from 2014-2016 have been re-evaluated in the context of a new research problem and literature.¹¹ A combination of participant observation and unstructured interview techniques were used to understand the process of emergence and change of the settlement of Murtaza Village and to determine the impact of historical and geographical factors on this process. The researcher actively participated in the daily life of the village (agriculture and livestock, domestic and social activities) and collected data through notes and photographs. This technique allowed the local people to get used to an external researcher more quickly and facilitated the observation of their natural way of life. Observations were elaborated through post-field desk studies. Unstructured interviews were conducted on architectural structures, construction techniques, agriculture and animal husbandry, historical development, and geographical characteristics of the village. In addition, oral

⁹ Marica Cassis et al., "Evaluating Archaeological Evidence for Demographics, Abandonment, and Recovery in Late Antique and Byzantine Anatolia," *Human Ecology* 46, no. 3 (2018), p. 384

¹⁰ Serhan Günen, *Tepeköy Ve Çınarlı (Niğde, Orta Anadolu Volkanitlerinin Mineralojik, Jeokimyasal Ve Petrolojik Özellikleri* (Niğde Üniversitesi Jeoloji Mühendisliği Anabilim Dalı Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2010); Damase Mouralis et al., "Quaternary Volcanic Landscapes and Prehistoric Sites in Southern Cappadocia: Göllüdağ, Acıgöl and Hasandağ. Landscapes and Landforms of Turkey," in *Landscapes and Landforms of Turkey*, ed. Catherine Kuzucuoğlu, Atilla Çiner, and Nizamettin Kazancı (Springer, 2019).

¹¹ Burak Falay, "Kırsal Bir Yerleşmenin Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Değişim Sürecinin Etnoarkeolojik Bir Yaklaşımla Araştırılması: Niğde- Murtaza Köyü" (PhD Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2019). Since ethics committee approval is not required for pre-2020 studies within the framework of ULAKBİM TR Index Journal Evaluation criteria, ethics committee approval was not obtained for this study. Participants were informed of the aims of the research, how the results would be used and the principles of confidentiality.

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narratives passed down from generation to generation were collected to reveal some aspects of Murtaza village that could not be illuminated by written documents. Those who volunteered to be interviewed were interviewed, with priority given to builders, farmers, shepherds, and the oldest residents of the village. The data obtained from the interviews were recorded in field notes, reviewed through desk studies, and evaluated through recurring themes and narratives. The focus was on the first settlement, water resources, neighboring settlements, remains of old buildings, and important historical events. Observations were made in and around the village and its surroundings in the areas of the first settlement, agricultural/grazing areas, sections related to the water system, and remains of old buildings in order to obtain concrete findings on the points indicated in the ethnographic and oral history data. The historical remains were recorded with photographs and field notes, and spatial analysis was carried out by processing them into GIS layers. Architectural documentation was also carried out to understand the current architecture of the settlement and its transformation in the historical process. The vector plan of Murtaza Village taken from the municipality of Niğde-Çiftlik district was updated in ArcGIS software and the settlement plan was drawn using orthorectified photographs obtained by aerial photography method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Melendiz Region and Murtaza Village in the Late Roman-Byzantine Period

The purpose of these sections is to thoroughly examine the settlement history of the Melendiz countryside and Murtaza village during the Late Roman-Byzantine periods. This will be achieved by integrating archaeological findings, historical records, environmental data, and local narratives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the region's history. While archaeological data and historical records documented the Byzantine period in and around the Murtaza village, environmental data focused on the past ecological conditions of the region and the impact of these conditions on settlements. The oral history of Murtaza village inhabitants was used to connect all these findings with cultural and spatial memory.

1.1. The Relationship of the Late Roman-Byzantine Period Military Defense System with the Settlements in Rural Melendiz

The Cappadocia region serves as a buffer zone against Parthian attacks from the east during the Late Roman period.¹² This data is supported by maps and manuscripts from the 4th century CE¹³ which point to the development of a settlement pattern in an around the Melendiz region, where *mansio* and *mutatio* were surrounded by military fortresses.¹⁴ Based on these data, it is reasonable to assume that the Melendiz region and its surroundings, which are located within the borders of Cappadocia, had a settlement pattern that encountered military attacks from the east and so developed around military fortifications since the Late Roman period. One of the archaeological evidences for this assumption is the remains of military fortresses discovered in the Melendiz region. Particularly noteworthy are the remains of a Byzantine fortress built on a natural rock mass 800 meters northeast of Murtaza village (Figure 2). The building's 2-meter-wide defense walls, named after the village, have been preserved up to 7-8 meters high in some sections (Figure 6).¹⁵ The fortress is located on a valley canyon

¹² Michael H. Dodgeon and Samuel N.C. Lieu, eds., *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars Ad 226-363* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005); Herodianus, *Historia Romana*, trans. C.R. Whittaker (Loeb Classical Library, 1920).

¹³ 4th century sources; The Itinerarium Antonini, created around 300 CE. and named after the Roman emperor Antoninus, is a map with more than twenty copies. The Itinerarium Burdigalense (Bordeaux Itinerary), dated 333 CE, is an anonymous manuscript describing in detail the pilgrimage route from Bordeaux to Jerusalem, the lodgings (*mansio*) and horse exchanges (*mutatio*) along the way. The Tabula Peutingeriana (Peutinger's Map) of 350 CE is a map drawn on parchment. 6.75 meters long and 0.32-0.34 meters wide, it has a narrow format in the north-south direction and a wide format in the east-west direction. This map, which pictographically depicts settlements and roads, is one of the most important geographical sources of the period.

The fourth volume of David French's Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor, the Pleiades Project conducted by Richard J. A. Talbert, an expert in ancient history at the University of North Carolina, Omnes Viae: Roman Routeplanner, Vici.org: Archaeological Atlas of Antiquity, Lund University's Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire, and Harvard University's The Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations are based on the digitization of the 4th century maps and manuscripts mentioned above. These works can be accessed through online platforms such as Omnes Viae, Vici.org, DARE, Harvard Digital Atlas, Tabula-Peutingeriana, Tabulae Geographicae.de Antonine-Itinerary and Pleiades Project.

¹⁴ David H. French, *Roman Roads & Milestones of Asia Minor: Vol. 3 Milestones, Fasc 3.3 Cappadocia* (Ankara: British Institute, 2012); *Roman Roads & Milestones of Asia Minor: Vol. 4 the Roads Fas. 4.1 Notes on the Itineraria* (Ankara: British Institute, 2016); Friedrich Hild and Marcell Restle, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2, Kappadokien: (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia Und Lykandos)* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981); Tülin Kaya, "Understanding the Use of Byzantine Routes in Central Anatolia (Ca. 7th-9th Centuries)," *Studia Ceranea* 9 (2019); Benet Salway, "Travel, Itineraria and Tabellaria," in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire*, ed. Colin Adams and Ray Laurence (Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005); Eugenia Equini Schneider, "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1993 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia," in *Xii. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Milli Kütüphane Basımevi, 1995); "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1994 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia," (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Milli Kütüphane Basımevi, 1996); Richard J.A. Talbert, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World: Map-by-Map Directory* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Jacopo Turchetto and Giuseppe Salemi, "Hide and Seek. Roads, Lookouts and Directional Visibility Cones in Central Anatolia," *Open Archaeology* 3, no. 1 (2017); "Itinerarium Burdigalense" In *Vol 1 Itineraria Antonini Augusti et Burdigalense: Accedit tabula geographica* edited by Otto Cuntz and Gerhard Wirth, 86-102. Berlin, Boston: B. G. Teubner, 1990.

¹⁵ Fazıl Açıkgöz et al., eds., *Niğde Kültür Envanteri 2009* (Niğde: Tekten Basın Yayın, 2009), p. 439.

(1800 meters altitude) opening up to the north of the Melendiz region. Thus, due to its observation angle, it has the ability to control the main roads passing up to the north and the distance extending towards Mount Erciyes. This strategic location is of great military importance. It likely served as an early warning system against raids by Arab troops from the east between the 7th and 10th centuries CE

Numerous Byzantine fortresses (Asmazkalesi, Balci/Üçtepe, Sivrihasar-Gelintepe, Macida/Niğde, Valisa/Yaylayolu, Tavala/Andaval and Salamün) discovered through archaeological surveys in the Melendiz region¹⁶ have also shown that the fortress in Murtaza village was not the only one, instead a belt of fortresses was established throughout the region as a defense against enemy raids (Figure 7). This belt of fortresses in the Melendiz region can be explained by the land-based military class that emerged in Anatolia as a result of the political, administrative, and military organization known as *Thema* (Byzantine Themes).¹⁷ Because in this system, soldiers (soldiers were also Byzantine) and peasants were assigned to military estates, where the peasants were obligated to cultivate the land and served in the army during times of war, equipped with military equipment and a horse.¹⁸ The fact that the rock-carved spaces in the Açık Saray, Çanlı Church and Selime-Yaprakhisar (İhlara Valley) within the borders of Nevşehir and Aksaray were used as living quarters and places where war horses and livestock were raised by inhabitants belonging to the landowning military class of Byzantium are concrete findings of this system.¹⁹ Moreover, the epigraphic and material remains of Euchaita (located in Çorum Avkat/Beyözü) offer evidence of the influence of the Thema system on the settlement pattern of Anatolia.²⁰ All these data prove the impact of the military system on the settlements in the Byzantine countryside.

The historical document *De Velitatione Bellica*²¹ provides supporting evidence for the events that took place during and after the reign of Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969 CE). According to *De Velitatione Bellica*, the Byzantine border territories mostly consisted of fortresses and villages, rather than cities.²² During the period from the 7th to 10th centuries CE, the territories were divided into three distinct administrative and political regions to increase defense capabilities against Arab invasions in Anatolia.²³ The first of these three regions is the area surrounding Constantinople, which provided food to the capital, supported commercial activities, and functioned as an entrepôt.²⁴ The second region includes the main strongholds and subordinate centers that acted as a defensive barrier against enemy attacks on the interior and that constituted important elements of the state's administrative, financial, and military infrastructure.²⁵ The third and outer region encompassed the areas most exposed to enemy activity until the mid-8th century AD.²⁶ These regions, including Cappadocia, were located around strategic passes known as Kleisura, which were the first to encounter raids by Arab forces towards the Taurus Mountains or Cilicia.²⁷ As a result, the Melendiz region in Cappadocia and smaller towns to the south, like Tyana (Niğde-Kemerhisar) and Phaustinoupolis (Niğde-Başmakçı) suffered greatly from these attacks.²⁸ Furthermore, the Melendiz region, referred to as 'Bishop's Meadow' (Marj al-Usquf) in Arabic sources dating to the 9th and 10th centuries AD, is on the route to Tyana (Kemerhisar) and Nakida (Niğde) via Podandos and Phaustinoupolis, or to Koloneia, Nazianzos, Nyssa and the episcopal center Doara (Divarlı) via Antioch

¹⁶ Lorenzo D'Alfonso, "Archaeological Survey in Northern Tyanis: Preliminary Report of the First Campaign (2006) of the University of Pavia," in 25. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı DÖSİM Basımevi, 2008), p. 4; "Archaeological Survey in Northern Tyanis: Preliminary Report of the Second Campaign," in 26. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2009), p. 163; Ernst Honigsmann, *Bizans Devletinin Doğu Sınırı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1970), p. 43-44; Schneider, "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1993 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia," 430; "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1994 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia," p. 15-16; Turchetto and Salemi, "Hide and Seek. Roads, Lookouts and Directional Visibility Cones in Central Anatolia."

¹⁷ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), p. 90.

¹⁸ Ostrogorsky *ibid.*, p. 90-91.

¹⁹ Fatma Gül Öztürk, "A Comparative Architectural Investigation of the Middle Byzantine Courtyard Complexes in Açık Saray - Cappadocia: Questions of Monastic and Secular Settlement" (2010); Filiz Tütüncü, "The Land of Beautiful Horses: Stables in Middle Byzantine Cappadocia" (Master's Thesis, Bilkent University, 2008), p. 27-39, 97.

²⁰ Haldon, "Euchaita: from Late Roman and Byzantine Town to Ottoman Village."

²¹ Niebuhr, B. G. (Ed.). (1828). *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*: Leo Diaconus: Quae Extant Omnia (Pars XI). "De Velitatione Bellica Domini Nicephori Augusti". p. 182-258. This work, known by its Latin title, is a military manual providing instructions on conducting guerilla warfare against the Islamic states in the east, namely along the Taurus Mountains which served as the frontier between the Byzantine and Islamic empires.

²² J. F. Haldon and H. Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands," in *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. Michael Bonner (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 159.

²³ Haldon, "Euchaita: from Late Roman and Byzantine Town to Ottoman Village," p. 244.

²⁴ Haldon, *ibid.*

²⁵ Haldon, *ibid.*, p. 245.

²⁶ Haldon, *ibid.*; Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 8.

²⁷ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 194.

²⁸ John Haldon, "Cappadocia Will Be Given over to Ruin and Become a Desert," in *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift Für Johannes Koder Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Belke, et al. (2007), 215-16.

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(Altunhisar).²⁹ It can be deduced that the route played a significant role in placing the Melendiz region at the heart of the advancing enemy forces, so increasing its susceptibility to attacks.

All these archaeological and historical data explain why the Melendiz region and the area surrounding Murtaza village were encircled by a belt of fortresses.³⁰ Based on this information, the Melendiz region is not a no-man's land but a border region capable of taking measures against Arab attacks from the east. The military defense system consisting of fortresses established an organic relationship with the settlements, leading to a settlement system that prioritized the security of the regional inhabitants.

1.2. Byzantine Period Settlement in Murtaza Village: Archaeological and Historical Data

Research was conducted in present-day Murtaza village to provide material evidence supporting the existence of a Byzantine settlement, in addition to the fortress remnants around the village proving the Byzantine presence. During the research, a spolia building material with an engraved cross was discovered on the wall of a house in the settlement (Figure 8). This was likely disassembled from a nearby church that no longer exists and brought to the settlement. Archaeological surveys, period maps (see footnote 13 and 14) and manuscripts (see footnote 1314) in the region provide data on numerous churches, monastery buildings (Kitreli, Yeşilyurt, Avören, Kilise Öreni, Kınık Ören, Kızıl Kilise, Andaval) (Figure 9) and episcopal centers dating to the 5th and 9th centuries CE.³¹ In particular, Basileos of Caesarea (329-379 CE), who is recognized as the founder of the monastic system in the 4th century CE and was later canonized, along with Gregorius Nazianzos (330-388 CE) and Gregorius of Nyssa (335?-385/395? CE), who are esteemed as prominent figures in the Cappadocian Church Fathers, ensured the strong organization of Christianity in the region. Moreover, the bishoprics of Doara (Divarlı) and Nazianzos (Nenezi) were particularly notable in the Melendiz region and its vicinity. Doara (Divarlı), located in the Melendiz region, was initially associated with Tyana (Kemerhisar) and later with Mokissos in 536 CE. It served as a bishopric until the mid-10th century CE but lost its status in the early 13th century CE.³² The evidence indicates that the region was an important center for Christianity during the Byzantine period and had an intense population movement. In conclusion, the presence of historical and archaeological evidence, such as the spolia adorned with crosses and the remnants of a military fortress in Murtaza village, strongly support the notion that the Byzantines occupied the village.

1.3. Byzantine Settlement in Murtaza Village: Oral and Historical Data

This section aims to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the establishment and development of settlement in Murtaza village by establishing a connection between the oral and historical sources of the village and its surrounding areas. In the lack of historical records, it is aimed to gain a layered understanding of the settlement history of Murtaza village by analyzing local narratives within a historical context. Within this framework, the oral historical data of Murtaza village associates the first layer of the settlement with the Murtaza fortress, which was part of the Byzantine military defense system in the region. According to the narrative, the first settlement process of the area around the fortress commenced when four Greek siblings, named Murtat, Dirmit, Andul, and Vandol, arrived. Murtat founded Murtatın settlement (now known as Murtaza village); Andul founded Andirlos settlement (modern Hacıabdullah village); Dirmit founded Divrin settlement (modern Yıldıztepe village); and Vandol founded Valisa settlement (modern Yaylayolu village) (Figure 10). As a Byzantine soldier, Murtat was assigned as the commander of Murtaza fortress and he and his companions established settlements in the surrounding areas known as Salandıra, Ören, Kemer, Mandıras, and Çayıröz (Figure 10). To support the oral history of Murtaza village with material evidence, investigations were conducted around the fortress. Nevertheless, no architectural remains were discovered, and it was determined that these locations are being used as pasture land. However, historical research on the Cappadocian countryside throughout the Middle and Late Byzantine periods uncovers that the central authority assigned soldiers as protectors of settlements or religious buildings that shared geographical and organic ties with fortresses.³³ In this system, founder soldiers not only defended their settlements but also obtained economic benefits by cultivating the land.³⁴ Meanwhile, during the Middle Byzantine period (610-867 CE), settlements in Cappadocia were typically situated on steep hills, isolated rock outcrops, or

²⁹ John Haldon, "Cappadocia Will Be Given over to Ruin and Become a Desert," in *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift für Johannes Koder Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Belke, et al. (2007), 216-17.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 215-16; Honigmann, *Bizans Devletinin Doğu Sınırı*; W. M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, Royal Geographical Society. Supplementary Papers (London: John Murray, 1890); Schneider, "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1993 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia."; "Classical Sites in Anatolia: 1994 Archaeological Survey in Cappadocia."; Turchetto and Salemi, "Hide and Seek. Roads, Lookouts and Directional Visibility Cones in Central Anatolia."

³¹ Banu Çelebioğlu and İsmet Ağayılmaz, "Kapadokya'da Kızıl Kilise," *Megaron* 3, no. 2 (2008): p. 233; Lorenzo D'Alfonso, "Archaeological Survey in Northern Tyanitis Final Report," in *28. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara: Allame Tanıtım & Matbaacılık Hizmetleri, 2011); M. Sacit Pekak, "Kappadokia'da Bizans Dönemine Ait Haç Planlı İki Kilise," *Sanat Tarih Dergisi* XVII, no. 2 (2008).

³² Hild and Restle, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2, Kappadokien: (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia Und Lykandos)*, p. 171.

³³ H. Ceylan Karaca, "Ortaçağ Kırsalında Savaş, Askerler Ve Yerleşimler," *Sanat Tarihi Dergisi* 31, no. 1 (2022): p. 299.

³⁴ Karaca, *ibid.*, p. 310.

in remote locations, perhaps as a result of the war environment.³⁵ When considering the local narrative of Murtaza village, the isolated mountainous environment in which is situated, and the remnants of the fortress, it becomes evident that the settlement process began with the military defense system established by the Byzantine Empire in the region.

We can further elaborate on the first settlement process of Murtaza village using historical data. Within this framework, the case of Eustathios Boilas (1059) an imperial official from a Cappadocian family, holds significance. Eustathios Boilas, an imperial official, relocated to the eastern frontier of the empire to settle in an empty region and soon built houses and churches on the land he owned.³⁶ In the Byzantine countryside, powerful landowners who were imperial officials, like Eustathios Boilas, exercised informal authority over the peasants, substituting for the empire in matters of taxation, administration of justice, and defense of the land.³⁷ Since the late 11th century CE, landowners like Eustathios Boilas constructed fortresses or towers on their estates to offer refuge to peasants during times of danger.³⁸ However, there is no data supporting the presence of such landowners in the Melendiz region in general and around Murtaza village. However, some assessments may be derived from the oral historical data on Murtat's dispute with his siblings (Dimit, Andirlos, and Valisa) concerning the division of water resources. This is because this narrative aligns with historical data on powerful landowners in the Byzantine countryside.³⁹

According to the narrative, Murtat redirected the water from the Murtaza stream through the water channels he had built in what is now called Gâvur-arkı or Terazi strait (Figure 11) to reduce the flow of water from the stream to the Dimit, Andirlos, and Valisa settlements (Figure 10). To support this narrative with material evidence, research was carried out in the area presently known as Gâvur-arkı (Terazi strait). During the research, remnants of ancient water channels were discovered on the surface (Figure 11). Nevertheless, the available data is insufficient to date these remains to the Byzantine period. On the other hand, the name given to the location of the water channels by the inhabitants of Murtaza as 'Gâvur' (foreign), a term used to refer to Byzantine Greeks, is a weak evidence pointing to the Byzantine period. The narrative asserts that Murtat's behavior earned him a reputation as a harsh and cruel person, leading to him being called as Murtat, which is used to describe individuals who mistreat others. According to the local history sources, this information suggests that there was a powerful landowner exercising an informal authority. Nevertheless, as noted above, this assumption lacks support from historical and archaeological evidence.

1.4. Byzantine Housing in Murtaza Village: Rock-Carved Structures

The housing and architectural preferences of the Byzantine period in the vicinity of Murtaza village are a significant topic of inquiry. The inhabitants of the village assert that the rock-carved structures (Figure 2) in the current settlement can be traced back to the Byzantine period. Currently, several rock-carved structures in Murtaza village are still in use, while others have been severely destroyed that they are inaccessible. Some of the accessible ones were examined, but no material remains that could be associated with the Byzantine period were discovered. To establish the connection between the numerous rock-carved structures in the settlement and the Byzantine period through material evidence, separate research should be carried out to evaluate these structures. However, historical research of the region suggests that the rock-carved structures might have been utilized in the Byzantine period. After the Arab raids in Anatolia, Byzantium lost control of the region and as a result, the cities lost their appeal and were mostly deserted.⁴⁰ During this process, cities in Anatolia decreased in size, while social and economic mobility shifted towards rural areas and the landed estates owned by the aristocracy, as well as the capital city of Constantinople. Such historical circumstances resulted in a rise in the construction of rock-carved architecture in the rural region of Cappadocia.⁴¹ This shift in the rural landscape is supported by the Byzantine historian Leo the Deacon and the Arab geographer Ibn Hauqal in the 10th century CE who reported that the inhabitants of Cappadocia lived in troglodytes, small settlements of rock-carved houses.⁴² These historical records

³⁵ Eva Kaptijn and Marc Waelkens, "Before and after the Eleventh Century AD in the Territory of Sagalassos: Settlement Evolution," in *Social Change in Town and Country in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. James Howard-Johnston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 87-88.

³⁶ Kostis Smyrliis, "Social Change in the Countryside of Eleventh-Century Byzantium." In *Social Change in Town and Country in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. James Howard-Johnston, 62-75. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 67.

³⁷ Smyrliis, *ibid.*, p. 72.

³⁸ Smyrliis, *ibid.*, p. 72.

³⁹ Smyrliis, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Philipp Niewöhner, "What Went Wrong? Decline and Ruralization in Eleventh-Century Anatolia: The Archaeological Record," (New York), p. 130.

⁴¹ Niewöhner, *ibid.*

⁴² Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la Terre*, trans. J. H. Kramer/ G. Wiet, Paris 1964, vol. 1 p. 194. This primary source could not be found. These secondary sources were used for this source. Thomas F. Mathews, Annie Christine, Daskalakis Mathews; *Islamic-Style Mansions in Byzantine Cappadocia and the Development of the Inverted T-Plan*. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 1 September 1997; 56 (3): p. 296.; Fatma Gül Öztürk, "Rock-Cut Architecture," in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia from the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. Philippe Niewöhner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 149.

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indicate that the pyroclastic rocks on the slope of the valley, where the present-day Murtaza village is located, were transformed into rock-carved places to provide shelter during the Byzantine period. Nevertheless, it is necessary to critically examine the connection between these places and the Byzantine period in separate research, and this assumption should be supported by material evidence.

1.5. Byzantine Economy of Murtaza Village: A History of Husbandry Activities Supported by Environmental Data

An important question is about the means by which the Byzantine populations residing around Murtaza fortress managed to maintain their subsistence economy. They must have resolved the issue of nutrition to ensure the continuity of the settlement. It is evident that the environment of Murtaza village exhibits a significant abundance of water resources and pastures. The settlement history of the region was directly affected by these environmental conditions. First of all, it should be emphasized that the Melendiz region has a rich history of animal husbandry activities. The 4th century CE historical record (*Itinerarium Burdigalense*) mentions the presence of an imperial equine breeding facility known as Villa Palmati, located between Andabalis and Tyana.⁴³ This facility was likely situated in the southern part of the Melendiz region, approximately 12-20 kilometers away from Tyana, with the land around the Bor plain and the site of the Akkaya dam at present-day's Ilıcalar, which was known as Xanxaris (Figure 12) in Early Christian times.⁴⁴ The region is characterized by a highly wetland ecosystem, featuring salt springs documented by Philostratos and Strabo, as well as hot springs at Xanxaris.⁴⁵ This data suggests that the Melendiz region and its immediate surroundings had a natural environment that provided favorable conditions for populations engaged in animal husbandry activities starting from the Late Roman period.

During the period from the 7th to 10th centuries CE, as agricultural stability worsened and pastoral activities became prominent, the vicinity of Murtaza village may have become a significant option for settlement. The isotope and pollen analyses of Nar Lake, located north of Göllüdağ in the Melendiz region, yield important data on this matter. The data from this study indicate that agricultural activities, such as cultivating olive, walnut, chestnut, vine, rye, wheat, barley, and plants used for flavoring food or medicinal purposes, were conducted intensively in the region between 330-679 CE.⁴⁶ However, starting in the late 670 CE, there was a noticeable rise in the number of oak trees in the region, and rural settlements were suddenly abandoned, and agricultural activities declined.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, data obtained from surveys conducted at Kilise Tepe, Çadır Höyük, and Çanlı Kilise indicate that despite substantial population levels during the 6th century CE, there was a sharp decline in the number of settlements in the 7th and 8th centuries CE.⁴⁸ In addition to these studies, it has ascertained that the lands between Tyana and the Melendiz plain, despite their fertile nature, lost their agricultural stability because they were a transit point for armies from 650 CE to the end of the 8th century CE.⁴⁹ A similar situation can be observed at the Euchaïta site, with a decline in vine and olive cultivation, a decrease in the availability of pollen from fruit trees, and an increase in cereal and livestock production.⁵⁰ After 950 CE, agricultural and husbandry activities increased again.⁵¹

These data, derived from paleoenvironmental surveys, coincide with 670 CE, when Arab armies intensified their military raids, and 950 CE, when military activities declined.⁵² The decline in agricultural activities can be attributed to the attacks of the Arab armies in the region, as well as the allocation of resources by the central government to fulfill military needs.⁵³ In addition, the shift from agriculture to animal husbandry after 610 AD can be attributed to climatic changes, specifically the Roman Warm Period (characterized by relatively humid and warm conditions), which persisted until 650 CE, and the Dark Ages Cold Period (characterized by drier and colder

⁴³ Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 348, 449.; J. Eric Cooper and Michael J. Decker, *Life and Society in Byzantine Cappadocia* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 51, 78, 84, 88.

⁴⁴ *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 348, 449; Bilge Umar, *Türkiye'deki Tarihsel Adlar* (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1993), p. 642, 818.

⁴⁵ Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 449.

⁴⁶ Ann England et al., "Historical Landscape Change in Cappadocia (Central Turkey): A Palaeoecological Investigation of Annually Laminated Sediments from Nar Lake," *The Holocene* 18, no. 8 (2008); Roberts et al., "Not the End of the World? Post-Classical Decline and Recovery in Rural Anatolia," p. 1238.

⁴⁷ England et al., "Historical Landscape Change in Cappadocia (Central Turkey): A Palaeoecological Investigation of Annually Laminated Sediments from Nar Lake."; Haldon, "Cappadocia Will Be Given over to Ruin and Become a Desert," p. 219-22, 27, 29; England et al., "Historical Landscape Change in Cappadocia (Central Turkey): A Palaeoecological Investigation of Annually Laminated Sediments from Nar Lake," 1242-43.

⁴⁸ Cassis et al., "Evaluating Archaeological Evidence for Demographics, Abandonment, and Recovery in Late Antique and Byzantine Anatolia," p. 89; Kaptijn and Waelkens, "Before and after the Eleventh Century AD in the Territory of Sagalassos: Settlement Evolution."

⁴⁹ Haldon, "Cappadocia Will Be Given over to Ruin and Become a Desert," p. 218.

⁵⁰ Haldon, *ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵¹ England et al., "Historical Landscape Change in Cappadocia (Central Turkey): A Palaeoecological Investigation of Annually Laminated Sediments from Nar Lake."; Roberts et al., "Not the End of the World? Post-Classical Decline and Recovery in Rural Anatolia," 1242-43.

⁵² Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*.

⁵³ Haldon, "Cappadocia Will Be Given over to Ruin and Become a Desert," p. 227.

conditions).⁵⁴ In particular, during the Dark Ages Cold Period, which lasted until the 930s CE, pastoral activities increased despite a sharp decline in agricultural indicators.⁵⁵ Despite all these data from environmental and historical research attribute the causes of the agricultural decline to different events and phenomena, there is a consensus that livestock raising activities became prominent during the 7th and 10th centuries CE. In summary, the abundant water resources and fertile pastures near the Murtaza fortress likely created an ideal environment for the people in the region from the 7th to the 10th centuries CE. This allowed them to sustain their animal husbandry practices and maintain settlement continuity.

2. Melendiz Region and Murtaza Village in Seljuk and Ottoman Period

An analysis was carried out on the Melendiz Region and Murtaza village using local narratives, historical records, and particularly the data found in the cadastral record books from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods.

2.1. Cultural and Social Interactions between Byzantium and Turks in Anatolia in the 11th-12th Centuries

Historical studies show that the Byzantine-Turkish relations in Anatolia in the 11th and 12th centuries CE were characterized by military, social, cultural, economic, and peaceful contacts.⁵⁶ The Christians in Anatolia developed strong alliances with the Turks, joining forces against the invading Franks, and established strong ties through trade, shared the same settlements, and strengthened ties between the two communities through intermarriage.⁵⁷ However, it is well acknowledged that both parties also resort to violence to accomplish their goals.⁵⁸ In these periods, the resistance of the Turks (particularly the Danishmends) in Central Anatolia against the armies of the First Crusade (1101 CE) and Alexios I (1097-98 CE) enabled them to expand their territory from Eskişehir (Dorylaion) to the eastern highlands, reaching the lakes of Central Anatolia, and to establish their control over Cappadocia.⁵⁹ Central Anatolia thus became a political and cultural region dominated by Muslim-Turkish elites between 1120 and 1200 CE.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the fact that the Seljuk sultans encouraged Turkmen nomadic groups and local Christian peasants to settle in Anatolia to increase agricultural production and accelerate the process of Turkish-Islamic colonization in Anatolia strengthened this dominance.⁶¹ This historical evidence suggests that during the 11th and 12th centuries CE, Muslim-Turkic nomads and soldiers initiated a new political and cultural transformation in the eastern provinces of Byzantium.

2.2. Settlement of Nomadic Turkish Groups in Murtaza Village: Oral and Historical Data

According to local oral histories collected through unstructured interviews with older residents and families claiming descent from nomadic groups, the Arife and Pilavcılar- who relied on animal husbandry- are said to have settled near the fortress. Participants in these interviews were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the village's history, as described in the Methodology section. The interview process took place between 2014 and 2016, with the permission of the informants and within the framework of the participant observation technique.⁶² This new migration wave led to a harmonious encounter between nomadic Turkish tribes and the Greek communities who had settled around the Murtaza fortress already. In this context, historical records indicate that the Seljuks maintained the use of fortress settlements on steep and inaccessible cliffs, which they acquired from Byzantine authority, due to their defensive advantages.⁶³ The Seljuks referred to these settlements as Karahisar, which shared spatial and functional similarities with the Ottoman Empire's settlements known as *menzil* or *derbent*.⁶⁴ From the available data, it can be inferred that the vicinity of the Murtaza fortress likely served as a settlement throughout the Seljuk period, mostly due to its strategic location and defensive characteristics. The rich pastures and natural water resourced of Murtaza village must have also provided favorable conditions for the settlement of nomadic Turkish groups involved in animal husbandry activities around the fortress. However, there

⁵⁴ Kaptijn and Waelkens, "Before and after the Eleventh Century Ad in the Territory of Sagalassos: Settlement Evolution," p. 88.

⁵⁵ Kaptijn, Waelkens, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Alexander Beihammer, "From Byzantium to Muslim-Turkish Anatolia Transformation, Frontiers Diplomacy, and Interaction, Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries," in *24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies 1*, ed. Emiliano Fiori and Michele Trizio (2022), p. 492; Nevra Necipoğlu, "Turks and Byzantines (Eleventh - Twelfth Centuries)," in *In the Turkic Speaking Peoples: 2,000 Years of Art and Culture from Inner Asia to the Balkans*, ed. Ergun Çağatay and Doğan Kuban (NewYork: Prestel Verlag, 2009).

⁵⁷ Alexander Beihammer, "From Byzantium to Muslim-Turkish Anatolia Transformation, Frontiers Diplomacy, and Interaction, Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries," in *24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies 1*, ed. Emiliano Fiori and Michele Trizio (2022), p. 503.

⁵⁸ Beihammer, *ibid.* p. 507-08.

⁵⁹ Beihammer, *ibid.* p. 493-96.

⁶⁰ Macit Tekinalp, "Palace Churches of the Anatolian Seljuks: Tolerance or Necessity?," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 33, no. 2 (2009).

⁶¹ Koray Özcan, "The Anatolian Seljuk City an Analysis on Early Turkish Urban Models in Anatolia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 54, no. 2 (2010): p. 277.

⁶² Falay, "Kırsal Bir Yerleşmenin Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Değişim Sürecinin Etnoarkeolojik Bir Yaklaşımla Araştırılması: Niğde- Murtaza Köyü."

⁶³ Koray Özcan, "Anadolu'da Selçuklu Dönemi Yerleşme Tipolojileri I: Karahisarlar," *Milli Folklor*, no. 77 (2008): p. 90-91.

⁶⁴ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Xvi-Xvii. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılarda Devlet Teşkilatı Ve Sosyal Yapı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), p. 177-78, 81.

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is a lack of material evidence to support the historical records and local narratives that coincide with these data, thereby failing to establish the existence of a settlement during the Seljuk period around the Murtaza village.

2.3. Ottoman Period Settlement of Murtaza Village: Cadastral Record Books

The cadastral record books include information about the settlements subjected to Niğde from 1500 to 1522 and these records (numbered 42, 455, and 387) reveal that Murtaza village was originally referenced in written records under the names Murtandı and Mutandı.⁶⁵ These records provide direct evidence that Murtaza village was inhabited during the Ottoman period in the 16th century. It is worth noting that the inhabitants of Murtaza village still use the names Murtandı and Mutandı as settlement names, which demonstrates the enduring ancient memory in the settlement. In addition, the similarity of the names Murtandı and Mutandı with the Byzantine fortress commander Murtat is another remarkable fact. The fact that the names of Dirmit, Andirlos, and Valisa settlements mentioned in the 16th century Ottoman records⁶⁶ coincide with the names in the Byzantine settlement narratives of Murtaza village is significant in verifying the Byzantine existence in the region based on Ottoman records. In the 1500 registration record of Andirlos and Divrin/Dirmiy settlements neighboring Murtaza village and mentioned in the Byzantine period settlement narrative, 24 non-Muslims were recorded in Divrin/Dirmit village, and 29 non-Muslims in Andirlos village, while there were 25 non-Muslims in Divrin village and 38 non-Muslims in Andirlos village based on the 1518 records, and 24 non-Muslims in Divrin village and 50 non-Muslims in Andirlos village in the 1584 records.⁶⁷ The population statistics is crucial for supporting the emphasis in the local narratives of Murtaza village that nomadic Turks and Greeks lived together without any problems. This data is supported by sources that offer information on the nomadic Turkish groups known as Bulgarlu, Berekütlü, Dündarlı, Yüzdecı, and Müstakıl, who resided in the Melendiz region (Yazi Üyük, Kiledere, Bağlama, and Gölçük) in the 16th century, and whose subsistence economy was based on animal husbandry activities.⁶⁸ Within this context, it is evident that the oral narratives of the nomadic Turkish groups that settled around the fortress align with the available historical data.

Additionally, Ottoman records from the 19th century offer detailed information on the settlement of Murtaza village. In the record known as Karaman Ahkâm No. 7 of 1851, the Murtaza village referred to as Murtantın, and the resolution of the water problem between the settlements of Andirlos and Divrin is mentioned. The record reports that the stream bed, currently known as Murtaza stream, was divided in such a way that it would flow to each of Dirmit/Divrin, Andirlos, and Murtantın villages for 2 days each during the irrigation season.⁶⁹ This record is important as it proves that Murtaza village was inhabited in the 19th century after the 16th century. This record is also important in that it shows that a similar water dispute between Murtat, the commander of the Byzantine fortress, and his siblings (Dirmit, Andirlos, and Vandol), which was mentioned in local narratives on the early settlement of the village, was also recorded in official records in the 19th century. The records date the water dispute to a later period than the oral history narratives. However, written records show that the problem of sharing water is a historical fact.

3. Reflections of Spatial and Cultural Memory in Present-day's Murtaza Village Settlement

This section elucidates the formative effects of the aforementioned historical process on the current settlement of Murtaza village. The explanations were developed using the data obtained from the ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Murtaza village.

3.1. Spatial and Cultural Memory of Murtaza Village: Local Architecture and Building Craftspeople

The current Murtaza village settlement was founded on the slope of the valley with rock-carved structures, about 800 meters away from the remains of the Byzantine fortress (Figure 2).⁷⁰ Thousands of years of spatial memory dating back to the Byzantine period influenced the development of today's settlement characteristic on this valley slope and close to the fortress. The masonry stone structures were built in front of and on top of the rock-carved structures, enhancing the architectural characteristic of the settlement (Figure 13a-b-c-d-e).⁷¹ The local architectural composition of the settlement is characterized by masonry (masonry means stone) structures, referred to as arched rooms by the inhabitants of Murtaza village, which have a history of nearly 100 years. Their

⁶⁵ A. Hüseyiniklioğlu and H. Arslan, "16. Yüzyılın İlk Çeyreğinde Niğde Kazası Yerleşme Merkezlerinin Tespiti," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 19, no. 2 (2009): 310-11.

⁶⁶ Hüseyiniklioğlu, *ibid.*, 308-10.

⁶⁷ Rafet Metin, "Xvi. Yüzyılda Orta Anadolu'da Nüfus Ve Yerleşme (Bozok, Kırşehir, Niğde, Nevşehir Ve Keskin Örneği) (in 16 Th Century, Population and Occupation in Middle Anatolia (Example; Bozok, Kırşehir, Niğde, Nevşehir and Keskin))" (PhD, Gazi University, Ankara, 2007), p.124-26.

⁶⁸ Ayşegül Hüseyiniklioğlu, "Karaman Beylerbeyliği'nde Konar-Göçer Nüfus (1500-1522) (Nomadic Population in the Karaman Province (1500-1522))" (*ibid.*Fırat University, Elazığ, 2008), p. 123; Mustafa Oflaz, "16.Yüzyılda Niğde Sancağı (Niğde Sanjak in the 16th Century)" (*ibid.*Ankara University, 1992), p. 92-94.

⁶⁹ Mehmet Bildirici, *Tarihi Su Yapıları* (Ankara: T.C. Çevre ve Orman Bakanlığı Devlet Su İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2009), p. 400.

⁷⁰ Falay, "Kırsal Bir Yerleşmenin Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Değişim Sürecinin Etnoarkeolojik Bir Yaklaşımla Araştırılması: Niğde- Murtaza Köyü."

⁷¹ Falay, *ibid.*

construction technique is based on a ribbed vault system (Figure 14).⁷² The inhabitants of the village use the term 'building arches like a foreign' for builders who possessed the skill to construct arched rooms with precise and sturdy measurements. They use this saying to mention the arched structures built by Greek and Armenian arch builders at the Güzelyurt/Gelveri settlement in Aksaray since the mid-1800s.⁷³ It is because the inhabitants of Murtaza village praised the arched structures built by Greek and Armenian builders in the region. According to the records, the Turkish arch builders in the region acquired this construction technique by growing up under Greek and Armenian builders. Meanwhile, the significance of the Melendiz region as an important center of the Christian religion enabled the builders from Murtaza village to observe the Byzantine churches in their vicinity, including their architectural elements such as arches, niches, and supports, as well as their construction designs. The architectural heritage, together with the skills acquired from Greek builders, addressed the current housing needs of Murtaza village, while enabling the builders to draw upon the ancient building technique of the region, which is thousands of years old.

3.2. Impact of Old Water Systems (19th century) on the Settlement

The mountainous and hilly topography of Murtaza village restricts agricultural activities. Thus, the focus of agricultural production is on crops such as buckwheat, sarıkamçı wheat, barley, chickpea, potato, cucumber, bean, tomato, zucchini, apple, and cherry, which are primarily for domestic consumption and animal feed, including vetch. Nevertheless, through the enhancement of the old water channels in the Gavurarkı region -probably dating back to at least the Ottoman period (19th centuries), according to water disputes in 19th century Ottoman records- and the interconnection of the Suludere, which feeds the Murtaza stream, with the Karanlıkdere stream that originates from the peaks of Melendiz mountain, the implementation of the new water system and dam construction⁷⁴ improved the efficient irrigation of the cultivated lands (Figure 11). The new water system was instrumental in the abandonment of cultivated lands located far away from the village, leading to their conversion into pasture lands. The areas near the village that could be irrigated via dam water (Figure 15) were cultivated with greater intensity.⁷⁵ The inhabitants of the village demonstrated their ability to enhance the functionality of the old water channels, resulting in increased agricultural production. This emphasizes their utilization of the knowledge and spatial memory of the past to adapt the environment to their needs. The persistent issues surrounding the division of water resources between Murtaza village and Hacı Abdullah (Andirlos) still highlight the enduring legacy of past conflicts.⁷⁶ This issue explains the current constraints on agricultural production and rituals such as rain prayers.

3.3 Impact of the Nomad Culture on the Settlement in Murtaza Village

The mountainous geography of Murtaza village has limited agricultural activities. However, natural water resources and pastures provided favorable conditions for animal husbandry activities. The shepherds from the village graze their sheep herds in seasonal settlements they establish from May to October in pastures located near to the main settlement (Figure 5).⁷⁷ In October, they relocate their herds to the pastures of Kaleköy, Akköy, and Erdemli villages in the Kayseri-Yeşilhisar area, where winter conditions are milder, to protect them from the harsh winter conditions in the settlement⁷⁸ (Figure 16). They temporarily settle these pastures for about seven months, starting in October and ending in May, before turning to the pastures of Murtaza village in mid-May. This cycle has been conducted throughout the year to ensure the herds' well-being during winter and their access to food since 1942.⁷⁹ Households in the village who do not work as shepherds, but own sheep hire shepherds to take care of their sheep and ensure that the herds graze in the pastures all year for a certain fee. Households who do not send their herds with the shepherds to Kayseri-Yeşilhisar tend to manage their herds themselves within the nearby dairies that they have constructed or in rock-carved structures.⁸⁰ The Murtaza people, being the descendants of nomadic Turkish groups, have significantly influenced the subsistence economy, lifestyle, and settlement pattern through their adherence to a pastoral culture.

CONCLUSION

⁷² Falay, *ibid.*

⁷³ Falay, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Bildirici, *Tarihi Su Yapıları*, p. 400.

⁷⁵ Falay, "Kırsal Bir Yerleşmenin Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Değişim Sürecinin Etnoarkeolojik Bir Yaklaşımla Araştırılması: Niğde- Murtaza Köyü."

⁷⁶ Falay, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Falay, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ The shepherds travel to Kayseri-Yeşilhisar with their herds through two routes. The first route starts from Murtaza village, following the Gölcük and Orhanlı route to Kayseri-Yeşilhisar. Migration on this route takes three days. The second route follows the Misli mound and Edikli route to Kayseri-Yeşilhisar. Migration on this route takes four days. The choice of migration route depends on the agricultural activities in the Misli plain. During periods of intensive cultivation, the longer second route is preferred. The shorter first route is chosen when the cultivated areas have a small extent.

⁷⁹ Falay, "Kırsal Bir Yerleşmenin Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Değişim Sürecinin Etnoarkeolojik Bir Yaklaşımla Araştırılması: Niğde- Murtaza Köyü."

⁸⁰ Falay, *ibid.*

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This study provides a deeper understanding of rural settlements in Anatolia during Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman periods by examining the historical development of Murtaza village. Through archaeological findings, historical records, environmental data, and local narratives, the research reveals that rural settlements were significantly shaped by the political, economic, and cultural changes of their respective eras, and that these influences have persisted into the present day. In particular, the settlement process of Murtaza village during the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods have had significant impacts on the environment, which have played a crucial role in shaping the historical and cultural structure of the settlement as it stands today. Since the Byzantine period, the area where Murtaza village is located has been utilized as a settlement location for military and defense purposes. The village's rich pastures and water resources facilitated its livability, sustained by ongoing pastoral activity. The village experienced significant demographic and cultural changes as a result of the interactions between the Byzantine Empire and the Turks, as well as throughout the Ottoman period. Consequently, the settlement developed into a place where Turkish and Greek communities coexisted. The village's spatial memory is characterized by its management of water resources and local architectural practices. In addition, shepherding practices which have roots in the pastoral tradition of the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, have further strengthened the cultural structure of the village. The findings indicate that Murtaza village has been shaped to meet the needs of various communities across time and has served as a continuous habitation area. Notwithstanding these findings, Murtaza village and its environs need to be investigated in more depth. In particular, conducting research that provides actual evidence of the relationships between rock-carved buildings and early settlements can enhance historical comprehension of this region. Conducting surveys and ethnographic research in Murtaza village and the nearby settlements of Hacıabdullah (Andirlos), Yaylayolu (Valisa), and Yıldıztepe (Divrin) can contribute to our understanding of the settlement history in the region by providing clearer insights into the historical and cultural relationships among these settlements. Future research can build on the data provided by this study and shed light on the historical dynamics of rural Melendiz in more detail.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Anadolu'nun Geç Roma, Erken Bizans ve Orta Çağ dönemlerindeki yerleşim alanlarına ilişkin bilgiler, arkeolojik ve tarihsel araştırmaların büyük ölçüde kentsel merkezlere ve önemli liman yerleşimlerine odaklanması nedeniyle sınırlıdır. Ephesos, Pergamon ve Ancyra gibi kentsel merkezlerin detaylı şekilde incelenmiş olmasına rağmen, kırsal bölgelerdeki yerleşim alanları neredeyse keşfedilmemiş olarak kalmıştır. Bu durum, Anadolu'nun yerleşim hiyerarşisini, kırsal alanların tarihsel süreçteki rolünü ve değişim dinamiklerini anlamayı zorlaştırmaktadır. Nüfus yoğunluğunun düşük olduğu kırsal bölgelerdeki bu bilgi eksikliği, tarih boyunca değişen siyasi rejimlerin, çevresel koşulların ve sosyo-ekonomik dönüşümlerin bu alanlar üzerindeki etkilerinin tam anlamıyla ortaya konulamamasına neden olmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, son yıllarda Orta Anadolu ve çevresinde yürütülen arkeolojik kazılar, yüzey araştırmaları ve çevresel analizler, kırsal yerleşimlere dair bilgi birikimini artırmaya başlamıştır. Örneğin, Euchaita, Çadır Höyük ve Kilise Tepe gibi yerleşimlerde yapılan çalışmalar, kırsal alanların siyasi, ekonomik ve kültürel değişimlere nasıl adapte olduğunu anlamakta önemli veriler sunmaktadır. Orta Anadolu, doğu ile batı arasında geçiş bölgesi olması nedeniyle hem insan hareketliliği hem de yerleşim düzenleri açısından benzersiz bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, Bizans, Selçuklu ve Osmanlı dönemlerinde kırsal yerleşimlerin mekânsal düzenlemeleri, peyzaj üzerindeki etkileri ve uzun vadeli süreklilikleri, yerleşim dinamiklerinin anlaşılması için kritik bir çalışma alanıdır. Bu makale, Orta Anadolu'nun Niğde ili kırsalında yer alan ve Bizans dönemine uzanan köklü bir yerleşim geçmişine sahip olan Murtaza Köyü'nü inceleyerek, Anadolu'daki kırsal yerleşimlerin tarihsel süreçteki rolüne ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu makale, Murtaza Köyü örneği üzerinden, bu bilgi boşluğunu doldurmaya ve kırsal yerleşimlerin tarihsel süreçlerdeki yerini anlamaya yönelik literatüre önemli bir katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Metodoloji

Bu makale, Murtaza köyünde 2014–2016 yılları arasında yürütülen saha çalışmalarının verilerini yeni bir araştırma problemi ve literatür çerçevesinde yeniden değerlendirmektedir. Söz konusu saha çalışmaları üç sezon boyunca (her birinde 32 gün olmak üzere toplam 96 gün) planlanmıştır; bu süreçte bölgedeki Tepecik-Çiftlik Arkeolojik Kazı Projesi (<https://www.tepecik-ciftlik.org>) de altyapı desteği sağlamıştır. Murtaza Köyü yerleşiminin ortaya çıkış ve dönüşüm sürecini, tarihsel ve coğrafi faktörlerin etkilerini anlamak amacıyla, katılımcı gözlem ve yapılandırılmamış görüşme teknikleri birlikte kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacı köyün günlük yaşamına (tarım, hayvancılık, ev içi ve sosyal faaliyetler) katılarak notlar ve fotoğraflar aracılığıyla veri toplamış; bu yaklaşım, yerel halkın doğal yaşam biçimlerini gözlemlemeyi kolaylaştırmıştır. Mimari yapılar, inşaat teknikleri, tarım ve hayvancılık uygulamaları, köyün tarihsel gelişimi ve coğrafi özelliklerine dair yapılandırılmamış görüşmeler, öncelikle inşaatçılar, çiftçiler, çobanlar ve köyün en yaşlı sakinleriyle yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, yazılı belgelerle

açıklanamayan unsurları aydınlatmak üzere nesilden nesile aktarılan sözlü anlatılar toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen veriler saha notlarına kaydedilmiş, sonrasında masa başında tekrar gözden geçirilip tekrarlayan temalar üzerinden değerlendirilmiştir. İlk yerleşim noktaları, su kaynakları, komşu yerleşimler, eski yapı kalıntıları ve önemli tarihi olaylar gibi başlıklar ön plana çıkmıştır. Etnografik ve sözlü tarih verilerinde işaret edilen konumlarda gözlemler yapılarak ilk yerleşim, tarım/mera alanları ve su sistemi kalıntıları belgelenmiş; fotoğraf ve saha notlarıyla kayıt altına alınan bu bulgular CBS (Coğrafi Bilgi Sistemleri) katmanlarına işlenerek mekânsal analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Aynı zamanda köyün mevcut mimarisini ve tarihsel süreçteki dönüşümünü incelemek için mimari belgeleme çalışmaları yürütülmüş; Niğde-Çiftlik ilçesi belediyesinden alınan vektörel plan, ArcGIS yazılımında güncellenerek hava fotoğrafı yöntemiyle elde edilen ortorektifiye görsellerle birleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, (ULAKBİM TR Dizin Dergi Değerlendirme kriterleri çerçevesinde 2020 öncesi çalışmalarda etik kurul onayı gerekmediğinden) etik kurul onayı olmaksızın yürütülmüş olup, katılımcılara araştırmanın amaçları, kullanım alanları ve gizlilik ilkeleri hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Böylece, Murtaza köyünün tarihsel ve mekânsal gelişimini çok yönlü bir yaklaşımla inceleyen bu araştırma, köyün evrimine dair bütüncül bir çerçeve sunmayı hedeflemiştir.

Bulgular ve Sonuç

Murtaza Köyü ve bulunduğu Melendiz Bölgesi, tarih boyunca savunma ve yerleşim açısından stratejik bir öneme sahip olmuştur. Bizans döneminde, doğudan gelen tehditlere karşı bir tampon bölge olarak işlev gören bu coğrafyada askeri amaçlı savunma yapıları inşa edilmiştir. Bu dönemde, Murtaza Köyü'ne yaklaşık 900 metre mesafede yer alan Murtaza Kalesi, bölgedeki askeri yapılanmanın önemli bir parçası olarak dikkat çekmektedir. MS 7.-10. yüzyıllar arasında Arap baskınlarına karşı bir erken uyarı sistemi olarak kullanılan kale, aynı zamanda yerleşimin sürdürülebilirliğini destekleyen doğal su kaynakları ve otlaklarla çevrilidir. Bu çevresel özellikler, ayrıca yerleşim alanının hayvancılık faaliyetleri açısından gelişmesine katkıda bulunmuştur.

11. ve 12. yüzyıllarda Anadolu'da Bizans ve Türkler arasındaki ilişkiler, askeri, sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik bağlamlarda şekillenmiştir. Selçuklu sultanları, bu hâkimiyeti daha da güçlendirmek amacıyla Anadolu'nun tarımsal üretim kapasitesini artırmayı ve Türk-İslam kolonizasyon sürecini hızlandırmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu bağlamda, Türkmen göçebe grupları ve yerel Hristiyan köylüler teşvik edilerek bölgeye yerleştirilmiş, böylece yeni bir politik ve kültürel dönüşüm başlatılmıştır. Selçukluların Bizans'tan devraldıkları kale yerleşimlerini savunma avantajları nedeniyle kullanmayı sürdürmesi, bu geçiş sürecinin mekânsal bir yansımasıdır.

Murtaza köyüne dair yerel anlatılar, bu dönüşümün izlerini taşımaktadır. Anlatılara göre, Bizans döneminden sonra hayvancılıkla geçinen konar-göçer Türk grupları olan Arife ve Pilavcılar, Murtaza kalesi çevresine yerleşmiştir. Günümüz Murtaza köyü sakinleri, bu toplulukların soyundan geldiklerini ifade etmektedir. Murtaza kalesi ve çevresi hem stratejik konumu hem de savunma özellikleri nedeniyle Selçuklu dönemi boyunca önemli bir yerleşim alanı olarak işlev görmüş olmalıdır. Ayrıca, bölgenin zengin su kaynakları ve otlakları, hayvancılıkla uğraşan göçebe gruplar için uygun yaşam koşulları sağlamış ve bu durum yerleşimin sürekliliğini desteklemiştir. Buna rağmen, Murtaza köyü çevresindeki Selçuklu dönemine ait yerleşimi somut bir şekilde kanıtlayacak arkeolojik bulgulara ulaşamamıştır. Ancak, yerel anlatılar ve tarihsel kayıtlar, köyün Bizans'tan Selçuklu dönemine geçiş sürecinde sosyo-kültürel ve demografik açıdan nasıl bir dönüşüm yaşadığını anlamak açısından veriler sunmaktadır. Bu bulgular, bölgenin hem mekânsal hafızasını hem de yerleşim dinamiklerini tarihsel bir bağlama oturtarak, Murtaza köyünün tarihsel gelişiminde göçebe kültürün rolünü ortaya koymaktadır.

Osmanlı tahrir kayıtları, bölgenin Bizans döneminden devraldığı iskân sürecini belgelemekte ve yerleşimin sürekliliğini göstermektedir. Bu dönemde, Türk ve Rum topluluklarının bir arada yaşaması, kültürel ve mimari bir sentezin oluşmasını sağlamıştır. Günümüz yerel mimarisinde önemli bir yer tutan kemer yapım sistemine dayalı yığma taş yapılar, bu etkileşimin en somut göstergelerindendir. Bölgedeki Bizans döneminden miras alınan mimari bilgi birikimi ve Osmanlı dönemlerinde Rum ve Ermeni yapı ustalarının etkisi yerel bir sentez yaratmıştır. Bu sentez, günümüz Murtaza köyünün mimari dokusunu oluşturan, kemer örtü sistemi ile inşa edilmiş olan taş yapıların ortaya çıkmasını sağlamış ve bölgenin mimari mirasını güçlü bir şekilde temsil etmektedir.

Günümüzde, Murtaza Köyü tarihsel süreçlerden miras kalan mekânsal hafıza ve kültürel sürekliliği barındırmaya devam etmektedir. Geleneksel su yönetim sistemleri, köy halkının modern tarımsal ihtiyaçlarına uyarlanarak eski su kanalları işlevsel hale getirilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, hayvancılık faaliyetlerinde izlenen göç yolları ve mevsimlik yerleşim düzenleri, geçmişten günümüze taşınan konar-göçer kültürünün etkilerini göstermektedir. Konar-göçer kültür, Osmanlı döneminde özellikle yaşam tarzında belirgin bir rol oynamıştır. Hayvancılığa dayalı bir geçim ekonomisine sahip olan bu gruplar, doğal su kaynakları ve otlakların zenginliği nedeniyle bölgeyi bir yerleşim alanı olarak tercih etmişlerdir. Bu durum, pastoral faaliyetlerin köy yaşamındaki merkezi rolünü pekiştirmiş ve tarımsal üretimin kısıtlı olduğu dağlık bir coğrafyada, hayvancılığın sürdürülebilirlik açısından temel ekonomik faaliyet haline gelmesini sağlamıştır. Murtaza Köyü'nde bu kültürün izleri, çobanların yaz aylarında köy çevresindeki meralarda, kış aylarında ise daha sıcak bölgelerde yer alan Kayseri-Yeşilhisar'a bağlı otlaklarda konaklamalarıyla günümüze kadar korunmuştur. 1940'lardan itibaren bile

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süre gelen bu döngüsel göç hareketi, konar-göçer geleneğin sürekliliğini ve köy halkının bu yaşam biçimini nasıl koruduğunu göstermektedir.

Murtaza Köyü'nün tarihsel dinamiklerini daha kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamak için özellikle günümüz yerleşmesinin yaslandığı kaya oyma yapıların detaylı incelenmesi gerektiği görülmektedir. Çevredeki Hacıabdullah (Andirlos), Yaylayolu (Valisa) ve Yıldıztepe (Divrin) gibi yerleşimlerin birbirleriyle olan kültürel ve tarihsel bağlarının ortaya çıkarılması, bölgenin tarihsel dokusunu daha iyi anlamaya katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu bağlamda yapılacak arkeolojik ve etnografik araştırmalar, bölgenin tarihine ilişkin daha derin ve kapsamlı bir bakış açısı sunacaktır.

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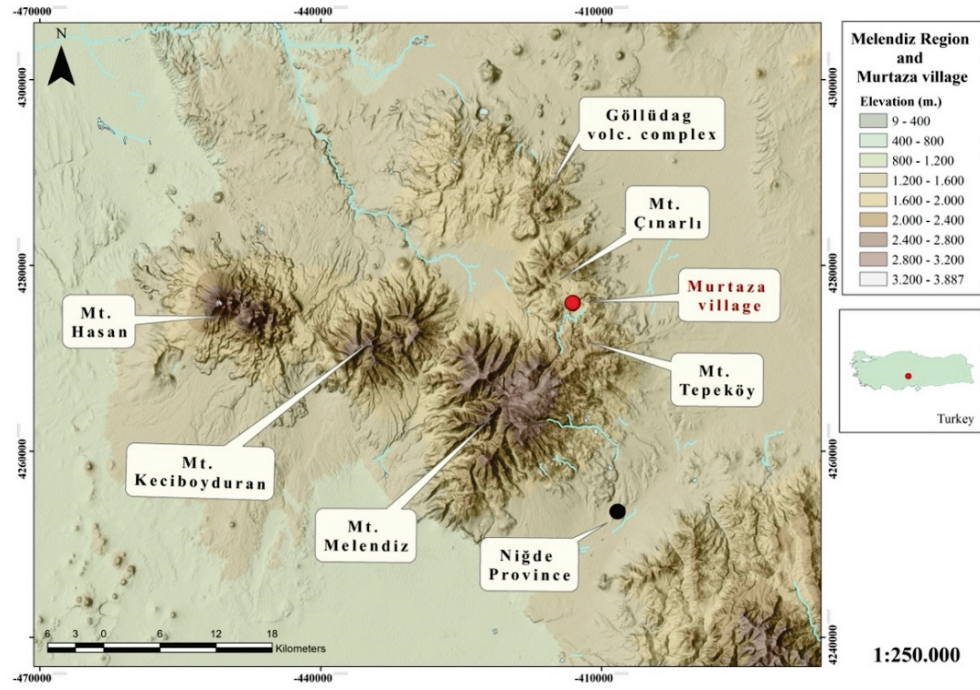
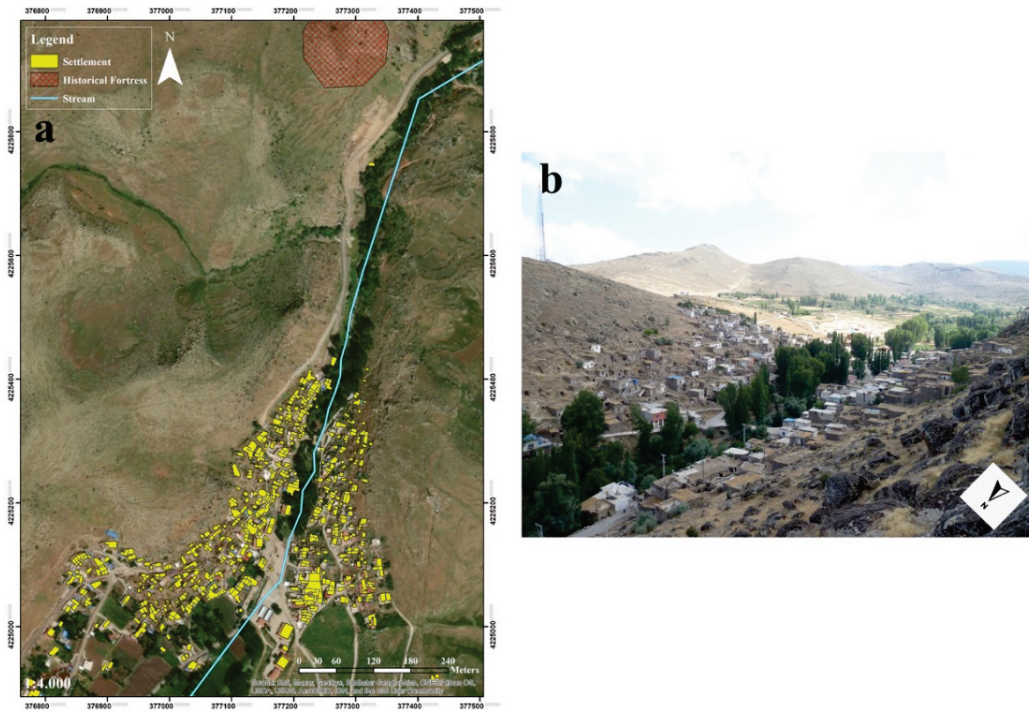


Figure 1. Geographical location of Murtaza village.⁸¹



⁸¹ Falay, ibid.

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Figure 2. (a-b) Murtaza village is located in a valley between volcanic mountains.⁸²

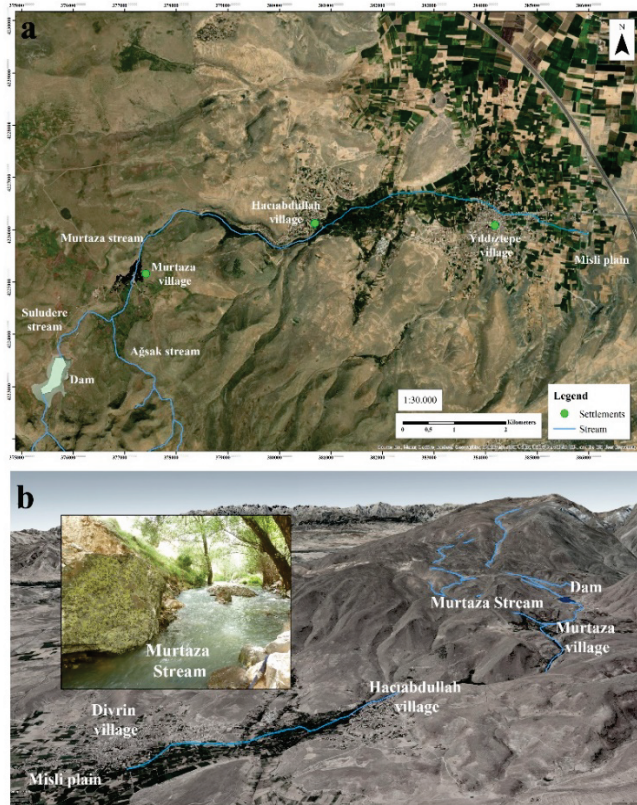


Figure 3. (a) Murtaza stream fed by Suludere and Ağsak streams. (b) Murtaza stream flows through Murtaza village, Hacı Abdullah, and Yıldıztepe settlements and ends in Misli plain.⁸³



⁸² Falay, ibid.

⁸³ Falay, ibid.

Figure 4. Architectural buildings in Murtaza village.⁸⁴



Figure 5. Seasonal settlement where animal husbandry activities are carried out in the Melendiz mountains.⁸⁵



Figure 6. Byzantine fortress ruins (7th-10th centuries)⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Falay, ibid.

⁸⁵ Falay, ibid.

⁸⁶ Falay, ibid.

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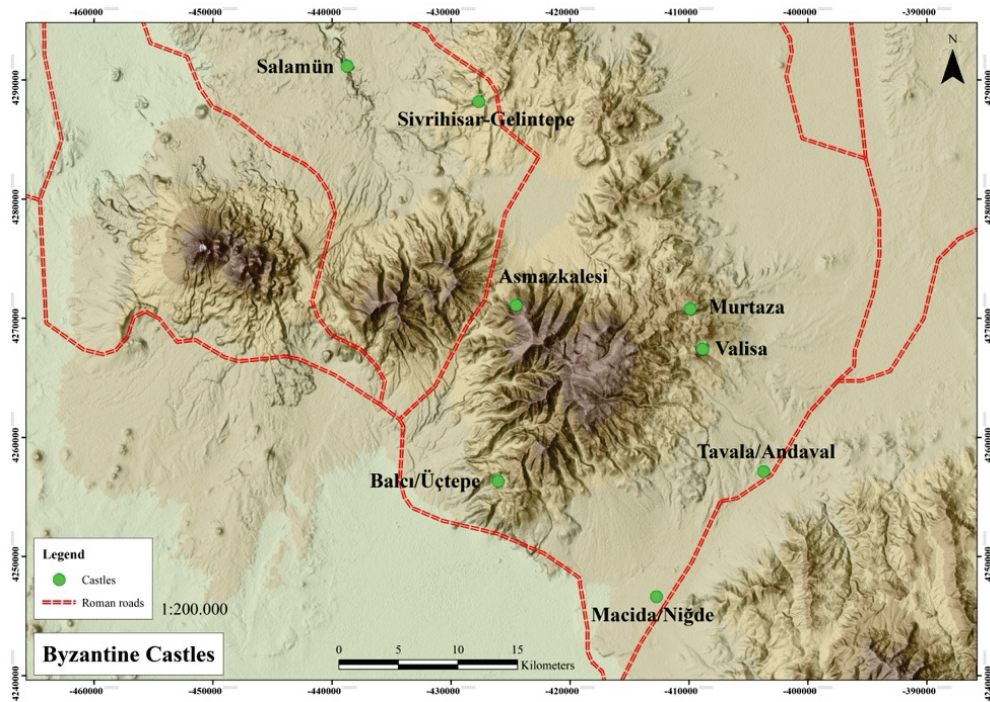


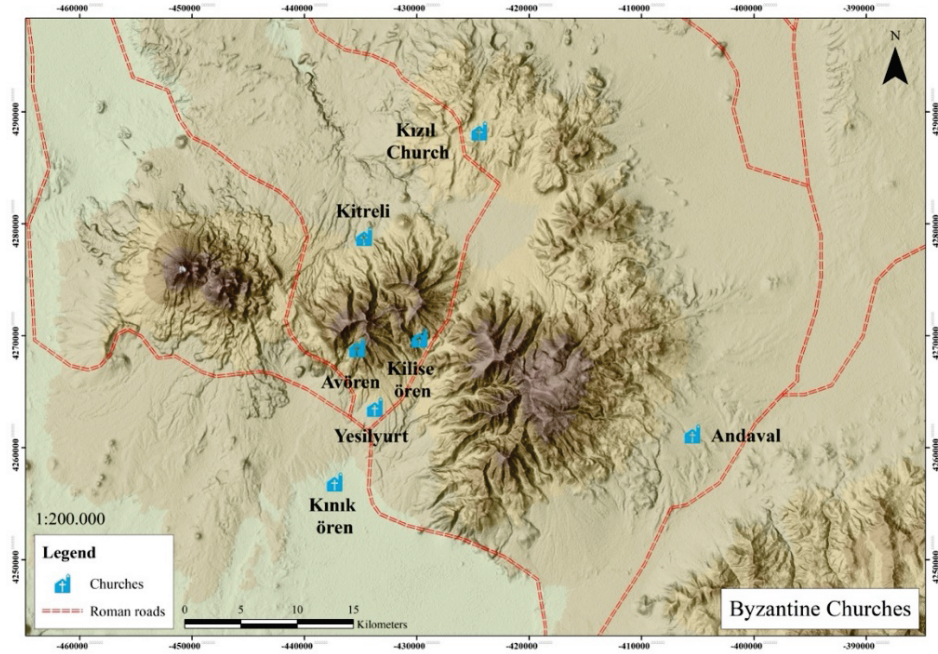
Figure 7. Byzantine fortress remains discovered in the Melendiz region and dated between the 7th-10th centuries AD.⁸⁷



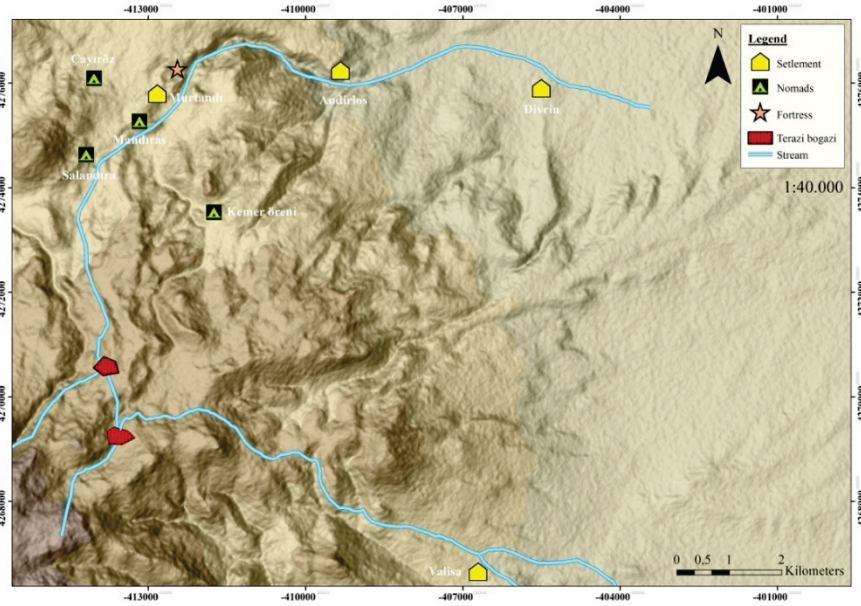
Figure 8. Present-day settlement of Murtaza village; spolia depicting a cross. The spolia depicting a cross is on the lintel of the building shown in the picture on the left.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Falay, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Falay, *ibid.*



*Figure 9. Byzantine churches in the Melendiz region.*⁸⁹



*Figure 10. Murtaza Castle, archaeological remains in the Terazi Boğazı-Gavurarkı region, settlement records from the Ottoman Tahrir Books and the oral history of the village showing the first settlement points (nomads). By visually presenting the relationship between oral history, written sources and archaeological observations, this map aims to trace the continuity and possible traces of settlement from Byzantine to Ottoman times.*⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Falay, *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Falay, *ibid.*

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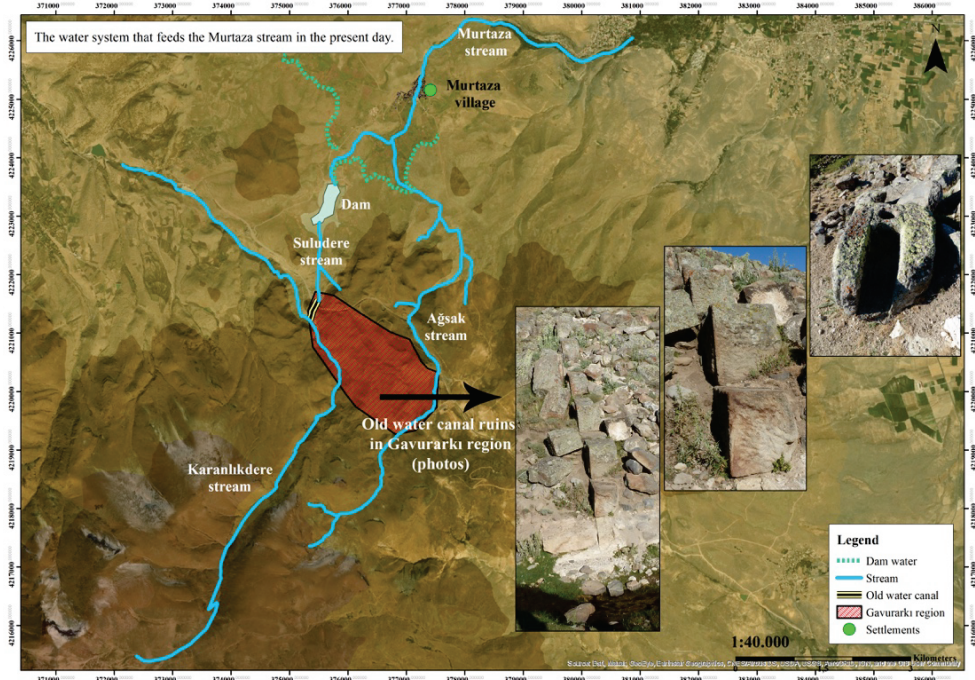


Figure 11. Remains and locations of water channels in the area known as Gâvur-arkı or Terazi strait.⁹¹

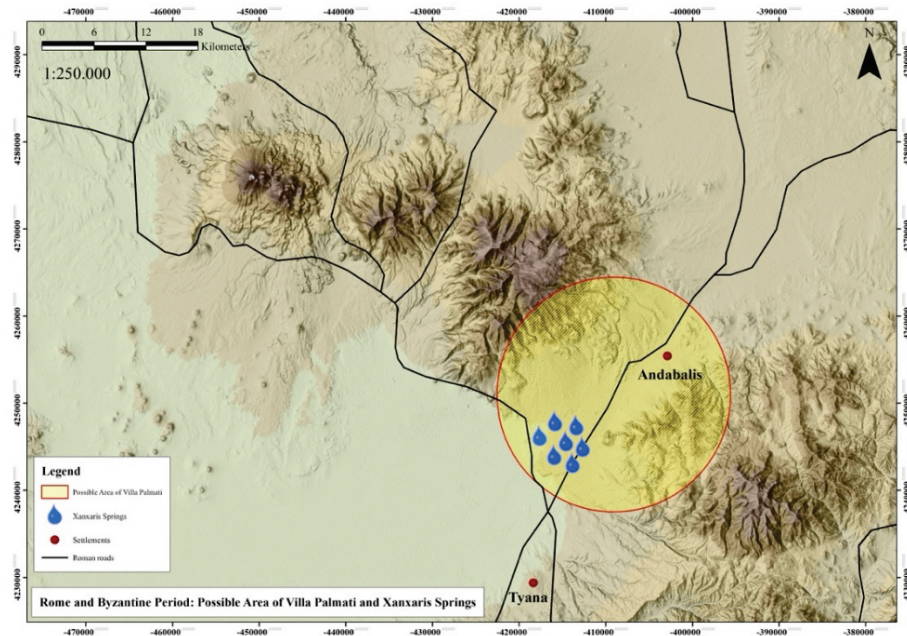


Figure 12. Possible location of Villa Palmati and Xanxaris springs based on historical data.⁹²

⁹¹ Falay, *ibid.*

⁹² Falay, *ibid.*

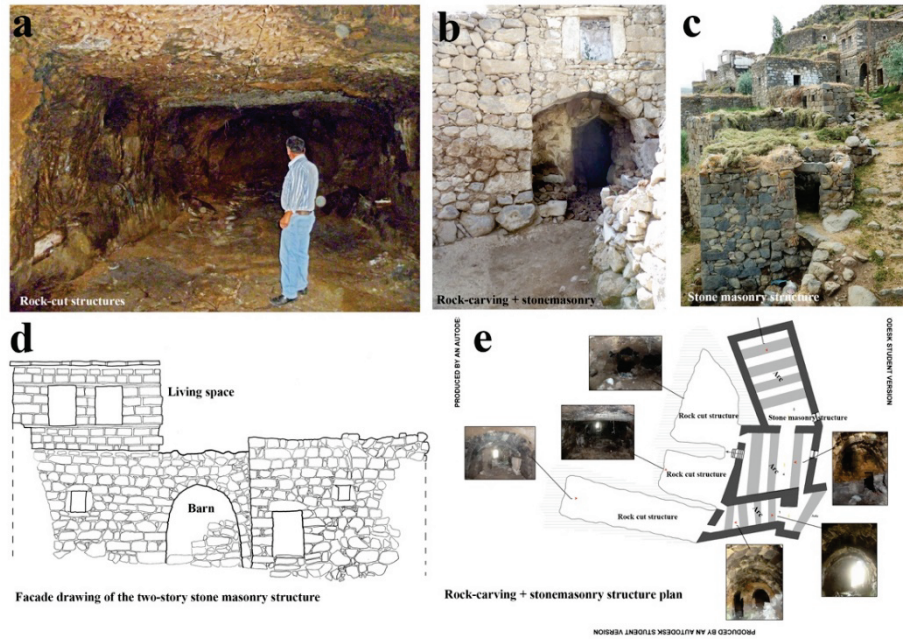


Figure 13. (a) Rock-carved structures (b) Rock-carved and stone masonry structures (c) Stone masonry structures (d) Frontal view of a stone masonry structure (e) Plan of a rock-carved and stone masonry structure.⁹³



Figure 14. A ribbed vaulted building typical of the local architecture of the village of Murtaza.⁹⁴

⁹³ Falay, *ibid.*

⁹⁴ Falay *ibid.*

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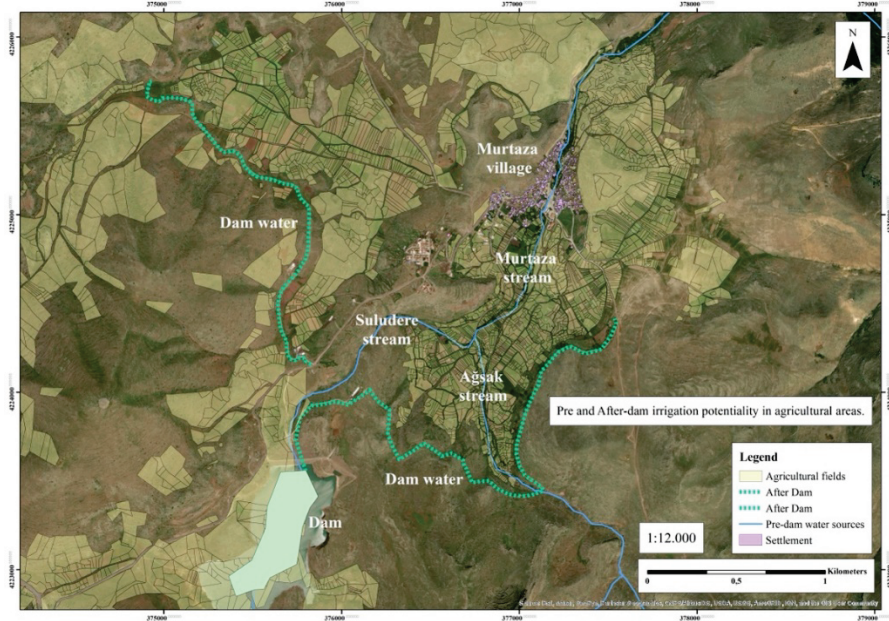


Figure 15. Agricultural lands and irrigation system in present-day's Murtaza village.⁹⁵

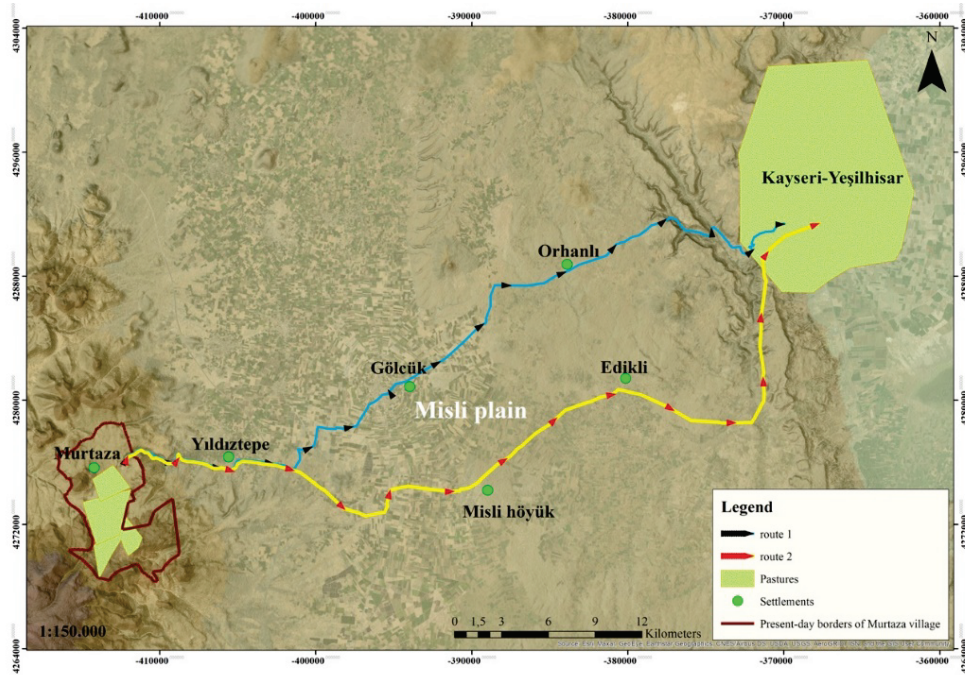


Figure 16. Seasonal migration route of Murtaza village shepherds.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Falay, ibid.

⁹⁶ Falay, ibid.



GTTAD

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