

Aphrodisias, Karia, Geyre

Around the turn of the seventh century the city of Aphrodisias was christened Stauropolis, City of the Cross.¹ On a gate in the city wall, the genitive ‘of the Aphrodisians’ was carefully removed and new lettering incised. The citizens were now to consider themselves Stauropolitans.² The gateway inscription is significant because it implies that the change of name occurred in a period in which civic self-presentation was still of paramount importance. Stauropolitans resided in a prosperous provincial centre. A recent find of a coin placed beneath a tile floor demonstrates that the latest repairs to the bathhouse erected under Hadrian were conducted during or after the reign of Phokas (AD 602–10).³ Over the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, a series of destructive events left much of the city in ruins and its citizens unable or unwilling to maintain its monumental grandeur.⁴ A medieval settlement subsequently grew within the ruins of the city. Churches, streets, fields and cemeteries adopted and transformed ancient topography. This settlement is best characterized as an episcopal village: a rural community equipped with an ecclesiastical infrastructure out of proportion to the requirements of the local population. The episcopal village kept the name Stauropolis, at least as the official designation of the metropolitan see and fiscal district. But it was more commonly known as Karia, an informal inheritance from the late antique province of which Aphrodisias had once been capital.⁵ The toponym Geyre appears for the first time in the Ottoman cadastral survey of 1530.⁶ The name likely reflects the vernacular pronunciation of the Greek, *στην Κάρια* assimilating to a voiced gamma. The origins of the toponym were not recognised by the surveyors of the Turkish nation state, and so Geyre outlived twentieth-century toponymic revisions to remain the name of the village until the present day.

This volume addresses the archaeology of Byzantine Karia from the eighth through to the thirteenth century. It collates and integrates material already published and presents several new bodies of archaeological evidence, assembled through both fieldwork and archival research and set out in detail in the appendices. It reconstructs the fabric of the medieval settlement so far as is possible, considering both domestic contexts and medieval interventions in ecclesiastical architecture. It seeks also to

investigate the occupation history of the settlement, to explore the social relations between its inhabitants, and to frame the site as a field of action integral to a broader region and political structure. The volume is intended as an exercise in settlement archaeology as social history, and as a contribution to the study of the Middle Byzantine Maeander.⁷

The destruction deposits that sealed the archaeological stratigraphy of late antique Aphrodisias cannot be attributed to a single historical event. Wilson identifies several instances of destruction by fire, which may or may not be simultaneous, followed by an earthquake that appears to have travelled on an east-west axis, toppling colonnades on the perpendicular north-south alignment. If one were to follow the numismatic dating, most of these events should fall somewhere near the end of the first quarter of the seventh century.⁸ However, numismatic dating of seventh-century destruction deposits is increasingly being brought into question, and it may be wiser to exercise caution regarding the precise date of these deposits until the later limit of the ceramic assemblages can be more precisely defined.⁹

I follow Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon in using the term Early Byzantine to refer to the period between the seventh and ninth centuries.¹⁰ I am aware that the same term is more often employed for the fourth through sixth centuries, for which I use late antique, but I find it more neutral than Dark Age, Iconoclastic Period, Invasion Period or Transitional Period.¹¹ An archaeological transition from Early to Middle Byzantine in the mid-ninth century is sometimes framed in terms of geopolitical transformation, as the eastwards expansion of Constantinopolitan military hegemony relieved the cities of western Asia Minor from the pressure of raiding from the Caliphate.¹² I prefer to consider the periodisation as one of archaeological visibility engendered by the accelerated circulation of copper alloy coinage, the emergence of recognisable supra-local ceramic forms and the restoration of figural art.

The dividing line between Middle and Late Byzantium is generally taken to be the sack of Constantinople in 1204.¹³ This

1 ala2004, VI.49–54; Nesbitt 1983, 159–64; Roueché 2007; Jankowiak 2013, 440.

2 Roueché 2007, 187.

3 Wilson 2019, 212.

4 Wilson 2019, 212–218.

5 Nesbitt 1983, 159–60; BZS.1955.1.1360; *Ignatios the Deacon* Ep. 19–20; *Alexander of Nikaia* Ep. 13–17; *Niketas Choniates* §400.

6 Though Geyre does not appear in the first *defterler* of the 1460s: Howard 2017, 2.

7 Whittow 1987, 264–65.

8 Wilson 2019, 212–28.

9 Ladstätter 2019, 16.

10 Brubaker – Haldon 2011, 453–54.

11 ‘Transitional’ was proposed by the architectural historian Robert Ousterhout, and works well in a purely architectural context, but defining any one period as transitional threatens to unduly stabilise the points to either side. Philipp Niewöhner’s ‘Invasion Period’ somewhat pre-empt historical interpretation (as noted by Thonemann 2018, 262): Ousterhout 1999, 3; Decker 2016.

12 Niewöhner 2017b, 54.

13 For example, Bartusis 1997; Treadgold 2013.



Fig. 1. Aphrodisias in the Mediterranean.

date was of little relevance to the inhabitants of the East Aegean valleys, and I allow my Middle Byzantine to extend into the thirteenth century. I introduce new terminology for the Komnenian end of this period only in the context of numismatics, when it becomes necessary to distinguish between monetary systems. By the later thirteenth century, the Upper Maeander had been fully incorporated into the political economies of the Turkic Beyliks.¹⁴ I set the later limit for my period somewhere in the early to middle decades of the thirteenth century.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the physical geography, administrative systems and major settlements of the Middle Byzantine Maeander. I then return to Aphrodisias, briefly considering the extent to which a history of the settlement might be written from literary sources and other textual media. Subsequent sections discuss the history of archaeological research at the site. The majority of the material I present in this book was unearthed in the early decades of the New York University excavations at Aphrodisias, which commenced in 1961. These excavations ought to be considered in their proper historical and intellectual context, requiring an analysis of the relationship between Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Studies in the period immediately following the Second World War. The chapter then surveys research addressing medieval Aphrodisias conducted from 1961 to 2017, before summarising the nature of the archival evidence and the structure of the volume.

A. PHYSICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE GEOGRAPHY

Aphrodisias is located in the Morsynos (Dandalas) Valley, a tributary of the Maeander (Büyük Menderes) in southwestern Asia Minor (Fig. 1). The settlement centres on a prehistoric höyük emerging above a gentle plain. The Morsynos flows from southwest to northeast through the centre of the valley (Fig. 2). The river offers limited opportunity for riverine transportation, and carries little fluvial sedimentation to the valley bottom. The valley is bounded to the north, east and south by precipitous ridges. To the northeast, the barren peak of Mt. Kadmos (Babadag) dominates the horizon. The northern ridge of the valley is around 600 m higher than the southern, and is the site of a great many more natural springs. Settlements within the valley are generally sited on these fertile northern slopes, often at the confluences of mountain streams. The Morsynos Valley forms a discrete ecological niche, and a spatial unit produced in antiquity as *chora* to the *polis* of Aphrodisias.¹⁵

At the eastern limit of the valley, a high pass leads over the southern flank of Mt. Kadmos and onto the Tabai Plain. To the west the Morsynos curves gently northwards until it emerges onto the floodplain of the Maeander beneath the walls of ancient Antioch (Fig. 3). The road west would have led past Mastaura, Nysa, Tralles, Magnesia, and Priene to the coastal site of Miletos. East of Antioch is a major fork in the Maeander. From here one may turn northeast to the settlement of Tripolis and the Banaz Ovasi. Alternatively, one might turn to the southeast and into the valley of the Lykos, where one would find the settlements of Laodikeia, Hierapolis, and Chonai. East of the

¹⁴ ala2004, VII.28.

¹⁵ Stearns 2012, 135–48.

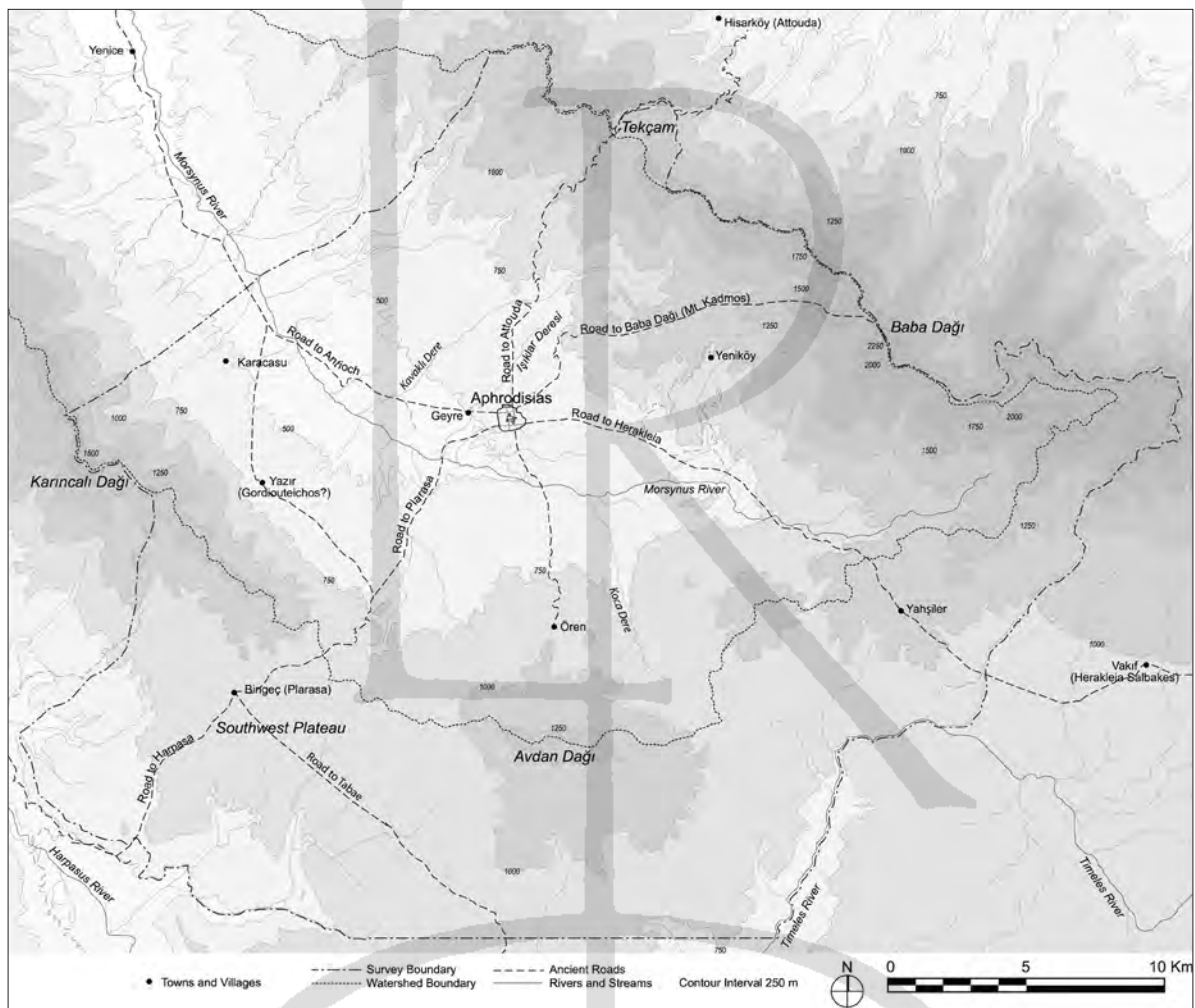


Fig. 2. The Morsynos Valley: hydrology and ancient road network.



Fig. 3. Aphrodisias in the Middle Byzantine Maeander.

Lykos, the Maeander continues into the Baklan Ovası and the fortress of Choma. The Maeander is the southernmost of three parallel river valleys of the East Aegean. To the north is the Kaystros, which leads to the coastal settlement of Ephesos. Further north still is the Hermos, in whose valley are the settlements of Philadelphia and Sardis. The Hermos emerges into the Aegean at the Gulf of Smyrna.

The major territorial division of the Early Byzantine state was the theme, a system created in response to the fragmentation of previous administrative structures after the Persian War.¹⁶ The theme was originally a military contingent, its territorial aspect being simply the geographic purview of the commander. As the Herakleian field armies came to be permanently settled on the land, the ambiguity between a geographic and a military division was resolved.¹⁷ The East Aegean river valleys were initially subject to the army of the Anatolikon. Around the end of the seventh century, the forces of the *magister militum per Thracias* were settled in the region, establishing the theme of the Thrakesians, or the Thrakesion.¹⁸ The territory was administered by a *strategos*, in whose person both military and civil jurisdictions were combined.¹⁹ In the more peaceful tenth and eleventh centuries the command of the Thrakesion came to be wielded by a civil *krites*. *Strategoï* and *kritai* served only for brief tours of three or four years and were almost always appointed to themes distant from their homeland. They were forbidden to acquire property or establish dynastic connections within the territory under their command.²⁰ Their position therefore depended entirely on the politics of the Constantinopolitan court.²¹ The ancient cities of the region had no direct administrative function as corporate entities, though some might serve as a seat of administration for regional commanders. The *strategos* of the Thrakesion was probably resident at Ephesos.²² Higher order settlements maintained some relevance as the nominal centres of the territories to which provincial tax collectors, known as *dioiketai*, were assigned; the Dumbarton Oaks collection includes four seals of a certain Arsavir, *dioiketes* of Staupropolis in the ninth century.²³

The late antique provincial hierarchy was also preserved in the episcopal sees. Metropolitan bishops sat at Staupropolis/Karia, Ephesos, Smyrna, Sardis, Laodikeia, Hierapolis, and at Chonai. Miletos was an autocephalous metropolitan see without suffragan bishops.²⁴ Metropolitans of Staupropolis attend-

ed both the sixth ecumenical council in 680 and the council in *Trullo* in 692.²⁵ At the second council of Nikaia in 787 a deacon acted as *locum tenens* for the metropolitan.²⁶ Charlotte Roueché assembles several signatures of metropolitans of Karia on documents of the Middle Byzantine period.²⁷ More bishops are known from their lead seals, both excavated at Aphrodisias and published in larger collections. These frequently depict or invoke the archangel Michael, to whom the episcopal Cathedral was dedicated.²⁸ This local cult of the archangel likewise represents an important continuity from late antiquity.²⁹

B. TEXTS FOR BYZANTINE KARIA

Before presenting any archaeological evidence, it will be worth pausing to consider the few literary texts that refer to Karia. Literary evidence for the Byzantine Maeander falls into three principal genres: hagiography, epistolography, and historiography. To these one might add epigraphy and sigillography as textual media. The surviving hagiography of the Maeander region is concerned primarily with the coastal area, as may be inferred from the epithets of the protagonists of Paul of Latros (Bafa Gölü), Nikephoros of Miletos, and Lazaros of Galesion (Alamandağ, north of Ephesos).³⁰ The initial passages of the life of Luke the Stylite are set in a southwestern Phrygian context.³¹ None of these texts refer to Karia or the Morsynos.

Three distinct groups of extant texts illustrate the activities of metropolitans of Karia. The first perspective is that of Ignatios the Deacon. Ignatios is best known for his theologically flexible approach to ecclesiastical politics during the second period of Iconoclasm. Three of his surviving letters are addressed to a Nikephoros, bishop of Karia. At some point after 815 Ignatios was ordained Metropolitan of Nikaia.³² It was probably at this stage in his career that he first entered into correspondence with Nikephoros. Ignatios despatched a polite reply to what appears to have been a longer composition congratulating him on his investiture.³³ After the second council of Nikaia in 843, Ignatios returned to Constantinople. His second and third letters to Nikephoros date from this later period. They concern an ongoing property dispute in the capital. Nikephoros, having been appointed trustee of a dowry, was apparently attempting to divert the property away from a young bride and to bestow it on an illegitimate branch of her family.³⁴ Behind a rhetorical pretence of amity, Ignatios' letters are blunt and threatening.

16 Lilie 1976, 61–64; Wassiliou-Seibt 2017, 802.

17 Haldon 1997, 212–15.

18 Haussoulier 1924; Zuckerman 2006, 129; Wassiliou-Seibt 2017, 799. Some ambiguity exists as to whether Aphrodisias would have fallen within the Thrakesion or the Kyberrhaiotai, largely depending on the interpretation of the confused geography of *de Thematis* §XIV, 31–37. I have recently identified a ninth-century seal of the *strategos* of the Thrakesians at Aphrodisias, and have argued elsewhere that it is unlikely that the Morsynos ever fell within the purview of the Kyberrhaiotai: Jeffery 2019a, No. 30.

19 Wassiliou-Seibt 2017.

20 Noailles – Dain 1944, 282–5; Whittow 1987, 297.

21 Whittow 1987, 308.

22 Ladstätter 2017, 241; though Foss considers a capital at Laodikeia or Chonai, to be more likely: Foss 1979, 195–96.

23 BZS.1955.690–693. A certain Anthemios performed the same function in the tenth century: BZS.1955.1.1360.

24 Whittow 1987, 453.

25 *PBE I* Theodoros 30, Sisinnios 9.

26 *PBE I* Theophylaktos 20.

27 ala2004, fasti:bishops.

28 Laurent 1963, Nos. 515, 516; Zacos – Vegler 1972, No. 1351; Laurent Nesbitt 1983, Nos. 2, 3. These may be compared to seals of the metropolitans of Hierapolis and at Athens likewise advertising local cults: Laurent 1963, Nos. 585–607; Arthur 2006, 93; Kaldellis 2009, 137–41.

29 Laurent 1963, 381; Jeffery 2019b, 218–27.

30 *Life of Paul of Latros; Life of Nikephoros of Miletos; Life of Lazaros.*

31 *Life of Loukas the Stylite.*

32 Mango 1997, 5–6.

33 *Ignatios the Deacon*, Ep. 9.

34 *Ignatios the Deacon*, Ep. 19–20.

Nikephoros is instructed to cease his interference and warned against travelling from Karia to Constantinople.

The second group of texts are likewise letters. Their author was bishop Alexander of Nikaia, a prominent intellectual of the tenth century.³⁵ Alexander was exiled and imprisoned in 944 on account of an unknown transgression. Seventeen of his surviving letters attest to a sustained effort to persuade provincial metropolitans to advocate for his rehabilitation. Seven of these refer to an anonymous metropolitan of Karia, with whom Alexander appears to have enjoyed close relations prior to his disgrace.³⁶ The bishop of Karia appears as Alexander's chief champion and ally; his endorsement often arrives as a rhetorical *coup de grâce* near the end of Alexander's petitions.³⁷

Four synodical decrees of Alexios Stoudites, Patriarch of Constantinople 1025–1043, attest to a dispute between the Constantinopolitan synod and the metropolitan of Karia.³⁸ The metropolitan had unlawfully deposed one of his suffragan subordinates, the bishop of Tabai.³⁹ The synod ordered that the suffragan be reinstated, but the metropolitan apparently ignored all decrees. The synod then attempted to enforce successively more severe punishments on the rogue metropolitan. At first the metropolitan's office was suspended and he was ordered to fast in penance. When this had no effect, the synod issued a command to the clergy of Karia to withdraw from communion with their metropolitan. The eventual outcome of the dispute is not recorded.

The texts are concerned exclusively with Karia the see and reveal almost nothing of Karia the settlement. A metropolitan ignored in Constantinople is neatly balanced by a Patriarch ignored in the Morsynos. A tenth-century exile would have us believe that the endorsement of an Aphrodisian bishop carried considerable clout. The episodes are interesting as snapshots of ecclesiastical politics, situating metropolitans of Karia within a Constantinopolitan literary diaspora. But they can offer only etic perspectives on the bishop as imagined by contemporaries; the material condition of the settlement is irrelevant to their purpose.

Only when the Maeander region became a theatre for military campaigns against the Seljuks did it come to feature prominently in narrative history. Karia appears twice in the chronicle of Niketas Choniates, born c. 1155 at Chonai in the Lykos Valley.⁴⁰ The first occasion is in connection with the short-lived polity of Theodore Mankaphas at Philadelphia.⁴¹ Mankaphas was a member of a dynasty that had held high military rank since the eleventh century.⁴² The family appears to have held lands in the Maeander region, and in the early thirteenth century minor members may be found in the hinterlands of Smyrna and Miletos.⁴³ Theodore was proclaimed *basileus* at Philadelphia

in 1188, establishing a polity that may have included most of the Thrakesion Theme.⁴⁴ Niketas narrates that Basil Batatzes, having been appointed *doux* of the Thrakesion, engineered the removal of Mankaphas from Philadelphia and the reduction of his territory to Constantinopolitan control. Mankaphas then fled to Ikonion, where he was granted permission to recruit a raiding party. He led this force into the Upper Maeander, plundering Laodikeia and Chonai before moving on to Karia. At Karia he allowed his barbarian followers to burn the great church of Michael.⁴⁵ Following the death of Kilij Arslan II, he was surrendered to Constantinople by the Seljuks. While the narrative sequence is straightforward, Choniates does not give a precise chronology and historians have offered conflicting reconstructions of events.⁴⁶ Mankaphas' raids in the Upper Maeander may have taken place any time between summer 1190 and c. 1194.⁴⁷

A little later in the chronicle, Choniates uses a diplomatic dispute as a means by which to contrast the moral characteristics of the Kay Khusraw and Alexios III Angelos.⁴⁸ In 1197, the emperor apparently seized the property of both Greek and Turkic merchants from Ikonion in response to an alleged slight. Rather than keep the proceeds in the imperial treasury, as would have been appropriate, Alexios distributes confiscated property to his courtiers. Kay Khusraw then leads an army into the Morsynos from the east, sacking Karia and Tantalos before making his way to Antioch. Roueché suggests that Choniates' Tantalos is likely the same site as the modern Dandalas, a village in the northern portion of the valley.⁴⁹ Choniates alleges that Kay Khusraw captured the entire able-bodied population, some five thousand people. He resettles these farmers at Philomelion in Phrygia. The sultan offers the new settlers five years' fiscal exemption and promises that in future the tax levy will be less burdensome than that extracted by Constantinople. This episode must be read in the context of Choniates' overarching narrative, in which successive moral failures on the part of Byzantine emperors lead directly to the catastrophe of 1204. Choniates carefully constructs an ironic contrast between an indolent emperor and a barbarian sovereign devoted to the minutiae of government.⁵⁰ It would therefore be unwise to assume that Choniates' depiction of Seljuk policy is grounded in historical reality. Perhaps more revealing is the terminology that he employs. Karia is described as a *komopolis*, or village-city.⁵¹

Pachymeres lists Karia alongside Antioch as Maeander settlements irrevocably lost to the Seljuks by 1278.⁵² This is the

35 Alexander's precise date of birth is debated. See Darrouzès 1960, 27 and Kazhdan 2006, 172.

36 *Alexander of Nikaia*, Ep. 1, 6, 13–17.

37 Notably *Alexander of Nikaia*, Ep. 15, in which the bishop appears as *ὁ ἀγιώτατος μητροπολίτης Καρίας*.

38 *Actes* Nos. 852–855; Moulet 2011, 392.

39 For Tabai, see Ramsay 1887b, 191.

40 ODB 'Choniates, Niketas'.

41 *Niketas Choniates* §400.

42 Cheynet 1984, 45–46.

43 MM IV, 61; MM VI, 151.

44 Cheynet 1984, 47.

45 *Niketas Choniates* §400.

46 Compare the divergent interpretations of Cheynet 1984 and ODB 'Mankaphas, Theodore'.

47 The date of 1188 given by Foss and Roueché is probably too early: ala2004 VII.9; ODB 'Aphrodisias'.

48 *Niketas Choniates* §495.

49 ala2004, VII.27. Dandalas is also the modern Turkish name for the Morsynos river.

50 Matheou 2014, 224–25.

51 As noted by Roueché ala2004, VII.27. I argue in the concluding paragraphs to this monograph that this provocative abstract category is much more useful than the non-specific 'town' for framing the settlement at medieval Karia.

52 ala2004, VII.28; *Pachymeres* §468.

final mention of Karia in any medieval Greek text.⁵³ Narrative historiography therefore provides little information regarding the *komopolis* of Karia save that it was subject to hostile raids in the final decade of the twelfth century. A further insight into the twelfth century may be gleaned from a copper alloy *stauropoleion* cross now in the Ashmolean Museum. The cross was purchased by William Buckler in Constantinople in 1926.⁵⁴ An inscription running across each arm commemorates the consecration by the bishop of Stauropolis of a church of St. Nicholas. The date is given precisely: 10 July 1172.⁵⁵ The dealer from whom Buckler purchased the cross claimed that it was discovered near Ainos in Thrace, now Enez immediately east of the border between Greece and Turkey. Roueché notes that Petit saw the same cross in the monastery church of Skaliotissa, near Ainos, around the turn of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ The cross was probably removed from the monastery in the course of the Greco-Turkish War or in its aftermath. This should place the metropolitan of Stauropolis well outside of his nominal diocese in the later twelfth century.

Roueché presents editions and commentary for four inscriptions from Middle Byzantine Aphrodisias. A simple epitaph on an ancient paving slab commemorates a certain Nikolaos.⁵⁷ Twenty-two pieces of a curving epistyle preserve fragments of a tenth-century dodecasyllabic verse.⁵⁸ A further dodecasyllabic verse is inscribed across the face of a *templon* epistyle in a twelfth-century script.⁵⁹ I reconstruct the architectural context of the epistyle inscriptions in the fourth chapter of this volume. A final text is inscribed across an ancient moulding, recovered in fragments at the Theatre and Sebasteion.⁶⁰ The inscription attests to a church dedicated to the martyrs Barbara and Anastasia. This Middle Byzantine chapel, presumably located near the centre of the settlement, is otherwise completely unknown.

Lead seals supply further historical evidence. These coin-sized objects were formed by passing a thread between two circular blanks, which were then impressed by tongs cut with imagery or inscriptions unique to their owner. In this way they could ensure the integrity of documents in transit or in archives, or authenticate a legal record. Where seals are found in archaeological contexts they therefore offer a view onto communication networks and archival practices. The seals published by John Nesbitt in 1983 were mostly found in the Bishop's Palace and are discussed in the second chapter with regards to their archaeological context. I have published a further twelve seals excavated between 1984 and 2018 in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.⁶¹ Full sigillographic apparatus and commentaries are given there, though a summary list of the complete series of thirty-five seals is presented in the fourth appendix to this volume. The new

seals derive mostly from excavations in the eastern portion of the settlement. The eighth and ninth centuries are represented by a *patrikios*, an imperial *kandidatos*, a *tourmarch* and two *strategoi*, suggesting that Aphrodisias remained a seat of administration within the Early Byzantine Thrakesion.⁶² New seals of the Middle Byzantine period include a tenth-century *skeuophylax* of H. Sophia and an eleventh-century military official stationed at Charsianon in Cappadocia, demonstrating the supra-regional connections of the site.⁶³

C. ARCHAEOLOGY, APHRODISIAS, AND THE MAEANDER, C. 1700–2020

Late Ottoman Geyre occupied the Theatre Hill and the north-eastern quarter of the intramural area of ancient Aphrodisias. Columns and architraves protruded above fields and pathways, and ancient marble elements were routinely incorporated into vernacular architecture.

The first Western scholars to reach the Upper Maeander did so from the bustling and cosmopolitan port of Ottoman Smyrna.⁶⁴ In 1812 the architect John Deering, under the auspices of the Society of Dilettanti, arrived at Geyre.⁶⁵ He constructed the first plan of the city of Aphrodisias: the only plan to incorporate the Ottoman village as well as ancient monuments. A caption to the stadium notes its function as a cattle enclosure. The first traveller to address the Christian architecture of Aphrodisias was the French archaeologist Charles Texier, who arrived in 1835. He dated the Cathedral to the reign of Constantine—far too early—but correctly deduced the architectural mechanics of the transformation from temple to basilica.⁶⁶

In 1856 work began on a project that would transform the human geography of the east Aegean river valleys. The first railway from Smyrna reached Aydin in 1866, and lines progressed further inland over the course of the subsequent decades.⁶⁷ With the railway came a new mode of archaeology. The Western engineers and architects charged with its construction would be the first excavators of ancient sites. They employed the same tools, techniques and even labourers in archaeological digs as they did on the railways.⁶⁸ Moreover, rail facilitated the transportation of heavy marble elements from rural contexts to the coast, where they might be shipped to Constantinople or to Europe. The archaeology practiced within the villages of the Maeander came to take the form of intrusive excavations, transforming the topography of the settlements and in some cases leading to the relocation of modern populations. At Geyre the first archaeological excavations were led by the French railway engineer Paul Gaudin in 1904–05.⁶⁹ Further digs were directed

53 It is likely that Michael VIII Palaiologos' reference to 'Karia' in the context of military expeditions of 1261 is to the region, since it is paired with Phrygia: *BMFD*, 1245.

54 Buckler 1928.

55 Buckler 1928, 99.

56 ala2004, VII.26, citing Petit 1908, 19. The connection was first made by Mango in discussion with Roueché.

57 ala2004, 173.

58 ala2004, 99. See pp. 78–79.

59 ala2004, 110, 246.

60 ala2004, 108.

61 Jeffery 2019a.

62 Jeffery 2019a, Nos. 27–31.

63 Jeffery 2019a, Nos. 32, 34.

64 Crawford 2003, 88. A complete list of early travellers to Geyre is compiled by Roueché at <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/bibliography/index.html#intro> (accessed 30/07/2020).

65 Society of Dilettanti 1840.

66 Texier 1848, 160; Texier 1864, 88–89.

67 Cobb 2017, 518.

68 Cobb 2017, 523.

69 Collignon 1904; Mendel 1906.

by André Boulanger in 1913.⁷⁰ These initial excavations were brought to an end by the outbreak of the First World War and subsequent Greco-Turkish War. The only excavation campaign at Geyre during the interwar period was undertaken by an Italian team in 1937.⁷¹

At the same time in Greece, preliminary steps were being made towards an archaeology of Byzantine settlements. Medieval remains at the Athenian Agora were championed by Alison Frantz.⁷² At Corinth scholars developed a Byzantine archaeology inspired by the medievalist aesthetics of the contemporary avant-garde.⁷³ *Hesperia* published a major article addressing Byzantine archaeology almost every year between 1932 and 1945.⁷⁴ From 1945 to 1964 Byzantium disappears from its pages.⁷⁵ The Cold War exerted new pressures on the institutions of Classical Archaeology; the primacy of ancient Greece was reasserted over the Byzantine Commonwealth, whose cultural legacy uncomfortably spanned geopolitical blocks.⁷⁶

A strong medievalist undercurrent runs through the works of the itinerant historical geographers of Asia Minor. Their research was primarily based on epigraphic documents, addressed *longue durée* questions of settlement pattern, and was often inspired by Christian faith.⁷⁷ Archaeological excavations, on the other hand, were generally concerned with an art historical agenda to which Byzantium was at best a coda.⁷⁸ The remains of vernacular medieval occupation were more likely to be considered an obstacle than an object of study.⁷⁹ Churches received some attention.⁸⁰ But the Christian Archaeology practised by Georgios Soteriou and Anastasios Orlandos in Greece was informed by the irredentist *Megali Idea* and as such had little purchase in the Republic of Turkey.⁸¹ In his final publication on the Byzantine Maeander, Mark Whittow drew attention to George Bean's archaeological guidebooks written between 1966 and 1978.⁸² He suggested that the scholarly guides captured a crucial moment in the history of archaeology in Turkey; Bean's was a vision of ancient urbanism defined by temples and togate

statues, conceptually innocent of the late antique revolution about to be set in motion by Peter Brown.⁸³

In the 1970s the archaeological study of Byzantine Asia Minor was re-ignited by the work of Clive Foss. Foss' ideas were first articulated in a 1972 doctoral thesis and disseminated through a series of highly influential publications over the following decade.⁸⁴ The key sites on which he based his analysis were Sardis, Ephesos, Miletos, Didyma, Pergamon and Hierapolis, with occasional reference made to Priene, Magnesia and Nysa; Aphrodisias barely features.⁸⁵ He argued that urban prosperity persisted throughout the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. Late antique urbanism was brutally undone by the Persian invasion of Anatolia in 622, and sustained Arab raids throughout the seventh century ensured that ancient cities were either abandoned or remained little more than fortified refuges. Foss' archaeological paradigm was revolutionary. Not long previously, George Ostrogorsky had claimed that the urban political economy of the provinces persisted throughout the eighth and ninth centuries.⁸⁶ However, many aspects of Foss' model have been critiqued or modified over the past two decades. That there was a dramatic simplification of the Byzantine economy in the seventh century remains undisputed, and a contraction of agricultural production has been confirmed through studies of pollen cores.⁸⁷ Critiques have been most significant with regards to urban transformations in the later sixth century, the role of the Persian War, and the nature of settlement pattern in the Early and Middle Byzantine periods.⁸⁸ Most scholars would now recognise that the cities of Asia Minor were no longer thriving by the turn of the seventh century, and that the 'Pompeii premise' of the Persian War must give way to a more drawn out demise of the ancient city.⁸⁹

Yet the principal problem encountered by Foss still remains to be solved; even today the eighth century remains almost invisible to the traditional methodologies of Classical Archaeology. The problem has its roots in numismatics. Across most of the territories of the medieval empire, copper alloy coinage minted in the period between the reigns of Constans II (641–68) and Theophilos (829–42) is extremely scarce. The causes and implications of the 'coin gap' are set out in the third chapter, but here it will suffice to point out that the scarcity is a monetary phenomenon, not an index of demographic decline. The numismatic problem directly affects ceramic dating, since the chronological brackets assigned to ceramic forms are ultimately dependent on stratigraphically associated coinage.⁹⁰ The principal tablewares of late antiquity were those belonging to the Red Slip tradition: bowls and large shallow plates in various red/orange clays covered by a thin slip usually similar in colour to

70 Boulanger 1914.

71 Jacopi 1939.

72 Frantz 1935, 1938, 1941a, 1941b, 1942, 1961, 1971, 1988; McCredie 2000.

73 Kourelis 2007.

74 Waagé 1933; Frantz 1935, 1938, 1941a, 1941b, 1942; Davidson 1937; Shelley 1943; DeWald 1944.

75 Notopoulos 1964; Frantz – Travlos 1965. The exception, Weitzmann 1949 on 'Euripides Scenes in Byzantine Art', only proves the rule.

76 Kourelis 2007, 396. For 'Byzantine Commonwealth': Obolensky 1971.

77 Cumont 1895; Ramsay 1887b. Thonemann 2011 very much follows in the model of the itinerant epigraphists, his historical geography likewise extending well into the medieval period.

78 Frend 1996 141; Whittow 2018, 42.

79 For example, Ladstätter 2019, 15 notes how the study of late antiquity at Ephesos in the early twentieth century was strictly limited to monumental remains.

80 Wiegand 1913; Reisch 1932; Ladstätter 2019, 15. Francophone scholarship in the region of Trezibond; Baklanov – Grégoire 1927; Brounov 1927.

81 Well illustrated by Soteriou's excavations at St. John at Ephesos in 1921 in the capacity of Ephor of Byzantine Antiquities: Soteriou 1940; Mango 1965, 40; Solomonidis 1984, 182; Frend 1996, 224–45; Hamilakis – Yalouri 1999, 129–30; Bowden 2009, 93–95.

82 Whittow 2018, 42, citing Bean 1966, 1968, 1971, 1978.

83 Brown 1971.

84 Foss 1972, 1975, 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1979.

85 Not a deliberate or pointed omission of course. The sites surveyed in Foss' publications were those for which documentation was available.

86 Ostrogorsky 1959, 54.

87 Izdebski 2013; Haldon et al. 2014; Haldon 2016, 232–37.

88 Brandes 1982, 1989; Whittow 1987, 2001, 2003; Haldon – Brandes 2000; Greatrex 2018; Thonemann 2018; Haldon 2019, 241–46; Jacobs (forthcoming).

89 On 'Persian War' deposits, see now the incisive comments of Ladstätter 2019, 16.

90 Armstrong 2009, 168.

the fabric. These were mass-produced according to forms that are relatively easy to recognise. The moment at which the Red Slip tradition comes to an end marks the limit of archaeological visibility.⁹¹ After this point, ceramic assemblages come to be dominated by coarsewares produced at local or even household level.⁹² It is extremely difficult to classify these coarseware products into typologies of relative sequence. Moreover, in the absence of stratigraphically associated coin finds there is no absolute chronological scaffold around which such a sequential typology could be structured. The problem is especially acute when stratigraphic contexts are not sealed. The coincidence of coin gap and ceramic gap brings us to an archaeological impasse, and we find ourselves in a frustrating situation in which the only artefacts excavated at Aphrodisias that may be securely dated to the eighth century are a few lead seals.⁹³

Whittow's doctoral thesis, submitted in 1987, remains the fundamental text for the history of the Middle Byzantine Maeander. He argued that the ancient settlements of the region were continuously occupied from the end of antiquity through to the later eleventh century.⁹⁴ Research has tended to confirm this hypothesis, with the proviso that the ancient, formerly urban, settlements were but one integral part of a complex and primarily rural social formation.⁹⁵ The Middle Byzantine period witnessed demographic and *per capita* growth, but surplus accumulation was not configured in such a way as to produce large towns or cities. I return to the question of higher order settlements in the Middle Byzantine Maeander in the final chapter of this volume. For now it will suffice to note these debates have been catalysed by a flurry of recent research projects addressing the medieval archaeology of the region.⁹⁶ Many invaluable contributions were published during the period in which this volume was being prepared, testifying to the vibrancy of a subject that until recently had been marginal to the agenda of Classical Archaeology in Turkey. At Aphrodisias, excavations at the Place of Palms and Tetrastylon Street have explicitly addressed the post-antique history of the site. Likewise, programmes of research at Miletos and Ephesos, under the respective direc-

tion of Philipp Niewöhner and Sabine Ladstätter, have targeted post-antique occupation.⁹⁷ New Early and Middle Byzantine material has been published from Priene, Mykale, Sardis, Tripolis, and Hierapolis.⁹⁸ Across Asia Minor the blurred outlines of Middle Byzantine communities are coming into focus.⁹⁹ It is hoped that new evidence from Aphrodisias will bring further contours to this emerging landscape.

D. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON BYZANTINE APHRODISIAS

Kenan Erim commenced his excavations at Aphrodisias in 1961. His initial objective was to confirm the existence of a local school of marble sculpture. This he undoubtedly achieved, with results more spectacular than could have been anticipated. But the first ten years of the Aphrodisias Excavations Project also witnessed the excavation of much of the medieval settlement. Already by the end of the 1960s, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace, the Triconch Church and hundreds of inhumation burials had been brought to light (Pl. 1).¹⁰⁰

During the subsequent decade Erim took care to ensure that his Byzantine finds were seen by some of the foremost experts in the field. In 1975 Hendy catalogued the large quantity of Byzantine coinage documented in the site inventory. His notes were never published, though they are referenced in his *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy* and are the source for Morrisson's published histograms.¹⁰¹ Robin Cormack came to Aphrodisias for two study seasons: 1977 and 1978. His research resulted in the publication of sixth-century mural paintings at the Theatre, a preliminary study of the Cathedral, and two papers addressing the Middle Byzantine settlement.¹⁰² These last two publications are short historiographical essays in which Aphrodisias is adduced as a case study through which to reconsider paradigms of urban decline. In 1983 Nesbitt published the first twenty-five Byzantine lead seals excavated at the site.¹⁰³ The most significant work to ensue from this period is Roueché's *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, first published in 1989.¹⁰⁴ This monumental study presented all inscriptions from the period AD 250–1200, alongside detailed commentary on the secular and ecclesiastical administration of the settlement. However, with the exception of epigraphy and sigillography there were no systematic publications of late antique or medieval material during this period.

Research on Middle Byzantine Aphrodisias recommenced around the turn of the millennium with the doctoral theses of

91 The end of the Red Slip tradition has often been considered a phenomenon of the early to middle seventh century, associated with the decline of the cities as the consumption centres for exported ceramics. This assumption has recently been challenged from multiple angles. Armstrong and Vroom, working with material from sites on the southern coast of Asia Minor, have demonstrated the persistence of so-called Cypriot Red Slip (Late Roman D) into the ninth century: Vroom 2005; 2007; Armstrong 2009; 2012. In the Peloponnese, Sanders has revised the dating of Phokaian Red Slip (Late Roman C) into the eighth. And in Tunisia, the production of African Red Slip is now recognised to continue long after the Arab conquest of AD 698: Bonifay 2004, 183–185. Sanders is currently preparing a new chronology for the Red Slip tablewares, revising the chronological brackets of Hayes 1972 in light of recent evidence. It is likely that local Aphrodisian ceramic chronologies (Hudson 2008, phase LR3), currently pinned to Hayes 1972, will require revision.

92 See Vionis 2009 for a study of Early Byzantine coarsewares at Sagalassos.

93 Nesbitt 1983, No. 1; Jeffery 2019b, Nos. 27, 28, 29.

94 Whittow 1987, 245–265.

95 Niewöhner 2017b, 54–56; Niewöhner 2017c, 260–61.

96 Much credit for this ought to be ascribed to the Amorium Excavations Project: see Lightfoot 2017 for an overview.

97 Niewöhner 2016b; 2016c; 2017b; 2017c; Ladstätter 2017, 2019; Pülz 2017; Vroom 2018; Karydis 2019.

98 Duman 2014; Buchwald 2015; de Giorgi 2016; Pedone 2016; Fildhuth 2017; Lohmann – Kalaitzoglou – Lüdorf 2017; Evans 2018.

99 Erciyas – Tatbul 2015; Ousterhout 2017; Niewöhner 2017; Haldon – Elton – Newhard 2019; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2019.

100 Erim 1966, 28, noting the excavation of the triconch hall of the Bishop's Palace. The structure of this report gives a fair insight into the agenda of the early excavations.

101 Hendy 1981; Morrisson 2002a, fig. 6.1.

102 Cormack 1981, 1990a, 1990b, 1991.

103 Nesbitt 1983.

104 ala2004.

Laura Hebert and Michelle Berenfeld.¹⁰⁵ These addressed the Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace, though preferring the nomenclature 'Temple-Church' and 'Triconch House'. The terminology reflects the late antique focus of both theses. Hebert's was structured around the act of transformation of temple to basilica, while Berenfeld was concerned primarily with the earliest phases of the house. Nevertheless, both authors presented significant research on the medieval phases of their monuments, and Berenfeld's recent monograph addressing the 'Triconch House' offers invaluable architectural analysis of the Middle Byzantine Bishop's Palace.¹⁰⁶

Though the ceramic types found at Aphrodisias are well known to those specialists who have spent many seasons at the site – in particular Ulrike Outschar and Muradiye Öztaşkın – there has been little published research. Véronique François' study of Ottoman ceramics touched upon earlier Middle Byzantine material and offered some useful correctives and qualifications of Teresa Tomory's 1980 study of medieval glazed wares from the Theatre excavations.¹⁰⁷ Advances in the recognition of medieval ceramics have gone hand in hand with detailed stratigraphic excavation in the Place of Palms and on the Tetrapylon Street. Öztaşkın has established a glazed ceramic sequence for the ninth through sixteenth centuries in her 2017 paper *Byzantine and Turkish Glazed Pottery Finds from Aphrodisias*.¹⁰⁸ A typology of local coarsewares remains a desideratum, though the analysis of promising material from recently-excavated contexts on the Tetrapylon Street may in future years enable the identification of Early Byzantine forms.

The Aphrodisias Regional Survey, conducted from 2005 to 2009 under the direction of Chris Ratté and Peter De Staebler, has also contributed to a better understanding of the medieval Morsynos. Örgü Dalgıç's reconstruction of the final phase of the extramural West Church added an important new monument to the Middle Byzantine settlement.¹⁰⁹ However, work on the rural landscape of the Morsynos Valley yielded ambiguous results. Though a mere 0.4% of ceramic sherds identified in the course of the intensive transect survey were described as 'broadly Byzantine/Islamic', the fact that no coarsewares could be identified cautions against pessimistic conclusions.¹¹⁰ Dalgıç identified five rural sites through finds of Middle Byzantine sculpture, mainly in more remote foothills of the valley. A series of frescoes in a rock-cut tomb on the southern edge of the valley may date as early as the ninth century.¹¹¹ Dalgıç notes that the sculptural fragments were found in fertile pockets of upland areas, but her suggestion that settlement here was motivated by concerns for security is difficult to square with continued occupation at Aphrodisias itself.¹¹² As my fourth chapter will show, if one were to judge only by quantity of marble sculpture, Middle Byzantine Aphrodisias would appear far more important than its hinterland. In truth there is little that can be concluded from

these data.¹¹³ It would be wiser to confess that we still understand little of the occupation history of the rural Morsynos in the Middle Byzantine period.

In 2008, work began on the excavation of the Tetrapylon Street, a major north-south avenue running from the Tetrapylon to the Sebasteion. This project was explicitly designed to 'provide detailed archaeological evidence for the post-antique life of Aphrodisias and the abandonment history of the classical city'.¹¹⁴ At the time of writing this project remains ongoing. Evidence for abandonment has in fact proved scarce; rigorous excavation has suggested a more continuous occupation history than had previously been posited.¹¹⁵ Current fieldwork continues to bring the history of Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman Aphrodisias into greater focus.

E. THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Literary texts give only the broadest outlines of the history of Byzantine Karia. It is the purpose of this volume to publish much of the archaeological material pertaining to this period, drawing upon the results of half a century of excavation. The project has involved both fieldwork and archival research. This research arrives decades subsequent to excavation and has therefore inevitably been mediated through the priorities of Classical Archaeology as practiced in the twentieth century; the questions I seek to answer are not ones that the excavators had in mind. An archival archaeology at one step removed from its object of study must by necessity be omnivorous, searching for information wherever it is available. My primary resources have been field notebooks, inventory records and photographic negatives.

Excavation at Aphrodisias has, from the outset, entailed the cooperation of residents of Geyre village with graduate students from American, British, French and Turkish universities. Graduate students were (and are) expected to make a record of excavation in the trenches under their supervision in the form of a prose diary. The notebook diaries were assigned successive numbers in the archive in order to facilitate reference. The notebooks vary in their presentation of excavation data according to the competences of the excavators, but the best combine detailed prose accounts of daily progress, scaled sketch plans and notes of all inventoried finds. Stratigraphy in the initial decades of excavation was limited to horizontal tranches, usually assigned Roman numerals; section drawings were usually produced after excavation was complete. In 1993 a new system of 'baskets' was instituted. The basket system takes the name of its fundamental unit from the plastic boxes employed for the collection of excavated ceramics. A basket corresponded to a well-defined fill or deposit: a single stratigraphic event. Each basket would henceforth be described on a single page of the notebook diary. This allowed for more detailed stratigraphic reporting, though with the disadvantage that baskets could not be assigned to structural features or to 'two-dimensional' cuts and interfaces. Recording sheets for Stratigraphic Units (SU) were introduced in 2013,

105 Hebert 2000; Berenfeld 2002.

106 Berenfeld 2019.

107 François 2001.

108 Öztaşkın 2017.

109 Dalgıç 2012.

110 Adkins 2012, 93; Lightfoot 2013, 842.

111 Dalgıç 2012, 391–92.

112 Dalgıç 2012, 387.

113 Lightfoot 2013.

114 Smith – Yıldırım 2009, 112.

115 For a more detailed summary of these excavations, see pp. 26–29.

permitting comprehensive stratigraphic sequencing alongside the narrative prose of the excavation diaries.

Archival research has been supplemented by the recording of standing remains in the field and identification of medieval carved marble across the archaeological site and within the depots of the Aphrodisias Museum. The results of this research may be found in four appended catalogues, describing all Early and Middle Byzantine coins, inhumation burials, sculpted marble fragments and lead seals yet found at the site.

F. STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

Interpretive discussion is organised into five chapters. The second chapter presents a topographic gazetteer of Early and Middle Byzantine activity at Aphrodisias. The chapter integrates information already published with new analysis of excavation notebooks and archive plans. Conclusions are drawn regarding the likely extent of medieval occupation and the nature of domestic and ecclesiastical architecture. The third chapter addresses the monetary economy of the Morsynos Valley, offering an interpretation of a catalogue of 712 coins from Aphrodisias and eleven rural villages. A large numismatic catalogue is an inherently diachronic dataset, well suited to the analysis of longer-term developments. The catalogues for nearby rural sites allow the monetary economy of the episcopal village to be set against that of the rural hinterland.

The subsequent chapter analyses a corpus of over two hundred items of liturgical and architectural sculpture. Most of these derive from the Cathedral, a building constructed in Late Antiquity incorporating much of the existing Temple of

Aphrodite. Here the installation of medieval barriers, pulpits and canopies reconfigured interior space but had no impact on structural tectonics. Today the building is mostly denuded of its later alterations, and the marble sculpture offers one of the only lenses through which to recognise such interventions. Liturgical sculpture of the eleventh-century Triconch Church is also presented, and a concluding section discusses the technical processes of marble carving. The fifth chapter addresses the funerary archaeology of the settlement. Between 1961 and 2009, a total of 377 Middle Byzantine graves were recorded. Three major cemeteries are identified around the Cathedral, the Tetrapylon and the Triconch Church. The chapter presents these cemeteries in detail, before discussing the potential of funerary archaeology to contribute to the social history of the settlement.

Structural priority is given to the clear presentation of new evidence. Many monuments are revisited on multiple occasions from different perspectives; the architecture of the Triconch Church is presented in the second chapter, its liturgical sculpture in the fourth, and its associated cemetery in the fifth. It is hoped that this structure will retain clarity while gently integrating diverse strands of evidence. The structure also moves from the general to the specific, from monetary economy through architecture to the intimate moment of the funerary ritual; preceding chapters set the stage for subsequent discussion. These chapters refer to other sites in the region primarily in order to adduce comparanda for specific material. The sixth and final chapter compares the medieval settlement at Aphrodisias with those at Amorion, Miletos, Ephesos and Hierapolis before commenting on the historical development of the ruralised settlement pattern of Aphrodisias and the Middle Byzantine Maeander.