

SUMMARY

**Studies of the Lycian Middle Ages and the Excavation at the
St. Nicolas Church in Demre**

In this article, studies related to Lycia in the Middle Ages are reviewed. It must be pointed out that, of all the Byzantine churches, only the Dereađzı basilica has been studied in a monograph. On the other hand, there exist many articles concerning various churches in the same region. Academic works on architectural sculpture, on mosaics and frescoes are limited. Of the military constructions, only the Dereađzı and Myra fortresses have been studied. There are few publications concerning the urban settlements, historical geography and history of the region in the Middle Ages.

The majority of surveys and excavations in the region are related to the Prehistoric, Hellenistic and Roman periods. Thus the history and development of Lycia in Late Antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages can at present only be considered in outline.

The excavation at the St. Nicolas Church in Myra-Demre will shed light on many questions concerning this period. Through this work we discovered hitherto unknown additions to the north east and north side of the church. At the east side of the NE corner room of the basilica we discovered an annex, with three buildings; the annex attains the length of 28 meters. On its N side is a longitudinal arcaded bay, with a podium on the east end. We started recently to excavate a building at the N side of the basilica. This two storied building may have been the Episcopal Residence at Myra.

It must be emphasized, that this excavation has unearthed an untouched stratigraphy which had been covered by a 6 meter high layer of alluvial material. Consequently this provided the material for a scientific evaluation. The small finds, such as decorative sculpture, ceramics, glass, metal work and coins, which dated from the 5th to the 19th century provide information about the history of the Metropolis of Myra, and of the most Holy Church of St. Nicolas. Furthermore, these findings will help in understanding the commercial and cultural relations of Myra, and its harbour city Andriake, with other Mediterranean cities and also with the countries in the near East.

The work at St. Nicolas has provided us with new material concerning the building phases of the church. The first phase can be dated to the 1st half of the 6th century; the second phase to the 2nd half of the 9th century, and the third phase before 1195, most probably between the middle of 11th to beginning of the 12th century.