A Lycian City on the Hillside of Akdağlar

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Rock-cut Tombs at the Acropolis

The ancient city of Tlos, located 42 km east of Fethiye, in the modern village of Yaka, is one of the most important settlements of the region of Lycia. The ancient settlement extends from the steep western hillside of the Akdağlar (Kragos), the highest mountains of the region, towards the plain which was formed from the alluvial deposits brought from the Eşen River. Saklıkent Canyon in the south and Seydikemer district in the north draw the boundaries of the ancient city's domination area. Among the neighbors of the ancient city, which stands out with its mountainous land structure suitable for defense and its dominating position over the Eşen Plain, are Araksa (Araxa) in the north, Oinoanda in the north-east, Xanthos in the south, Pinara in the south-west and Telmessos in the west. Thus it appears that Tlos was spread over a large area, unlike other Lycian cities, and for this reason was referred as a "country" rather than a "city" in Hittite sources. The use of the term "country" for the ancient city of Tlos seems confusing. Yet the inscriptions reveal that the ancient city consisted of a large number of vicinities and quarters (such as Astesis, Bellerophon, Iobates, Malieus, Sarpedon) and around it many villages and outposts connected to the center were situated.

According to ancient Greek mythology, every ancient city has a foundation legend and a founder hero. The legend of the founding of Tlos relied on Hellenic myths and the name of the city was believed to originate from "Tloos" who is one of the four sons of Tremilus and Praxidike. Pinaros, Xanthos and Kragos were also accepted as his siblings. The earliest of the mythological transmissions mentioned above belongs to Panvasis from Halicarnassus, who is known to have come from the school of Homer and who is contemporaneous with Herodotus who lived in the 5th c. BC. Stephanos from Byzantium, who is thought to have lived in the 6th c. BC, is another ancient source showing that a similar agreement was accepted for a long time. Stephanos Byzantinos copied Panyasis' transmissions directly in his geography book called "Ethnika".

In all ancient sources since the time of Homer, the population of Lycia was referred to as people of Hellenic origin. Therefore, the creators of the developed cultures flourishing especially in the western and southern coasts of Anatolia were regarded as the Achaeans, who settled in Anatolia after fleeing from the Dorian invasions in the 12th c. BC. Also some Achaean armies who couldn't return to their homelands after the Trojan War are believed to have settled in these regions. But whether this belief reflects the truth is still argued, since Homer narrated in detail in the Iliad that all the peoples of Anatolia gathered together and fought against the Achaean League in front of Troy. It is surprising of him not to include the Hittite army. This union that the peoples of Anatolia built against foreign forces was known prior to the Trojan Wars. For instance, all of the Anatolian peoples gathered together and fought side-by-side with the Hittites in the Hittite-Egyptian war realized under the leadership of Hittite King Muwatalli II and Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II. This union is attested once again in the Treaty of Kadesh signed during the period of Hattushili III. Therefore, in the transmissions of Homer and all of the ancient sources succeeding him, the ideology of the Hellenization of the Anatolian peoples seems to represent a political

phenomenon. This ideology is only apparent in the transmissions of Homer and there is no written document about this theory coming from before the 8th c. BC. The written sources known from Anatolia and Egypt indicate a scientific fact which is the exact opposite of the present belief.

Today, the presence of Lycians in these lands before the Aegean migrations is documented with epigraphic and archaeological finds. For instance, the terms Lukka / Lukki, used in defining the geographic region, are known from both Hittite and Egyptian texts since the 15th c. BC. The Cape Gelidonya and Uluburun shipwrecks are among the archaeological finds of the period. Similar Bronze Age finds have also been uncovered in coastal Lycian cities in recent years. Therefore the legend related to Lycians being of Hellenic origin and their names coming from Lykos son of the Athenian King Pandion, does not reflect the truth. It is more accurate to state that Lycia is a Hellenized word.

Spread over a large area unlike other Lycian cities, Tlos was referred as a "country" rather than a "city" in Hittite sources.

Geographical Position of Tlos





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On the other hand, Lycians identified themselves as Trmmili, and their land as Trmmise. The expression Termilai used by Homer in identifying Lycians is identical to Trmmili. The expression of Trimili found on the Patara Road Guide Monument erected during the period of Claudius made it certain that the words Trmmili or Termilai were the same as today's Dirmil / Altinyayla settlements. This shows that Herodotus' statements about the people of Trmmili coming from the Island of Crete do not reflect the truth.

FROM TLAWA TO TLOS

Mother Goddess Figurine Late Neolithic Period

The name of the city of Tlos doesn't have a Hellenic origin. It was derived from the Lycian expression "Tlawa". Tlawa is identified with the settle-

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ment of "Dalawa" within the lands of Lukka, which is often mentioned in Hittite texts from the 15th c. BC. Among the Hittite sources where "Dalawa" is mentioned, the orthostats from the open air temple found in Konya-Yalburt on which the Great Hittite King Tuthalia IV's (1250-1220 BC) Lukka campaign is depicted, are of great importance. Two blocks of the above-mentioned orthostats (14 and 15) can be read as "I came down to the Land of Dalawa.

Women and children of the Land of Dalawa bowed before me". The presence of the Lycian region in the period of the Great Hittite Kingdom and their relations with the Hittites can clearly be attested through, Yalburt hieroglyphic inscriptions.

The settlement in Tlos in the Hittite period which was emphasized in written documents is also supported with the archaeological finds coming from the stadium area. Among the finds, dated mostly to Middle and Late Bronze Ages, are pottery, decorative objects, accessories, bronze axes in various forms, daggers and arrow heads. However the history of the first people living in this region goes far beyond the period of the Hittites in light of archaeological finds from Tlos and the finds from Tavabaşı and Girmeler cave / mound located within the territory of Tlos. Stone axes, obsidian and flint tools found during the 2009-2012 excavations in Tlos, show great similarities with the finds from the mound settlement in front of Girmeler Cave. Among the finds from this area in front of Girmeler Cave, pot sherds similar to Hacılar and Kuruçay pottery are present. Similar pottery is also found in the Tavabaşı Region caves located within the boundaries of the village of Arsa. All of the finds mentioned above can be dated as far back as the Late Neolithic Period according to stylistic and typological research. Also, rock paintings with various iconographies found on the outer surfaces of Tavabaşı Region caves, are also dated to the same period in the light of similar examples. Therefore it is possible to find other caves or mounds used since the Neolithic Period

The name of the city of Tlos was derived from the Lycian expression "Tlawa", which is identified with "Dalawa" within the lands of Lukka mentioned in Hittite texts from the 15th c. BC. On the orthostats from the open air temple in Konya-Yalburt on which Great Hittite King Tuthalia IV's (1250-1220 BC) Lukka campaign is depicted, the hieroglyphic inscription can be read as "I came down to the Land of Dalawa. Women and children of the Land of Dalawa bowed before me".

Bey Tomb at the Acropolis





A group of five statues discovered during the excavation of the theater; three men dressed in armor reflect the Roman emperors Hadrian, Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius in their iconographies and portrait details; the 1.82 m. high dressed woman statue is Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina Minor and the other woman statue with one side of her breast open is the Goddess Isis.

Tlos was accepted as one of the six biggest cities having the right of three votes as Xanthos, Patara, Pinara, Olympos and Myra.

in the Eşen River basin in the region of West Lycia. On the other hand, the comparisons made with the finds from settlements such as Hacılar, Kuruçay, Bademağacı and Höyücek in the Elmalı Plain and its eastern extensions, showed the presence of extensive commercial relations between these two regions. Thus the extension of the Middle Anatolian Neolithic as far as the West Anatolian coast is documented with archaeological data for the first time.

Although the traces of settlement which started in the Neolithic Period and continued without interruption until the Iron Age were identified in Tlos and its surroundings, not many archaeological finds dating to the period between the Iron Age and the Persian invasion in 540 BC were found. Only pottery dating to the end of the 2nd m. BC, which are accepted as local pottery as well as a small amount of Geometric Period pottery with banded decorations are found. Finds dating to the period mentioned above are also known from Lycian cities where excavations have been conducted for many years. The Tlos excavations are quite new and therefore new archaeological data from the period mentioned above are expected to be found in the future.

Since the beginning, a military (symmachiaepimachia), political (sympoliteia) and religious (amphiktionia) union based on ethnos-polis ideology, was found in every Lycian city. The starting point of such a union is felt in the participation of all Lycian cities under the identity of "people from Lugga" in the Assuwa / Arzawa confederation founded in Western Anatolia in the 15th c. BC. A similar union formation is seen in their support of the Hittites under the name "Land of Lukka" during the Hittite-Egyptian war under the leadership of Hittite King Muwatalli II and Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II. Attacking Egypt and Cyprus under the identity "Lukka" is another tangible indicator of this union formation. Besides these examples, another important expression of how strong the union formation was in the 2nd m. BC is seen in the presence of Lukka armies standing against Achaeans under the leadership of King Sarpedon in the fronts during the Trojan Wars. Such an organized appearance of Lycian people is not only limited to the 2nd m. BC, many similar examples are also known since the Iron Age. A similar argument is particularly emphasized in Herodotus' transmissions about Lycia. The use of the concept of "Lycian" in the lists of the Delian-Attic League in 452-445 BC, as well as the plans of mutual defense of Lycian cities against Persian or Greek domination, are accepted as tangible indicators of the concept of unity. Mutual symbols used on coins from the Dynastic Period before the founding of the Lycian League in the first half of the 2nd c. BC also indicate this unity. The unified structure Lycians established inter se in early periods, was institutionalized and formalized in 168-67 BC and thus was formed the Lycian League based on a polling, election system where Lycian cities and citizens would be governed within the frame of a democratic constitutional law.

Although a continuous common unity among Lycian cities was observed, their independence was lost when Persian armies invaded Lycia under the leadership of Harpagos in c. 540 BC and the whole of the Lycian region remained under Persian domination until the end of the Dynastic Period. After the independence war started by Perikle in 360 BC against the Persians ended unsuccessfully, Lycia was under Carian rule for a short period of time. Alexander the Great dominated Lycia in 334-33 BC. After Alexander's death, the domination continued under the Antigonians, Ptolemaic dynasty, the Seleucids and the Rhodians respectively. This period of chaos in Lycia ended when the Roman Senate recognized Lycia's independence in 168-67 BC and formalized the Lycian League.

The ancient city of Tlos was accepted as one of the six biggest cities, along with Xanthos, Patara,

Pinara, Olympos and Myra, which had the right of three votes. The Roman Emperor Claudius turned the Lycian region into a Roman state in 43 AD. Tlos kept its importance within the League during this time and also carried its title of "metropolis". It must be because of this importance that, as stated in Patara Road Guide Monument, the Lycian road network was connected to Tlos from seven different directions; and trading routes coming from Xanthos in the south, Pinara in the south-west, Telmessos in the west, Cadianda in the north-west. Araxa in the north and Choma in the east crossed in Tlos. These routes are still being used today. Tlos is one of the important centers of the episcopacy in Lycia during the Christian Period. The continuation of this religious importance until the 12th c. AD has been documented with archaeological data. The importance of Tlos is also felt during the Period of the Anatolian Beyliks and the Ottoman Period. Mentese ended the Byzantine domination in south-west Anatolia after the fall of the Anatolian Seljuks and established an authority from the middle of the 13th c. until the beginning of the 15th c. with Muğla as its center. Especially the remains in the quarter of Turbe are documented as belonging to the Mentese Beylik.

Frieze detail from the Theater



The theater of Tlos has a particular importance among Anatolian theaters, with its temple-like architecture in the middle of its second floor and the spectacular interior and exterior arrangement of the skene. The overall architectural structure of the theater and the renovation inscription dating to the period of Augustus indicate that the theater of Tlos was built in the Hellenistic Period.

An Ottoman feudal lord coming to the area in the 19th c. and known as "Kanli (Bloody) Ali Agha" built himself a fortress on top of the acropolis, using ancient remains. Today the modern village of Yaka lies above ancient Tlos.

THE DISCOVERY OF TLOS

The ancient city of Tlos was left to its fate for many years until it was rediscovered with the journeys of Ch. Fellows in 1838 and T.A.B. Spratt in 1842 and was introduced to the scientific world for the first time with publications including the notes taken during these journeys. However the intense vegetation of the city caused the research to remain on a superficial level and the researchers had to content themselves with rather historical explanations. The important and movable artifacts that were identified, like the Izraza Monument, were smuggled out of the country. Besides these publications, which can rather be called itineraries, the first scientific study on Tlos was conducted by G. Bean. Bean prepared the city's topographic plan for the first time and attempted to give detailed information on architectural remains. W. Wurstler tried to develop and elaborate Bean's plan of the city.

The first overall scientific research in the ancient city of Tlos was started as a survey in 1992, in a collaboration between the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Akdeniz University. After the excavation permit was given, the first official excavations started in 2005. As part of the survey continued until 2001, documentation work was done in the city center and its territory. Excavation work started in 2005, focused more on the monumental structures in the city center and its immediate vicinity. Also, research was started in Girmeler and Tavabaşı in 2009.







Surrounded by a U-shaped colonnade, the stadium area is located at the east foot hill of the acropolis with nine seating rows carved into the bedrock.

Stadium area with the pool in the middle

The highest point of the ancient city of Tlos is called the acropolis and it forms the western boundary of the city center. As well as the official state buildings seen on the acropolis starting from the Early Classical Period, monumental tombs evaluated under seven different architectural groups were also found.

Therefore, in Tlos, it is not possible to make the distinction between the acropolis and the necropolis as known from Classical Greek cities, because the people of Tlos chose to live nestled with their tombs as observed in the whole Lycian region. Thus the hill referred to as the acropolis was also used as a necropolis.

"Rock-cut tombs" constitute the largest group among the monumental tombs in the acropolis. Rock-cut tombs, often imitating wooden Lycian houses, are carved from the bedrock and stand out with their spectacular façade architecture. In some examples, an arrangement of the façade with the application technique is also observed. Monumental rock-cut tombs imitating the façade of a temple are also found. One of them is called the Bellerophon tomb, and is named after its relief. However, here, the Lycian ruler on the winged horse Pegasus is depicted in a lion hunting scene instead of chimaira. The majority of rock-cut tombs were looted in ancient times or recently. Some were found untouched, in their original position, in excavations.

During archaeological work, different arrangements inside the tombs were found and it was noted that the burials were placed on benches (kline). Burial gifts were also placed on these benches (kline). Previous burials and burial gifts were stacked irregularly inside the hole in the middle. The interior arrangements of the rock-cut tombs, mostly used as family burials, were altered in different periods. For instance, a kline found in a Classical Period rock-cut tomb was altered in the Roman Period and burial grounds with bricks were built. Inside these new burial grounds, skeletons and burial gifts were placed on top of each other. In light of archaeological finds, we know that the earliest rock-cut tombs were used since the Classical Period. Also in light of finds, it came out that a rock-cut tomb was used over a long period of time, c. 500 years. "Sarcophagi" constitute the second largest group of tomb monuments in the acropolis. Lycian type gabled roofed sarcophagi as well as sarcophagi with triangular gable-shaped lids were found.

Some of the sarcophagi were seated on a hyposorion. On the other hand a considerable number of sarcophagi were found placed directly on the ground or above a podium slightly raised from the ground. Besides these, chamber tombs, monumental tombs, chamosorion type tomb monuments and simple inhumations were the most frequently encountered burial types, which are spread over the large area reaching the foothill of the acropolis.

The stadium area with a north-south axis, is located in the flat area on the east foothill of the acropolis. This area was surrounded on its north, south and east, by a U-shaped colonnaded gallery. A single-sided stand was carved with 9 seating rows into the bedrock of the foothill of the acropolis, on the west. The stadium of Tlos was designed together with a bouleuterion rising on the eastern cliff of the acropolis and looking at the diazoma which is on a higher level than the stand. The bouleuterion building has an entrance opening to the stadium diazoma on the east. A pool measuring 72 x 8.30 m. and a fountain structure in front of the pool lies in the middle of the stadium on a north-south axis. The pool is c. 1 m. deep and a stone channel system is built around the pool to drain water. The water accumulated in this channel is drained through another channel in the middle of the west section of the pool. The pavement of the pool was made of irregularly cut stone blocks but no insulation system was used here. The arrangement of the pool and the fountain indicate that this area might have been used not just for stadium purposes but also for social

The arrangement of the pool and the fountain indicate that this area might have been used for social and religious activities rather than sports.



Detail of Pool



Bellerophon Tomb

The Bellerophon Tomb is one of the most remarkable among the rockcut tombs in Tlos. The large templetype tomb has a relief portraying the mythical hero Bellerophon riding Pegasus, the winged horse. and religious activities. With the fortifications surrounding the acropolis on its foothill, built in the Early Christian Period by using spolia, the city becomes narrower and the stadium remained outside the acropolis and the new settlement formed on its foothill.

Two-storey shops located to the west of the agora were directed towards the stadium. One reaches the small bath and palaestra through a long street moving from here towards the south. Through a monumental doorway located in the middle of this street, one reaches the agora plane, which is on the second floor level of the shops. The asphalt road passing through the middle of the city caused great destruction to the agora; there is not much left except for the agora center lying underneath the soil. To the west of the agora plane, the theater leaning against the cliff forms the eastern boundary of the city. The theater of Tlos has a particular importance among Anatolian theaters, with its temple-like architecture on the top middle of the second cavea and the spectacular interior and exterior arrangement of the skene.

The inscriptions from the theater and the architectural installations show that the building underwent renovations several times during the Roman Period. However the overall architectural structure of the theater and the renovation inscription dating to the period of Augustus indicate that the theater of Tlos was built in the Hellenistic Period. This early dating of the theater is supported by a statue base dating to the 3rd c. BC and found in front of the main entrance in the north. The theater, consisting of two cavea separated by a large diazoma, is entered through both the north and south. Beside these entrances, staircases on the north-east and south-east directions, which provide access to the highest diazoma, are also found. The skene building is higher on the west side. The skene building, which originally had 3 floors, survived only partially. The front façade of the skene looking towards the cavea (scaene frons) is decorated with garland friezes, figurative and vegetal reliefs. The exterior facades looking towards the agora are animated with arched windows and frieze bands on the 2nd and 3rd floor levels. Columns were also rising underneath the consoles between the windows. Three doors providing access to the interior of the skene from the side of the agora are located on the ground floor.

Immediately south of the agora plane, lie the religious buildings of the city over an area of c. 7000 m². There are a great number of remains showing that this section of Tlos was used as a sacred place over different periods of time. A temenos wall surrounding the whole area and remains of reliefs are so far the earliest levels dating to the Classical Period. A temple structure lies fallen on the ground on the south corner of this area. The pediment and the state of destruction of the front facade indicate that the structure was built on a north-south axis and the front façade was directed towards the north. This temple positioned on a north-south axis had a templum in antis plan and was seated on a platform measuring 15.67 x 7.78 m. The access to the temple is provided by a seven step staircase. The structure, composed of two rooms namely the pronaos and naos, was built in the Corinthian order. Passing through the two columns on the corners of the ante, one reaches the pronaos measuring 5.14 m. x 3.07 m. The naos is close to square in plan and measures 6.97 m. x 5.23 m. The original pavement blocks covering the foundations of the pronaos and naos were removed in ancient times and used as spolia in the City Basilica. The crepis and podium were preserved in situ up to the level of the stairs giving access to the pronaos and the foundation filling. Above the podium, which measures 1.89 m. with its crown and base, lies the one-step crepis line. The masonry starting with a profiled base above the crepis, ends with a molding called a "wall crown", underneath the entablature. With the pediment completing the entablature, which consists of architrave, frieze and geison, the height of the structure up to the level of the platform reaches 10 m. Above the architrave, blocks decorated with a row of astragals is the frieze band decorated with vegetal motifs. The preserved fragments of the north and south pediments show that the sima was decorated with lion-shaped water spouts. The architectural features of the temple, dedicated to the God Kronos according to epigraphic finds, date the temple to the 2nd half of the 2nd c. AD. There is no depiction of

Kronos on Tlos coins but the presence of his cult in the city since the Early Roman Period and the competition organized in his honor, the "Kroneia", every year are known from the inscriptions. The name and cult of the God Kronos are not mentioned in city inscriptions prior to the Roman Period. On the other hand, the name of the Lycian God of the Sky Trggas is no longer in use during the Roman Period. Probably, since the Roman Period, the Lycian God of the Sky Trggas was replaced by Kronos, who is also a sky god and both gods were accepted as equivalent. A similar situation is seen in Rome. However in Rome, Kronos was Latinized, as was the case for other gods, named Saturn and festivals in his honor called "Saturnalia" were organized.

In the middle of the flat land used as the sacred area, immediately north of the Kronos Temple, was the City Basilica built for the first time during the Early Christian Period and used until the 12th c. AD. Architecturally, the structure, recalling the cross-shaped basilicas of the period, has 3 naves and lies on an east-west axis. The apse is directed eastward. The entrances of the structure are located on the south. The main entrance in the middle is larger than the side entrances. While the doors on the north and south were opening to the side naves, the central door gives access to the middle. The basilica is enlightened by a total of 8 windows on the north and south walls and 2 windows on the east wall. The three-windowed apse built in the central part of the east wall has a polygonal shape. With its majority still standing, the walls are built with rubble stone.

Bellerophon Tomb Area



However, regular blocks are used in patches as spolia. The 2 column lines with a total of 14 column bases, divide the central part into 3 naves, are also spolia. The connections between the column bases are also spolia and the arrangement is formed with horizontally placed column bases.

The spolia mentioned above is presumed to be brought from the Kronos Temple and the agora nearby according to architectural similarities. The architectural differences indicate that the rectangular shaped atrium located in front of the entrances to the west of the basilica was added in a later period. A similar addition is observed in the southern part of the structure. In the later stages of use, a small chapel was formed here. Also, high enclosure walls were built to the east of the basilica on a north-south axis. While the stone masonry showed similarities with the basilica, the connection between the two building is still unclear.

To the south and west of the sacred area, on which religious structures from different periods arose, two large bath complexes were built on the lower plane. The structure located immediately south of the area is called the big bath due to its size. The bath complex, consisting of 3 rooms located side-by-side, interconnected with 2 doorways, has a typical Lycian bath appearance according to its architectural elements. The frigidarium located in the eastern part of the bath and used as the entrance to the complex, has a north-south axis. The room, entered by a monumental door from the north, looks towards the Eşen Valley with an apsidial structure consisting of an arrangement of 7 arched windows on the south. A semi-circular pool reached by staircases is found inside the apsidial section. The tepidarium is reached through doors located in the middle of the western wall of the frigidarium. Even though the original remains of the heating system in the floor and the wall were preserved until today, this room was transformed into a small church in the 12th c. AD. The caldarium is located in the westernmost section of the bath. A similar heating system is also found here. However the caldarium also underwent alterations and this section was transformed into the narthex of the church.

The structure rising immediately north of the big bath, and consisting of 3 rooms similarly, is the small bath, according to its size. However the Lycian type side-byside arrangement of the rooms is not applied here. The most important feature making a distinction between the two bath structures is not only the size and the room arrangement. The palaestra located in the north of the small bath is also a distinctive feature. Changing rooms and fountain structures are found on the north and south of the palaestra. Bath structures with palaestra are not many in number in Lycia. The small bath complex, which can be called a "gymnasium" according to its architectural installation features, has an important place in Lycian bath architecture.

Besides the public buildings such as the rock-cut tombs on the acropolis, the stadium, the agora, bath complexes, Kronos Temple, City Basilica and the theater, which are easily visible to visitors coming to the city center of



Tlos, there is also a great number of archaeological remains hidden underneath the rich vegetation cover, scattered between valleys nearby the city center and on mountain ridges. Therefore the research conducted in the ancient city of Tlos was not limited to the center only and survey was started in 2009 in areas nearby the city. The archaeological remains deployed in the rugged hillside starting from the peak of Akdağlar and extending towards the Eşen Valley, and constituting the historical, political and socio-economical heart of Tlos, are gathered under six topics: public buildings, military structures, economic buildings, residential areas, necropolis and sacred areas. The drawing and documenting of present archaeological remains and their application on the city map is still ongoing. In conclusion, the ancient city of Tlos is an important Lycian settlement bordering the Eşen Valley on the east, founded on the west hillside of the Akdağlar and standing out with its historical values as well as its impressive nature which is fed by rich water sources. With its characteristics, Tlos was included in the "World Heritage Tentative List" in 2009, according to UNESCO's Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. There are a lot of remains with the characteristics of a historical document, waiting to be discovered in Tlos and its near vicinity. In addition to systematic excavations, newly started survey work will make access to these remains easier and new data will be shared with the world of science through different scientific work.

