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An Evaluation of Sacred Place Names Between Türkeli and Ayancık in Terms of Religious Structures

Durmuş GÜR [1] **Cahit KARAKÖK** [2]

[1] Karabük University, Safranbolu ŞYD Vocational School, Department of Handicrafts, Traditional Handicrafts Program, Türkiye

[2] Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Art History, Department of Early Christian and Byzantine Arts, Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

Located in the Western Black Sea Region, the districts of Türkeli and Ayancık are situated to the west of Sinop along the Black Sea coast. Some of the place names between these two districts are believed to be associated with sacred figures from the Byzantine/Post-Byzantine period. Historical maps, portolans, archival documents, and scholarly studies reveal that the names of these settlements have either been entirely altered or modified over time, preserving their presence to the present day. The partial preservation of names such as Türkeli, Hamamlı (St. Anthonios), Türkeli Akbudak/Ayvasıl (St. Basileios), and Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu (St. Stephanos) from west to east strengthens the possibility of religious structures bearing the same names in these places. Apart from the Michael Arkhangelos/Archangels Church located in Ayancık's center, the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine religious structures in settlements named after sacred figures between the Ayancık and Türkeli districts have not survived to the present day. Among these settlements, only one of the churches known to have existed in Türkeli, Hamamlı (Ayandon), Türkeli, Güzelkent (Helaldı), Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu (İstefan), and Ayancık's central area has survived to the present. Despite this, the preservation of these names in scientific sources, along with the names of Akbudak Village (Ayvasıl), Ayaz Village, Hatip Village, and the intersection named Baliyös (Basileios) between Hatip and Taşgüney villages in Türkeli, have been examined and evaluated within the scope of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine religious architecture.

Türkeli ve Ayancık Arasındaki Kutsal Yer Adlarının Dini Yapılar Açısından Değerlendirilmesi

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ÖZET

Batı Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde yer alan Türkeli ve Ayancık ilçeleri Sinop'un batısında bulunur. Karadeniz sahilinde bulunan bu iki ilçe arasındaki bazı yerleşim adlarının Bizans/Post Bizans dönemi kutsal din adamlarıyla ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Tarihi haritalar, portulanlar, arşiv belgeleri ve bilimsel çalışmalarda bu yerleşim alanlarına ait adların zamanla ya tamamen değiştirilmiş ya da değişime uğrayarak günümüze kadar gelebildiği görülmektedir. Batıdan doğuya sırasıyla Türkeli, Hamamlı (Aziz Anthonios), Türkeli, Akbudak/Ayvasıl (Aziz Basileios) ve Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu (Aziz Stephanos) isimlerinin günümüze kadar kısmen korunmuş olması, buralarda tarihte aynı isimlerle anılan dini yapıların bulunma ihtimalini güçlendirmektedir. Ayancık Merkez'de yer alan Mikail Arkhangelos/Başmelekler Kilisesi dışında Ayancık-Türkeli ilçeleri arasında kutsal isimlerle anılan yerleşim alanlarındaki Bizans ve Post Bizans dönemi dini yapıları günümüze ulaşmamıştır. Bu yerleşim alanlarından Türkeli, Hamamlı (Ayandon), Türkeli, Güzelkent (Helaldı), Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu (İstefan) ve Ayancık Merkez'de varlığı bilinen kiliselerin sadece bir tanesi dışında diğerlerinin günümüze ulaşmaması, buna rağmen bilimsel kaynaklarda bu isimlerin korunması ve ayrıca Türkeli'ne bağlı Akbudak Köyü (Ayvasıl), Ayaz Köyü ve Hatip Köyü ile Taşgüney Köyü arasındaki Baliyös (Basileios) adındaki yol ayrımının isimleri, çalışma kapsamında incelenerek Bizans ve Post Bizans dini yapıları açısından değerlendirilmiştir.

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Corresponding Author: Durmuş GÜR, *durmusgur@gmail.com*

INTRODUCTION

In the Western Black Sea Region, in the districts of Türkeli and Ayancık, located on the Black Sea coast west of Sinop, place names are thought to be connected with important clergymen from the Byzantine period. In early Byzantine settlements within Paphlagonia, it is known that certain Christian clergy lost their lives while living by their religious teachings. Cemeteries, hidden retreats, rock-carved structures, and numerous other sites have been used for religious purposes as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Öztürk, 2013, p. 335). As the Early Byzantine period progressed, larger religious structures increasingly supplanted smaller worship sites. It has been established that certain of these structures are dedicated to significant religious figures, including saints, archangels, Jesus, Mary, John the Baptist, and the Church Fathers. Over time, these structures were regarded as sacred, and the names of the holy figures to whom they were dedicated gradually became associated with settlements, villages, districts, and counties. It has also been determined that some names of settlements in the Northwestern Black Sea region, preserved until the 20th century, were assigned by non-Muslims who lived in the area for this purpose.

In historical maps, portolans, archival documents, and scholarly works, some names of these settlement areas have either been completely changed or have undergone modifications to reach the present-day. The partial preservation of names such as Türkeli (St. Anthonios), Ayvasıl (St. Basileios), and Çaylıoğlu (St. Stephanos) from west to east strengthens the possibility of religious structures bearing the same names in these places. Apart from the Michael Arkhangelos/Archangels Church located in Ayancık's center, the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine religious structures in settlements named after sacred figures between the Ayancık and Türkeli districts have not survived to the present day. Among these settlements, only one of the churches known to have existed in Türkeli Hamamlı (Ayandon), Güzelkent (Helaldı), Çaylıoğlu (İstefan), and Ayancık's central area has survived to the present. Despite this, the preservation of these names in scientific sources, along with the names of Akbudak Village (Ayvasıl), Ayaz Village, Hatip Village, and the intersection named Baliyös (Basileios) between Hatip and Taşgüney villages in Türkeli, have been examined and evaluated within the scope of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine religious architecture.

Map 1
Sinop, Türkeli and Ayancık Map (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV)

It is possible to identify the original names of the settlements between Türkeli and Ayancık from historical maps. For instance, in Cassell's Weekly Dispatch Atlas (Railway Weller, 1863), the names Ayandun (Türkeli/Hamamlı) and Stefane (İstefan) are recorded, while the General Atlas of the World (George Aikman, 1856) includes Ayios Antonios (Türkeli/Hamamlı) and Stefanos (İstefan). Kiepert's map records Hamamlı Village as "Ajandıon (H. Antonios) Antonios Vgb. Between İstifan (İstefan/Çaylıoğlu) and Türkeli, settlements such as Emreli Neighborhood (Evraly), Ay Vasil (Ayvasıl),

Ajas (Ayaz), and Ker (Keş) are marked (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV). Despite Güzelkent being larger than these settlements today, it is striking that it is not represented by its historical name on maps, and many maps do not even mark it at all. Moreover, it is noteworthy that some of these names are indicated with the prefixes Hagios and Ayios, represented as Ay and H. respectively (Map 1).

In the nomenclature of settlement areas, this study references the works of Umar (1993), Nişanyan (2010-2024), and Sezen (2017). The findings derived from quantitative field studies conducted in these regions have been systematically compared and presented within a cohesive framework. The resultant data are delineated and elucidated under the subsequent subheadings.

FINDINGS

Settlement Areas with Sacred Names

It has been established that certain settlement names originally appeared in Greek before their modification. Researchers have identified several of these names in historical maps, travelogues, dictionaries, and academic literature. Furthermore, it is detected that some of these names were specifically adopted by non-Muslim communities concerning religious structures and settlement areas. Among these, while the existence of religious structures in locations such as Ayios Antonios, Ayios Stephanos, and Ayios Basileios is known, the religious structure in the settlement referred to as Ayios Basileios has not survived to the present day and is not mentioned in any scientific literature, making its exact location yet to be determined. The settlement areas deemed sacred by Christians have been examined under the following subheadings.

Ayios Antonios

The settlement known as Ayios Antonios, referring to Saint Anthonios, appears in historical maps, travelogues, and scholarly works as associated with Hamamlı Village in Türkeli. Currently, Hamamlı Village is located three kilometers south of the district center **(Figure 1).**

Figure 1
Sinop, Türkeli, View of the Central District from Hamamlı Village (D. Gür Archive, 2024)

In the first quarter of the 19th century, Bijişkyan noted the presence of a church named Ay Andon in the settlement of Ayandon (Bijişkyan, 1998, p. 61-62). Esemenli describes the Greek church in the village as a significant religious structure (Esemenli, 1990, p. 248-249). Historically, the village known by various names such as Antonios, Ayandon, and Hamamlı appears in different forms in scientific sources, the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, and historical maps. These names include Ajandıon, Ajandion, Ayandon, Ayandinn, Ayandun, Ayios Anton, Ayios Antonios, H. Antonios, Hagios Antonios,

and S. Antonius. The northernmost natural cape formation of Türkeli is marked on maps as Ayandon Cape (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV; Mendel, 1903, p. 332, No: 48; Umar, 1993, p. 143; Belke, 1996, p. 173; Bijişkyan, 1998, p. 61-62; Tomaschek, 2010, p. 78; İpek, 2016b, p. 303-310; Sezen, 2017, p. 66). This indicates that the name Ayios Anton, meaning Ayandon, evolved from Saint Basileios. Moreover, the usage of S. Anton in academic sources serves as an abbreviation of Saint, signifying the religious honorific (Mendel, 1903, p. 332, No: 48; Umar, 1993, p. 143; Belke, 1996, p. 173; Tomaschek, 2010, p. 78).

Ayandon appears frequently in archival documents from the late 16th century (Sezen, 2017, p. 768). It is plausible to suggest that the name H. Antonios derives from Saint Antonios (Umar, 1993, p. 143). Although the name Türkeli has been in use since 1924, the area referred to as Gemiyanı was designated as the district center in 1957. Today, Gemiyanı is a neighborhood within Türkeli (Sezen, 2017, p. 284, 768).

Ayios Basileios

The name of Akbudak Village, affiliated with present-day Türkeli, was changed to Ayvasil in 1907 and subsequently to Ayvasıl after 1946. The transformation of Ayvasil/Ayvasıl is known to have originated from the Greek Ayios Basileios. In Turkey, two additional villages with the same name exist: Kocapınar Neighborhood (Ayvasil) in Elmalı, Antalya, and Küçüklü Village (Ayvasil) in Bulancak, Giresun. The names of both these settlements are believed to have derived from the Greek Ayios/Hagios Basileios/Vasilios. Additionally, in modern Greece, a village named Agios Vasilios is known to exist in Langada (Langaza), near Thessaloniki. Historical maps specifically record this village as Ay Vasil, reflecting its dedication to Ayios Vasilios (Saint Basil) in Greek (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV).

The current designation of the settlement Akbudak as Ay Vasil on historical maps (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV) suggests a derivation from Ayios Basileios (Umar, 1993, p.143-144). Known today as Akbudak Village, the area lies 5.7 km from Güzelkent via road. In Güzelkent, the existence of a church, repurposed as a primary school in 1937, is documented (Yılmaz, 1987, p. 24; Yıldız, 2022, p. 22-24). Although the original name and inscription of this church have not survived, it remains plausible that it may have been dedicated to Saint Antonios, Saint Basileios, or another significant religious figure. However, without sufficient evidence, it is premature to assert a specific dedication.

Figure 2
An Overview from Sinop, Türkeli, Güzelkent to Taşgüney Village and Akbudak Village (D. Gür Archive, 2024)

Today, a location named Baliyös is known to exist between Hatip Village and Taşgüney Village in the district of Türkeli. This designation, used for the area between Hatip Stream near Hatip Village and Taşgüney Village, is believed to have originated from the Greek name Ayios Basileios, or Saint Basil (Figure 2).

Ayaz Village, currently part of the Türkeli district in Sinop, appears on historical maps as "Ajas" (Kiepert, 1902-1906, Map. aIV). This naming variation likely resulted from researchers and cartographers recording settlement names based on their interpretations or observations. Locally, the area is referred to in variations such as Ayaz or Ayas. The designation "Ayaz Village" is thought to derive from "Ayios-?" with "Ayios" or "Hagios", meaning "Saint", as the initial prefix.

Ayios Stephanos

Today, this settlement is known as the Çaylıoğlu neighborhood in the Ayancık district of Sinop. Historical records indicate that Ayancık was originally named İstefan, derived from "İstefane," until its name changed in 1890 (Demir, 2019a, p. 133). The Bijişkyan noted the presence of a significant Greek church in İstefan, situated approximately 20 km from Ayandon, which refers to the Hamamlı neighborhood of Türkeli, in the early 19th century (Bijişkyan, 1998, p. 61-62). The historical name of the Çaylıoğlu neighborhood is İstefan, which is known to have derived from Ayios/Hagios Stephanos. Scholars have examined the inscription found at Sulu Church (possibly a structure remnant or a cistern) in this area (Mendel, 1903, p. 333, No: 51) **(Figure 3).**

Figure 3
Sinop, Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu Village (A. C. Akyol and C. Karakök Archive, 2024)

The village, named after the Çaylıoğlu family, who still reside in the region, is located 11 kilometers west of Ayancık district. Historically referred to as Stephane and similar variants, the settlement was known by names such as İstefan and Istifan until the early 20th century (Counillon, 2004, p. 124; Gür, 2023, p. 49). Researchers have indicated that the name of the city derives from Στεφάνη/Stephanos, evaluated from historical and chronological perspectives (Gür and Köroğlu, 2023, p. 37). The name of the settlement Στεφάνη has been referred to in various forms throughout history. The settlement area is seen to have been named Stephane during the Roman and Byzantine periods. It is indicated as Stephane located west of Sinop in the Tabula Peutingeriana (Podossinov, 2012, p. 203-206). Scholars note that the city retained the name Stephane until the period of Turkish rule (Belke, 1996, p. 118-232; Darakoulis, 2012, Tab. 5, 9, fig. 1), including Stephane, Stephanie, Stephanis,

Stephanio/Stefanio, Stefano, San Stephano, Istafan, Istefan, and İstefan (Stephanus, 1849, p. 585; Ruge, 1929, p. 2342-2343; French, 1986, p. 483-484; Belke, 1996, p. 273; Dan, 2009, fig. 2; Gür and Köroğlu, 2023, p. 37). The settlement area is seen to have been named Stephane during the Roman and Byzantine periods. It is indicated as Stephane located west of Sinop in the Tabula Peutingeriana (Podossinov, 2012, p. 203-206). Scholars note that the city retained the name Stephane until the period of Turkish rule (Belke, 1996, p. 118-232; Darakoulis, 2012, Tab. 5, 9, Figure 1).

Today, Usta Burnu, shaped like a peninsula, possesses a completely natural structure. Gradually extending from east to west in terrace formations towards the Black Sea, Usta Burnu serves as the center of the historical settlement (Gökoğlu, 1952, p. 19; French, 2013, p. 173, Map. 5.2.1; Belke, 1996, p. 273; Gür and Köroğlu, 2023, p. 37). Research indicates that the name Stephane was also in use during the Byzantine period (Belke, 1996, p. 118, 232, 273). Surrounding the structure known as Sulu Kilise, significant quantities of architectural artifacts and ceramic fragments dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries are present (Gür, 2023, p. 56). Scholars consider that the now-lost religious structure was dedicated to Saint Stephanos; however, the lack of sufficient data limits the support for this viewpoint.

Archangelos Michael

Between 1875 and 1877, records indicate the presence of nine churches in Ayancık (Demir, 2019a, p. 133). In the archive document dated 25 October 1883, the name of the religious building built on the site of the historic church is given as follows Archangel Michael Church (T.C.B.O.A. İDH. 00910). Among these, only the Michael Arkhangelos Church/Archangels Church, located on the Turkish coastal road in Ayancık town center, has survived to the present day. According to the 1899 Kastamonu Province Yearbook, a total of seven churches existed in Ayancık. One of these churches is the Michael Arkhangelos Church in the town center, while the other structures have not endured to the present (İpek, 2016a, p. 23, Tab. 4; Timor, 1999, p. 129; Yavuz, 2017, p. 93, 95, 103) **(Figure 4).**

Figure 4
Sinop, Ayancık, Michael Archangelos Church (A.C. Akyol Archive, 2024)

In our research conducted within the framework of the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, we have identified numerous churches within the current borders of Ayancık and Türkeli districts. These structures primarily belong to the post-Byzantine period and are associated with Christian Orthodox

communities. While there are some scholarly studies available regarding these buildings and the religious activities of non-Muslim communities in the region (Tok, 2012, p. 111-126; İpek, 2016a, p. 17-40; İpek, 2016b, p. 300-311; Kaya and Yılmaz, 2016, p. 276-301; Demir, 2019a, p. 111-142; Demir, 2019b, p. 443-474; Gür, 2023, p. 45-67; Gür and Köroğlu, 2023, p. 35-50), our comprehensive field and archival research is ongoing.

CONCLUSION

The distance between the districts of Türkeli and Ayancık on the Black Sea coast is approximately 35 km. Several settlements between these two districts bear sacred names from the Byzantine period. The settlements identified from west to east are Türkeli, Hamamlı (Saint Antonios), Türkeli, Akbudak/Ayvasıl (Saint Basileios), and Ayancık, Çaylıoğlu/İstefan (Saint Stephanos). In addition, noteworthy settlements whose names have been partially preserved to the present day include Ayaz Village (Ayios/Hagios) and Baliyös (Ayios Basileios) (Map 2). It is known that non-Muslims inhabited these settlements until the population exchange. The possibility of finding religious structures bearing the same historical names as these settlements can be evaluated based on the Michael Arkhangelos Church /Archangels Church in Ayancık center.

Map 2

Settlement Areas Between Sinop, Türkeli, and Ayancık[1]

Currently, apart from the Michael Arkhangelos Church /Archangelos Church in Ayancık Center, the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine religious structures named after sacred names in the settlements between Ayancık and Türkeli have not survived to the present day. Among these settlements, churches in Türkeli Hamamlı (Ayandon), Güzelkent (Helaldı), Çaylıoğlu (İstefan), and Ayancık Center are known, but all except one have not reached the present. It has been identified that one of the historical churches that did not survive is located in Yukarı Helaldı. This church, which is noted to have remained empty for about 13 years after the population exchange, began to be used as a primary school in 1937 and was later demolished at an unknown date (Yılmaz, 1987, p. 24; Yıldız, 2022, p. 22-24).

The preservation of the names mentioned above in scientific sources, as well as the names of Akbudak Village (Ayvasıl), Ayaz Village, and the junction named Baliyös (Basileios) between Hatip Village and Taşgüney Village, provide evidence that the religious names in the region remained intact until the 20th century. It is known that there were numerous non-Muslim families in Türkeli and Ayancık until 1923-1924. In addition to the dense non-Muslim population living in Ayancık, Ottoman archive documents confirm the presence of non-Muslim communities in the 19th and 20th centuries in Türkeli's Hamamlı (Ayandon), Dayısta, Morza, Turhan (Tosos), and in Türkeli (Yarna) (İpek, 2016a, p. 29; Ünlü

[1] https://www.nisanyanyeradlari.com/ 24.10.2024, 15:12

and İskender-Kılıç, 2014, p. 597-617; İskender-Kılıç, Ünlü, and İpek, 2016, p. 67-300). At the beginning of the 1900s, non-Muslims and Turks lived peacefully together in the region (Demir, 2019b, p. 445). In 1914, it was known that there were 8,814 non-Muslims living in Sinop, among whom those residing in Gerze spoke Greek, while those in other villages spoke both Greek and Turkish. During World War I and the years of the national struggle, it was determined that non-Muslims lived in the settlements of Ayancık, including Dayısta, Düzler, Fergene, Güzelkent, Hamamlı, İstefan, Karasuyu, Kasapçı, Pinef, Turhan, and Yalı (Demir, 2019b, p. 445).

Some of the old names of villages in Ayancık are of Greek origin, and it has been determined that a significant portion of the population was Orthodox Christian before the population exchange. The former names of these settlements can be listed as follows: Konsa (Ağaçlı), Akçekise/Akçakilise (Akçakese), Sirna (Aliköy), İstefan (Ayancık and Çaylıoğlu), Güray (Aygördü), Kirindi/Krinita (Babaçay), Holuza (Bahçeli), Fergene Güney (Belpınar), Lefken/Lefkinos (Çamyayla), Dolisa (Doğlaşa), Duday (Erdemli), Tekfur (Hacıoğlu), Harzana (Harzana), Kirşe/Kilise (Köseyaka), Manastırtepe (Sansar), Cebelit/Gebelit (Tarakçı), Fergene (Uzunçam), Barna/Barlana (Ünlüce), and many more settlements[2].

It has been determined that the names of these and some nearby villages were later changed and Turkishized. During this process, efforts were made to control the population and settlement by relocating migrants to Sinop's Ayancık, Ayandon, Helaldı, and surrounding villages during the exchange period, alongside changing the names of the settlements (Çevik, 2020, p. 48).

It has been determined that some of the migrants who arrived in Sinop after 1923 were relocated to the Ayancık and Türkeli regions. It was planned to resettle 2,000 of these individuals in Ayancık (Cengizhan, 2005, p. 108; Kaya and Yılmaz, 2016, p. 278-279, Tab. 1). The names of the settlement areas began to be changed during the Ottoman period and continued into the Republican era. In particular, the names of settlements that were not in Turkish were changed through official circulars in 1925, 1940, and after 1950 (Kütükoğlu, 2012, p. 156-157). It is known that some village and settlement names in Türkeli and Ayancık also witnessed this transformation process. The renaming of many villages and neighborhood names, especially those like Ayandon and İstefan, serves as an example of this tendency.

In the Ottoman book titled "Son Teşkilatı Mülkiyede Köylerimizin Adları", it is observed that the historical names of some villages around Ayancık and Türkeli have been preserved since 1928 (Anonymous, 1928, p. 666-668). In addition to these names, there are many places in the region with the names Kıran and Kilise. It is known that terms like Kıran and Gebran were used to refer to non-Muslims (Avşin-Güneş, 2015, p. 18-19). In Samsun, Bartın, and Karabük, there are similarly known residential areas and neighborhoods named Kıran, where non-Muslims live. Kıranköy Mahallesi, located in the Safranbolu district of Karabük, was a neighborhood exclusively inhabited by non-Muslims until around 1923-1924. The term "Church" is preferred not only for the identification of Christian religious structures but also for ruins or remnants of buildings. Between Türkeli and Ayancık, there are many places named Kavaklık. Although these areas do not solely consist of poplar trees, the naming of these locations as Kavaklık has raised questions about their names.

The historical names of some villages in Ayancık indicate the naming of non-Muslims. Since they are so numerous, it is not possible to specify and explain them one by one. Only those within the scope of the study have been evaluated.

It is observed that the historical names of several settlements, including Tekfur (Hacıoğlu), Fergene (Belpınar), Lefken (Çamyayla), and İstefan (Çaylıoğlu), were used in 1928 (Anonymous, 1928, p. 666).

[2] https://www.nisanyanyeradlari.com/ 26.10.2024, 16:11

The village currently known as Hacıoğlu was historically referred to as Tekfur (Anonymous, 1928, p. 666-668). The name Tekfur is used to denote a Christian lord. There are many historical settlements in Turkey with the name Tekfur. It is known that the historical names of places such as Bolu, Gerede, Ertuğrulköy, Çanakkale, Gelibolu, Tayfurköy, Mersin, Tarsus, Esenler Neighborhood, Samsun, Bafra, Yeşilköy, Silifke, Esenbel Neighborhood, and Ayvacık, as well as Yunus Emre Neighborhood, were Tekfur[3].

In Türkeli, the historical names of some villages are known to have remained unchanged, and some of these names continue to be used today. Among them, certain names stand out: Marbel (Akçabül), Sırtıvan (Alagöz), Kalasa (Direkli), Dayısta (Gaziler), Kirtoz (Gündoğdu), Cible/Cibliye (Gökçealan), Moğan (Işıklı), Morza (Düzler), Banamar (Karabey), Coray (Oymayaka), Cabanay (Taşgüney), Tosos (Turhan), Bolla (Yapraklı), Yacıköyü (Yazıcı), and Reyfez (Yeşiloba) are known to have originated from the local non-Muslim population (İpek, 2016a, p. 29). The old name of the village Gündoğdu, Kirtoz, is particularly noteworthy. In Greek, the name Kirtoz has various meanings, including "protruding" and "curved." Archive records from 1907 mention both the names Kirtas and Kirtoz and the village has been known by the same name since 1928. It is believed that this name derives from the Greek Kyrtos/Kirtoss and was assigned by the non-Muslims who resided in the region until around 1923-1924[4].

The houses in the settlement areas named Kirtoz and Kirtozaltı, which reflect the region's wooden house architecture (Gül, 2018, p. 48), suggest that this name was likely used by the local Greeks to emphasize the aesthetic aspects of the settlement and its structures. The presence of locations such as Kilise Tepe in Yenigüler Village (Türbe) and Maden Village in Ayancık indicates that the archaeological remains in these areas should be considered within the context of these names.

It would be quite accurate to state that the settlements named after Saints Antonios, Basileios, Stephanos, and Arkhangelos began to be associated with religious structures in the region, or that the names of sacred places were preserved through the churches built later.

There are numerous churches in the Black Sea region dedicated to holy figures. Some of these churches have survived to the present day, while others have been destroyed. Based on the existing religious structures, the names of these holy figures have been preserved in churches belonging to Christian Orthodox communities (Yılmaz and Gür, 2022, p. 105-126). The Christian Orthodox clergy has built many churches[5]. The influence of certain sacred religious names has begun to extend beyond the religious structures to impact the region and its settlements. Although the names of these settlements have been changed, the names of the holy figures identified in this publication were preserved in Anatolia until 1923-1924 and thereafter continued to be maintained by the migrants who relocated to Greece.

Furthermore, during the population exchange of 1923-1924, it was observed that the non-Muslims from Sinop in general, as well as those from Ayancık and Türkeli, migrated to Greece. Due to their connections to the Hamamlı settlement in Türkeli and their affection for Sinop, they established communities in Greece's Epirus region, naming their villages Nea Sinopi and Arkhangelos. This situation indicates that the historical name of Hamamlı Village in Türkeli referred to as Ayandon due to Saint Antonios, has been preserved in Ayandon Village in Kesriye, Greece, as a result of the population exchange. Similarly, the Michael Arkhangelos Church in Ayancık has continued to be commemorated in Arkhangelos Village in the Epirus region of Greece. Additionally, the renaming of the settlement called Kantzas, located 15 km from Nea Sinopi, to Stephanie/Stefani in 1927, as reported in the official

[3] https://www.nisanyanyeradlari.com/?y=Tekfur&ul=Hepsi&o=c&s=1&n=0 26.10.2024, 16:11
[4] https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BCndo%C4%9Fdu,_T%C3%BCrkeli#cite_note-3 26.10.2024, 15:29
[5] To see these religious buildings, see: (Karaca, 2008).

gazette, serves as a reminder of the historical name Stephanie associated with Çaylıoğlu Village in Sinop. This situation illustrates that the sacred place names that experienced a disruption due to the population exchange in Anatolia continued to be preserved in Greece thereafter.

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