

# Historical Geography of Lykaonia Region

Asuman Baldiran, Erdener Pehlivan

**Abstract**—In this study, the root of the name Lykaonia and the geographical area defined as Lykaonia Region are mentioned. In this context, information concerning the settlements of Paleolithic Age, Neolithic Age and Chalcolithic Age are given place. Particularly the settlements belonging to Classical Age are localized and brief information about the history of these settlements is provided. In the light of this information, roads of Antique period in the region are evaluated.

**Keywords**—Ancient Cities, Central Anatolia, Historical Geography, Lykaonia Region.

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN Hittite texts, the overall region of Central Anatolia is called “Luviya”. Hittites divided Anatolia into different geographical regions. It is considered the name “Lukkuwaniya” used for Central Anatolia transformed into Lykaonia in process of time [1], [2].

In the region, following the archeological researches carried by Solecki, Farrand, Kokten and French, areas which provide Paleolithic materials has been determined and the main ones of these areas are as such: Kurtunini Cave in the west of Lake Sugla [3]. This cave is an important place in terms of providing the Paleolithic material. Another residence is Pinarbasi Cave which is within the boundaries of Adakale Village in Karaman and which is located near Hotamis Lake spring [3]. This cave is also an important localization providing Paleolithic materials. Tursunlu which is within the boundaries of Akşehir District in Konya city and which provides singular findings is an important localization [4]. In the section of sandpit near the ruins of Dervişin Hani which is located in the south of Konya - Karapınar road and is another Paleolithic center, Paleolithic period materials are found [5] (Fig. 1).

Many settlements belonging to Neolithic age are seen in the boundaries of Lykaonia Region. The major ones of these settlements are Suberde [6], Catalhoyuk and so forth [7] (Fig. 2).

In Chalcolithic period, just like in Anatolia as a whole, a dramatic increase in the number of Chalcolithic settlements was seen in Lykaonia as well. These settlements are mounds like Catalhoyuk [7], Can Hasan [8], Sizma [9], (Fig. 3), etc.

Furthermore, in the region, particularly in Sugla Lake and Carsamba river basins, important early Bronze Age centers such as Akcalar Mound [10], Karabulak Mound, Gokhoyuk, Ortakaraviran Mound, Karaviran, Sizma and Hatunsaray take place [3].

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Fig. 1 Paleolithic settlements in the region Lykaonia



Fig. 2 Neolithic settlement in the region Lykaonia

After briefly summarizing the prehistorical ages of the region, to mention the classical age history;

The region had been ruled by Lydia until the Persian invasion in 6th century BC. Between 6th and 4th centuries BC, the geography which Persians reigned including Cappadocia was ruled by only one Persian governor (satrap). In 4th century BC, the area which had been a part of

Hellenistic geography was started to be ruled by Seleukos as successors to Alexander the Great, after his death. It was given to the rule of the Pergamon King Eumenes II with Roman invasion over the area [11]-[22]. The region was given to the rule of the successors of Ariarathes V of Cappadocia who had fought together with the Romans against Pergamon during his revolt against the Romans in 2 century BC. Towards the end of 1st century BC, Lykaonia land was probably governed by Cilicia. In 39 BC, Poleme took Iconion from Antonius. In 36 BC Antonius gave Galatia and some parts of Lykaonia to Tyrann Amyntas. In 31 BC Augustus approved this situation. When Amyntas died in 25 BC, the state was turned into a Roman State by Augustus [3]-[11].

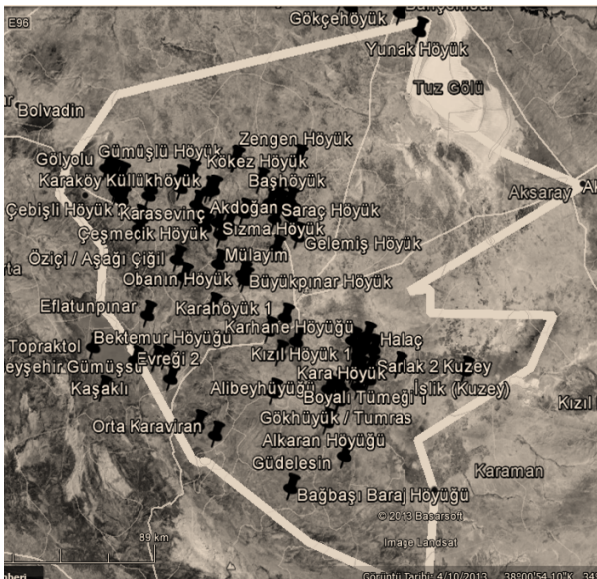


Fig. 3 Chalcolithic settlements in the region Lykaonia

## II. BOUNDARIES OF LYKAONIA REGION

It is quite difficult to mark the borders of the region in terms of antique geography conditions. The first written information about the region is learned by Xenophon who told the story of Alexander's Conquest of the East in 4th century BC. Xenophon states that the region's border starts from the east of Iconion which is the last city of Phrygia and expands to Dana (around Nigde Kilisehisar) which is 5 days of distance on foot [12]-[23]. Another antique writer Strabon (69 BC - 19 AD), instead of defining the boundaries of the region clearly, tells the boundaries by marking it with regions. According to Strabon, it is the region surrounded by Phrygia in the west, Cappadocia in the east, Galatia in the North and the Taurus Mountains in the south [24]. It can be stated that Strabon is the first one who has marked the region generally. While mentioning Lykaonia Principality, Plinius (23-79 AD) talks about 14 cities which cover firstly Iconion, Thebase and Hyde within the boundaries of Galatia-Cappadocia [25]. In terms of antique writers, the most detailed investigation can be found in Plinius. While Lykaonia and Galatia were accepted as states in 1st and 2nd centuries BC, in Byzantium Period, Galatia was a

part of Bukellarion Thema and Lykaonia of Anatolikon Thema.

Hierocles, while giving the city lists of Galatia and Lykaonia, he separates these regions into three parts [26]:

- Galatia Salutaris
- Galatia Salutaris
- Lykaonia

However, the significance of states' boundaries faded after the Thema system had been established in 7th century [3].

Belke - Restle carried out the most detailed researches about Lykaonia Region in 20th century. According to Belke-Restle, Lykaonia - Cappadocia border reached Akgöl through Aksaray (Garsaura) in the south of Tatta Limne after passing over Arsama Mountain. Divle Plain in the south of Akgöl marks this boundary. Like Cilicia and Cappadocia boundaries, Isaura - Lykaonia boundaries also followed the Taurus Mountains and Goksu (Kalykadnos). Lykaonia's western border with Pamphilia - Psidia reached Beyşehir Lake, following the Geyik and Kupe Mountains and passing Vasada and Amblada [13].

In the west, starting from the eastern part of Beyşehir Lake which was the eastern border of Psidia Region, Galatia Region's southern border Yunuslar (Pappattiberipolis), Elgin (Tyraion) and Ladik (Laodikea Katakekaumene) were located. Although the northern borderline of Beyşehir Lake continuously changes, it can be determined with the help of Psidia and Phrygia cities.

To put it briefly, Lykaonia Region extends over Tuz Lake, starting from Beyşehir Lake in the west, the Taurus Mountains in the south and Karaman in the east. In the North, by covering the northern coast of Tuz Lake, it occupies the area which extends over Ladik. It can be said that Konya, Karaman and Aksaray cities are located in its boundaries [13].

## III. SETTLEMENTS IN LYKAONIA REGION

Amblada: It is known that the city which was localized on the border of Phrygia - Caria in Strabon due to its relations to Pergamon Kingdom exported wine for medical purposes to the Antique world [24]. The name Amblada is mentioned by Hierocles and Stephanos of Byzantine [26], [27]. The localization of the city was built on Asardag known as a fortress in the south of Beyşehir Lake by J. Jünther [14]. Amblada that had started striking coins dating from the 1st century BC, struck coins during the periods of Commodus (176 - 192), Caracalla (208-217) and Phillipus Arabs (244 - 248).

Anzulada: It can be localized into Oguzeli, Akorenkisla. In the northwest of Tuz Lake, 4 km northwest of Toprak Castle, two boundary stones were discovered. On one of the stones with inscriptions, the name Anzulada is read [3].

Barata: On Iconion - Tyana road, with a distance approximately 75 km to Iconion and 30 km to Laranda, in the region of Binbirkilise ruins which are located in Madensehri surroundings near Karapınar, it has geographical formations with a crater-like characteristic [15]. In the south of the settlement, there is a mountain which is referred with the same

name. Materials and ruins found predominantly belong to the late period [13].

**Cabalucome:** It takes place in the surrounding of Kulakmurat Inn and 36 km northeast of Konya. On the spolia stones used in the inn, King Valans (375-378) inscriptions have been found [3]. Ceramics belonging to Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantium periods have also been found around the building [13].

**Comitanasso:** The settlement which is located in Ortakuyu site, 80 km northeast of Iconion is on the road between Perta and Ubinace [3]. On some of the spolia found in the potential settlement, the name Comitanasso can be read [13].

**Congusse:** Probably it is located near Altinekin and 23 km northwest of Pertain Peutingen map, it is seen between Perta and Pegalla. Furthermore, at the entrance of Altinekin Mosque, inscriptions have been found. However, there is no name of place on them [13].

**Cybistra:** It can be localized into Eregli district in Konya city. It is stated in Strabon that its boundaries extend over Derbe [24].

**Derbe:** Kerti Mound is located 22 km northeast of Karaman. In Strabon, the name of the settlement can be found in the section in which the name of Archelaos who was appointed as the 11th governor by the Romans was mentioned [24]. Plinius refers it as a part of Lykaonia [25]. It is stated as Tyrant Antipatros Derbetes's center of kingdom who killed Cicero's friend Amytas. With an inscription found in Kerti Mound, its location has become definite. The inscription dates back to 157 A.D. [16].

**Faustinopolis:** It is possible to localize it to the west coast of Sugla Lake [13]. It should not be confused with Faustinopolis which is located in the southwest of Cappadocia Region in Nigde - Basmakci [17].

**Hyde:** It is located in the northeast of Goloren - Karapinar. Plinius states it as being located on the border between Cappadocia - Galatia as one of the cities of Lykaonia. Besides, it is said that in Plinius that it was a member of Koimon Lykanon (Lykaonia Union) and struck coins [25].

**Iconion:** It is the center of Konya city. It can be localized according to Xenophon and Strabon [23], [24]. As a result of various excavations and researches, its location has been proved as archeological. It has witnessed continuous settlements up to now since 1st century BC [3]. It is known that Antipatros established an effective Tyranny in the region. In 41 AD, it came under the rule of Romans in Cladius's Period. Its name became Claude Iconion. In 2nd century, the city, which had become a Roman colony by Hadrian formerly, started to be named as Colonia Aelia Hadriana Augusta Iconesium from that time. The oldest Iconion coins belong to the 1st century BC [3].

**Ilistra:** It is in the location of Yollarbasi town 17 km distance to Karaman city. It is on the Antique road of Iconion - Laranda. In Hierocles's City Lists, it is written that representatives were sent to 325 Nikia - 431 Ephesos - 451 Chalcedon Consuls by Ilistra [26]. Today, the town is built on Acropolis. Many spolia materials have been determined in the buildings in the town [3]-[13].

**Kanna:** It is in the site of Besagil which is located in the north of Karapinar district. It takes place in Peutingen map [13]. It has church remnants of Byzantine period. Also it sent representatives to 381 - 451 Chalcedon Consul [3].

**Kilistra:** It takes place in Gokyurt subdistrict, Hatunsaray [3]. Its name is mentioned on a grave stele belonging to 4th century in Konya. In Kilistra located in Gokyurt Mound site, Roman and Byzantium necropolis, sepulchers and chapels carved in tufa rock have been found. In the graves located in the southeast of the city, tablets written in Greek have been discovered. At the northern exit remnants of the door of city's rampart also have been found. Also in the southeastern part of the city, the wheel trails of carts belonging to the ancient road on the rock soil are clearly seen [3]-[13].

**Kodlessos:** It is located 37 km northwest of Karaman, in Godelesin. It is on the Antique road between Iconion - Laranda. On an inscription found in the region, the name Kodlessos is mentioned [13].

**Korna:** Probably in the south of Iconion known as a place called Dinorna, rampart and a church ruins have been found. It sent representatives to 381- 451 Chalcedon Consuls [3]-[13].

**Koropassos:** It is on the road between Iconion - Garsaura, near Akhantepe. It is at a distance of 20 km from Garsaura [23]. Ceramics have been found belonging to Roman and Byzantium Periods.

**Laranda:** It can be localized into today's Karaman city. It is located in the north of the Taurus Mountains and south of Lykaonia. It is referred as "Landa" in Hittite inscriptions. In Strabon, it is stated that like Soatra (Yaglibayat), it suffered from aridity [23]. Raising sheep had an important place in ancient city economy. Strabon mentions Tyrant Amyntas of Derbe's flocks of sheep and narrates they were under the control of the tyrant [23]. It joint Lykaonia Union in 370 BC and sent representatives to 325 Nikaia - 471 Chalcedon - 879 Constantinopolis Consuls. A Byzantium ceramic has been found on the mound which is located in the city center [13].

**Lystra:** It can be localized to Hatunsaray district. It has witnessed many settlements since the Chalcolithic age [3]. Its Roman necropolis has been found. It is mentioned as "Lusna" in Hittite texts. It can be localized near Akgol which is mentioned in St. Paul's travelogue. It is one of the cities that takes place in the vicinity of Iconion. People living in the hinterland of the city are called Lystreni or Lystrenes [25].

**Mistheia (Parlais):** Beysehir - it has been a settlement since the classical age. The city's name is mentioned after Ousada and Amblada in Hierocles [26]. The city was reestablished in Claudius' period (41 - 54). It is located on an appendage of Via Sebaste [18].

**Posala:** It is 30 km northwest of Ozyurt - Karaman and sent a representative to Constantinopolis in 381. In the buildings around, there are spolia materials belonging to Byzantine period [13].

**Pyrgoi:** It is 7 km northwest of Ilistra and near Kazimkarabekir (Gaferiyat). There are architectural materials belonging to Byzantine period [3]-[13].

**Savatra:** Yaglibayat - Strabon mentions it as a town that has deep wells near Garsaura [23]. During the excavations in the



village, many Roman sculptures have been found. Furthermore, a cavea belonging to a Roman Theatre which has preserved stairs has been found with the archeological excavations [3] - [19].

**Sidamara:** It is located 50 km northeast of Laranda (Karaman). There, a sarcophagus named Sidamara Sarcophagus was found by Osman Hamdi Bey [20]. Besides, inscriptions belonging to Roman and Byzantium periods have been found and the city is on the antique road of Iconion - Herakleia [13].

**Thebase:** It is located 20 km east of Kesmez Village - Karapinar. Plinius refers it as a Roman city [25]. In the northeast of Kesmez Village, there are castle remnants surrounded by double ramparts. Also, architectural fragments belonging to a Byzantium church have been found, as well [3].

**Ubinace:** It is localized 12 km southeast of Sultanhan and 20 km east of Comitansso as Malir Mound [3]. Ceramics belonging to Roman and Byzantium periods and Roman period tomb stele have been found [13].

**Vasada (Ousada):** It is on the antique road 65 km southwest of Bostandere - Konya. In Ptolemaios, it is referred as Hellenistic City. It sent representatives to 451, Chalcedon consul [26]. There are ruins of a theatre with the capacity of 1000 audiences [3] (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Classical Period Settlement Region in Lykaonia

#### IV. ANTIQUE ROADS OF LYKAONIA REGION

##### A. Via Sebaste

One of the most significant roads on Lykaonia Region is Via Sebaste (the King Road). With the purpose of establishing a relationship between colonies and asserting authority over the region, road construction was started by Cortunus Aguila with Augustus's order in Anatolia in 6 BC. This road system is known as Via Sebaste. The starting point of the road is Psidia Antiocheia (Yalvac). The eastern part of the road reaches Beysehir by passing through Neapolis (Karaagac), then Kizildag and through Sultandağlari. Four milestones in Kiyakdede site near Beysehir have been found. The road divides up into four forks [21]:

- It reaches to Isaura by passing through Amblada- Ousada and the coast of Trogistis Lake [21].
- It passes Kiziloren by continuing towards the east and reaches Lystra (Hatunsaray) Colony [21].
- It again moves towards east; however, reaches Lystra through Iconion [21].
- It is a fork separated from Kiziloren, reaches Lystra passing 15 km southwest of Konya [21].

##### B. Amorion - Iconion - Cybistra Road

The road which traverses Lykaonia region in the direction of northwest - southeast divides up into 3 forks:

- It is between Laodikea Katekekumene - Iconion. Some of the milestones which are on this route have been found [21].
- It is between Iconion - Cybistra and reaches Cybistra over Karapinar. By passing over Savatra and Kanna settlements on the route, Cybistra is reached [21].
- This route which separates from Iconion in the southeast direction reaches Cybistra over Sidamara [21].

##### C. Ankyra - Laranda Road

It extends over Central Anatolia region intersecting in the direction of North and South [21].

- Ankyra - Iconion route: The road beginning from Ankyra reaches Iconion over Congusse. Milestones of Roman Period can be found on this route [21].
- Iconion - Laranda route: Alongside no milestone belonging to this route has been found, it is probable that the road may reach Laranda passing through Kodylessos, Posala, Pyrgoi and Ilistra [3].

##### D. Iconion - Garsaura Road

It is a route with an east - west direction. It is considered that the road extends in a parallel way with today's Konya-Aksaray route. It intersects Congusso on Ankyra - Laranda route [3]-[21].

#### V. CONCLUSION

The data collected from such settlements as Kurtunini, Tursunlu, Dervisin Hani and Pinarbasi Cave in Lykaonia Region provides us with information about the Paleolithic Age of the region. In Neolithic process, on the other hand, along with an increase in the number of the settlements in the region, distinctions in qualifications of the settlements are observed. Many settlements belonging to Neolithic Age mainly localized on waterfronts and bottomlands. Among the important settlements which represent the Neolithic Age in the region, Catalhoyuk and Suberde settlements can be counted. In Chalcolithic Period, accelerative rate of increase as in Neolithic Age continued.

If it is necessary to view from the classical geography approach, settlements belonging to this period, as well as their close positions to localizations of prehistorical and prehistorical pioneers, are also in a state of change into urbanization. Some of the cities mentioned above which have theatres, constitute a good example for this situation. Besides,

another indicator of which the settlements gaining an urban character are that they struck coins independently.

In the light of this information, the situation in which most of the cities mentioned above are represented by modern settlements today shows us that the process of thousands of years has very little effect on historical topography.

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