

Summary

New Discoveries and some Observations at Melas Valley

This treatise contains the preliminary report of the first wide-ranging survey conducted in a section of Melas Valley, most of the ancient settlements of which were not treated in sufficient detailed until today.

The Manavgat River defines the areas' geography of settlements. Rising in the south of the Kimyos Plain, the river joins the Sögüt Brook coming from the south of Ormana to its west, and then flows south to the west of Gödene within its enclosed topography. Melas has become a shelter and a habitat for numerous settlements throughout several millennia, specifically for the mountain-dwelling Pamphylians and not-so-developed tribes such as the primitive Homonads who penetrated from north to south into valley. Among the ancient settlements defined in the vicinity of Akseki, there are places with ancient names like Etenna, Cotenna, Erymna and those where ancient names are at present unknown, e.g. İbradı, Unulla, Minareli, Sinan Hoca, Güzelsu, Cevizli and Bademli, in addition to others of a smaller size.

It is understood that the specific character of architecture in general in the Akseki region is achieved by the use of a combination of wood-and-rough stone, mostly still standing today which stems from the region's past as a result of its natural conditions and the local materials which have not changed much from the past to the present. The still standing structures of the later period, which resemble ancient architecture, to be describe later, have remained from the local Rums who composed the majority in the census figures at the turn of the 20th century but left Anatolia in the first quarter of the 20th century. In the Turkish period, the building technique that was sustained is seen to be based on the same principles with new contributions. Also, the means of subsistence, dependent upon animal husbandry and forestry have seen little change because of the limited areas for agriculture and the unstable weather conditions.

The mountainous region north of the Pamphylia plain was dominated by Etanna, the largest of the area. In antiquity, the land was densely covered with olive trees. The remnants of numerous buildings used for olive oil processing are still frequently seen today. The oil trade provided high level of prosperity in Etanna and its environs. Whilst the remains of Etenna reflect this wealth the other settlements of the Melas Valley failed to achieve a proper quality and growth because of the social and political disorders, which engaged these primitive communities and prevented the milieu being established civilization. Since the oil was exported from Side and Aspendos, Etenna functioned as an intermediary by virtue of its location between Pamphylia and Pisidia.

These facts were gleaned as a result of the investigations carried out at a preliminary level: Any ancient remnant is not found in the center of Akseki, which developed out of a marketplace and had the old name "Marulye", but some large-and-small scale settlements are identified in the surrounding area. There are some vestiges in Bademli, also known as "Bodamyra". At Salihler or "Hotarya" the remains of a clock tower and a settlement are visible, and the hill they rest on is called the "Herse Castle". Güzelsu is known as Sülles. There are ruins of some settlements on the "Hisar (Fortress) Mountain" behind the village, and in the gorge there are remains of settlements. About 4 km south of Üzümdere, the ancient road "Gavuryolu" passed by. It is stated that "there are blocks with inscription" among the settlement ruins 3 km away from Minareli, known as "Menerge". There are remains again at Sinanhoca with the old name "Ivgal". Also, the ruins of a castle, stone blocks of the Roman period and the remains of Byzantine wall near Cendeve village should be mentioned.

It can be seen that quite a lot of place names other than those of the settlements around Akseki have reached our day from Antiquity, as has been the case, for example, with Günkaya once called Emerye, Dutluca Gelves, Sadıklar Gravganda, and Emiraşıklar Zomana. The names of larger settlements like Etenna, Kotenna or Erymna have continued, through with less deformation, one becoming "Gödene" and the other "Ormana". The place names indicate that ancient settlements in the region had been more densely located than the remains observed today would suggest.

In conclusion, according to authors the purpose of this study is to contribute towards illuminating the Valley's past and its connections with neighboring cultures by drawing the researchers' attention to the archaeological values of the region.