

# Aizanoi and Anatolia

## Town and countryside in late late antiquity\*

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### 1. Aizanoi. The problematic settlement history of an Anatolian town

Aizanoi is situated about 1,000 m above sea level in a remote valley of the Central Anatolian high plateau. The Roman town is best known for the monumental ruins of the temple of Zeus. Due to this temple, Aizanoi attracted the attention of Roman archaeologists earlier than most sites on the high plateau. Excavations started in 1926, and by 1979 not only the Roman town, but even late antique Aizanoi was considered to have been extensive and important.<sup>1</sup> During the ensuing last quarter of the twentieth century, refined excavation techniques revealed that almost every Roman structure was remodelled or reused during late antiquity. In spite of all this, the latest verdict on late antique Aizanoi reads rather grim: according to the current director of the excavation K. Rheidt, the settled area shrunk drastically, urban culture and functionality declined radically, and the town lost attraction and importance.<sup>2</sup>

Neither Rheidt's negative nor the older positive assessment of late antique Aizanoi are based on unequivocal archaeological evidence. Instead, the two contrary archaeological evaluations can be linked to two equally contrary historical conceptions of how late antique towns developed: one conception, and its most prominent representative C. Foss, are mainly concerned with the Persian and Arab incursions that the Anatolian towns had to face from the seventh century onwards.<sup>3</sup> This period of invasions has been labelled a 'Dark Age'. In contrast,

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\* The annotations are confined to the most relevant and – as far as possible – English publications. For more literature and a detailed presentation of the archaeological evidence see P. Niewöhner, *Aizanoi, Dokimion und Anatolien. Stadt und Land, Siedlungs- und Steinmetzwesen vom späteren 4. bis ins 6. Jh. n. Chr.* (in print).

1 R. Naumann, *Der Zeustempel zu Aizanoi* (1979), 78.

2 K. Rheidt, 'Archäologie und Spätantike in Anatolien. Methoden, Ergebnisse und Probleme der Ausgrabungen in Aizanoi', in: G. Brands – H.-G. Severin (ed.), *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung* (2003), 239–47, 245. 247.

3 C. Foss, 'The Persians in Asia Minor and the end of antiquity', *English historical review* 90 (1975), 721–43. Repr. in: id., *History and archaeology of Byzantine Asia Minor* (1990), I; id., 'Archaeology and the 'twenty cities' of Byzantine Asia Minor', *American Journal of Archaeology* 81 (1977), 469–86. Repr. in: id., op. cit., II.

the preceding fourth to sixth centuries appear as the last heyday of ancient urbanism.<sup>4</sup>

The other conception is presented by W. Liebeschuetz. He has studied changes in urban administration that took place within late antiquity from the fourth to the sixth centuries. Liebeschuetz comes to the conclusion that the so-called flight of the curiales<sup>5</sup> caused the towns to decline already during the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>6</sup> These centuries are therefore set off as late late antiquity from earlier late antiquity that lasted until about A.D. 400.<sup>7</sup>

From all that has been said so far, it may seem that Rheidt's interpretation of the archaeological evidence in Aizanoi supports Liebeschuetz and opposes Foss. However, the picture becomes more complicated when the rural hinterland of the urban centres is also taken into consideration: Rheidt assumes that whilst Aizanoi declined, the surrounding countryside gained in importance until the once overwhelming difference between town and village was reduced to minor administrative functions and the bishop's residency.<sup>8</sup>

Liebeschuetz comes to the contrary conclusion: he believes that urban spending was necessary for the development of the ancient countryside. Liebeschuetz therefore thinks it 'a priori likely' that the countryside declined simultaneously with the towns during the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Foss argues the same way, but

4 M. Whittow, 'Ruling the late Roman and early Byzantine city. A continuous history', *Past and present* 129 (1990), 3–29; id., 'Recent research on the late-antique city in Asia Minor. The second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. revisited', in: L. Lavan (ed.), *Recent research in late-antique urbanism* (2001), 137–53.

5 W. Liebeschuetz, 'The finances of Antioch in the fourth century AD', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 52 (1959), 344–56. Repr. in: id., *From Diocletian to the Arab conquest. Change in the late Roman Empire* (1990), XII; A.H.M. Jones, *The later Roman Empire 284–602. A social economic and administrative survey* (1964), II 737–57; A. Laniado, *Recherches sur les notables municipaux dans l'empire protobyzantin* (2002), 1–129.

6 J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall of the Roman city* (2001).

7 cf. the distinction between 'the late imperial period (4<sup>th</sup> – mid-5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)' and 'the early Byzantine period (mid-5<sup>th</sup>–mid-7<sup>th</sup> century AD)' as applied by H. Vanhaverbeke – M. Waelkens, *The chora of Sagalassos. The evolution of the settlement pattern from prehistoric until recent times* (2003), 127 n. 21 and *passim*.

8 Rheidt (s. Anm. 2) 247. Cf. C. Ratté, 'The urban development of Aphrodisias in late antiquity', in: D. Parrish (ed.), *Urbanism in western Asia Minor. New studies on Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Hierapolis, Pergamon, Perge and Xanthos* (2001), 116–47; Whittow (s. Anm. 4) 152.

9 Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 8. 70–3.

from the opposite point of departure: he points to a booming countryside as analogy to the supposedly booming towns.<sup>10</sup>

As far as the towns are concerned, Foss, Liebeschuetz and Rheidt deduce their different scenarios from the same archaeological evidence. The archaeological record can be interpreted both ways. Aizanoi offers a typical example: in the second half of the fifth century the northern portico of a colonnaded street was blocked off to form a smithy.<sup>11</sup> According to Liebeschuetz and Rheidt this indicates the collapse of urban administration and public order, and possibly economic as well as demographic recession.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, Foss and others refer to laws that regulated private use of public property and set down rents that had to be paid.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the private occupation of public space is taken as a sign of prosperity rather than decline.<sup>14</sup>

As long as the interpretation of the archaeological record remains thus ambiguous, no hypothesizing will determine the real course of events.<sup>15</sup> The methodological problem is twofold: firstly, there is as yet no gauge by which to distinguish between prosperity and decline in late antiquity. In the late fourth century, for example, many temples, theatres, and gymnasia fell into disrepair whilst simultaneously many churches, colonnaded streets and prestigious houses were built.<sup>16</sup>

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- 10 C. Foss, 'The Lycian coast in the Byzantine age', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1994), 1–52, 47. Repr. in: id., *Cities, fortresses and villages of Byzantine Asia Minor* (1996), II.
- 11 K. Rheidt, 'Aizanoi. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen 1992 und 1993', *AA* (1995), 693–718, 712.
- 12 Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 39–41 including n. 52; 406. 408–9.
- 13 H. Saradi, 'Privatization and subdivision of urban properties in the early Byzantine centuries. Social and cultural implications', *Bulletin of the American society of papyrologists* 35 (1998), 17–43.
- 14 Whittow (s. Anm. 4) 19.
- 15 This let some scholars to suspect, the judgment of others might have been guided by political opinion: W. Liebeschuetz, 'Late antiquity and the concept of decline', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45 (2001), 1–11; id., "The uses and abuses of the concept of 'decline' in later Roman history, or was Gibbon politically incorrect?", in: L. Lavan (ed.) (s. Anm. 4) 233–45; L. Lavan, 'Late antique archaeology. An introduction', in: id. – W. Bowden (ed.), *Theory and practice in late antique archaeology* (2003), p. vii–xvi; L. Lavan, 'Christianity, the city, and the end of antiquity', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 16 (2003), 705–10, 710; W. Liebeschuetz, 'The birth of late antiquity', *Antiquité Tardive* 12 (2004), 253–61, 260–1.
- 16 A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek city from Alexander to Justinian* (1940. Repr. 1967), particularly 251–8; P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au 4e siècle après J.-C.* (1955), particularly 314–8; Jones (s. Anm. 5), particularly II 712–66; B. Ward-Perkins, 'The cities', in: *CAH XIII*<sup>2</sup> (1998), 371–410.

Until about A.D. 400 the towns ‘changed’, became Christian, but did not decline.<sup>17</sup> Did something similar also happen in the fifth and sixth centuries?

The second methodological problem arises out of archaeology itself: only small portions of towns have so far been uncovered by stratigraphical excavation. There is always the chance that an excavation has missed out on late antique prosperity. As had happened before in the fourth century, prosperity could have moved to a different, yet unexcavated quarter.

These problems can be avoided in the countryside:<sup>18</sup> where a large territory with many settlements has been surveyed, the total result might yield statistical information about economy and demography that a single town cannot provide. Once the development of the countryside is known, it can be used as a gauge by which to assess the town.

## 2. Aizanitis. The countryside and its development

The territory of Aizanoi is called Aizanitis. It comprises the plain and the surrounding mountains up to the watersheds with Kütahya/Kotyaeion in the northeast, Pınarcık/Appia in the southeast, Gediz/Kadoi in the southwest, and ancient Tiberiopolis somewhere near modern Emet in the west (fig. 1).<sup>19</sup> Nowadays, the area contains about five dozen villages. Roughly half of them lie in the plain, the other half in the mountains. The villages have been surveyed thrice, twice for inscriptions,<sup>20</sup> and once for stonemasonry.<sup>21</sup>

Most of the inscriptions belong to grave stones and votives of the Roman Imperial period. Almost all of them have been found in the plain, where they denote a regularly spaced grid of rural settlements. The mountains are virtually

17 W. Pohl, ‘The politics of change. Reflections on the transformation of the Roman world’, in: id. – M. Diesenberger (ed.), *Integration und Herrschaft. Ethnische Identität und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter* (2002), 275–288, 284; G. Brands, ‘Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung’, in: id. – H.-G. Severin (ed.) (s. Anm. 2), 1–26.

18 M. Whittow, ‘Recent research on the late-antique city in Asia Minor: the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. revisited’, in: L. Lavan (ed.) (s. Anm. 4) 137–53, 151–2.

19 B. Levick – S. Mitchell – D. Nash – J. Potter – M. Waelkens (ed.), *Monuments from the Aezanitis* (1988), p. xvii–xxii; B. Levick – S. Mitchell – J. Potter – M. Waelkens (ed.), *Monuments from the upper Tembris valley, Cotiaenum, Cadi, Synaus, Ancyra and Tiberiopolis* (1993), p. xv–xxii.

20 *ibid.*; C. Lehmler – M. Wörrle, ‘Neue Inschriftenfunde aus Aizanoi 3. Aizanitica minora 1’, *Chiron* 32 (2002), 571–646.

21 P. Niewöhner, ‘Welkende Städte in blühendem Land? Aizanoi und die Verländlichung Anatoliens im 5. und 6. Jh. n. Chr. Vorbericht über eine Untersuchung im Umland Aizanois’, *AA* (2003), I 221–8.

free of Roman Imperial grave monuments and settlements (fig. 1. 2).<sup>22</sup> The total number of inscriptions found in the villages equals approximately two fifth of those from Aizanoi (fig. 2). A majority of the grave monuments feature reliefs as well as inscriptions and can be traced back to one metropolitan workshop in Aizanoi.<sup>23</sup> Apart from the grave stones and votives, no Roman Imperial or earlier stonemasonry occurs in the villages.<sup>24</sup>

The ancient stonemasonry other than grave stones and votives found in the modern villages of the Aizanitis is exclusively late antique. It comprises architectural sculpture and liturgical furniture. The latter accounts for at least 25 church buildings (fig. 1), most of which date to the fifth or sixth century or – in other words – late late antiquity. Ceramics and tiles identify the find spots as settlements. They were as common in the mountains as in the plain, but only in the plain do they date back to the Roman Imperial period. The number and distribution of late late antique settlements compare to those of the modern villages (fig. 1). They are probably determined by the amount and distribution of arable soil. In late late antiquity as in modern times all available ground would have been farmed.

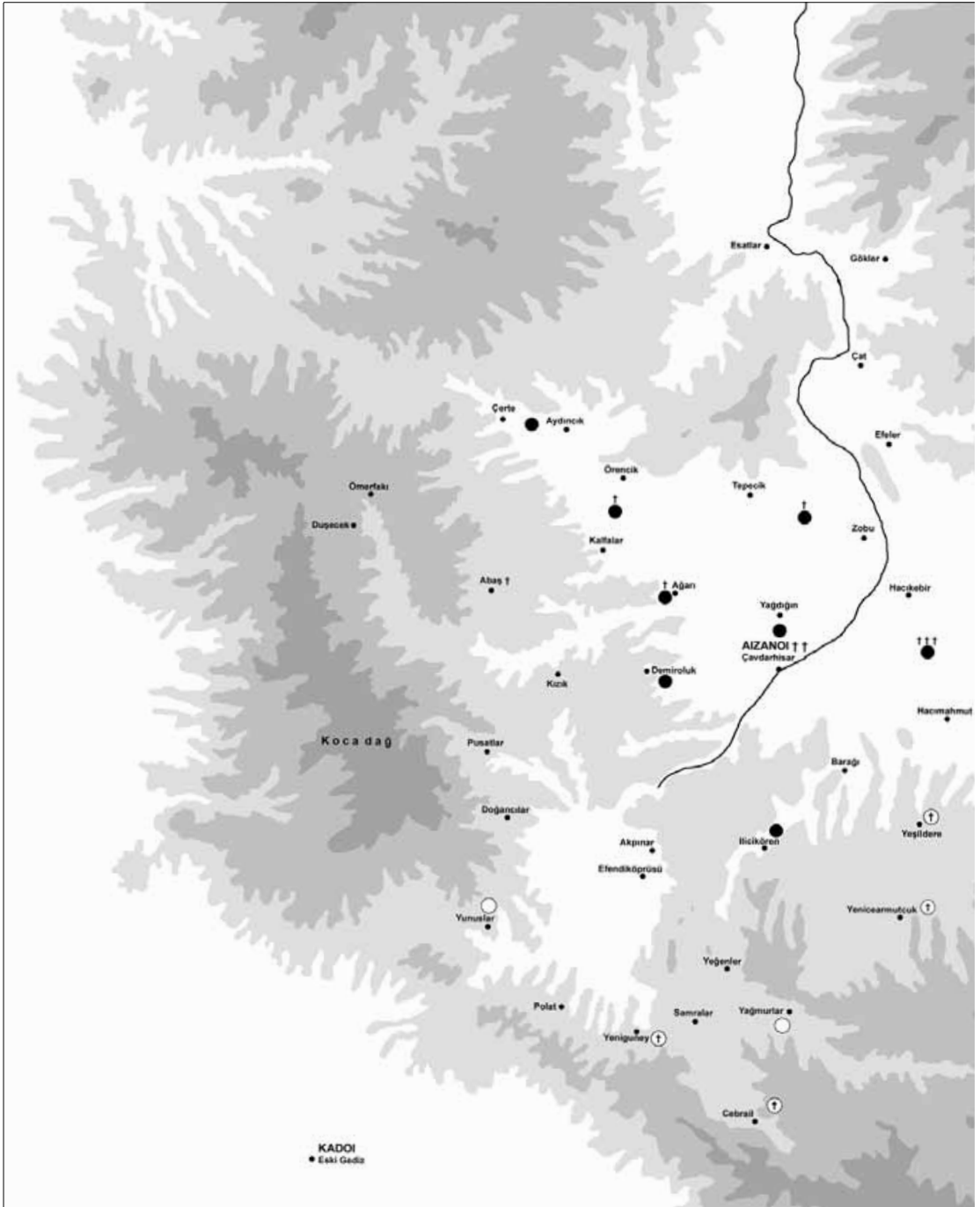
This must have been different in the Roman Imperial period, when settlement was limited to the plain alone. In those days, only the plain could have been farmed intensively. The mountains were too far away for any but extensive use and might not have been farmed at all. By comparison, the number of settlements and the amount of intensively farmed land increased by roughly a 100 per cent during late late antiquity. This development can be attributed to an analogous growth of population for two reasons: firstly, more manpower was needed to farm the additional land. Secondly, the population increase would have been the driving force behind the move into the mountains, where farming is more difficult and less profit-yielding than in the plain.<sup>25</sup>

22 The Roman Imperial stonemasonry in the mountains to the north of Aizanoi and Ortaca (the black column to the very right in fig. 2) consists almost solely of votives to the only rural sanctuary known in the region: M. Riel, 'Le sanctuaire des dieux saint et juste à Yaylababa köyü', *Živa antika. Antiquité vivante* 40 (1990), 157–77; Th. Drew-Bear – C. M. Thomas – M. Yıldızturhan, *Phrygian votive steles* (1999), 398.

23 M. Waelkens, *Die kleinasiatischen Türsteine* (1986), 46–48; Levick – Mitchell – Nash – Potter – Waelkens (ed.) (s. Anm. 19), p. 1.

24 A few scattered examples in the villages closest to Aizanoi are components of metropolitan monuments that might have been moved as early as late antiquity.

25 For the same reasoning cf. D. Baird, 'Konya plain', *Anatolian archaeology* 4 (1998), 16; G. Tate, 'Expansion d'une société riche et égalitaire. Les paysans de Syrie du nord du 2<sup>e</sup> au 7<sup>e</sup> siècle', in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (1997), 913–40, 927–9 including fig. 11; P. Castellana – R. Fernández – I. Pena, *Inventaire du Jébel Wastani. Recherches archéologiques dans la région des*



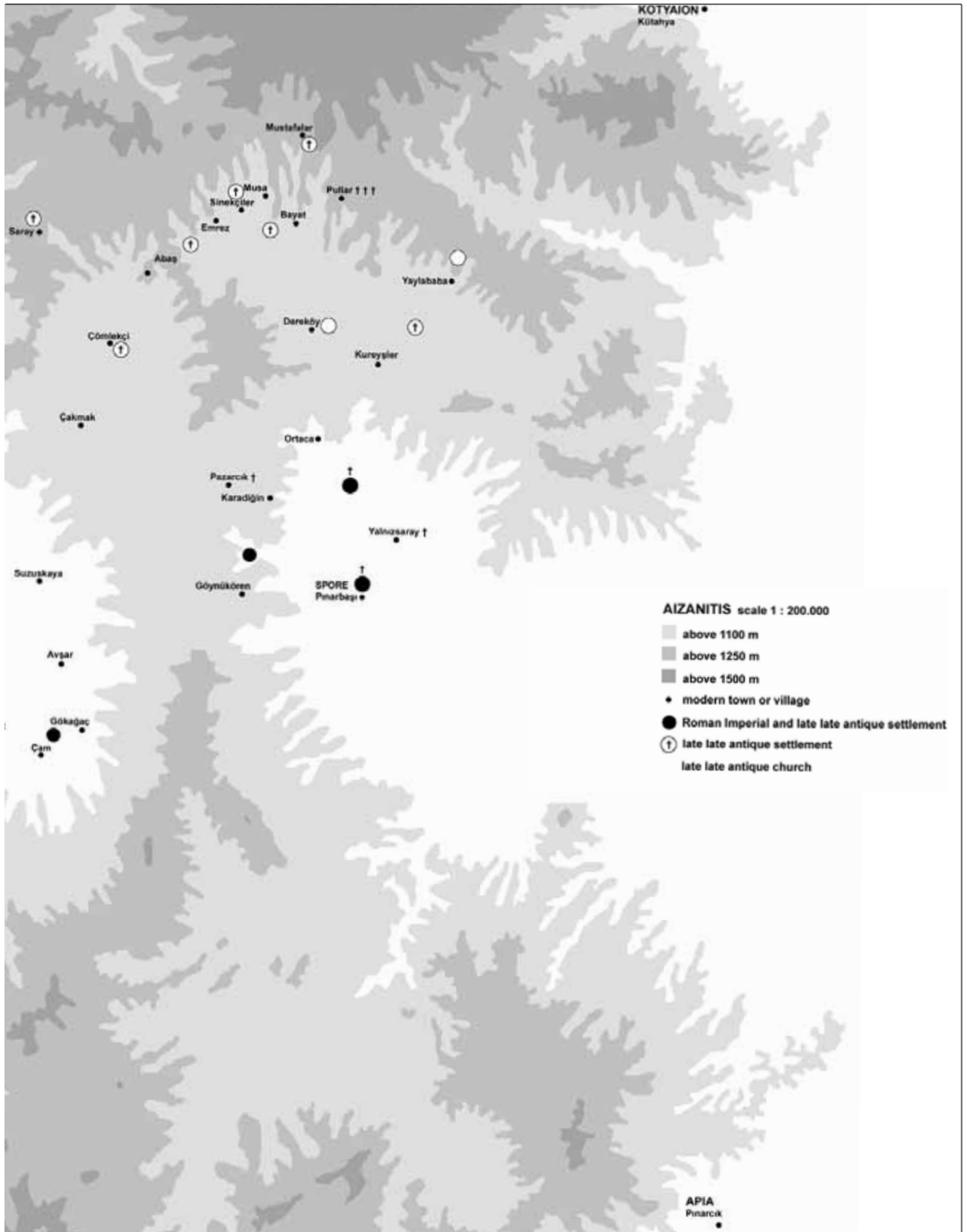


Fig. 1

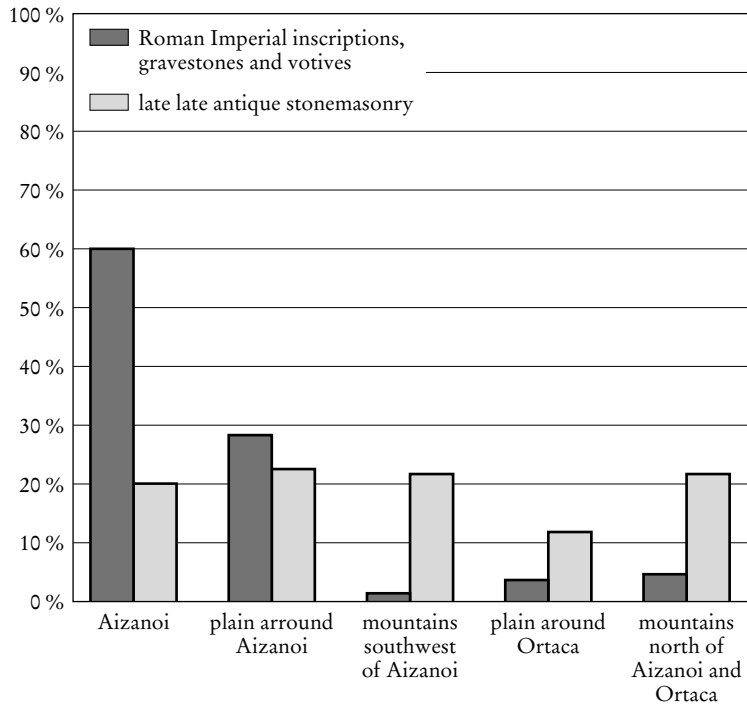


Fig. 2

In relation to Aizanoi, the countryside has yielded almost four times as much late late antique stonemasonry (fig. 2). This explains the appearance of stonemasons that worked only in one rural district, for example in the area around and to the north of Ortaca (fig. 1), and seem to have been based there instead of in Aizanoi. Much had changed since the Roman Imperial period, when stonemasonry used to be made and – apart from a comparably small number of grave stones and votives – put up exclusively in town. In comparison, late late antique Aizanoi had lost ground to the countryside. If the architectural heritage of earlier ages is discounted – and most of it was in ruins by late late antiquity – there is nothing left in the archaeological record to distinguish Aizanoi from a rural settlement in the territory.

But is the archaeological record complete?

*Villes mortes de la Syrie du Nord* (1999), 17–22; C. Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine. Peuplement et populations* (1998), I 77–8; II 520–1.



### 3. Anatolia. Town and countryside in late late antiquity

#### 3.1 More methodology

The last question leads back to the problem that findings from limited excavations may not reflect the condition of a town at large. This obstacle can be met by taking into account a lot of towns: the more often the same scenario is encountered, the more likely it is close to historical truth. However, the number of Anatolian towns, where any late late antique scenario may be drawn up, is small. For most places the archaeological record for the period in question is too sparse for any scenario to evolve at all.

Therefore it seems prudent to simplify matters: although a whole town may be too complex an organism for consideration, the development of some of the components like colonnaded streets are well known. Other such components are porticoed squares, public baths and lavatories, prestigious houses, town-walls, and churches. By their size and splendour they were the outstanding architectural manifestations of Anatolian urbanism in A.D. 400.<sup>26</sup> They distinguished a town

26 The constitutive components of late antique urbanism have been summarised by L. Lavan, 'The political topography of the late antique city. Activity spaces in practice', in: id. – W. Bowden (ed.) (s. Anm. 15) 314–37. Some of them are ignored in this essay because they can not be identified and/or dated with certainty. Cf. J.-P. Sodini, 'Les groupes épiscopaux de Turquie', in: *Actes du 11<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne* (1989), I 405–26; L. Lavan, 'The residences of late antique governors. A gazetteer', *Antiquité tardive* 7 (1999), 135–64; S. Eyice, 'Side'de bir Bizans hastahanesi mi?', *Adalya* 5 (2001/02), 153–62; C. Dorl-Klingenschmid, *Prunkbrunnen in kleinasiatischen Städten* (2001); F. A. Bauer, 'Monument und Denkmal', in: *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst VI Lfg.* 45 (2001), c. 656–720. The same holds true for a continued use of theatres and stadiums, including their adaptation to animal and water games: A. Cameron, *Circus factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (1976), 314–7.

Inscriptions may reflect changing 'epigraphic habits' rather than urbanistic changes: R. MacMullen, 'The epigraphic habit in the Roman Empire', *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), 233–46, 245–6; E. A. Meyer, 'Explaining the epigraphic habit in the Roman Empire. The evidence of epitaphs', *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 74–96, 95–6.

C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in late antiquity. The late Roman and Byzantine inscriptions including texts from the excavations at Aphrodisias conducted by Kenan T. Erim* (1989) and Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 11–5, insinuate that the 'epigraphic habit' and urban building developed analogous, but do not (Roueché) or fail to (Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 54) cheque with the archaeological record. For a critical review of Liebeschuetz, op. cit., see F. Kolb, *Gnomon* 76 (2004), 142–7, 143.

from a village. Was that still the case in the fifth and sixth centuries?<sup>27</sup> If not, had they been replaced by other, equally conspicuous markers of urban distinction?

Studying these components in isolation from their respective urban contexts means ignoring various local causes for urban change, such as earthquakes.<sup>28</sup> This is permissible only if the overall development was the same everywhere in spite of different local causes. In this case the ultimate cause would not have been local and affected all towns equally.<sup>29</sup> This is indicated by the relative distribution of towns in Anatolia that remained constant throughout late antiquity and the Byzantine era, although their absolute number fluctuated.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.2 The archaeological record

During late antiquity Anatolian urbanism underwent a uniform decline: prestigious public and private building other than churches all but came to a standstill. Older buildings were seldom repaired. More often they were partitioned off into smaller units or left to decay. Even town walls remained gaping or were rendered useless by lean-tos on their outside perimeter. The only new buildings were churches, but they did not distinguish the towns from the countryside any more, as they had become common in rural areas too.

The countryside witnessed an unprecedented boom during the fifth and sixth centuries: the settled area and the number of settlements increased all over rural Anatolia, and the population would have done so too. This quantitative increase is demonstrated best by ceramics.<sup>31</sup> Ceramics have typically been surveyed in areas

27 This question has been answered to the confirmative by D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jb.* (1969). Maybe Claude failed to notice the deviant development of the Anatolian towns, because he turned to the Mediterranean as a whole without first studying each region by itself.

28 The urbanistic effects of earthquakes varied: an earthquake of the later 4<sup>th</sup> century is believed to have triggered a major building boom in Ephesus: H. Thür, 'Die spätantike Bauphase der Kuretenstraße', in: O. Kresten e.a. (ed.), *Efeso paleocristiana e bizantina* (1999), 104–20, 119. In contrast, earthquakes of the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries are linked with the decline of Sagalassos: M. Waelkens, 'Sagalassos und sein Territorium', in: K. Belke e.a. (ed.), *Byzanz als Raum* (2000), 261–88, 274–5.

29 In the sense of a long term 'conjoncture' of the regional 'histoire sociale' as opposed to the short term and local 'histoire événementielle': F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*<sup>2</sup> (1966), I 16; II 223–4. 519–20.

30 M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine monetary economy c. 300–1450* (1985), 71 map 14; 90–100 including maps 20–3.

31 W. Bowden – L. Lavan, 'The late antique countryside. An introduction', in: id. – C. Machado (ed.), *Recent research on the late antique countryside* (2004), p. xvii–xxvi, xxii.

with no standing remains, for example the central Anatolian high plateau. Other regions like the southern coastal provinces, where many late antique settlements have survived, bear witness to a large number of new rural churches. They testify to a qualitative improvement of rural building.

The Aizanitis links both kinds of evidence, quantitative as well as qualitative, and shows that new churches were built in the new settlements on the high plateau, too. The rural churches met the same regionally varying standards as the urban ones. For the first time architectural stonemasonry, which used to be an urban prerogative during the Roman Imperial period, became common in the countryside too.

The overall result was a convergence of settlement patterns in town and countryside. Where there are no older remains, there is nothing in the archaeological record to distinguish an urban from a rural settlement any more. This development is mirrored by contemporary sources that stopped to differentiate between towns and other places.<sup>32</sup> The foundation of new towns<sup>33</sup> indicated inflation<sup>34</sup> rather than an increase<sup>35</sup> of urbanisation. The combination of urban decline and rural prosperity may more appropriately be termed 'ruralisation'.

This did not necessarily involve a decline of urban population: small towns, that had never advanced far beyond big villages, seem to have fared well. However, in big and important towns, that used to invest a lot in architectural status symbols during the Roman Imperial period, houses and whole quarters were abandoned, especially from the middle of the sixth century onwards.

### 3.3 Historical conclusions

In as much as the 'Roman town' – as opposed to a Roman village or a Post-Roman town – was defined by outstanding buildings, Anatolia witnessed its 'decline and fall' in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries. Why did that happen?

The chronology supports Liebeschuetz' hypothesis, according to which the social and administrative changes known as the 'flight of the curiales' had a decisive impact. The new urban elite of 'notables', that replaced the curiales in late late

32 Claude (s. Anm. 27) 220; W. Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (1989), 31–5.

33 Jones (s. Anm. 5) II 718–20; Claude (s. Anm. 27) 203–21.

34 W. Brandes, 'Die Entwicklung des byzantinischen Städtewesens von der Spätantike bis zum 9. Jahrhundert', in: K.-P. Matschke (ed.), *Die byzantinische Stadt im Rahmen der allgemeinen Stadtentwicklung* (1995), 9–26, 11–2.

35 F. R. Trombley, 'Town and Territorium in Late Roman Anatolia', in: L. Lavan (ed.) (s. Anm. 4) 217–32, 230.

antiquity,<sup>36</sup> did obviously not care much for urban building.<sup>37</sup> They did build churches,<sup>38</sup> though, but as the greater part of this effort went into the countryside, it did more to reduce than to further urban distinctiveness.

Christianity contributed to this development in so far as it was not as dependent on towns and urban institutions<sup>39</sup> as the so-called *polis*-religions of old.<sup>40</sup> Otherwise, Christianity can hardly have been at the root of urban decline,<sup>41</sup> because Anatolian cities had already been thoroughly Christianised during the last urban building boom around A.D. 400.<sup>42</sup>

Poverty might have played a part. It seems to have increased among the urban population during late late antiquity<sup>43</sup> and started to appear on the political agenda of the church.<sup>44</sup> This and a power vacuum after the ‘flight of the curiales’ may have

36 Laniado (s. Anm. 5) 131–252.

37 W. Liebeschuetz, ‘Oligarchies in the cities of the Byzantine East’, in: M. Diesenberger – W. Pohl (ed.) (s. Anm. 17) 17–24, 21.

For a different opinion see Whittow (s. Anm. 4) 20–9; Laniado (s. Anm. 5) 132.

38 Roueché (s. Anm. 26) p. xxv. 86–7. 123–4; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, ‘Administration and politics in the city of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries with special reference to the circus factions’, in: C. Lepelley (ed.), *La fin de la cité antique et le début de la cité médiévale. De la fin du 3<sup>e</sup> siècle à l’avènement de Charlemagne* (1996), 161–82, 167–8; Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 15; Laniado (s. Anm. 5) 154–60.

39 W.H.C. Frend, ‘Town and countryside in early Christianity’, in: D. Baker (ed.), *The church in town and countryside* (1979), 25–42. Repr. in: id., *Town and country in the early Christian centuries* (1980), I; P. Brown, *Authority and the sacred. Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world* (1995); P. Brown, ‘The rise and function of the holy man in late antiquity. 1971–1997’, *Journal of early Christian studies* 6 (1998), 353–76, 372–3.

Deviant: K. W. Harl, ‘From pagan to Christian cities of Roman Anatolia during the fourth and fifth centuries’, in: Th. S. Burns – J. W. Eadie (ed.), *Urban centers and rural contexts in late antiquity* (2001), 301–22, 314–18.

40 J. Rüpke, ‘Religion. X. Rom’, in: *Der neue Pauly* X (2001), c. 910–7, 912; S. Mitchell, ‘Ethnicity, acculturation and empire in Roman and late Roman Asia Minor’, in: id. – G. Greatrex (ed.), *Ethnicity and culture in late antiquity* (2000), 117–50, 135–6; M. Maas, ‘Mores et moenia. Ethnography and the decline in urban constitutional autonomy in late antiquity’, in: M. Diesenberger – W. Pohl (ed.) (s. Anm. 17) 25–35, 30–1.

41 For a different opinion see Whittow (s. Anm. 4) 28–9; Mitchell (s. Anm. 40) 135–6.

42 S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, men and gods in Asia Minor* (1993), II 73–84. 91–5; P. Brown, *Authority and the sacred. Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world* (1995), 3–26; R. MacMullen, *Christianity and paganism in the fourth to eighth centuries* (1997), 1–12. 30. 150–1.

43 E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance. 4<sup>e</sup>–7<sup>e</sup> siècles* (1977).

44 P. Brown, *Poverty and leadership in the late Roman Empire* (2002), 10. 16.

contributed to an increase of social unrest.<sup>45</sup> Many natural disasters and the plague possibly aggravated the situation in the course of the sixth century.<sup>46</sup>

However, a general economic as well as demographic recession would not have set in before the 7<sup>th</sup> century. In this respect Foss stands confirmed by the rural settlement and building boom during late antiquity. The same holds true for a climatic change to the worse. It has been assumed that such a change led to a desertion of the countryside and subsequently caused a collapse of Anatolian urbanism during the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>47</sup> The archaeological record contradicts this. If the climate did change, it probably brought more rain that enabled the extension of the farmed and settled area onto more arid ground, as has recently been suggested for the Middle East.<sup>48</sup>

Rural prosperity explains, why small towns continued to do moderately well,<sup>49</sup> as far as their urban status was based on serving as central markets for the surrounding countryside.<sup>50</sup> An increase in the number of towns could have resulted from the increase in rural settlements. More settlements would have necessitated additional markets, administration and bishops,<sup>51</sup> and these functions were commonly linked with the legal status of a town.<sup>52</sup>

This far, the development of town and countryside went hand in hand, as both Liebeschuetz and Foss have assumed it would. At the same time, the old 'Roman' towns lost their architectural splendour, with which they had been invested for

45 Paltlagean (s. Anm. 43) 203–31; Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 249–83. 406; Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 37) 22.

46 Liebeschuetz (s. Anm. 6) 53. 410; M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (2003), 326–33. 656–70; D. C. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and pestilence in the late Roman and early Byzantine empire. A systematic survey of subsistence crises and epidemics* (2004), 155–65; reviewed by M. Meier, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 97 (2004), 627–9.

47 J. Koder, 'Climatic change in the fifth and sixth centuries?', in: P. Allen – E. Jeffreys (ed.), *The sixth century. End or beginning?* (1996), 270–85.

48 Y. Hirschfeld, 'A climatic change in the early Byzantine period? Some archaeological evidence', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 136 (2004), 133–49.

49 Jones (s. Anm. 5) II 718–20; Claude (s. Anm. 27) 203–21.

50 cf. G. Dagron, 'Entre village et cité. La bourgade rurale des 4<sup>e</sup>–7<sup>e</sup> siècles en Orient', *Κοινωνία* 3 (1979), 29–52, 52. Repr. in: id., *La romanité chrétienne en Orient* (1984), VII.

51 Jones (s. Anm. 16) 85–94; J. Koder, 'The urban character of the early Byzantine empire. Some reflections on a settlement geographical approach to the topic', in: *The 17<sup>th</sup> International Byzantine congress. Major papers* (1986) 155–87; id., 'Παρατηρήσεις στην οικιστική διάθροση της κεντρικής Μικράς Ασίας μετά τον 6<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα. Μια προσέγγιση από την οπτική γωνία της Θεωρίας των κεντρικών τόπων', in: *Byzantine Asia Minor (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> cent.)* (1998), 245–65.

52 Jones (s. Anm. 5) II 714; Koder (s. Anm. 51) 155–7; Claude (s. Anm. 27) 151–4. 219–23.

political reasons<sup>53</sup> until about A.D. 400. This urban splendour was obviously not linked to rural prosperity, otherwise either the former should have increased during late late antiquity, or the countryside should have fared even better during the Roman Imperial period. To the contrary, the decline of urban building seems to have been a precondition for all the many and splendid churches to be erected in the countryside. Only when the ‘flight of the curiales’ deprived the towns of their former political role and urban representation lost importance, were funds, marble and stonemasons released to the countryside too.<sup>54</sup>

In other words, until about A.D. 400 the typical ‘Roman’ town employed resources that were then shifted to the countryside during late late antiquity. These resources were obviously not generated by the ‘Roman’ town itself, otherwise they would not have been available any more during late late antiquity, when the ‘Roman’ town was in decline. It follows that the exclusively urban manifestation of architectural splendour until about A.D. 400 lends some meaning<sup>55</sup> and justification<sup>56</sup> to the old and much disputed label ‘parasitical consumer city’.<sup>57</sup> During the Roman Imperial period such a ‘city’ made sense: It played an important political part as such and as central place of a wider *polis* that included and

53 Jones (s. Anm. 16) 227–240; Mitchell (s. Anm. 42) I 198–226.

54 W. Liebeschuetz, ‘The end of the ancient city’, in: J. Rich (ed.), *The city in late antiquity* (1992), 1–49, 33, notices that ‘more money – or at least more labour and craftsmanship – was expended on villages in late antiquity than earlier’, but is not sure ‘whether the terms of economic exchange between town and country had become more favourable to the countryside’.

55 For a different opinion see C. R. Whittaker, ‘The consumer city revisited. The vicus and the city’, *JRA* 3 (1990), 110–7; C. R. Whittaker, ‘Do theories of the ancient city matter?’, in: T. Cornell – K. Lomas (ed.), *Urban society in Roman Italy* (1995), 9–26.

56 For a different opinion see C. Schuler, *Ländliche Siedlungen und Gemeinden im hellenistischen und römischen Kleinasien* (1998), 290; P. Horden – N. Purcell, *The corrupting sea. A study of Mediterranean history* (2000), 105–8.

57 This term was first fraced by W. Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus. Historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftslebens von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart I<sup>2</sup>* (1916), 142–3; cf. M. Weber, *Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum*, in: *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* <sup>3</sup>(1909), particularly 6. 13. Repr. in: id., *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1924), 1–288; M. I. Finley, *The ancient economy* (1973), 125–39; H. M. Parkins, ‘The ‘consumer city’ domesticated? The Roman city in elite economic strategies’, in: id. (ed.), *Roman urbanism beyond the consumer city* (1997), 83–111, 83–7; W. M. Jongman, ‘The Roman economy. From cities to empire’, in: L. de Blois – J. Rich (ed.), *The transformation of economic life under the Roman empire* (2002), 28–47; 44–7. The literature on the ‘consumer city’ is vast, for annotated bibliographies see Horden – Purcell, op. cit. (n. 56), 557–8; J. Andreau, ‘Twenty years after. Moses I. Finley’s The ancient economy’, in: S. v. Reden – W. Scheidel (ed.), *The ancient economy* (2002), 33–49, 42.

integrated the countryside.<sup>58</sup> But this changed during late late antiquity. The ‘flight of the curiales’ deprived the *polis* and its central place, the town, of their former importance. In consequence the resources were now shared more equally between town and countryside.

### Abstract

Aizanoi and other Anatolian towns witnessed a last urban building boom around A.D. 400. Colonnaded streets and squares, walls, large houses, and baths manifested urban status and distinguished towns from villages. That changed during the fifth and sixth centuries. Urban building other than churches all but came to a standstill. The existing buildings were allowed to run down and formerly prestigious houses were deserted. At the same time the countryside witnessed an unprecedented boom. The settled area and the number of settlements increased all over rural Anatolia, and the population would have done so too. Rural churches met the same regionally varying standards as the urban ones. The overall result was a convergence of settlement patterns in town and countryside. Where there are no older remains, there is nothing in the archaeological record to distinguish an urban from a rural settlement any more.

The conjunction of urban decline and rural prosperity can be observed all over Anatolia and must have had some cause of more than local significance. The last urban building boom around A.D. 400 continued a Roman tradition that was based on the overriding importance of the *polis* in the political life of the empire. That seems to have changed, after the ‘flight of the curiales’ left the towns with a governing body of ‘notables’, who took little interest in urban affairs. This may explain urban decline as well as rural prosperity: resources that had been concentrated on the towns until about A.D. 400 seem to have been shifted to the countryside in the fifth and sixth centuries. It follows that these resources had not been generated by the towns themselves, otherwise the resources would not have been available any more when the towns were in decline. This lends some new meaning and justification to the old and much disputed label of ‘parasitical consumer city’.

58 cf. Schuler (s. Anm. 56) 290; Horden – Purcell (s. Anm. 56) 105–108; B. Dignas, ‘Urban centres, rural centres, religious centres in the Greek East. Worlds apart?’, in: E. Schwertheim – E. Winter (ed.), *Religion und Region. Götter und Kulte aus dem östlichen Mittelmeerraum* (2003) 77–91; P. Doukellis, ‘Föderalismus in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit. Theorien und Praktiken’, in: L. Aigner-Foresti – P. Siewert (ed.), *Föderalismus in der griechischen und römischen Antike* (2005) 43–79, 79.