

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

A CASE STUDY : HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF URBANIZATION IN SOUTHERN PART  
OF TURKEY IN HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

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The papers presented have made it very clear that Cilicia was located at a crossroads between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, and was a place of cultural interaction for thousands of years. The results of excavations and other research conducted in the area demonstrate that the historical development of Cilicia was very active. Here I would like to present some information with regard to the urbanization of the area between the Hellenistic period, which began in the second half of the 4th century BC, and the Roman period, which commenced in the mid 1st century BC and ended in the second half of the 3rd century AD. However, within the limited time available to me, it will only be possible to present an outline of the

subject.

Within the time span under consideration, approximately six hundred years, the major activity in the area was urbanization, a process which reached its peak between the 1st century BC and the end of the 1st century AD. To understand this process better, we need to talk briefly about the pre-Hellenistic settlements. Cilicia can be subdivided into two regions according to differences in the topography: the western part is termed Rough (Mountainous) Cilicia (called Kilikia Tracheia or Cilicia Aspera in the ancient written sources), whilst the eastern part is called Plain Cilicia (or, as the ancient authors called it, Kilikia Pedias or Cilicia Campestris). In examining the urbanization process, we can distinguish four basic groups of settlements:

- 1) Cities founded on or adjacent to older settlements
- 2) Cities that were the continuation of colonies
- 3) Cities either founded or renamed by the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings
- 4) Cities re-founded when Seleucid domination ended and Roman domination began

### **I. Settlements founded on or adjacent to older settlements**

Plain Cilicia (called Qedi in Hittite, and Que in Assyrian texts) had been intensively inhabited since prehistoric times. Zephyrion was located on the hill where the Mersin Opera House and the Museum stand today. This place is a few kilometres south of Mersin-Yümüktepe, one of the most ancient settlements in the region.

Tarsus (or Tarsa as in the Hittite texts) is one of the oldest cities of this group. Although the known archaeological finds do not provide us with a precise foundation date for Tarsus, Gözlükule, the mound within the city borders, dates back to the 2nd millennium BC. In the future, we hope to find out more about the chronological sequence of Tarsus-Gözlükule (from

Hittite to Roman times) from the excavation project which has been proposed and planned by Professor Dr. Ash zyar.

Adana is likewise one of the oldest settlements of Plain Cilicia. The city's antiquity is demonstrated not only by the Hittite origin of the word 'Adana', but also by the identification of the "People of Danuna" as the inhabitants of Adana on a bilingual (Hittite hieroglyphic and Phoenician) seal dated to the 8th century BC.

Another old settlement in Plain Cilicia is ancient Mopsuestia, located at Misis (modern Yakapınar). The name means "the Hearth of Mopsos" and refers to Mopsos the Oracle, the son of Apollo in mythology. According to the tradition, Mopsos founded numerous cities in Pamphylia and Cilicia, two of which were given his own name: Mopsuestia and Mopsukrene. A proposed location for Mopsukrene is the vicinity of Kiriit village, north of Tarsus. Muksas, the founder of the Adana dynasty according to the Karatepe inscriptions, was most probably Mopsos. The excavations at the Misis mound have proved that this site had been inhabited since the Chalcolithic period. Although the name of Mopsuestia in the Hittite period is unknown, some scholars suggest that a settlement called Pabri must be located somewhere here. The earliest ancient source to mention the name of Mopsuestia is Theopompos of Chios, a writer from the 4th century BC.

Kirhu, the capital city of the Kingdom of Pinidu, is one of the earliest settlements of Rough Cilicia. Pinidu is identified with Meydanıkkale, which lies near modern G lnar.

Ancient Kelenderis, which has been identified with modern Aydınçık (previously Gilinderes), is one of the most ancient settlements of Rough Cilicia. Although in some ancient sources Kelenderis is defined as a colony of the island of Samos, it is now suggested that there were already native inhabitants here before the arrival of the Samians.

Selinus, called Sallune in the year 557/556, was one of the cities at the western end of Rough Cilicia, the region then known as Pinidu .

## II. Cities that were the continuation of colonies

From the mid 8th century BC onwards, once peace was restored in Hellas, the Greek colonization movements took place. The first waves were directed towards the Mediterranean area. These reached the coastline of Plain Cilicia at the beginning of the 7th century, as we learn from the ancient sources (Thucydides I.12). Furthermore, the ancient sources state that the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BC) won a victory over the colonists both at sea and on land, and he erected a victory monument at a city near Anchialos, the location of which is not yet known (Arrian, *Anabasis* II, 5, 2 ff). This event indicates that the coastline of Plain Cilicia remained largely free of colonization movements.

Unlike in Plain Cilicia, the colonists in Rough Cilicia founded a number of "apoikia" without meeting any resistance from the locals. 'Apoikia' means a colony-settlement which is entirely independent of the mother-city. One of these was Nagidos, located at modern Bozyazi (near Aydıncık), which was claimed to have been established by Samian colonists (Pomponius Mela 77 "*Celenderis et Nagido Samiorum Coloniae*"). This land must have been inhabited by indigenous people before the Samians set foot here. As we have mentioned earlier, this must also have been true of other Samian colonies on the coast of Rough Cilicia.

There was a settlement called Holmoi, at modern Tasucu, to the east of Aphrodisias (Skylax 102; *Anonymi stadiasmus sive periplus maris magni* 180 vd.; Strabo XIV 5, 4). When we consider the locations of the apoikiai, it is clear that the sites chosen were not only natural ports with good defensive positions, essential for sea trade, but also they had cultivable land. This may indicate that the newcomers had an agricultural background rather than a mercantile one.

According to Strabo, there was a colony called Soloi at the border between Rough and

Main Cilicia. The founders of this site were from the city of Lindos, on Rhodes. Soloi is identified with modern Viransehir near Mezitli, a few kilometres east of Mersin (Skylax 102; Strabo, XIV 5, 8; Pomponius Mela 1. 71; Eustathios, Dionysios Per. 875).

Mallos, suggested to have been a colony of Argos, is one of the most ancient settlements of Main Cilicia (Arrian, *Anabasis* II 5, 9). It is situated at the Kızıtahta village of Karatah in the Adana district. Tradition has it that the founders of Mallos were Amphilochos and Mopsos from Troy (Strabo 14, 5, 16, 676).

### III. Cities either founded or renamed by the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings

The Hellenistic period began in the region with the Battle of Issus in 333 BC, when the Persian army was defeated and driven out of Cilicia by Alexander the Great. During this period not only were the existing cities restored but also new ones were founded. The Persian satrapal borderline of Cilicia remained unchanged throughout Hellenistic times. The region was a focal point in the serious power struggles between the commanders of Alexander the Great following his death in 323 BC. The first winner was Perdikkas. He captured Cilicia in 323. In 321, after the Treaty of Triparadeisos, Antipatros took over control of the region. For the two years following the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, Cilicia was ruled by Pleistarchos, the son of Perdikkas, and then from 299 BC by Demetrios Poliorketes. Demetrios went back to Greece in 296 BC. Thereafter began the domination of Seleukos Nikator, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty.

In the 3rd century BC, most probably immediately after capturing the region, Seleukos founded the city of Rhossos, which was located at modern Arsuz, at the south end of the Gulf of Iskenderun. The mound and the man-made water channels of the city are still visible. Seleucid Rhossos became part of Roman Cilicia in 64 BC. During the reign of Augustus, the

settlement was given not only the status of a "free city", but also that of a "sacred city", with a temple which had the right to shelter refugees. Rhossos lay outside the borders of the province of Cilicia when the regional administration was rearranged in Vespasian's reign.

Seleukos founded the city of *Alexandreia kat' Isson* in order to immortalize the name of Alexander the Great. This city, of which no remains are extant, was located in the *Esentepe* district of modern *Iskenderun*, near *Hatay*.

It is believed that Seleukos founded the city of *Aigeai* in order to secure his control over the northern part of the Gulf of Issus. It was situated at the site of the modern town of *Yumurtalık*, *Adana*. The remains of some Roman buildings have survived.

Seleukos also founded *Seleukeia*, named after himself and located on the *Kalykadnos* (Gksu) river in central Cilicia. The settlement gave him control over the strategically and economically important *Kalykadnos* valley. The *Holmoi* (*Tahucu*) people were forced to move into the newly-founded city.

During this period, most of Rough Cilicia was under the control of the priests of the Temple of Zeus in *Olba*. Within their lands they were independent of the Seleucid Empire. It is believed that the construction of the temple of Zeus *Olbios*, which was the most important sanctuary in the area, was initiated during the reign of Seleukos Nikator.

After the assassination of Seleukos Nikator in September 281, his son Antiochos I succeeded him. Whilst Antiochos was busy eliminating a revolt in North Syria, Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, the king of Egypt and one of Alexander's successors, occupied the Cilician coast. Cilicia remained in the hands of the Ptolemaic dynasty from 280 until 271 BC.

It is very likely that the Rough Cilician cities of *Berenike* and *Arsinoe* were founded during the reign of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos (285-246). The exact location of these sites is unknown, but it is suggested that they lay in the area of modern *Bozyazi*, to the east of *Anamur*.

*Anemurium*, another important city of Rough Cilicia, was located 5 kilometres west of

Anamur. Its history goes back to the 4th century BC. Livius mentions its name in his account of the campaign of Antiochos III against the Ptolemaic army. Anemurium began to flourish in the early 1st century BC. Before that, it had remained in the shadow of Nagidos.

In the year 260 BC, following the death of Antiochos I, his son and successor Antiochos II Theos took control over the east coast of Cilicia, with the support of the Rhodians. However a year later, after his death in 246 BC, Ptolemaios III Euergetes recaptured the Cilician coast. Thereafter, by the treaty settlement of Euergetes and Seleukos II in 241 BC, it was agreed that the entire coastal region of Cilicia would remain under the control of the Ptolemaic Empire.

However, in 223 BC, with Antiochos III's accession to the throne, a new era began for the Seleucid Empire. In 197 BC he organized a great military campaign against the Ptolemaic Empire and marched into Cilicia to expel them from Asia Minor. In the early stages of his campaign he conquered the cities of Korakesion, Zephyrion, Soloi, Aphrodisias, Korykos, and Selinus. However, he lost all his gains when he was defeated by the Romans in 189. By the Treaty of Apamea of 188 BC, he was compelled to relinquish his claims over Anatolia, as far as the Taurus Mountains, and also Rough Cilicia up to the Kalykadnos valley. According to this same treaty, no Seleucid navy was allowed to pass west of the Sarpedon Cape (at modern Tahucu).

In 187, a year after the Treaty of Apamea, Antiochos died and his son Seleukos IV succeeded to the throne, followed, after his death in 175, by Antiochos IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC). Antiochos restored some of the old cities, and renamed them as had many of his predecessors in Hellenistic Cilicia. The aim of this practice was to make these cities appear as if they had been newly founded. We are aware of such cases from the evidence of coinage and inscriptions.

For example, during the reign of Antiochos IV, Tarsus was renamed as ANTIOCHEIA PROS TO KUDNO, meaning Antiocheia on the Kydnos (=the modern Tarsos river), as

proved by the coinage known from this period.

Another city renamed at that time was Adana. On the coins issued during the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes, the name of the city was A meaning ANTIOCHEIA PROS TO SARO, Antiocheia on the Saros (=modern Seyhan river).

Another city renamed by Antiochos IV Epiphanes was Mallos. On inscriptions, the name of the city is recorded as Antiocheia on the Pyramos (=modern Ceyhan): ANTIOCHEIA PROS TO PYRAMO,

The name of Mopsuestia was also changed by Antiochos IV Epiphanes. The coinage shows that it became SELEUKEIA PROS TO PYRAMO Seleukeia on the Pyramos.

Here is another settlement renamed by Antiochos IV. On both the coins and inscriptions connected with the city of Kastabala, the name of the city appears as IEROPOLITON PROS TO PYRAMO which means the sacred city on the Pyramos.

The city of Oenoandos, the suggested location of which is at modern Gözene, approximately 8 km southwest of Erzin in the Hatay, was renamed Epiphaneia. The coinage of the city attests that this renaming took place during the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes.

The location of Seleukeia on the Gulf of Issos has not yet been identified. The name of SELEUKEIA PROS TOS ISSIKO KOLPO appears only on two bronze coins issued in the 2nd century BC. It is very likely that this is just the renaming of an old city situated on the Gulf of Iskenderun, as in the cases mentioned above.

#### **IV. Cities, which re founded when Seleucid domination ended and Roman domination began**

This fourth group can be subdivided into two:

a) Settlements either founded or renamed by various local kings who were the allies of



Rome before the Roman domination in Cilicia

b) Cities founded as a result of the resettlement policy of the Romans. When the Romans established their provincial system in Cilicia, those people who were formerly either nomads or pirates were compelled to settle down. The historical events of the 1st century BC to 1st century AD were especially bound up with this policy, which shaped the fate of the cities.

The very first event involving Rome and Cilicia was the military campaign required against the pirates of the region. From the mid 2nd century BC onwards, piracy had not only brought an end to Rhodian domination of the Mediterranean, but had also become a serious threat for maritime activity in general. In 102 BC, the Roman Senate appointed Marcus Antonius to command the mission. The aim was to destroy the pirate bases, especially those in the coastal area of Rough Cilicia. Whether or not he achieved his aim is uncertain, though the subsequent reappearance of piracy indicates that he was not entirely successful.

The subsequent Roman efforts made against the pirates, first by Sulla in 97/96 BC, then in 84 BC by L. Licinius Murena, the propraetor of Anatolia, and finally by Cn. Cornelius Dolabella, propraetor of Cilicia between 80 and 79 BC, were unable to defeat them. But in 78 BC the Roman Senate elected P. Servilius Vatia as commanding officer in Cilicia for five years, and he ultimately overwhelmed the pirates, on land as well as at sea. In honour of this achievement he was given the name Isauricus.

While this was happening in Rough Cilicia, the Seleucid domination over Plain Cilicia, which had existed since the 4th century BC, was beginning to weaken as a result of internal power struggles over the kingship, which caused confusion and a power vacuum in both Plain Cilicia and other Seleucid lands.

During this chaotic situation, an event that can be considered a turning point in the history of the area took place. In 83 BC, Tigranes, the king of Armenia, who was trying to gain access to the Mediterranean, defeated the Seleucid king Antiochos X, and occupied the cities of Plain Cilicia. The ancient sources claim that the inhabitants of the conquered cities were

forced to resettle in Tigranokerta (modern Silvan-Diyarbakır), the new capital city which he founded. Some of these people died on the road, a journey of hundreds of kilometres.

In 69, L. Licinius Lucullus, the Roman commander, marched to Anatolia in order to make war against Mithridates VI, the king of Pontus. In the course of this campaign, he captured Tigranokerta, the capital of Tigranes, who was allied with Mithridates. At the beginning of the year 68 he sent the Cilicians back to their homes from where they had been drafted 15 years previously. Lucullus entitled Antiochos XIII Asiaticos as king of the Seleucid kingdom of Syria and Cilicia.

However, as a result of his opponents' complaints, Lucullus was withdrawn from his position by the Roman Senate. He was charged with being unsuccessful in his war against Mithridates. In his place, the Senate appointed Cn. Pompeius Magnus. His task was to deal with the pirates who were allied with Mithridates. He was authorised with exceptional powers throughout the Mediterranean area, within a territorial limit of 50 miles. Finally, in the summer of 67, Pompeius defeated the pirates at Coracesium (Alanya). As a result of his victory, the piracy which for centuries had been a great threat in the Mediterranean area, was effectively eliminated. Most of the pirate population were, in fact, formerly farmers. However, when the power vacuum brought anarchy and terror to the region, these people were left with virtually no choice but to become pirates in order to survive. Following the victory of Pompeius, they were settled down in the partially abandoned cities of eastern Cilicia, such as Adana, Mallos and Epiphaneia. Ancient authors state that Pompeius settled most of the ex-pirates at Soli and, following the practice of the Hellenistic kings, he renamed the city after himself, as Pompeiopolis.

This was the first step towards Roman domination of the strategically very important Plain Cilicia, an importance fully apparent to Pompeius in relation to his plans to make war against Mithridates and his allies. The cities of Plain Cilicia were brought under the direct protection of Rome. Since the citizens of these places considered this event the beginning of

a new era, they adopted the year 67 as the initial date for their calendars. The dates on the Mallos, Epiphaneia, Mopsuestia and Alexandreia kat'Isson coins and inscriptions were given according to this new regulation. Pompeius had bestowed the status of "free city" (*civitas libera*) on Mopsuestia. In either 66 or 65 BC, he assigned the same status to Pompeiopolis (formerly Soloi), where he established a community of veterans together with re-settled ex-pirates, and here too the new calendar was adopted.

The second step taken by Pompeius to secure Roman control in Cilicia was the dethroning of Antiochos X<sup>III</sup>, the Seleucid king who had been recognized by Lucullus. By this action it was being indicated that Rome was a more reliable protector than the Seleucids, who had by now been effectively eliminated in the region. Pompeius, based on his status of *impenium proconsulare maius*, given to him by the Roman Senate, reorganized the Cilician province with the annexation of Plain and Rough Cilicia, Lycia, Pamphylia, Pisidia and Cyprus. Tarsus became the provincial capital.

However, this Cilician province established by Pompeius in 64 BC had vanished by 40 BC, when it was given as a wedding present to Cleopatra, the Ptolemaic queen, by her husband Marcus Antonius.

Later, the mountainous part of western Cilicia was handed over to Archelaos I, the Cappadocian king, by Octavianus Augustus, the sole authority in the Roman Empire after defeating Marcus Antonius at Actium in 31 BC. In the meantime, some parts of Plain Cilicia were left with Tarkondimotos II Philopator, the son of an ex-pirate called Tarkondimotos.

In AD 17 Tiberius, the successor of Octavianus Augustus, took the opportunity afforded by Tarkondimotos II's death, and annexed his territory, together with some areas of Plain Cilicia, to the Roman province of Syria. Thereafter, Antiocheia replaced Tarsus as the new official capital of the territory. In AD 20, Tiberius founded the city of Augusta on the Saros (modern Seyhan), located to the north of Adana. The calendar of Augusta, the remains of which have been covered by the modern Seyhan Dam Lake, starts with the year 20. The land of Zeus

Olbios's sanctuary at Olba, which had been the property of the Teukron, the dynasty of priest-kings, also became a Roman possession. Here, Tiberius founded the city of Diokaisareia in AD 17. In later centuries, the southern parts of this temple-state were included in the growing lands of the cities of Elaiussa-Sebaste and Korykos.

In AD 38, Caligula took from the Syrian province the lands of Cilicia and Commagene and gave them to his friend since childhood, Antiochos IV, the Commagenian king (AD 37-8).

In either AD 51 or 52, to demonstrate his loyalty, Antiochos IV founded Neronias in Plain Cilicia in honour of the Imperial family. The city was named after Nero, who had been adopted by Claudius in AD 50. Neronias was located at Düziçi, in the Adana district. It was renamed Eirenepolis in the reign of Vespasian.

Later, in the AD 72, Vespasian reorganized the eastern provinces. As part of this rearrangement he dethroned Antiochos IV, accused of disloyalty, and he took over his lands. The Commagenian part of those lands was united with the Syrian province, but from the lands of eastern and western Cilicia he created a new provincial territory, namely the province of Cilicia. Tarsus was the capital of this new province, which extended from Kodrigai, near Sanseki Castle (north of Iskenderun), in the east, to the Sedre Çayı in the west. A governor (*legatus Augusti pro praetore*) was appointed as the imperial administrator, but no legion was assigned to the province.

The last Roman city in the lands of Cilicia was Flaviopolis, founded by Vespasian in 73 in the northeast of Plain Cilicia. Although we have no firm evidence, it is commonly believed to be located at Kadirli in the Adana district.

The concomitant processes of Roman urbanization and Romanization had begun in the region in the 1st century BC and lasted until the third quarter of the 1st century AD, with the foundation of the new city of Flaviopolis. However, in the period extending from the 1st century AD, until AD 260 when the campaign of the Sassanid king Shapur I took place, changes occurred in the social and political structures of the Cilician cities, according to the

nature of various historical events. During the Sassanid campaign, not only was the Roman emperor Valerian captured by Shapur I but also almost all the Cilician cities as far as Selinus were sacked. This event is considered the end of Roman domination over Cilicia. The changes in the cities also affected urban building activities, which were especially concentrated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The purpose of these activities was to create city centres based on a standard construction plan.

When we look at the historical development of urbanization in Cilicia, it is clear that from prehistoric times until the end of the Hellenistic Age inhabitation was concentrated in the coastal areas and adjacent parts, since maritime transportation was more practical and faster than overland movement. However, when the whole of Cilicia became a Roman province in AD 72, not only were transportation facilities built between the coastal and inner Anatolian lands, but also peace was secured in the mountainous areas. Thereafter, inland settlements also began to appear. In particular, those in the inland parts of Plain Cilicia enjoyed large-scale progress as a result of the eastern campaigns at the beginning of the 3rd century AD leaving the old coastal cities in their shadow. The development of urbanization in the first three centuries of the Roman Empire can be comprehended, to a certain degree, with the help of various sources of evidence: ancient written sources, archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic. However, current and future archaeological and historical-geographic investigations in the region will surely provide an opportunity to obtain more detailed information on the matter.