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LATMOS: A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE IN ANATOLIA

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University Private University

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by

Şahin Yıldız

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research,
Policy, Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned, **Şahin Yıldız**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

This thesis tries to evaluate Mount Latmos in Western Anatolia under the term of sacred space and understands the continuity of the sacred character of the mountain within different religions. While doing so, it relates the syncretic character of folk religion in Turkey to the temporal space. It also documents the mountain's existing natural and cultural heritage from the prehistoric ages to the contemporary age by benefiting the previous scholars' studies on the area and tells the story of the attraction focused on the area for centuries. Within the scope of this study, the intangible cultural heritage of the modern Turkish communities will also be understood. The thesis tries to attract attention to the existing and potential threats to the cultural heritage of Latmos and understands the locals' perception about the heritage and the measures that have been/are being/should be taken within policy, management, conservation, and community perspectives. The thesis evaluates Mount Latmos as a cultural landscape and sacred space and it tries to bring scholarly attention to the current problems that the mountain is facing.

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Many heroes' journeys follow the monomyth pattern; the journey begins with the 'call to adventure'. This call was made by Prof Özlem Berk Albachten, who sparked a fire inside me and forced me to come back to my country as a volcano. Then the hero receives supernatural aid and acquires guidance through the journey. Prof József Laszlovszky, with his nonending energy, Carsten L. Wilke making me fall in love with religious studies and Gerhard Jaritz with constructive feedbacks and bringing prodigious approaches to my ideas have been my most significant source of inspiration along the two years in CEU; there is no way of gratitude that I can express to them. Emre Yıldız, my old friend; Emre Dayıoğlu was giving me new ideas about understanding the rural culture; Emrah Kaya and İsmail Karabulut contributing to my studies made this thesis possible. I thank Boğaziçi Zeybek Team, which helped me recover my mental and physical condition when I was confined to bed for long months. I thank Fazıl Say and Dünyadan Sesler YouTube channel for being the soundtrack of this thesis.

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I dedicate this thesis to my nephew, Atlas. I wish that when he comes to my age, he realizes that he had the best teacher that one could have: his grandmother, my mother. I wish he follows the path of science and his people, and this path will be structured by the stories he will listen to for years. I wish this thesis to be a small contribution to these narrations that he will remember when he looks at Mount Latmos, and I wish that the mountain forces him to begin the hero's journey.

Aut viam inveniam aut faciam.

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Preface

“What would be the point of preserving a sacred mountain if equal care were not taken to preserve the narrative that lent it that sacredness among a specific culture? If the sacred narrative is lost, the sacred place will be as well.”¹

-Martyn Smith

Human tends to believe. Whether due to awe, wonder, relaxation, fear, horror, and inability to understand how the universe works, one tends to believe. One's world is divided into two: the sacred and the profane. The sacred manifests itself to man as it manifested itself to me by means of Latmos.

When I was nine years old, I, for the first time, climbed up Mount Latmos by myself with my friends. We used to play hide and seek among the complex rock systems, swimming in the streams flowing down from the mountain's peak to the Meander Valley. I was eagerly listening to the stories of a saint resting in peace on the top of Latmos and his spirit flying across Meander valley to the city of Söke to visit his fellow saint's tomb every Friday night. I was reticent and careful while passing near some founts or wells inside which some mermaids were living. Sometimes djinns were calling you into the well, imitating your mother's voice.

For the villagers, our house was haunted, and many had seen a 'ten-meter-long snake' protecting the house or dwarfs jumping over our three meters high fences into the street. The nearby church was also the house of ghouls screaming every night, and because the main door of our house was taken from that church, our house was a gate into the 'other world'. The nearby Greek hospital, which was deserted after 1923, was another principal place where djinns had wedding ceremonies every night; if you look at them, you would be crumpled.

¹ Martyn Smith, *Religion, Culture, and Sacred Space* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 156.

What do these beliefs and many other stories of the supernatural tell? The unknown is the supernatural in the folk approach. The old is mystical, and the present is profane. Our house was a Greek prison of the nineteenth century, and the church is also dated to that century. Both because these two were foreign to the recently settling population coming from Greece after 1923 and because the long dwelling culture of Greeks suddenly disappears and creates a cultural gap, the villagers created a new storyline fitting into the environment. This environment was Beşparmak Mountains, in this case, the mountains where the supernatural happens.

The sacred/supernatural narrations were not randomly generated. They always had a corresponding physical space. These equivalences “were almost always distinguished by some natural feature: an impressive grove of large old trees, a spring, a lake, a fissure in the earth, or a mountain peak. These were often landscapes of great natural beauty”² and sometimes an architecturally striking building such as the tomb of an ancient gladiator or a deserted hospital.

Realizing the relation between the physical space and the supernatural/sacred at a young age, I began to construe these stories as the elements of folklore but not the horror stories of daily storytelling art of old grandmas. The villagers used to narrate the heroic stories of bandits whose mother was the mountain, and some of them were carrying a stone named ‘lightning wear’ taken from the mountain and blessed by some Muslim saints; that is why no bullet could harm them.

² J. Donald Hughes and Jim Swan, “How Much of the Earth Is Sacred Space?,” *Environmental History Review* 10, no. 4 (December 1, 1986): 248, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3984349>.

When I was twelve, I began practicing the dances of these bandits, and I began collecting the stories of the most famous bandits of the nineteenth century. I visited every village on the mountain. I attended wedding ceremonies of unfamiliar people to record the dances and document the stories for years with an ethnographical approach after establishing a folk-dance society in my university in 2014.

While visiting the villages, I witnessed two contrasting landscape: on one side, some savage forests and rocks adorned with my childhood's sacred narratives and showing no sign of human civilization as far as the eye can see; on the other side a desert of dust and sounds of dynamites exploding every hour and expanding day by day to swallow both villages and unexplored heritage elements inside the caves, among the trees. Then, I decided to do my best to preserve the mountain, the sacred space of previous religions and beliefs and the current profane space that has the residue of the sacred character of the mountain. Sacred narratives should be reminded to preserve the sacred space, and with this thesis, I try to preserve this narration and space with my own secular sacred: science.

Introduction

When one thinks about the fertile lands of Anatolia, Meander Valley is one of the few areas that comes into mind. The river, the artery carrying life into the plains, was earliest mentioned in Iliad and “[was described] as part of the land of the harsh-tongued Carians, ‘who dwell in Miletus, on thickly wooded Mt Phthires [i.e., Mt Latmos], by the streams of the Meander and the steep crags of Mycale’”.³ The definition made 8th century BCE is still legit, but this time the river is a part of the land of the harsh-tongued Turkish *Yörüks* dwelling all around the mountains surrounding the river, on industrially destructed Mt Latmos and steep crags of Mycale deforested by intentional forest fires and expansion of wind turbines. However, the fertility of the area has not drastically deteriorated. When one follows the route of Meander, s/he understands the reason for the choice of ancient dwellers building cities of Priene, Myus, Miletus, Herakleia, Latmos and all the other ancient cities to the east such as Nysa, Laodicea, Hierapolis by witnessing the agricultural abundance the river carries.

However, the Meander River is not just an element of nature or natural space nourishing the soil. It is, yet a “perceived space constructed by the inhabitants of a region as a means of organizing their physical surroundings into a coherent conceptual framework [and] [...] the important point is the region’s reality in social consciousness, its inhabitants’ awareness of living in, and belonging to, a particular region.”⁴

The dwellers of the Meander region construct their life accordingly with the Meander River.

The cultural and economic life are wired into it. The river floods the valley or changes its bed,

³ P. Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 23.

⁴ Thonemann, 23–24.

the people of the valley act accordingly. The richness it brings is reflected on the two sides of the valley, especially Mycale and Latmos. These mountains and their slopes were nourished and created a culture depending on the river and the sea.

Although Mt Mycale houses some significant ancient settlements, Latmos, with its striking physical features, has become the most important mountain in the western part of the valley as the highest mountain in the region and a supplement to the Meander River for fertility.

Thanks to its nature suitable for taking shelter and its visual temptation with instantly rising elevation out of the sea level, the mountain has attracted different civilizations in each of which it had a sacred character. From prehistoric times until the contemporary age, it has always been dwelt by various tribes, religious communities, societies. This uninterrupted life created a heritage of prehistoric rock arts, settlements of Carians, inscriptions of Hittites, the art of Christian monasticism and Turkish culture blending into the geological heritage of the mountain. The cultural persistence was also reflected in the religious sphere, and the mountain was always related and attributed to different deities such as Zeus, Selene, and Tarhunt. This attribution has also created the sacred art in the region.

Sacred Anatolian art can be found anywhere from any date in Western Anatolia. However, the continuity of the sacrality of a geological formation, which is a mountain ridge, in this case, is rare. Latmos exhibits prehistoric schematic rock paintings some of which are believed to be painted for ritualistic purposes.⁵ The landscape exhibits the fascinating temples and sanctuaries for Athena and Endymion; more than ten monasteries having coenobitic, lavriotic,

⁵ Karadere Cave is believed to have this ritualistic character thanks to many supporting evidences. See: Anneliese Peschlow-Bindokat, *Herakleia on the Latmos*, trans. Inge Uytterhoeven, 1st ed. (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2014), 77.

eremitic characters and many frescoes decorated caves and hermitages⁶; tombs of saints⁷ as the objects of Sunni and Alevi folk religion, and finally manifestations of the Father Rain cult⁸ that continued to exist until the 1970s.⁹

Latmos, as a sacred space and cultural landscape, is not principally known with its sacred character by the contemporary locals. However, the forgotten narratives of sacrality and existing cultural heritage elements under threat are two inseparable elements that create this cultural landscape in Western Anatolia. The tangible heritage of all the cultures reigned over the mountain, and the intangible heritage of the modern Turkish communities are menaced by mining facilities, non-existence of a heritage management plan, treasure hunters, rural-urban migration, natural elements, destructive approaches of the locals. In brief, this study's focal point is the sacred value, heritage elements, and ongoing destruction of a sacred mountain in Greek mythology, Mount Latmos, located at the west of the Meander valley, Western Anatolia.

⁶ Anthony Kirby and Zeynep Mercangöz, "The Monasteries of Mt. Latros and Their Architectural Development," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis, 1050 - 1200: Papers of the Fourth Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, Portaferry, Co. Down, 14 - 17 September 1995*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby, Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6,2 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1997).

⁷ There is a specific term for these tombs: *türbe*.

⁸ This ritualistic performance of praying for rain is to Allah and Yağmur Baba (Father Rain) is an intermediary in this process. But it is also known that the weather god of different religions was characterized with the peak of Mount Latmos.

⁹ Volker Höhfeld, ed., "Herakleia- Stadt und Landschaft des Latmos" (Tübingen: Institute of Geography, 2017), 171.

Chapter 1 - Latmos: a Sacred Space, an Ancient Relic

All religions in history believe in hierophanies, namely manifestations of the divine. These manifestations mostly happen within the realm landscape: for example, a tree can be regarded as ‘wise’ and accordingly sacred or a water stream breathing life into barren lands can be considered as regenerated with the spirit of a sinless old man who died of thirst. For religious human, these landscape features are more than just a stream or a tree, and they are inhabited by supernatural realities or hierophanies. For them, the place is now sacred and transcends the ‘reality’ of the material world. Space loses its homogeneity and undergoes a qualitative change; a clear distinction is created between the sacred space and the rest of the world.¹⁰

This veneration is given to the site no matter whether it was shaped by humans or is a product of nature. For hierophanies, natural structures occupy as fundamental importance in the sacred world as humanmade structures. One often supports the other, as the Nile creates the prosperity necessary for the Great Pyramid of Giza or caves and natural shelters embellished with ancient rock art are inseparable with the ultimate sacrality of Uluru, the sacred site of the Australian aborigines.

Among all these natural sanctuaries, one specific type of landscape has always shone out: mountains. For Eliade, “mountains are the nearest thing to the sky, and thence endowed with twofold holiness: on the one hand, they share in the spatial symbolism of transcendence – they are high, vertical, supreme, and so on – they are the special domain of all hierophanies of atmosphere, and therefore, the dwelling of the gods.”¹¹

¹⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion; [the Groundbreaking Work by One of the Greatest Authorities on Myth, Symbol, and Ritual]*, trans. Willard R. Trask, A Harvest Book (San Diego: Harcourt, 1987), 10–20.

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (London and New York, Sheed&Ward, 1958), 99.

Mountains as Sacred Spaces and Sacred Space in Anatolia

“Mountains function as sacred natural sites in three general ways. Firstly, certain mountains are singled out by religions, cultures and societies as traditionally sacred mountains, their designation indicated by webs of myth, ritual, practice, and belief associated with them.”¹² For instance, Jabal an-Nour, where Prophet Mohammed is believed to have received his first revelation can be an example to that. “Secondly, mountains or mountain ranges that may or may not be revered directly take on more diffuse auras of sacredness from the smaller sacred sites they contain within them, such as groves, springs, rocks, and places associated with holy personages.”¹³ Mount Ida in Western Anatolia, Ida with a thousand springs, is a fine case of where the myths of different cultures have been retold for centuries redounding sacrality to the mountain. “Thirdly, in a looser way, mountains may inspire a sense of wonder and awe that makes them appear sacred in the eyes of groups or individuals.”¹⁴ Mount Ararat, for example, has been inspiring different nations (especially Armenians) and cultures for thousands of years. This mountain “is more than a mountain— it is a sacred site that unites a population and its diaspora as one community. It is, moreover, an interesting example of how a sacred site that lies outside a country’s territory can serve as its national symbol and evoke a feeling of ‘Armenianness’ that transcends geopolitical boundaries.”¹⁵

Anatolia has been under direct effect of many different religions and beliefs since prehistoric times up to the contemporary age, thus it holds sacred natural sites intermingled with spiritual

¹² Edwin Bernbaum, “Sacred Mountains and Global Changes: Impacts and Responses,” in *Sacred Natural Sites: Conserving Nature and Culture*, ed. Bas Verschuuren (London; Washington, D.C: Earthscan, 2010), 34.

¹³ Bernbaum, 34.

¹⁴ Bernbaum, 34.

¹⁵ Eileen Barker, “Contemporary Creations and Re-Cognitions of Sacred Sites,” in *Sacred Sites and Sacred Stories Across Cultures Transmission of Oral Tradition, Myth, and Religiosity*, ed. D.W. Kim, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021), 299.

narratives. For instance, Çatalhöyük (7400-6000 BCE), where the ordinary life had a religious/spiritual dimension with burials, murals, incorporation of body parts of wild animals into house walls and the passing down human skulls generation to generation.¹⁶ Hittites, in addition, created inscriptions or reliefs near sacred springs¹⁷ or their identification of deities with mountains to which the kings made offerings¹⁸. Anatolia has produced a significant interaction between nature and belief as observable from endless practices identical to portions above.

Subsequently, the interaction of pre-Greek communities with the natural environment continued when Greek polytheism inherited some religious/cultic characters of already existing cultures such as Carians, Luwians, Hittites. The Aphrodite of Aphrodisias and some other deities, which are local Anatolian gods and goddesses in origin, were came to be identified later on with the Olympian gods, so that, for example the local Ionian goddess of Ephesos, *Despina*, venerated with the name and features of Artemis.¹⁹

Together with the economic and cultural boom emerging in Western Anatolia, classical Greek civilization's most important cities and cultural centers prospered there, such as Miletus, Priene, and Ephesus. Their elegant culture also meant highly developed religious practices and a set of beliefs pertinent to the nature. The Meander River, for instance, was related to the

¹⁶ Ian Hodder, ed., *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 15.

¹⁷ Meltem Doğan-Alparslan and Metin Alparslan, "A New Luwian Rock Inscription from Kahramanmaraş," in *Luwian Identities: Culture, Language and Religion between Anatolia and the Aegean*, ed. Alice Mouton, Ian Rutherford, and Ilya Yakubovich, *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* 64 (Conference, Leiden: Brill, 2013), 219.

¹⁸ Gary Beckman, "Intrinsic and Constructed Sacred Space in Hittite Anatolia," in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World*, ed. Deena Ragavan and Claus Ambos, *Oriental Institute Seminars* 9 (Annual University of Chicago Oriental Institute seminar, Chicago, Ill: Oriental Inst. of the Univ. of Chicago, 2013), 154.

¹⁹ L. R. Brody, "The Cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria," *Kernos* 14 (2001): 93.

patron deity of the river Meander²⁰ or the mountain god Tmolus as the deity of Mount Tmolus²¹.



Figure 1-Endymion asleep. 2nd century, found in Roma Vecchia in 1775/6 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Sacred Space and Syncretism in Folk Islam



Figure 2-The pyramid tomb, which was prayed by Muslim communities for years as a saint's tomb named Çağ Baba. According to the Greek inscription on it, the tomb is 2300 years old and belongs to Diagoras.²²

²⁰ Hesiod., Hugh G. Evelyn-White, and Homer., *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homerica* (London; New York: W. Heinemann; Macmillan Co., 1914), 334.

²¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XI, Fable III.

²² Arkeofili, "Uzun Yıllar Türbe Sanılan Antik Mezar, Bakım Bekliyor [Ancient Tomb Believed to be Muslim Saint's Tomb Waits For Care]," *arkeofili.com*, 2020.

The sacred character of the mountain continued to exist also in the modern Muslim communities with different ritualistic practices and via the narratives. Although the mountain cannot be named as a contemporary sacred space, it had this spiritual dimension until 1970 when the Muslim communities used to pray for the rain on the peak of Latmos.

In the religious sensibility of the present Turkish peasant population of the region, local memories mingle with ethnic traditions. Rain prayer of Turks, for example, has a deep cultural background that goes back to Central Asia. This practice is called as *Yada*, the cult of stone that possesses the ability to change the weather.²³ Interestingly, the ‘sacred stone’ on the top of the Latmos has a magical character similar to legendary *Yada*. The rain cult was still practiced during the tenth century CE, and Latmos was the arrival point for pilgrimage from Miletus, begging for rain at a ‘sacred stone’. This ‘stone’ was described as an immense body of rock at the top of the mountain, and it was mentioned several times in many documents of the medieval era as a place that had healing powers enlightening the abbots of the monasteries of the mountain and blessing them with the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Rain cult can be understood within the cultural and collective memory. The cultural and collective memories are such strong actors in the folklore of the communities that even a constant practice in the old times can affect the contemporary rituals, especially when the different communities were in constant interaction with each other. The continuous exposure to each other’s religion creates a type of syncretism. For example, the emir of Sivas ordered Christian prayers to save his wife from djinns in the thirteenth century. Turks used to

²³ İlhan Başgöz, “Yada A Rain-Producing Stone and the Yada Cult Among the Turks,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* XVI, no. 1 (June 1, 1982): 159.

²⁴ Alexander Herda et al., “From the Gulf of Latmos to Bafa Lake: On the History, Geoarchaeology, and Palynology of the Lower Maeander Valley at the Foot of the Latmos Mountains,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 88, no. 1 (2019): 4.

participate in a pilgrimage to a church in Ankara where a sacred stone heals people. There was a church in Nevşehir in which both Turks and Greeks worshipped St. Mamas; even a baptismal ritual was frequent among the Turks.²⁵ Another case is the hot springs of Yalova in the Western Anatolia where “the survival of the holy went back through the Byzantine era to pagan times; the famous hot springs of Yalova were in antiquity dedicated to Apollo, in the Byzantine days to St. Michael, and under the Turks, they were resanctified by the burial of a dervish.”²⁶

The continuation of the sacred character of the mountain, especially with the rain cult, is not a justification for syncretic environment involving different religions. However, the theory of collective memory and cultural memory can create a better explanation for the rain cult, the supernatural virtues related to the mountain and the topographic perception of the mountain as a sacred being. Space related legends concerning the miracles of St. Paul of Latros²⁷, the scorpions of Latmos, which do not sting the guests or a bandit who cannot be killed when on Latmos, are geography bound. These testimonies attest to the people’s collective memory of the supernatural and veneration of the mountain, which is the common objects of the two mentioned stories. “Sacred places thus commemorate not facts certified by contemporary witnesses but rather beliefs born perhaps not far from these places and strengthened by taking root in this environment. [...] But if a [notion] is to be settled in the memory of a group, it needs to be presented in the concrete form of an event, of a personality, or of a locality.”²⁸

²⁵ Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor: And the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Publications of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA, 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 486–87.

²⁶ Vryonis, 485.

²⁷ Mount Latmos has been named with different names throughout the history such as Latros, Latmum, (mistakenly) Titanus/Titanos, mountain of the Phthires.

²⁸ Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory*, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 199–200.

Latmos's striking continuity of sacredness was easily adaptable for the Turks because of their cult of 'Father Mountain'. The concrete form of sacred aspect of rain cult is, additionally, the granite boulder on the top of the mountain.

Mountains have always been an essential sacred sphere for Turkic communities. However, these mountains are not just sacred spaces but some conscious beings with anthropomorphic folkloric representations. One can find a mountain, a hill or a summit named '*baba, dede, eren*' (approximately: "*father, master/grandfather, saint*")²⁹. Turkic tribes consider mountains as the mediating spaces towards *Köktengri* (the Sky-god), and the cult of father on the mountain is practiced to honor the ancestors as the intermediaries with *Köktengri*. However, with the acceptance of Islam as the dominant religion, the 'father cult' underwent a characteristic change in which Muslim saints or spirits have replaced the 'father, ancestor'. The sacred character of the mountains stayed the same but within an Islamized version.

The relation between the people and the mountain as a sacred space is more robust in Yörük, Alevi and Tahtacı³⁰ communities of Turkey than among the rest of the population. Especially the Tahtacı communities were regarded as a complete body of syncretic religion with pagan understandings. Their understanding of religion was understood as "the survival of some heathen cult, perhaps it may be a half-formed or decayed form of Christianity"³¹, "a mixture

²⁹ Baba means father. Dede is the spiritual leaders of the Bektashi sects which emerged as a branch of Anatolian mysticism in the 13th century. Eren is one who has lost 'the self' and explored the mysteries of God by losing himself within love of God.

³⁰ Yörük means someone who walks, literally a nomad. This community embraced Sunni Islam later than the sedentary population in the cities and villages. Some nomads had not seen a mosque until the twentieth century. The Alevi and Tahtacı communities are sects that were influenced by heterodox Bektashi understanding of Islam. As they were the target of massacres during the Ottoman Empire, they lived their lives as conservative communities mostly on the mountains.

³¹ Theodore Bent, "The Yourouks of Asia Minor," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 20 (1891): 270.

of Shiite Mohammedanism, Christianity, and Paganism”³², “a mixture of Shiite Mohammedanism and Christianity, with perhaps a trace of primitive paganism”³³.



Figure 3-The sacred 'tomb' of Çiçek Baba (Flower Father) on Sandraz (Çiçek Baba) Mountain which was named after a fight between the mountains according to the local folklore.³⁴

When Turks were migrating from the East to West, especially during the Mongol attacks in the 13th century, they carried their sacred memories with them. They adapted the existing notions of the ‘sacred’ environment by recreating them within their cultural values. They settled into already existing sacred landscapes instead of creating their own sacred environment.

Mount Ida, Kaz Dağı in Turkish, is an excellent example of mentioned adaptation. In Western Anatolia’s north part, the Turkoman communities adopted the mountain as a sacred space and a female cult was invented by inheriting ancient Greek’s myths about Mount Ida as the dwelling of Cybele, the ‘Great Mother of the Gods’. They also created the narration of Blonde

³² Henry Algernon George Percy, *Highlands of Asiatic Turkey* (London: E. Arnold, 1901), 90.

³³ Ellsworth Huntington, “Through the Great Canon of Euphrates River,” *Geographical Journal* 20 (1902): 186.

³⁴ Ümit Şıracı, “SANDRAS DAĞI’NIN ERENİ ÇİÇEKBABA ÇİÇEKLERİ ÇOK SEVER! [EREN OF SANDRAS MOUNTAIN, FATHER FLOWER LOVES THE FLOWERS]” *Denizli Gazetesi*, September 2, 2019.

Girl, *Sarı Kız*, by blending legends Christian saints with narrations of the blonde daughter of Prophet Mohammed basing on the myths of Ancient Greeks.³⁵

Similarly, Latmos, whose villages were mainly founded by *Yörüks*, has many hills that are named with cultic names: *Erenler Hill*, *Kozakbaba*³⁶ *Hill*, *Rock of Eren*, *Hill of Little Eren*, *Dede Hill*, *Dedeler Spring*, *Hill of Khidr*, *Yarandede*.³⁷ All these specific areas are near the peak of Latmos or on the ares from which one can see the summit.

The sacred character of the Latmos is not limited to naming practices. It is also manifested in the interesting case of Ovoos, piles of rocks mostly built on barren areas near mountain summits brings a tangible aspect to the Islamic sacrality of the area. One worships them, and they are believed to have the spirit of an *eren* who helps nomads and grants their wishes.

Muğla province, taking Latmos with its boundaries, is home to many ovoos, and interestingly, Eren Mountain in that province has major number of them. Latmos also has similar ovoos that are no more objects of worship or part of any ritualistic or cultic practices.³⁸

Similar practices of piling the rocks up were observable in the village of Bağarası until 2005.

During Hıdırellez³⁹, the elderly people would go to the riverside where the stream creates silt.

³⁵ Jean-Paul Roux, *Türklerin ve Moğolların eski dini* (İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1994), 127.

³⁶ For Ahmet Yaşar Ocak and Mehmet Naci Önal, the graves on the summits of the hills/mountains or naming them with some specific names are possibly imaginary. The non-factual quality of these names or 'fake' graves are more visible if the baba or eren is named after an element of nature such as Kozakbaba, The Father of Pinecone. The supernatural forces that are believed to live on the mountains are Islamized by naming them with 'baba, dede, eren' and keeping the ancient sacred character. See: M. Naci Önal, "Dağ Kültü, Eren Kültü ve Şenliklerin Muğla'daki Yansımaları [Cult of Mountain, Cult of Eren, the Festivals and their reflections in Muğla]," *Bilig*, no. 25 (Spring 2003): 99–124.

³⁷ Another sacred space where a saint's tomb exist near Karakaya village named 'Dede' was destructed by the mining facilities.

³⁸ These ovoos are sometimes named as 'kulluk' and 'Dede Döşegi' (English Bed of Dede) in the some other regions of Anatolia. Some other examples can be found here: nimrikulluklari.com/turkiye-kulluklar-farli-bolgeler

³⁹ The day Al-Khidr and Elijah met on Earth, according to the Islam. Also welcomed as the arrival of spring on May 5 and 6.

Taking children with them, the old made them build a high standing pebble pillars and pray to it. This the small-sized structure is regarded as an intermediary object with the Khidr.

The syncretic aspect of these practices and continuing sacred character of the mountain has created a boundless heritage on the mountain. The reminiscence of the old civilizations creating the sacred or profane heritage is still visible on the mountain and displays a wide array of cultures.



Figure 4-The ovoo on Tekerlektepe. ©Sadık Baydere

Chapter 2 - Heritage and Perception

Latmos, with its stunning physical presence, has been home to different cultures and currently possesses a rich intangible culture of modern Turkish villages. The geologically unique and visually alluring landscape of the modern Beşparmak Mountain and ancient Latmos have a rich fauna and flora that makes it worth visiting and preserving other than the inestimable heritage. Centuries of ‘academic interest’ on Latmos beginning with the Dilettanti Society in the eighteenth century and the humans’ persistent choice of the mountain as a living space generate interest in the mountain.

Thousands of years of human dwelling on the mountain resulted in a rich culture accumulated on and around the mountain, creating an oasis of the intangible and tangible heritage of modern and ancient eras. As a sacred space of Christianity and ancient Greek religion and a cultural landscape in the modern era, heritage elements of the mountain should be understood to bring more scholarly attention and create an understanding of heritage preservation. As a geologically rare body, the mountain should also be analyzed within the understanding of geological heritage.

An Insight into Latmos: Nature and Current Culture

Beşparmak is a mountain ridge rising steeply from the old Latmian Gulf, which is now filled with the sediments of Meander River (Turkish Büyük Menderes Nehri) and creating a landlocked lake, Bafa Lake. The mountain is the southern part of Menderes massif and geologically a part of the Çine sub-massif,⁴⁰ one of the oldest in Anatolia. Its core was comprised of highly metamorphic, probably Precambrian rocks, schistose, granite, gneiss and

⁴⁰ E. J. Catlos and Ibrahim Çemen, “Monazite Ages and the Evolution of the Menderes Massif, Western Turkey,” *International Journal of Earth Sciences* 94, no. 2 (April 2005): 205.

above all, augen gneiss⁴¹. The mountain ridge extends from Bafa Lake, a residual lake being the remnant of a former marine gulf named Latmikos Kolpos⁴², in the West to the Province of Karpuzlu in the East. ⁴³ Since the shape of the mountain ridge resembles fingers, the locals named the mountain ‘Beşparmak’, which means ‘five fingers’ in Turkish. The highest elevation of the mountain is Tekerlek Tepe (Round Hill) which is 1353 meters high. Here, the Turkish naming of ‘Beşparmak Mountain’ is coterminous with Mount Latmos under locals’ understanding and Latmos defines the western area of the Beşparmak Mountain including the highest summit of the ridge, Tekerlek Tepe. However; in locals’ understanding, ‘Beşparmak Mountains’ that is not coterminous with Mount Latmos covers a larger area.

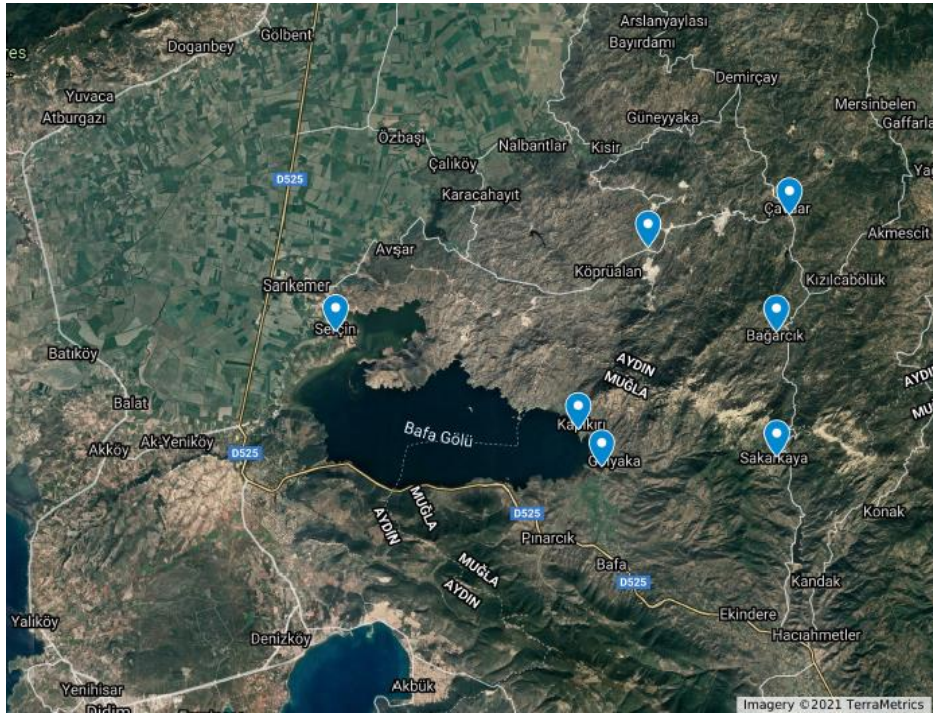


Figure 5-Google Earth image of Latmos among the villages that are exhibiting the most beautiful sceneries of the mountain.

⁴¹ Anneliese Peschlow, “The Prehistoric Rock Paintings of Mount Latmos,” in *The Carians From Seafarers to City Builders* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020), 174.

⁴² Herda et al., “From the Gulf of Latmos to Bafa Lake: On the History, Geoarchaeology, and Palynology of the Lower Maeander Valley at the Foot of the Latmos Mountains,” 20.

⁴³ Its coordinates are 37°29’ 53.19” N 27°31’ 36.51” E / 37.4981083°N 27.5268083°E / 37.4981093; 27.5268083. See: Bülent Deniz et al., “Evaluation of the Tourism Potential of Beşparmak Mountains in the Respect of Protection – Use Balance,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 19 (2011): 252.

Since the mountain rises sharply from sea level, it is the most striking geographical element in the area. The gneiss and granite bodies covering the mountain's surface have been shaped by climate factors resulting in thousands of caves suitable for human dwelling. Thanks to the elaborate rock systems, NGOs and the municipalities around Beşparmak Mountains are advertising the mountain as a ‘geopark’.

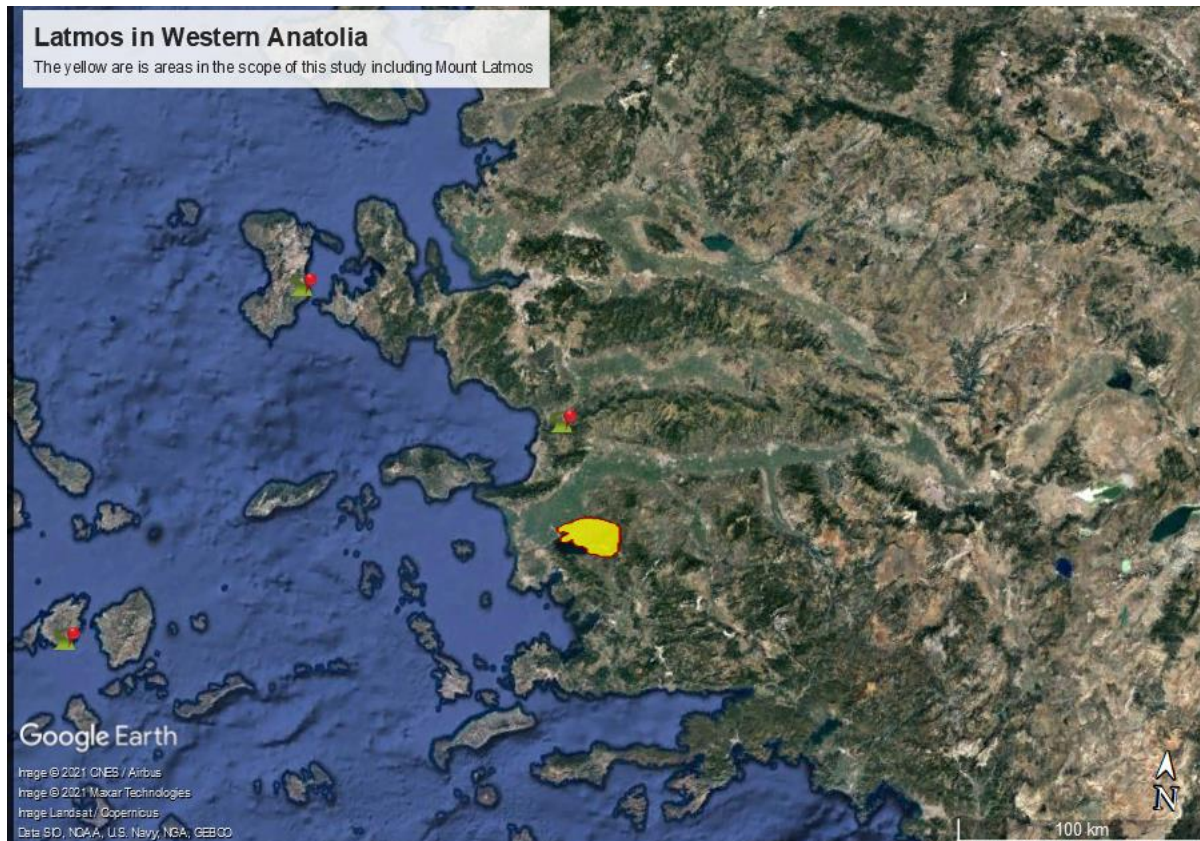


Figure 6-The location of Latmos and its cultural boundaries

The rock formations, the quality of the soil, and the feasible microclimate of the mountain have created Asia Minor's most enormous stone pine (*pinus pinea*) forests, which are the main visual characteristic of Mount Latmos and its gneiss formations. It should also be noted that stone pine forests cover nearly 30000 hectares or area in Turkey, and 20000 hectares of these belong to Beşparmak Mountain. The highest temperatures around the region can be as high as 45 centigrade degrees and the lowest 0 degrees in harsh winters. It is rare to witness

snow. The average wind speed changes between 1.0m/s and 1.7/s during the year.⁴⁴ However, the strongest winds are created in summers, making the pine forests vulnerable to fires while they are already being chopped down to expand mining facilities. Thus, the mountain forests are now leaving their places to the debris of the locals' mining facilities or agriculturally expansionist practices.

A report written in 1913 defines the Beşparmak Mountains as ‘covered with forests’⁴⁵. This character is repeated until the arrival of the mining companies around 2000. These forests have also been critical economic resources of income for the villages where locals are still harvesting the nuts of pine trees within traditional ways.



Figure 7-Pine trees that cover Mount Latmos ©EKODOSD

⁴⁴ Nihal Özel, *Beşparmak Dağları ve Dilek Yarımadası Milli Parkı Bitki Örtüsü Üzerine Araştırmalar [Researches on the Flora of Beşparmak Mountains and Dilek Peninsula National Park]* (İzmir: Ege Ormancılık Araştırma Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü, 1996).

⁴⁵ Ali Tevfik, “Memalik-i Osmaniye’nin Adalar Denizi Sahilindeki Vilayeti; Aydın Vilayeti [The Coastal Province of Ottoman Lands in Aegean Sea: Province of Aydın],” in *Mufasssal Memalik-i Osmaniye’nin Coğrafyası*, trans. Ramazan Özey (İstanbul: Tefeyyüz Matbaası, 1913), 342–259.

Another vital element of the flora is the olive tree, a critical economic resource for the whole region. Olive trees are not farmed in the fertile plains of the Meander valley in contrast to other regions of Turkey, where olives are the objects of classical farming. The traditional olive farming on the mountain used the same methods to extract olive oil as the ancient



Figure 8-Old wheel for extracting olive oil ©EKODOSD

Greeks in the region, even the same extraction wheels and extraction pools carved out of the rocks. However, with the road constructions connecting the mountain villages to the nearby cities, these techniques were forgotten, since locals could take their olives to the olive oil factories in the nearby cities.

Anneliese Peschlow documented the stones used for olive oil extraction in ancient times, and some of these stones will be swallowed by a dam⁴⁶ planned to be constructed in the mountain.

⁴⁷ Turkey which produces 15.9% of the world's table olive, has benefited from Beşparmak Mountain's contribution to that amount on a grand scale. However, the olive farming poses a threat to the pine trees. Olive tree can be raised up to 500 meters elevation and in some areas of Latmos, the villagers clear the forests below that elevation to make room for olive farms.

Natural Environment and Architecture on Latmos

Another component of regional flora that has been an essential element of traditional culture is the chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*). This native Mediterranean tree has been used by

⁴⁶ This dam will also swallow some minor Byzantine heritage elements but as there is not a complete field research for the prehistoric rock arts, potential damage is not measurable.

⁴⁷ Bahattin Sürücü, "Antik Dönem Zeytinyağı İşliklerinin İzini Sürüyoruz[We are Tracing the Ancient Olive Oil Workshops]," Ekodosd Kuşadası, n.d., <https://ekodosd.org/index.php/9-uncategorised/321-antik-doenem-zeytinyagi-isliklerinin-izini-suerueyoruz>.

nomads of the region to build temporary houses. The chaste houses were built until the 1980s, when there were still many nomadic families. A house could be used for nearly 40 years, then a new house would be built in any place on the mountain. Today, there is only one traditional master of this type of buildings left, and after him, the collective memory of this handcraft will be forgotten. In this technique, the chaste branches are woven into a house, and a specific sticky mud is plastered above the chaste surfaces.⁴⁸ However, with the connection of the villages to the road networks and the Ottoman state forcing nomads to settle down to gather taxes easily, more and more nomads left their way of living and settled permanently in the villages. Their chaste houses were abandoned, and then replaced the traditional houses with the distinctive Latmos masonry.



Figure 9-A traditional chaste house on Latmos

The mentioned unique masonry's epitomes are still visible in several villages in or near Mount Latmos such as *Çomakdağ* or *Bayırdamı*. The rocks of the mountain can easily be quarried, and it offers an endless resource of building materials. The architectural

⁴⁸ Latif Sansür, "Çit ev yapımını anlattı,[He Introduced the Construction of Chaste House]" Newspaper, Hürriyet Gazetesi, May 17, 2018, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cit-ev-yapimini-anlatti-40840279>.

characteristic of these houses reflects the natural environment of Latmos. Some travelers also realized the coherence between the traditional houses and the nature of Latmos in the eighteenth century, and they described the houses as “A few huts, inhabited by Turkish families, are of the same color and scarcely distinguishable.”⁴⁹

There are only a few traditional masters of the unique masonry in Tekeler village. Their old and unique way of building has become a rich taste for some wealthy people desiring to settle at Latmos villages. The few remaining masters are sometimes building houses for them. The houses are known with their quality of being cool in summer and warm in winter. However, this type of houses is also displaced by concrete buildings to flaunt because many young villagers consider traditional houses as old-fashioned while some city-dwellers sacrifice vast sums of money to build one of them. Although most of the Turkish villages on/near Latmos was founded around the second half of the nineteenth century by the nomads, they blended their architectural character into the natural environment of Latmos. The only exception to these late nineteenth century villages is the village of Çomakdağ, founded earlier and has the most elaborate pieces of architecture.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Richard Chandler and Nicholas Revett, *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1825), 205–6.

⁵⁰ Albert Distelrath, *Siedeln und Wohnen in einer Ruinenstätte: ein denkmalpflegerisches Konzept für Herakleia am Latmos = Yerleşim ve yaşam alanı olarak ören yeri: Herakleia (Latmos) için bir koruma konsepti* [Ancient site as a life space: A protection concept for Herakleia (Latmos)], MIRAS 1 (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 2011), 98–99.



Figure 10- Traditional rock houses on Latmos ©EKODOSD

Fauna of Latmos

Besides the mountain's rich flora, its fauna preserved the most diverse species of animals until the 1980s. Bears, deer, wild goats, leopards were the native dwellers of the mountain, but they are extinct in the region now. However, there are claims that the Anatolian leopard (*Panthera pardus tulliana*) still exists on the mountain. Some claim that the mass herd attacks by a predator animal was caused last remaining leopards.

Although these claims are not justified, the memory of this species is still vivid in ordinary narrations about the past. Stories are still invented to frighten the kids. The last known leopard was shot in the 1960s in the region. The stories of the leopard, typically creates the stories of the hunters. In Latmos's case, there were some famous name tracking down leopards and killing them, such as Mantolu Hasan, who was living in a city near Latmos⁵¹ killed nearly 1/3 of the last remaining leopard population in Turkey.

⁵¹ <https://ekodosd.org/index.php/yaban-hayat>

The presence of leopards was a threat to the nomads, but they were also an inspiration for farmers on the mountain whose farms were pillaged by flocks of wild boars. An instrument named ‘*gork*’ was widely used to scare away wild boars and jackals by imitating the voice of the Anatolian leopard. They are not anymore used; however, they were adequate to protect the farms and herds. This instrument shows how the mountain villagers adapted to the mountain’s wild environment via integrating into the wilderness.⁵² Many leopard traps show how the locals find ways to capture them, and some of these traps had been used by many different generations, as locals mention.



Figure 11- A leopard trap and the lid on the front ©EKODOSD

Demography of Latmos

Current life in Latmos is economically dependent on husbandry, figs, olive oil and agricultural labour. There are fifteen villages from which one can experience the tempting nature of Latmos. One can quickly reach to the sites of prehistoric rock arts and the other heritage elements. However, only three of them have been getting popular for a while:

⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWfhkkBQBs>

Bağarcık, Kapıkırı and Gölyaka. The total population living on the mountain is between 6,000 and 7,000. It is considerably low populated when comparing to the area the mountain covers.

The culture on the mountain can be categorized within two sub-groups in the locals' perception. There are *Yörüks*⁵³ now settled but once a nomadic community. They continued to their pastoral lifestyle herding goats until the 1930s. They are culturally the least degenerated community, and many villages at the mountain are known as '*Yörük*' villages on Latmos. Their accent is distinctively different from formal Turkish, and as it sounds 'different' to other cultural sub-groups in the region, they are named 'black *Yörüks*'⁵⁴. *Yörüks* are the biggest sub-group of the cultural group known as 'the hillmen', '*dağlı*' in Turkish. There are two different sub-groups within the 'hillmen' group, and these are within the different sect of Islam, Shiism, different than Sunni *Yörüks*: *Tahtacı*s and *Alevis*.

Most of the *Yörüks* have settled permanently with the foundation of modern Turkey in 1923. However, majority of them had already settled before this date. Some families continued to follow their pastoral lifestyle, but just a few families are still migrating in Asia Minor. Some of the *Yörüks* settled in already existing Greek villages abandoned due to the Greco-Turkish Wars (1919-1922), but these Greek villages are primarily near the Meander valley, where agricultural practices are feasible. Some other *Yörüks* founded their own village out of nothing. The culture of 'hillmen' was primarily authentic until the opening of mountain roads and the widespread usage of agricultural machinery. *Yörüks* still wore traditional wedding ceremonies and authentic costumes until the 1990s. They were and still are a culturally conservative sub-group.

⁵³ *Yörük* is stemmed from the Turkish verb of 'yürümek' which literally means 'the one who walks.

⁵⁴ Here, black is not used in a sense to identify color but to emphasize their identity more.

Yörüks are proud of their cultural identity and always boast about their relationship with the mountains. Accordingly, here it should be noted that “there has been an increasing recognition of the potential significance of ‘dead’ and ‘living’ monuments for contemporary populations as venues of intangible performances. The attachment that communities feel for places, monuments, and objects—expressed through pilgrimage, religious devotion, story-telling, and tourism—can be a vital means of constructing group identity”⁵⁵. Here locals’ attachment for their surroundings (mountains) and post-memory of an old nomadic lifestyle are now strengthening their cultural identity as Latmos (Beşparmak) being their center of narrations about their ancestors of local *Yörüks*.

The other group cannot be directly named with any specific name but consists of the people living in the border villages where northern Latmos slopes meet with the alluvial plains of Meander.⁵⁶ Although this group has no specific name, it has two sub-groups that are culturally constituted by the main body of this group: yerli(native/local) and göçmen (migrant/immigrant). These villages were the first to have electricity, a water system, and a road network because they were easily accessible regarding their geographical conditions near to the cities. The fertility of this plain was economically tempting; that is why the first railway of the Ottoman Empire was built here in 1856 under the name of Ottoman Railway Company which transported the figs, cotton, liquorice from the plains to İzmir port. The railway accelerated the process of plain villages’ integration into the ‘modern life’ swiftly while the hillmen were still living a secluded life and not interacting with city-dwellers. The agricultural abundance of the plain villages and the wealth it created attracted people from the mountains

⁵⁵ D. Fairchild Ruggles and Helaine Silverman, eds., *Intangible Heritage Embodied* (New York: Springer, 2009), 8.

⁵⁶ Strabo, *Geography. 5: Books 10 - 12* Chapter 8 Section 15, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, Reprinted, The Loeb Classical Library 211 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000).

to the plains and the nearby cities. That is why the population of the mountain villages began to decrease.

The authentic culture of the villages of the plains⁵⁷ and the mountains were not different in large scale. However, the gap in their difference became bigger when 500.000 Muslim citizens were forcibly displaced from the Balkans to Asia Minor, and 1.200.000 Greek Orthodox people living together with Turkish communities were moved to Greece between 1923-1925. After that exchange, with the arrival of thousands of ‘migrants’ from the Balkans, the hillmen coming down to benefit from the fertility of Meander plains became ‘natives’ in local jargon, and the newcomers became ‘migrants’ or ‘exchanged’. ⁵⁸ The economic boom in these villages, their exposure to urban culture and the significant number of migrations caused the loss of authenticity in their culture. On the other hand, the mountain villages were losing their population to nearby cities and big agricultural villages. This rural-urban migration also brought a halt to cultural continuity in the mountain villages. Finally, with the mines, some villagers abandoned their traditional economic activities and began to work for the mining facilities at the beginning of the 2000s while the young generations were already migrating to the nearby cities. One of the most considerable side effect of this loss in unique and Latmos culture was observed in the folk dances of the mountain.

⁵⁷ It should be noted that the plain villages near Latmos had a great amount of Greek people living.

⁵⁸ Before the Population Exchange 1923-25 between Turkey and Greece, Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, Macedonians, Tatars, Turks and other different ethnic groups were already settling in many villages. They were named as ‘migrants’ because they were escaping from ethnic cleansing and conflicts. Their number was between 4 and 7 million. Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 343. With 1923 Population Exchange 500.000 of them were added to this number and as a result many villages had a cosmopolitan culture. The biggest village near Latmos, Bağarası, is for example divided into two neighborhoods: native and migrant.

An Attraction Point: Latmos

The distinctive physical features sheltering bandits was also the source of awe for many adventurers or scholars. Moreover, Latmos has been an essential source of mystery for many travelers thanks to its sacred character and its heritage of Greek deities and being one of the most important monastic settlement centers of Orthodox Christianity. It was Richard Pococke⁵⁹ who first visited Latmos as a traveler in 1740. However, it was architect Nicholas Revett, Richard Chandler and the painter William Pars who discovered and recorded Latmos's most important ancient settlement Herakleia between 1764-1765.⁶⁰



Figure 12-The signature of Nicholas Revett and Richard Chandler and the year 1765 onto a fresco in the Cave of Christ in Latmos.

⁵⁹ Richard Pococke was the bishop of both Ossory and Meath. However, his fame was due to his travels to the East and his collection of travel writings in the book of 'A Description of the East and Some Other Countries' published in 1743.

⁶⁰ Anneliese Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 1st ed., Homer Archaeological Guides 3 (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2014), 40–41.

They were the members of an antiquarian society founded in 1734 by “some gentlemen who had travelled in Italy, desirous of encouraging at home a taste for those [antique] objects which had contributed so much to their entertainment abroad, [...] under the name of Dilettanti, and agree[ing] upon such resolutions as they thought necessary to keep up the spirit of the scheme.”⁶¹ Accordingly with this spirit, they visited Latmos and the nearby ancient cities of Didyma and Priene to study them scientifically. Although the team led by Richard Chandler concentrated mainly upon antiquity, they also realized the vital role of Latmos in the Middle Ages with its many monasteries and churches. He even compared the mountain to Mount Athos⁶², an important center for Eastern Orthodox monasticism for centuries.

The savage nature of Mount Latmos was also pointed at by him in the book ‘Travels in Asia Minor and Greece’, which is more like a travelogue also portraying the people. He describes Latmos as “uncommonly rough and horrid, consisting of huge, single, irregular, and naked rocks piled together”⁶³. However, Chandler mistakenly named Latmos as Titanus, and this was corrected by Revett, who replaced Titanus with Latmus in the revised edition of their book.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Richard Chandler, *Ionian Antiquities* (London: T. Spilbury and W. Haskell, 1769), Preface.

⁶² Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 42.

⁶³ Chandler and Revett, *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece*, 1:202–3.

⁶⁴ Chandler and Revett, 1:202–3.



Figure 13-Bafa Lake by William Pars ©British Museum

Above is the oldest painted depiction of Mount Latmos and the ancient city of Herakleia on the far right. William Pars, between 1764-1766, painted this landscape; and the waterbody was noted as Lake Myus and the city as Myus, which was a nearby ancient city to Latmos. However, this was corrected in the 1825 edition of Chandler's book.⁶⁵ The striking physical features of Latmos defined as 'a summit remarkably craggy' and 'long visible in various parts of the country' also influenced William Pars's drawing and painted Mount Latmos bigger than the actual proportions compared to the theatre of Miletus, as it is in the figure below.

⁶⁵ Herda et al., "From the Gulf of Latmos to Bafa Lake: On the History, Geoarchaeology, and Palynology of the Lower Maeander Valley at the Foot of the Latmos Mountains," : 24–25,



Figure 14- Chandler on the boat. Revett and Pars are waiting to be mounted. In front, the theatre of Miletus, in the back; Latmos Mountain. 1764 ©British Museum

A Brief Summary of Academic Studies on Latmos

The mountain has attracted fame in poetry and visual arts of the Renaissance and also the modern age thanks to the myth of Selene and Endymion (a madrigal about Latmos, for instance, was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I in 1601.⁶⁶). However, the first detailed academic study on Latmos was conducted by Theodor Wiegand at the beginning of the twentieth century which resulted in the book of *Der Latmos*.⁶⁷ Although it is the first full-scale academic study completely devoted to Herakleia of Latmos, there were also minor studies on Carian settlements before when some scholars visited Latmos. In 1893-1894, with a grant of the Hellenic and Royal Geographical Societies, W. R. Paton and J. L. Myres

⁶⁶ The Triumphs of Oriana's 'As Vesta was from Latmos Hill Descending' (1601)

⁶⁷ Theodor Wiegand, *Der Latmos* (Berlin: Verlag Georg Reimer, 1913).

conducted area research on the Latmian Gulf and Latmos.⁶⁸ In their studies on Latmos, the Temple of Zeus Akraios and Thea Akre was mentioned for the first time.⁶⁹

A German archaeologist, Theodor Wiegand, worked on the excavations of the nearby ancient cities of Priene (1895-1899) and Miletus (1899-1911), but he had the chance to work on the monasteries and other Byzantine heritage elements of Latmos. Thanks to the photographs he took during his area research, it is now possible to compare the heritage elements' present condition with their condition at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, his studies on Latmos Herakleia could not advance because of the outbreak of World War I.

Nevertheless, thanks to the contributions of the German Research Foundation, Wiegand's research on Herakleia and its unknown predecessor settlement Latmos was broadened with the studies on the marble quarries of Herakleia and Miletus (1978/1979). In 1984, the necropolises of the old city of Latmos and Herakleia were examined; and in the last fifteen years, the mountain has gathered academic and touristic attraction thanks to the discoveries of prehistoric rock arts in 1994.⁷⁰ Additionally, Alexander Herda has markedly contributed to the studies on Latmos, and the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen's Institute of Geography has produced a voluminous academic publication on Latmos.⁷¹

⁶⁸ W. R. Paton and J. L. Myres, "Karian Sites and Inscriptions," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 16 (1896): 188–272.

⁶⁹ Alexander Herda, "The Temple of Zeus Akraios and Thea Akre at Amyzon-at-the-Rock," in *Carians: From Seafarers to City Builders*. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020), 156.

⁷⁰ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 52–53.

⁷¹ Höhfeld, "Herakleia- Stadt und Landschaft des Latmos."

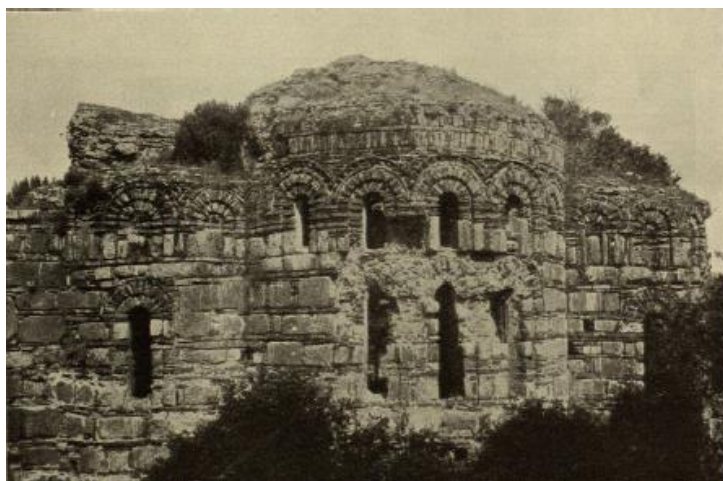


Figure 15-The first photograph of the Church of Kahveasar Island by Theodor Wiegand in the book of Der Latmos

Cultural Heritage of Latmos

As the scholarly interest shows, Latmos, as a sacred space and cultural landscape, has assembled different civilisations' cultural or sacred production. Although each heritage element of different eras should be studied with a comprehensive approach to perceive the mountain as a conglomerate cultural system of different societies; the following pages will be giving a summary of heritage elements of the mountain:

Prehistoric Rock Arts of Latmos

Latmos's most striking visual constituents that make it a cultural landscape are the rocks. These rocks house ethereal prehistoric rock arts. As a part of the rock systems, the granite boulder on the mountain's peak was regarded as sacred by the Greeks, rock hermitages exhibit exquisite monastic arts of Byzantine Empire. Necropolises carved in to the rocks near Bafa Lake embodies a memorable landscape. Ancient settlements with precise architectural masonry of the unique rocks and the folk architecture of Turkish communities are camouflaged into the nature of Latmos. These all form a heritage area built up by nature, culture, religion and integral rocks. The intensity of the prehistoric rock arts on the mountain, their artistic resemblance to each other and their artistic insignia of pivotal mountain

demonstrate that the mountain was a sacred spot with its dazzling landscape consisted of massive granites, shelters or porous metamorphic rocks.⁷²

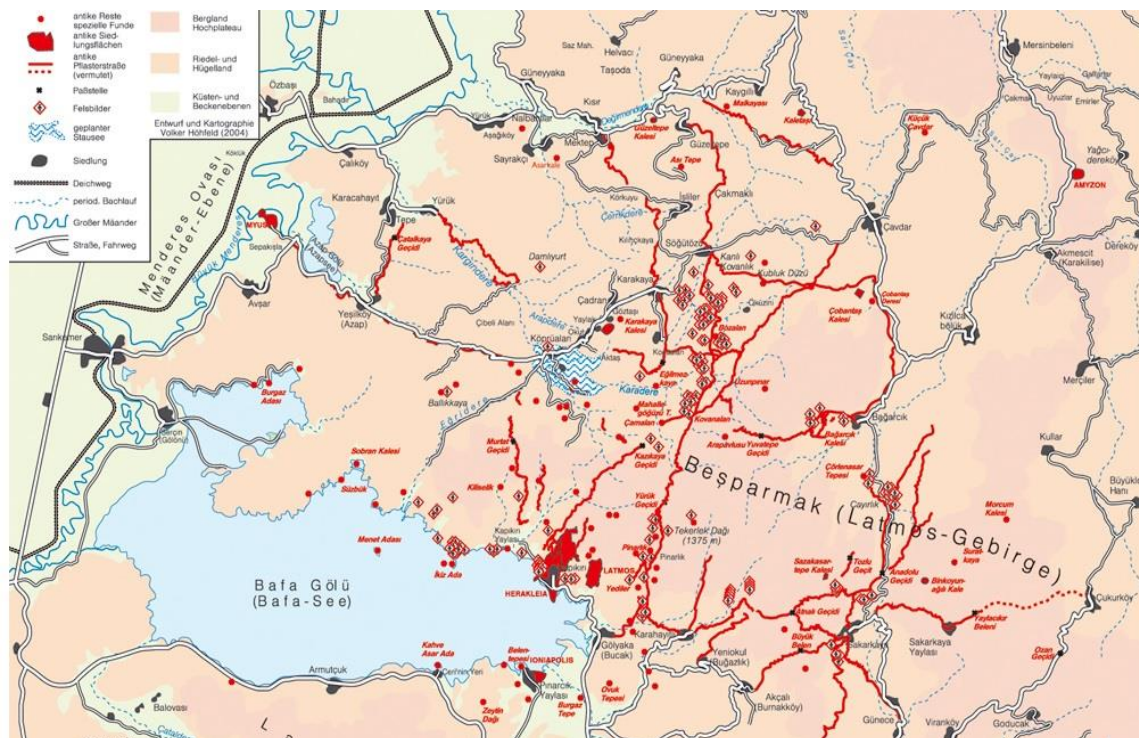


Figure 16-Volker Höhfeld's map of Latmos. Red dots are small-scaled ancient heritage elements, but the dots covering more extensive areas show the ancient cities. Red lines are ancient ways, and diamond shapes are the areas of prehistoric rock art. ©latmos-felsbilder.de

The most notable aspect of the mountain is the prehistoric heritage discovered recently. The more prolonged known heritage of antiquity and the Middle Ages are not under the spotlight because they are less pressured by mines or treasure hunters. Some beekeepers and shepherds was already aware of the prehistoric rock arts in the region before 1994 when the first scientific documentation was undertaken by Anneliese Peschlow. Her studies, beginning 1998, focused chiefly on the prehistoric rock arts of which more than two hundred sites have

⁷² Ömür Harmanşah, *Place, Memory, and Healing: An Archaeology of Anatolian Rock Monuments* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 113.

been identified. This number is increasing progressively with the discoveries of nature clubs hiking on the mountain. The diameter of the rock art area is broadening with the recent discoveries. According to a resident of Karakaya village who has shown the prehistoric rock arts to Peschlow for the first time, there are more undocumented rock arts than documented and more research should be conducted.⁷³

The rock paintings of Latmos are the first known prehistoric rock arts in Western Anatolia concentrated in an area that is densely populated.⁷⁴ Although there are also some minor rock art areas elsewhere in Anatolia; they are not as densely populated regarding the number of rock arts as Latmos.⁷⁵



Figure 17-Keremlik Prehistoric Rock Arts ©Manşet Aydın

⁷³ Interview with Yaşar Beşparmak, May 2021.

⁷⁴ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 52.

⁷⁵ In February 2021, a new group of prehistoric rock arts were found in a cave of Mersin which have similar artistic style with the images in Mount Latmos. See: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/turkiye/mersinde-8-bin-yillik-kaya-resimleri-bulundu-560261.html>

While the discovered rock arts were limited only with Latmos, new paintings have been found recently on a nearby area, Madran Mountain, having the same artistic style as Latmos.⁷⁶ Most of the paintings are scattered around the mountains' peaks and are homogeneous in their artistic style, primarily painted in red with the rare case of yellow and their sizes change between seven and seventy cm.

Another pattern of the distribution of the rock paintings is their proximity to water sources. They are either in a cave through which a stream flows or near to the source of streams. The paintings mainly depict ornaments, hands and feet, women in profile with a prominent bottom, men alone, couples, family nucleus, wedding ceremonies. They exceedingly depict feminine figures, which may be illustrating the critical role of women in society.⁷⁷



Figure 18-Balıktaş Prehistoric Rock Arts ©wanderlustmary.com

⁷⁶ <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/madran-daginda-prehistorik-kaya-resmi-bulundu>

⁷⁷ Peschlow, "The Prehistoric Rock Paintings of Mount Latmos," 178–85.

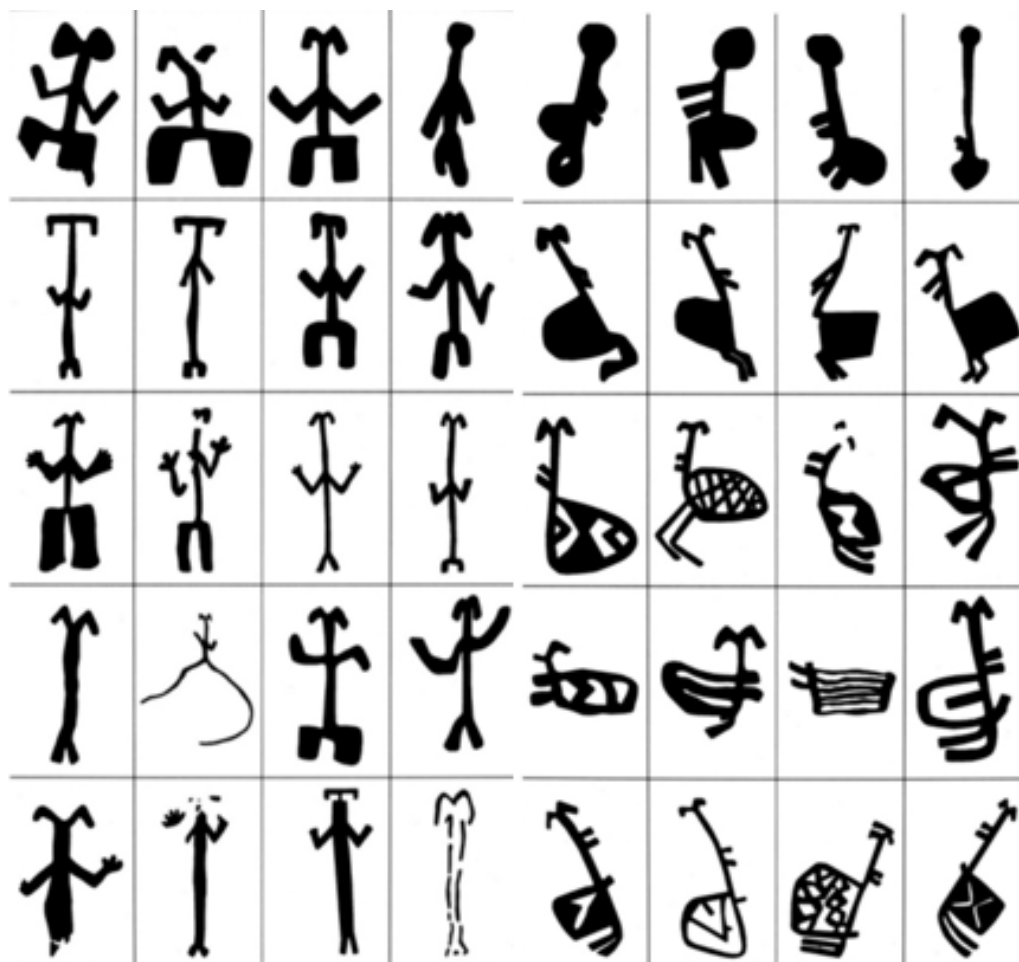


Figure 19-Four column from left: male depictions

Four-column from right: female depictions. ©Anneliese Peschlow

The paintings are not precisely dated. However, the excavation in Malkayası Cave on Latmos, the pottery findings there and the identical patterns of weavings on both rock paintings and identical potteries used in the caves hint a possible dating. The identical potteries of the late Neolithic period in not far settlements (Hacılar, Kuruçay, İzmir), asserted that the Latmian rock painting could easily be dated to the sixth and fifth millennium BCE.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Peschlow-Bindokat, A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment, 186–87.



Figure 20-Possible wedding ceremony on İvizada, an island on Bafa Lake ©Anneliese Peschlow

Karadere Cave of Latmos, as a famous case, is a unique example of the rock paintings of the mountain because there is an artificial recess next to the cave entrance, and this is the only cave where the peak of the mountain, the sacred stone, can be seen. According to Peschlow, the images in Karadere Cave may be the personification of the Weather God, and the caves are too small for dwelling. That is why they were only used for cultic aims.⁷⁹



Figure 21- Karadere Cave ©Özer Akdemir

⁷⁹ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 77–80.

Heritage of Classical Antiquity

Apart from the prehistoric rock arts, the Meander Valley and Latmos have been among the most crucial areas for Classical Antiquity with its ancient cities such as Miletus, Priene, Myus, Magnesia, Pyrrha which have high cultural heritage and economic interactions with important ancient cities such as Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and Halicarnassus. However, under the scope of this study, two ancient cities and their heritage will be singled out.⁸⁰ These cities are Latmos and its successor Herakleia ad Latmum. They began to attract touristic interest for a decade though not to the same extent as the other cities such as Miletus or Priene. There are not many heritage elements left to be seen of Herakleia ad Latmum because their materials were used for the construction of the new city of Herakleia.⁸¹

Although the autochthonic (pre-Hellenic) Carian city Latmos is well hidden among the rocks and difficult to find, the successor city Herakleia is noticeably detectable near the shoreline of Bafa Lake.⁸² The foundation date of Latmos is not known; however, it was mentioned in the written sources around the sixth century BCE. It is known that the city was abandoned around the end of the fourth century BCE, and the new city of Herakleia was founded around the third century and became the capital under the rule of the Macedonian commander Pleistarch.⁸³

⁸⁰ Although there are other ancient cities on Beşparmak Mountains' eastern part such as 'Alexandria ad Latmum' (Alinda) and Amyzon close to the Latmos Mountain which had an alliance with Herakleia, the border of this study covers the area between Sarıçay Stream in the east and Bafa Lake in the West, Serçin in the North-west and Sakarkaya village in the South-east.

⁸¹ Höhfeld, "Herakleia- Stadt und Landschaft des Latmos," 33–34.

⁸² Urs Peschlow, "Mount Latmos," in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. Philipp Niewöhner (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 264.

⁸³ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 116.



Figure 22-Athena Temple in 1965, photographed by Jane Laroche. @Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes



Figure 23-Athena Temple as it is today. It is the main attraction of the tourist where the locals sell the traditional handicrafts. @Yaprak Güldal

The landscape integrated architecture of old Latmos with its exquisite masonry and the classical Hellenistic city plan of Herakleia have become central components of the classical heritage that are still visible and eye-catching for anyone visiting. The Temple of Athena is the most eye-catching feature of ancient Herakleia located in the present Turkish village Kapıkırı. Once having a marble facade, the temple is an excellent example of Doric-Ionic architecture and masonry of local gneiss.⁸⁴ Besides the Temple of Athena, Herakleia/Latmos, had a local god, Endymion. One of the city's best-preserved buildings is Endymion's sanctuary who is believed to have been the founder of the city. The grotto of Endymion is in the old city of Latmos, but in Byzantine times (ninth century), this grotto becomes part of a monastery painted with an elaborate fresco depicting Jesus Christ as Pantokrator.

As the other often visited heritage element, the Necropolis of Herakleia on the eastern bay of Bafa Lake, having 300 graves cut deep in the rocks and covered with a gneiss lid and the graves of Latmos dug in or in the vicinity of houses are the most encountered elements hinting to the vivid life of the past in the area.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Höhfeld, "Herakleia- Stadt und Landschaft des Latmos," 39.

⁸⁵ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 134–35.



Figure 24-Necropolis near Herakleia. Hundreds of these graves can be found around the ancient city.

In addition to these, the ancient roads of Latmos present essential insights into the daily life of antiquity. There are three main road networks on Mount Latmos with several branches and intersections connecting the ancient cities of Myus, Herakleia and Euromos. Although some of these roads are in bad condition, their course is still visible⁸⁷, and many hikers follow these ancient roads on Latmos.

⁸⁶ Taken from the archives of Anatolian Geography Exploration and Research Community.

⁸⁷ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 136–43.



Figure 25-The ancient road that connects Herakleia to Kazıkaya ©Volker Höhfeld⁸⁸

Heritage of Christianity on Mount Latmos

Along with the classical heritage, Latmos was also an important center of Christian monasticism in the Middle Ages. The mountain⁸⁹, “provided an area of seclusion and harsh

⁸⁸ Höhfeld, “Herakleia- Stadt und Landschaft des Latmos,” 194.

⁸⁹ It is noteworthy to mention that Mycale mountain, facing modern Beşparmak Mountains (Latmos) was also a holy mountain for the tenth century sources. They are the two mountains setting the North (Mycale) and South (Latmos) borders of Meander Valley’s west edge. See more: Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843-1118*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39.

terrain which conformed to lavriote ideals, while remaining easily accessible from the more populated areas of the Meander valley below.”⁹⁰

The first monks and hermits of the monastic life in the area had left Mount Sinai and Upper Egypt and settled on Mount Latmos around the seventh century. Accordingly the mountain's name linked with an *hegoumen*⁹¹ was, for the first time, mentioned in 787. Christian monasticism flourished under the leadership of St. Paul (tenth century). The lively monastic life on the mountain was disrupted by the Turkish occupations beginning with the 1070s in Western Anatolia. Furthermore, the monasteries and the settlements were sacked by 1081, when Alexios I Komnenos ascended the throne.⁹² With the Byzantine reconquest, the monastic life flourished again, but Turkish attacks later ended it. As the last continuing case, the famous and the biggest monastery, Stylos Monastery, continued to exist until 1222 having twenty-one *hegoumens* and existing for more than three centuries.⁹³ The later patriarch Athanasius had a pilgrimage to Latmos around 1250 while he was returning from Holy Land.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843-1118*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 37.

⁹¹ A title similar to abbot but it is used for the Eastern Orthodox churches.

⁹² Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor*, 151.

⁹³ Kirby and Mercangöz, “The Monasteries of Mt. Latros and Their Architectural Development,” 69.

⁹⁴ Clive Foss, “Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 138.



Figure 26-Yediler/Kellibaron Monastery ©sozcu.com.tr

When looking at the architectural heritage of Christianity, it would not be an exaggeration to say that “the monasteries on and around Latmos are among the best-preserved [in Western Anatolia] probably because the area was marginalized by the Turkish conquest and has remained so ever since.”⁹⁵ Turkish conquests’ influenced the architecture of the monasteries of the mountain that added fortifications to their bodies. Most of them were supported such impressive fortifications, Yediler and İkizada as an example, that one could mistake them with castles.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Philipp Niewöhner, “Monasteries,” in *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. Philipp Niewöhner (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 126.

⁹⁶ Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium*, 276.

Latmos was famous as a monastic center with its eleven monasteries in the Byzantine Middle Ages. The monasteries of Stylos and Yediler (Kellibaron), Kirselik, Sobran, Karyes are among those visited by the hikers today. Although they do not possess the glory of their old times, they need immediate precaution against further physical deterioration. The most fragile artefacts, bringing fame to the Latmos with the prehistoric rock arts, are frescoes. Especially caves in the proximity of Yediler Monastery “served as hermitages for single ascetics, who separated themselves from the monastic community”⁹⁷ contains these alluring frescoes.



Figure 27-Frescoes of Stylos Cave ©hotelsilvaoliva.com

The caves with the frescoes, probably dated to the ninth century, signify Baptism, Nativity, Crucifixion, Virgin Mary, Archangels, and also have non-symbolical geometrical

⁹⁷ Niewöhner, “Monasteries,” 127.

ornamentations. These caves are thought to be hermitages for eremites; however, they may also be the meeting point for the followers of monastic life in the region.⁹⁸ Yediler Cave, Stylos Cave and Cave of the Apostles have the most vivid samples of Byzantine rock paintings, although there are intentional damages, possibly provoked by iconoclasm, Turkish invasions, or contemporary visitors. Stylistically, the iconography in the caves has similarities with Egypt and Syria because of the monastic migrants fleeing from Arabs invading these areas.⁹⁹



Figure 28-The Frescoes near Yediler Monastery ©Şahin Yıldız

⁹⁸ Peschlow-Bindokat, *A Carian Mountain Landscape: Herakleia on the Latmos-City and Environment*, 204–6.

⁹⁹ Peschlow, "Mount Latmos," 267.

Intangible Heritage of the People on Modern Beşparmak Mountain

The intangible heritage of the mountain is as rich as the tangible heritage of it. For UNESCO, oral traditions, performing arts (dance, theatre, pantomime), social practices, festive events, rituals, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe, knowledge, and skills to produce traditional crafts are within the concept of intangible cultural heritage which is transferred from older generations to the younger ones.¹⁰⁰

The villages on Latmos, with a more preserved culture than the other villages near urban areas, exhibit the pre-modern period's residual cultural practices. Among these, Zeibek dances and their legacy are the most crucial elements of intangible heritage.

Zeibek is the term used for social bandits dwelt on the mountainous areas of Western Anatolia between the eighteenth and twentieth century. Banditry tradition in the region emerged around the 16th century, but the term 'zeibek' happened to be used around the 18th century's first half. They kidnapped and robbed the feudal landowners, killing the Ottoman authorities in the region and were regarded as the 'biggest trouble' of Ottoman local governors in the Empire's official historiography. They had their unique way of dancing, dressing, and communicating. They built fountains and bridges for the peasants. They funded wedding ceremonies, and they paid widows on month basis. Zeibeks, to sum up, were "peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to they admired, helped, supported."¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

¹⁰¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, Rev. ed., 1st American paperback ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 17.

After Independence War (1919-1923) against the Italian, French, Greek and British invasion, Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, wanted to create a ‘new society’, and in that purpose, he needed to restructure the myths and culture of the society. In other saying, he needed an invention of a new tradition, especially in the cultural sphere.



Figure 29-Zeibeks dancing. ©Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Museum Archive

He wanted to create a national dance such as waltz or ballet that can be danced both by men and women in the saloons, and zeibek dances were an excellent resource for this respecting the contributions of the bandits to the Independence War. As The New York Times of 5 November 1933 reported, he tried to nationalize zeibek dances: “Pasha Mustapha Kemal tries to popularize native zeibek dance.”. The pedagogue Selim Sirri Bey was purposively assigned to update the indigenous dance to the latest saloon fashion. Two daughters of Selim Sirri Bey started a tour of Europe with the aim of studying the Western dances and updating old Turkish dances accordingly in the 1930s. A new national dance was created under their guidance, highly inspired by the ballet. This new dance was ‘the dance of the Turk’, Zeibek.

Three operas were composed having the theme of Zeibeks in this era. Atatürk was named ‘the Last Zeibek’ and ‘Zeibek the Blonde’ because he managed to control the Zeibeks under his rule, and he was a skillful zeibek dancer. As a result, “existing customary traditional practices were modified, ritualized and institutionalized for the new national purposes.”¹⁰²

Zeibek , as an improvised dance named after the bandits of Western Anatolia, is now regarded as the ‘national dance’ of the Turkish people and its most remarkable examples are originated in the Latmos villages. Traditionally, zeibek dances were practiced after long musical and psychological preparation, and the musical process was called *oturak alemi*. The youth in the villages used to practice the dances meticulously by whistling until they found their unique style and improvised the dance relentlessly. Ceremonies took three days, making it possible for nearly every man to get on stage in the villages. However, these *oturak alemis* were expensive because of the vast quantities of food, alcohol, and other things the host used to provide.

In time, the old tradition and musical preparation of *oturak alemi* and the authentic zeibek dances have nearly vanished in the villages of Beşparmak, both because of the gradual desertion of traditional farming techniques, which diminishes the population of the villages and because of the economic disadvantage of the rural life with the booming agricultural and industrial economy in the cities of Turkey causing rural-urban migration. While 75.8% of the population in Turkey lived in rural areas in 1927, 75.1% of the population dwelt in urban areas in 2018.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 19th pr, Canto (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr, 2010), 6.

¹⁰³ T.C Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, “Kentsel- Kırsal Nüfus Oranı[Chart of Urban-Rural Population],” n.d., <https://cevreselgostergeler.csb.gov.tr/kentsel---kirsal-nufus-orani-i-85670>.



Figure 30-The musicians of Dibekeci¹⁰⁴ © <https://www.facebook.com/ege.kaba.zurnacilar>

Latmos, with its elaborate rock systems and unpassable nature, has sheltered the Zeibeks and it is one of the three critical mountains for the banditry tradition in Asia Minor. That is why the dances named after this banditry tradition had an essential share in the mountain culture. The physical characteristic of the mountain is a clear justification for the active banditry on the area. When the founder of the German Archeological Institute of Istanbul, Martin Schede, paid a visit to Latmos, he remarked this sentence to express the hostile environment of the mountain sheltering the bandits: “Inhospitable and poor, this mountain, separated from the

¹⁰⁴ Dibekeci is village 20 minutes’ drive away from Kapıkırı and the center of traditional music practices of the Western and Southwestern part of Anatolia. Nearly all the families dwelling there are musicians.

thoroughfare by a lake, has always been the most desolate area of the region.”¹⁰⁵. The mountain, with its culturally conservative villages, has preserved the authentic way of zeibek dancing and the legends about them and notably is home to the slowest forms of folk dances¹⁰⁶ in Anatolia and the world, whereas the different zeibek dances are danced at a high tempo in different regions of Western Anatolia. The tempo is so slow that each bar extends up to 45 seconds and tempo between 20-24 beats per minute in Beşparmak Mountains. As a result, each dancer’s individual performance takes up to ten minutes which is too long for a solo folk-dance performance.



Figure 31-A shelter for the bandits on Latmos Mountain, Zeibeks ©EKODOSD

¹⁰⁵ A speech by Martin Schede in 1936 for the remembrance of Theodor Wiegand who made the first extensive research on Latmos at the beginning of 20th century.

<http://www.didimturizmdernegi.org/ilcemizdetay/latmos-da-eskiya-inleri>

¹⁰⁶ There are many shops or restaurant with the name of Zeybek in the neighboring villages and cities of Latmos. For example, Zeybek Restaurant is one of the first restaurants of Kapıkırı village built upon the ruins of Herakleia ad Latmum.



Figure 32-Notorious Hüseyin the Little of Beşparmak, the last zeibek of Beşparmak Mountain ©Şahin Yıldız

Legacy of Zeibeks, and myths about them are inseparable from the cultural and rural space of Latmos. Zeibek “is stronger, more famous, his name lives longer than the ordinary peasant’s, but he is no less mortal. He is immortal only because there will always be some other [zeibek] to take his gun into the hills or on to the wide plains.”¹⁰⁷ The zeibeks’ transgenerational memory shaped within the Latmian geography creates a web of modern myths that take place on the mountain. Although their memory is still untouched, the Zeibek banditry on Beşparmak Mountain could not withstand to the modern age as “hardly any of the great bandits of history survive the translation from agrarian to industrial society.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ Hobsbawm, 132.

Among the Zeibeks dominated the mountain, the three names come forward thanks to many songs and dances written for them: Zeibek with Aba¹⁰⁹, Murat of Çavdar, Hüseyin the Little. However, the most famous one is Hüseyin the Little, who ruled Beşparmak Mountain with his older brother Murat of Çavdar between 1905-1920. He disappeared mysteriously to come back for only one day in the 1950s as an older man and evanescenced again. When he comes back for one day after thirty years, thousands of people gather from nearby cities into the small village of Burunköy, and everybody watches him in deafening silence while he begins to climb Beşparmak for the last time to be seen.

He was a Tarantinesque character, a ruthless bandit; thus, his legacy is still vivid. He is believed to have a sacred talisman carved out of a sacred stone on Latmos. That is why he is presumed as immortal by locals saying: There is no death for him on Beşparmak. A song about the dramatic death of Murat that Hüseyin the Little had to witness when he was a 12-year-old boy is still sung on the Latmos villages as Hüseyin being the first-person narrator in the song:

*Paddle boatman! Let me pass to Ilbır¹¹⁰
 I am not a falcon; I cannot fly
 Let me have my silver gun
 I pave the way for my followers!*

*He wears a turban black
 His eyebrows dyed black
 Is not it enough for you
 To wander at the peak of Beşparmak.*

¹⁰⁹ an 'abā' (a long, full garment), traditionally of camel hair and brown or black.

¹¹⁰ After his brother's death, he runs from the peak of Latmos towards Kapıkırı village where he hires a boatman to take him to the next side of Bafa Lake. This song, narrations and the photograph were documented by Şahin Yıldız during an area research (2016) focusing on banditry tradition on Mount Latmos.

A Problem of Authenticity

Another intangible heritage element is the traditional costumes. Although men wear identical to Zeibek costumes died out, the women costumes are worn traditionally. The villages of Beşparmak Mountain have a unique way of clothing especially worn during wedding ceremonies or feasts by the local women. The costumes are usually a century old, and a village, Çomakdağ, near Beşparmak, became famous with these unique and authentic costumes daily worn and attracted many Turkish tourists by the virtue of that.



*Figure 33-The traditional wedding costume and flower ornaments that can be seen on the mountain villages near/on Latmos
@Şahin Yıldız*

Although the authentic culture of this village is still visible during the feasts, religious holidays or weddings, the village currently put their culture (including themselves) on sale in order to create an appealing package to the degree that this make-up changes the nature of their culture and the authenticity sought by the visitors becomes ‘staged authenticity’

provided by villagers.¹¹¹ This also caused by the alienation of the urban people from their ordinary life. As a result, they seek authenticity, and the tourists of urban culture create “a discourse that worked through a representation of space in which [authenticity] was constructed as a theatrical stage on which the [urban culture] projected its fantasies and desires.”¹¹²

However, although these costumes are work on only specific occasions, the residents of Çomakdağ village, understanding the touristic value of these costumes, wear these elaborate costumes in their daily lives; but this brings the problem of staged authenticity rooted in the aesthetic needs of the tourists. The tourists are “motivated by a desire to see life as it is lived, even to get in with the natives, and, at the same time, they are deprecated for always failing to achieve these goals. The term ‘tourist’ is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences.”¹¹³



Figure 34-Traditional head ornament in Çomakdağ @District Governorship of Milas

¹¹¹ Peter Robinson et al., eds., *Operations Management in the Travel Industry*, Second Edition (Boston, MA: CABI, 2016), 264.

¹¹² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978), 54.

¹¹³ Dean Maccannell, “Staged Authenticity: Arrangement of Social Space in Tourist Settings,” *American Journal of Sociology - AMER J SOCIOL* 79 (November 1, 1973): 592.



Figure 35-Flowers are the most striking elements of this type of headdress. @District Governorship of Milas

This type of staged authenticity commodifies the culture, and cultural value is reproduced without the real sense, and this creates a fake new culture assumed to be authentic. “Through this process of creating touristic values, the heritage of Everyman becomes part of the public domain. Even if it is still inhabited by family members who might be expected to inherit it, it will be relocated within a new system of property.”¹¹⁴ In other words, the cultural value of these costumes as intangible heritage elements “rather than being a reclamation of the past, heritage and tourism [via these costumes] function as a new form of cultural production (a value-added industry) that takes the past as its theme”.¹¹⁵ This theme is profitable and the property of the economic interactions rather than a unique item of folklore.

¹¹⁴ Marie-Françoise Lanfant et al., eds., *International Tourism: Identity and Change*, Sage Studies in International Sociology 47 (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1995), 39.

¹¹⁵ Robert Shepherd, “Commodification, Culture and Tourism,” *Tourist Studies* 2, no. 2 (August 1, 2002): 188.



Figure 36-The traditional coloring of the doors in Çomakdağ. @Sinan Ünsal

Latmos as a Cultural Landscape

The theory on the landscape has two elements that are mistaken with each other: space and place. While the place is a physical existence here and now, the space is a cultural understanding that is non-existent without perception.¹¹⁶ The space's cultural character bears the term landscape as a representational being as the land answering how it is perceived, how humankind apprehends and grasp its essence, and how the system of perception or

¹¹⁶ Eric Hirsch, "Landscape: Between Place and Space," in *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, ed. Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon, Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1995), 3–5.

apprehension works for the landscape.¹¹⁷ However, regardless of cardinal relations it has with the culture, the cultural landscape has a precedent, and it “is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result.”¹¹⁸

The cultural landscape term and its usage were debated within heritage protection, other than the theories of geography and sociology. In 1992, with the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the 16th session of the World Heritage Committee, cultural landscapes’ recognition and protection were, for the first time, categorized within an international legal instrument, and the cultural landscape was defined as the ‘combined works of nature and of man.’ by UNESCO.¹¹⁹

Under the term of the cultural landscape, UNESCO creates three categories:

a-) Landscape designed and created intentionally by man such as gardens or parklands; Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the South-East of Cuba as an example.

b-) Organically evolved landscape created by a social, economic, administrative or religious imperative and reflecting the process of evolution within time with these sub-categories:

-Relict landscape: The evolutionary process stopped in the past, but the striking features of the heritage are still visible to which Ecosystem and Relict Cultural Landscape of Lopé-Okanda of Gabon can be an example.

-Continuing landscape: The landscape where the evolutionary process is still visible

¹¹⁷ Matthew Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 4.

¹¹⁸ Carl O. Sauer, “The Morphology of Landscape,” University of California Publications in Geography 2 (Berkeley: University Press, 1925), 46.

¹¹⁹ Nora J. Mitchell et al., eds., *World Heritage Cultural Landscapes: A Handbook for Conservation and Management*, World Heritage Papers 26 (Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009), 19.

and the space with an active social role in modern society has traditional importance.

Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens of Turkey can be an example of that.

c-) Associative cultural landscape: The landscapes having powerful religious, artistic, or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material culture evidence.¹²⁰ Uluru can be an excellent example of this type of landscape.

Accordingly with these definitions, Mount Latmos can be associated with the term of cultural landscape with its ongoing sacred character for different civilizations. However, it would not be fair to classify the mountain as a continuing landscape because the continuity of the sacred character stopped in current cultural understanding and because the contemporary population and the state have a destructive relationship with the mountain and gradually the mountain becomes a place other than space. However, as a relict landscape, the mountain stands in the solid state in the history of Christianity as the predecessor of Mount Athos, which is still an essential monastic settlement for Orthodox communities today.

Regarding the terminology that should be used to address Latmos, the possible equivalent term would be the ‘sacred landscape’ because the mountain “is a ‘representational space’, which can be explained as space as directly experienced through its associated images and symbols, or as symbolic meanings enacted in spatial form. As heritage practices territorialize a landscape and thus recreate space, the landscape is recreated and redefined, and its social character is changed.”¹²¹ The heritage practices focusing on the narratives of the sacrality can revive the sacred character of old times and can change the social character. However, this

¹²⁰ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (Paris, 2008.), 86.

¹²¹ Naomi Deegan, “The Local-Global Nexus in the Politics of World Heritage: Space for Community Development?” in *Community Development through World Heritage*, World Heritage Papers 31 (Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2012), 79.

term would not be enough to cover all the other heritage aspects and would mean to disregard the profanity of the mountain.

Latmos as a Geopark

Geological heritage has long been disregarded, and it may be one of the latest areas of protection on which an international network was founded under UNESCO. Creation of an international network focusing on geological heritage under the term ‘Geoparks’ was proposed in 1996 for the first time, and accordingly a decision was taken to create this global network focusing on geological heritage areas with unique characteristics in 1998 by UNESCO.¹²² The decision generated a new label expressing governmental recognition of the importance of managing outstanding geological sites and landscapes holistically.¹²³ There were already some areas with outstanding geological significance before that date under the term ‘natural heritage’ or some other local practices in the 80s. However, within the geopark concept, UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) was, for the first time, established after 1996. Currently (May 2021), there are 169 geoparks of 44 different countries under the list of UGGp.¹²⁴

According to UNESCO, the geopark concept was implemented to protect and enhance the value of geological areas exhibiting the critical eras of the world’s evolution and hinting possible solutions for the world’s future problems. The concept was promoted to contribute to science, culture, education, and tourism, and it adopts the community-led approaches.¹²⁵ The

¹²² Anze Chen, Yunting Lu, and Young C. Y. Ng, *The Principles of Geotourism*, Springer Geography (Berlin Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London: Springer, 2015), 246.

¹²³ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_gives_global_geoparks_a_new_label/

¹²⁴ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/list-of-unesco-global-geoparks/>

¹²⁵ Operational Guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks.

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/IGGP_UGG_Statutes_Guidelines_EN.pdf

tourism aspect of the geopark concept aims “the sustainable protection and safeguarding of the geological heritage of a region [which is] the fundamental principle behind geotouristic activities.”¹²⁶

The cultural sphere of Latmos proves a convenient term, as mentioned before: cultural landscape. However, in the last ten years, there has been a public desire for the establishment of a geopark on Latmos and activists tend to use the term ‘geo-park’ for Latmos. The usage of this term may be helpful for the protection of the mountain against the mining facilities; however, it may also shadow the cultural heritage aspect of it. However, the first does not contradict the second as they are defining two different aspects of the term mountain.

The local awareness has also been more gravitated towards the ‘natural heritage’ compared to the cultural heritage. In 2014, with the signature of six villages under the leadership of the World Wide Fund for Nature, the villagers had shared their interest in the re-designation of Latmos as a natural heritage site.¹²⁷ The leading NGO working on the protection of Latmos, EKODOSD, has also been bringing attention to the slogan of “Latmos should be a Geopark!”¹²⁸

When the national concept of geological heritage is considered, Turkey has many definitions of natural heritage. *National park* defines natural and cultural areas as having leisure and touristic areas which are scientifically and aesthetically rare. *Nature park* defines the natural areas rich flora and fauna within a complete landscape suitable for the people’s need for leisure and joy. *Natural monuments* define the properties created via natural forces and under

¹²⁶ Marie-Luise Frey et al., “Geoparks-a Regional, European and Global Policy,” in *Geotourism*, ed. David Newsome and Ross Dowling, 2012, 98.

¹²⁷ <https://www.wwf.org.tr/?2760>

¹²⁸ Kazım Yörükce, “Latmos Jeopark Yapılmalıdır [Latmos Should Be Geopark],” *Ses Gazetesi*, November 25, 2020,

the protection of national park rules. *Natural preservation area* defines rare or endangered ecosystems that have absolute importance for science and education and needs immediate protection.¹²⁹

Bafa Lake was designated as a nature park in 1994; however, this does not include Latmos. However, with its geological heritage, the mountain fits into the definition of the natural heritage of the Turkish state. Although the Anatolian peninsula has many different geological heritage areas, only one site of geological heritage was recognized by UNESCO as a geopark: Kula Volcanic Geopark of Western Anatolia, which also exhibits prehistoric rock arts, classical heritage, and Ottoman heritage. Identical to rock art of Latmos, Kula Geopark has a “pictograph interpreted as depicting Çakallar volcano [and this] would define it as the oldest site where humans demonstrably eye-witnessed a volcanic eruption and possibly artistically recorded it.”¹³⁰ In this case of Kula, the co-existence of rock arts and geological heritage may be an example for the Turkish officials or volunteers trying to advertise and protect the nature and heritage of Latmos.

¹²⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs of Republic of Turkey, “Milli Parklar Yönetmeliği[Regulations on National Park],” *Resmi Gazete*, December 12, 1986, 19309 edition, <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=5413&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5>.

¹³⁰ İnan Ulusoy et al., “Volcanic Eruption Eye-Witnessed and Recorded by Prehistoric Humans,” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 212 (May 15, 2019): 187.



Figure 37-These types of rock formations are widespread to see on Latmos. ©Dinçer Sertkaya



Figure 38-One of the rocks having a spectacular shape. ©Volker Höhfeld

Chapter 3- Destruction and Management

A Valuable Landscape in Danger: Latmos and its struggle of existence

Landscapes are in constant change. Some of them are changed via climate effects, others by deforestation or mining, some of them are shaped by earthquakes or rivers carrying soil and changing their beds. However, before understanding the change they undergo, landscapes should be understood within the term of space basically and this term “is more than a mere collection of material realities and persons in a landscape; beyond men and environment space should be understood as a site of ongoing interactions of social relations, as a dynamic process of production inspired by a society.”¹³¹ This dynamic process has many dimensions harming the natural and cultural unity of Latmos such as mining facilities, treasure hunters and natural forces.

Mining Facilities

Despite the universal value of the mountain, Latmos is in peril with several threats, most of which are caused by human factors.¹³² First of those factors are mining facilities that are mining feldspar, quartz, and quartzite. Due to the labyrinthically shaped rock formations Latmos has, it requires detailed and thorough area research that has not been done to document and register possible tangible heritage elements that are threatened by the mines.¹³³

¹³¹ Andreas Külzer, “Reconstructing the Past in a Changing Landscape. Reflections on the Area of Ephesus and Other Sites in Western Asia Minor,” *Gephyra* 16 (2018): 76.

¹³² According to ICOMOS reports, although natural forces such as wind and water erosion are taking their toll, human activity is the biggest negative impact on rock-art, especially as a result of infrastructure projects and economic and industrial activity. Drah Valley was destructed by quarrying as a case. However, rock art at Foz Coa in Portugal, threatened by a dam construction, was saved. See: Timothy Darvill and António Pedro Batarda Fernandes, eds., *Open-Air Rock-Art Conservation and Management: State of the Art and Future Perspectives*, Routledge Studies in Archaeology 12 (New York: Routledge, 2014), 297.

¹³³ Although there are extensive studies of Anneliese Peschlow, Alexander Herda, Volker Höhfeld and Albert Distelrath, the region requires more attention a complete research on prehistoric rock arts all along the Latmos Mountains. Peschlow’s legacy should be improved.

Although the situation is fragile, mining facilities and their excavation machines are carelessly continuing their work, and what is worse, the mining facilities are wiping the rock paintings with soap and sponge and rubbing them with sandpaper.¹³⁴ While doing so, they will not be tackled by the laws protecting archaeological sites. Opening new mining facilities and expansion of the existing ones are being planned on the area. These facilities estimate a yearly production of 1.5-million-ton minerals, and the estimated operational period of these mines is 211 years, as the executives of these companies announced.¹³⁵



Figure 39-Mines destroying the landscape. ©odatv.com

Menderes massif, especially the southern sub-massif, is targeted by mining facilities seeking feldspar, marble, quartz, or lignite. However, the characteristic morphology of this massif

¹³⁴ Havva İşkan Işık, “Binlerce Yıllık Tarih, Arap Sabunuyla Yok Ediliyor” (Antalya, March 8, 2016).

<https://www.ayyildizgazetesi.com/haber-30560-Binlerce-Yillik-Tarih-Arap-Sabunuyla-Yok-Ediliyor.html>

¹³⁵ Bahattin Sürücü, “Latmos’ta Yeni Maden Sahaları,” Ecosystem Protection and Nature Lovers, January 5, 2019, <http://www.ekodosd.org/index.php/9-uncategorised/729-latmos-ta-yeni-maden-sahalari>.

exhibits marvelous landscapes carved out of gneiss by nature, and the profit-oriented wild mining distorts the geological heritage. The untouched nature of the area has become a hotspot for hikers and getting more and more popular every day, but the number of mining facilities is also rising, hindering the nature-oriented tourism potential for the region.

This expansion, significantly accelerated between 2004-2014, has resulted in mines covering 3800 hectares of 149 different quarries.¹³⁶ Furthermore, at least ten of these quarries operate in Latmos and plan to expand their operational borders. While the mining facilities threaten the unexplored prehistoric rock arts or Christian frescoes on Latmos, nearby ancient cities are also under constant threat. For example, Stratonikeia, which contains the heritage elements of the Ottoman Era and Sultanate of Rum or Lagina of the Hellenistic period, are under constant threat by the area's largest lignite-mining quarry.¹³⁷

These mining facilities do not only harm the tangible heritage. The intangible heritage of the region is also being disturbed by the facilities. Quarries operating without any break have caused many people to leave the traditional lifestyle in their remote villages and migrate to the nearest cities. Yaşar Beşparmak (53) of Karakaya village of Söke has remarked that: "I have always lived here, but recently I moved to Söke because the life became unbearable there. I have asthma, and I even have hard times visiting my father's tomb. It was not that bad in the mid-2000s. However, after that, many people from my village escaped from there to the cities."¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Murat Gül, Kemal Zorlu, and Muratcan Gül, "Assessment of Mining Impacts on Environment in Muğla-Aydın (SW Turkey) Using Landsat and Google Earth Imagery," *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 191, no. 11 (October 19, 2019): 655.

¹³⁷ Gül, Zorlu, and Gül, 663.

¹³⁸ Yaşar Beşparmak, Rock Arts and Perception of the Villagers of Karakaya (interview with Şahin Yıldız), April 2021.

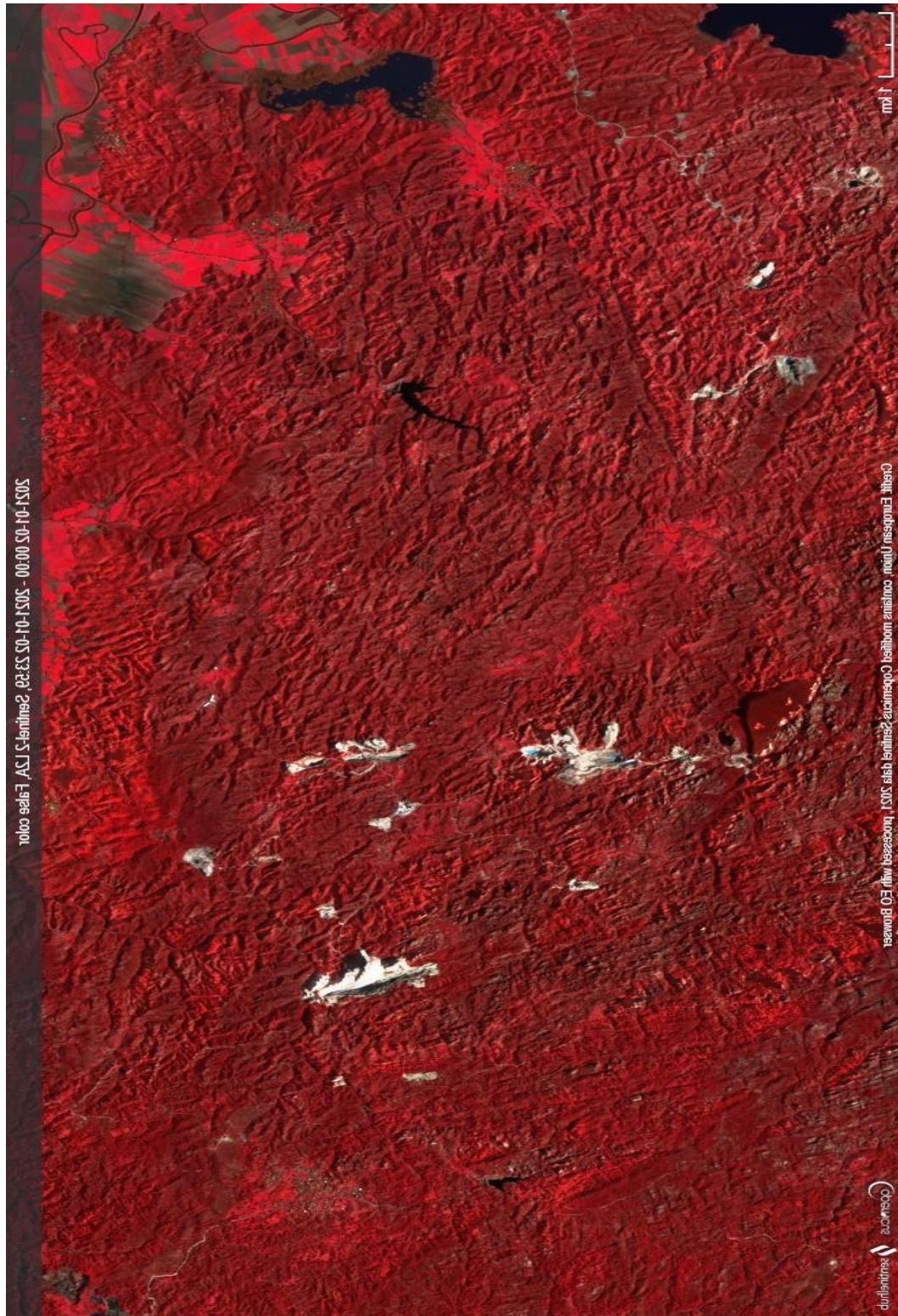


Figure 40-The map shows the amount of water that the plants possess. The white areas are the mining facilities on Latmos where no plant exists.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This map was created by Şahin Yıldız using Sentinel-2 satellite images in Sentinel Hub, 6 January 2021

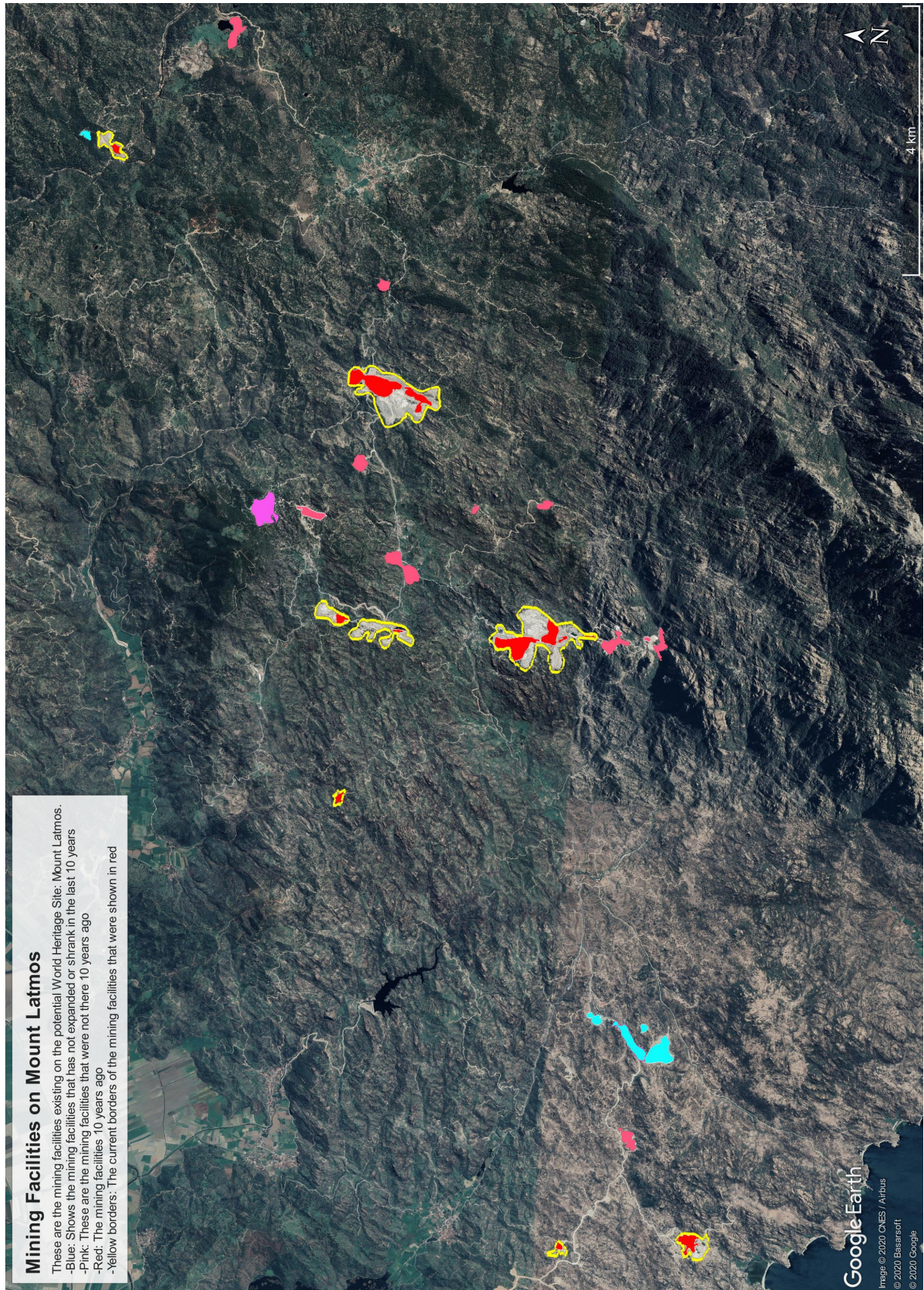


Figure 41-This map shows the expansion of mining facilities in time. 7 January 2021, Şahin Yıldız via QGIS

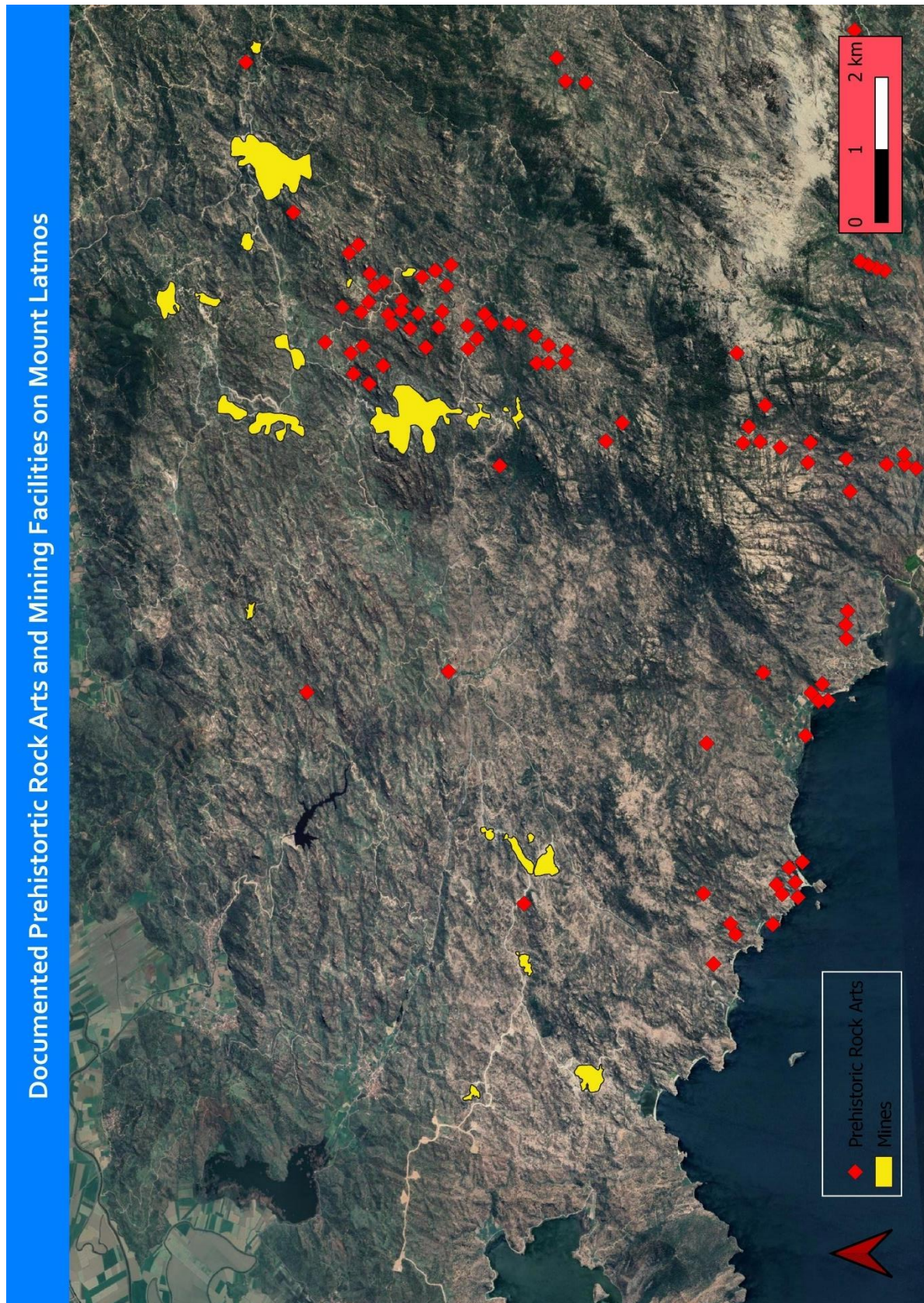


Figure 42-The prehistoric rock arts and the operating mines on the same map. The map was created by georeferencing Peschlow's map of prehistoric rock arts in QGIS by Şahin Yıldız, 7 January 2021

Treasure Hunters

Another threat to the heritage of the mountain is the illegal excavations of treasure hunters, which is a hope of richness and source of adventurous excitement for many people. Rock arts, Hittite inscriptions and Byzantine heritage are interpreted as ‘having treasure inside’ by treasure hunters; that is why there have been cases of destruction. The locals for generations had been calling the rock arts ‘*define işareti*’¹⁴⁰ until the studies of Peschlow. As an essential case, Karadere Cave, with its rock arts possibly signifying local deities, were excavated by treasure hunters nearly half a meter deep in 2013.¹⁴¹

Turkey is notorious for the illegal excavations that are destroying the heritage of the country. Treasure hunting is like a weekend activity for many people dreaming of getting rich or seeking excitement with these activities. Many Facebook groups have the names of ‘Treasure Hunters’, ‘Treasure Signs and Their Deciphering’, ‘Real Treasure Hunters’, ‘Archeological Treasure Database’ and these count to more than 1.5 million members. Every day, thousands of images are shared in these groups where the other members try to locate the ‘treasure’. YouTube channels with the names ‘Archeologist’, ‘The Treasure Hunter’, ‘Master Treasure Hunter’ are watched by millions of people with their endless number of videos broadcasting the process of seeking treasures recorded with GoPros. Their total number of subscriptions is totally around one million people.

Facebook groups of treasure hunters are also another issue with the heritage protection. The photograph in the image below is an unfinished statue; a lion statue, probably a Hittite one. The ‘treasure’ is inside the lion, and it should be broken according to the group members.

¹⁴⁰ Sign of treasure in English.

¹⁴¹ Interview with the local guide Mithat Serçin, April 2021.

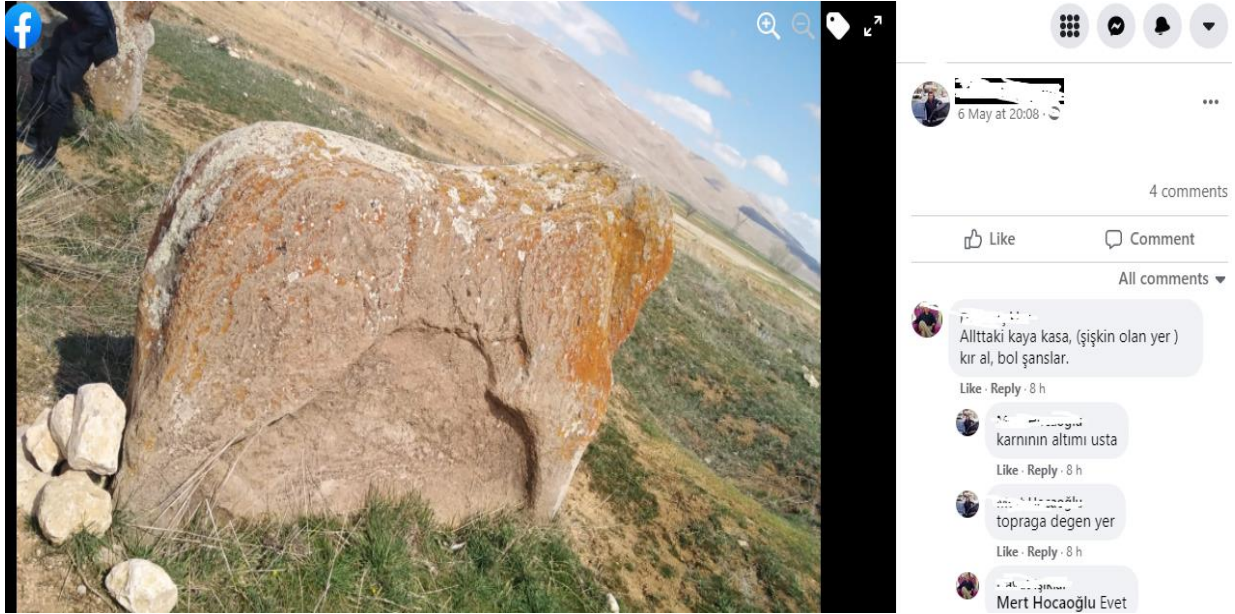


Figure 43-This is a screenshot from one of the groups. ©Şahin Yıldız

Turkish state charges anyone who illegally excavates any area intending to find treasures (even though it belongs to the excavator) between two or five years. If one happens to find an artefact with cultural value, he should inform the state about this otherwise s/he would be charged with between six months and three years in jail. If you conduct any research/area research with the aim of finding treasure, the crime is charged with between three months and two years in jail.¹⁴²

However, the only discouraging element preventing more extensive damage to the existing heritage is, tragically, the treasure hunters' belief in supernatural beings protecting the treasures. Many illegal excavations are accompanied by Imams¹⁴³, the civil servants of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, to protect the treasure hunters from the attacks of 'djinnns' or

¹⁴² <https://kvmgm.ktb.gov.tr/TR-132356/tarihi-eserlere-iliskin-cezai-islemler-nelerdir.html>

¹⁴³ <https://t24.com.tr/haber/cevre-eylemcisi-ve-imam-kacak-kazi-yaparken-yakalandi,886195>

preventing ‘djinnns’ from carrying the treasure to another location, turning it into complete dust.¹⁴⁴

Although some monasteries have already been the target of treasure hunters and the prehistoric rock arts and frescoes can still be the target of treasure hunters with their ‘contradicting’ image with nature and a possible ‘hint’ for treasures. However, the main threat is the treasure of Küçük Hüseyin, who was a notorious bandit in the first 20 years of the twentieth century.

While I was conducting oral interviews with the villagers of Latmos on the history of Küçük Hüseyin in 2016, the central theme in the narrations about him was his massive treasure and how he hid it beneath the rocks of Latmos. Many treasure hunters have been flooding Latmos to find so-called treasure for years even though my records on him show that he died as a poor bandit. However, thanks to the stricter measures against the illegal excavations, especially on the mountain slopes facing Bafa Lake via drone observations of the gendarmerie, there are no frequent visits of treasure hunters twenty years ago.¹⁴⁵

Besides the human factor, natural factors may also damage the heritage on the mountain. The rock art, for example, painted on the secluded surface of the rocks cannot be affected by the rain. However, some other arts may be affected by rain dripping. Also, as the mountain is in the earthquake zone, the best example of the arts should be strengthened on the ground level to prevent falling or toppling of the rocks.

¹⁴⁴ İsmail Şenesen, “Türkiye’deki Define ve Definecilikle İlgili İnanışlar ve Bu İnanışların Motif Index’e Göre Değerlendirilmesi[The Beliefs of Treasures and Treasure Hunting in Turkey and the Evaluations of These Beliefs According to Motif Index],” *Ç.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 25, no. 2 (2016): 283–98.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with the old mukhtar (elected representative of a village), Orhan Serçin

Natural Forces on Rock Art

The threat to the rock arts of the prehistoric era and frescoes of Christianity is not always human-sourced. Nature, sometimes, is a destructive agent for the heritage. In the case of Latmos, the biggest natural threat is earthquakes. The mountain is between two dangerously active faults, Söke Fault and Gökova Fault. The major earthquakes do not only occur on these specific faults, but many other dangerous faults can also sometimes produce earthquakes between the magnitudes of 7.0 and 8.0, as it happened recently in October 2020 with 7.0 magnitude just 50 km away from Latmos. These earthquakes can quickly turn the rocks upside down or cause the rock systems exhibiting art to collapse.

Other than the earthquakes, forest fires are another element of threat for the heritage. Latmos and the surrounding environment have been classified as areas where fire risk is higher than in many other regions.¹⁴⁶ There are other threats such as weathering, wind erosion, exposure to rain and these “can be retarded by deflecting the flow of water over painted surfaces with a well-designed artificial drip line, or installing a boardwalk to cut down on dust, or discouraging the growth of algae or moss, or reducing the risk of fire in the vicinity of a site.”¹⁴⁷ However, these precautions are the last to consider when there are more severe issues.

Management Issues on Latmos

Regarding the overall protection of the prehistoric rock arts, Getty Institute has published a conservation and protection policy that can be a good inspiration for those aiming to create a management plan for the heritage of the area. Public policy & political awareness, effective

¹⁴⁶ İsmail Baysal, Yasin Uçarlı, and Ertuğrul Bilgili, “Forest Fires and Birds,” *Kastamonu University Journal of Forestry Faculty* 17, no. 4 (December 20, 2017): 545.

¹⁴⁷ Janette Deacon, “Rock Art Conservation and Tourism,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 384.

management systems, physical & cultural conservation practices and community involvement benefits are the main four issues that need to be given importance according to this policy.¹⁴⁸

Although the policy is aimed at the prehistoric rock art areas and sites, it is helpful for the protection and preservation of Latmos as a cultural and natural landscape.

Public policy & political awareness

When it comes to public awareness, the area was not trendy, but it is getting popular for the last ten years. The outstanding efforts of Ecosystem Protection and Nature Lovers Association of Kuşadası (EKODOSD), cooperating with Anneliese Peschlow, sparked some interests. The recent public interest for the area has also brought the attention of the Directorate of the Protection of Cultural Heritage Elements (DPCHE) of Aydın Region. This governmental organization working with EKODOSD and created a map showing the boundaries of Latmos within the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Aydın. Miletus Museum of Archaeology in Aydın also inspected the area in 2016 and tried to document some unknown heritage elements such as ancient olive oil extraction tools and new rock paintings. The same directorate (DPCHE) of Muğla has not initiated any large-scale work towards the area yet, so it is impossible now to manage the area as a tourism spot. The municipality of Aydın has also established a visitor center in Karakaya near the prehistoric rock arts. The center informs visitors about Latmos, help them find a local guide for the rock paintings and Byzantine remnants and ruins. Also, some rock paintings can be seen there via 3D VR technologies for the people who cannot walk up to the area.

¹⁴⁸ Neville Agnew et al., *Rock Art: A Cultural Treasure at Risk* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2015), 24.



Figure 44-Latmos Visitor Center. ©Municipality of Aydın

The area has been attracting a small number of people hiking on the mountain, and the area is leisurely getting popular. The natural beauty of the area has promoted popularization, but this also contributed to the awareness of the mountain's heritage. However, with the rising tourist number, the urge to protect the heritage is also rising. Hikers and tourists carelessly touch the monastic and prehistoric art on the rocks, which is extremely dangerous for the artworks. There is no protection against both the possible mass tourism and treasure hunters, which is an issue that should be solved immediately.

The current threat to existing rock arts has been raised in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey several times (2014, 2016, 2017, 2019) and changing the status of the mountain into a national park was proposed several times, but there has not been any satisfactory reply. However, the state replied with a written letter stating that ‘the rock art is scattered around 1500 hectares area of Latmos and 35.5 hectares are being inspected and studied and in this

35000-meter squares no mining activities will be allowed' but not mentioning any further plan covering the whole area.¹⁴⁹

Effective Management Systems

Latmos stands as a border between the provinces of Aydın and Muğla in Turkey. The southern and south-eastern side of the mountain belongs to the jurisdiction of Municipality of Muğla/Milas. The northern and north-western side of the mountain, on the other hand, belongs to the Municipality of Aydın/Söke. However, Muğla's initiations towards the management and advertisement of the area were preceded by Aydın, although the first one has most of the tangible heritage.

Latmos is within reach of 6.5 million people with a maximum two hours of drive. Moreover, this number doubles in summer. When the number of visitors to Latmos is compared to the whole population around the region, it is evident that the area needs proper management and an excellent PR initiative. This is now a must when considering more and more people are becoming members of hiking clubs to see Latmos, and the mining facilities are expandingly becoming destructive.

The cultural and historical value of the Latmos is unapprehended yet. However, the area needs a comprehensive management strategy and action plan; many professionals and academicians on rock art come up with efficient ideas. These ideas suggest that the consultation and research, survey, efficient strategies and implementations and monitoring are essential for the proper management for the possible rock art areas.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ <https://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d27/7/7-13127sgc.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Janette Deacon, "Rock Art and Hunter-Gatherer Communities in Relation to World Heritage," *World Heritage Papers*, Human Evolution: Adaptations, Dispersals and Social Developments (HEADS), 29 (n.d.): 160.

There is only one visitor center which can attract only 300-500 visitors every year. The tourism and academic studies in the area are managed by some local guides, Ecosystem Protection and Nature Lovers Association of Kuşadası and the Carian Way.¹⁵¹ The lack of a management plan on the state and municipality level contributes to the deteriorating condition of the heritage elements of Latmos and its unpopular visibility.



Figure 45-The red-white mark of the Carian way on Latmos. It keeps the hikers on the path. ©Karia Yolu

An intimately worked policy should be prepared with the cooperation of Aydın and Muğla Municipalities. Archaeology Museum of Miletus and the academicians of nearby universities such as Dokuz Eylül University, Ege University, Adnan Menders University should be

¹⁵¹ Carian Way is an initiative set up by four hikers. The way follows the old routes connecting ancient settlements of Caria together. The hiking way is the longest walking path in Turkey with more than 800 kilometers. The project is funded by South Aegean Development Agency and the road signs are painted regularly to keep road in working condition. Latmos is one of the areas on Carian Way.

encouraged to participate in field research, and they should be consulted. Due to the scarcity of rock art and professionals on rock art in Turkey, professional and academic consultation from UNESCO, ICOMOS should also be sought.

Public awareness programs should be implemented for the villagers on the mountain. As they are not aware of the area's cultural value, they are looking over the treasure hunters in the area or depending on mining facilities as income sources because they have not profited from tourism yet. The potential income that they may generate via tourism of the region can be a sterling motivational factor to make them attached to the area on which they only make money via olive trees or husbandry. The virgin quality of olive oil, untouched forests and unique stone rural architecture of the villages may also be used as the means of advertisement to boost the area's fame.

Here, semi-independent regional development agency, GEKA¹⁵² preparing the regional development plans or IPARD¹⁵³ running rural leadership and development programmes can be a first-hand aid choice for the locals. Although the main support of the first mainly is directed towards agriculture, energy and mining; there still consider tourism as a way of income for the locals. IPARD project on the other hand is solely based on agriculture but Latmos and surrounding nature can also benefit from this via dense population of olive and stone pine.

Although many marvelous ancient cities were attracted by millions of students for educational purposes such as Ephesus, Miletus, Halicarnassus, Aphrodisias, Priene; Latmos has not been able to compete with them and attract the daily school trips or the students. Educational

¹⁵² Southern Aegean Region Development Agency, Güney Ege Kalkınma Ajansı in Turkish.

¹⁵³ IPARD is an EU initiated rural development project. The project is managed by Organization of Supporting Agricultural and Rural Development in Turkey.

bodies should also be encouraged to pay a visit to Latmos, other than the renowned destinations. Executives of mentioned NGOs should make presentations in the schools and universities about the mountain, which is seldomly happening. Raising awareness will improve the urge to safeguard the heritage elements of the mountain.

The knowledge and data about the area should be revised, and more data should be collected to ensure that the area has an efficient management system. Local communities are sometimes excluded from heritage management planning and decision-making; however, managing the heritage on Latmos requires an enormous time to get to know the characteristics of the mountain categorically. Professional consultations from rock art site managers or open-air museums' managers should be sought, mainly from Australia, where the cultural landscapes are intertwined with rock arts. Both municipalities' cooperation is critical to compound an integrated project on Latmos.

Physical and Cultural Conservation Practice

Although it is too late to conserve most of the Byzantine ruins, it is still not late to save the monastic art (paintings) in cloisters and prehistoric arts in the rocks. Both are highly delicate that the continuous visitors' physical interaction and natural factors are destroying them. The conservation practices for that kind of paintings are challenging because of many factors such as micro-environmental conditions, micro-organisms¹⁵⁴ that is why it is best to seek help from ICOMOS on the practices, and it is imperative to prevent people from touching the arts.

¹⁵⁴ Agnew et al., *Rock Art: A Cultural Treasure at Risk*, 41.

Community Involvement

The tourism on Latmos is focused on only one village, Kapıkırı, which is the main target of tourists visiting nearby ancient cities of Priene, Miletus, Ephesus and the summer tourism hotspots of Didim, Kuşadası, Bodrum counting up to nearly six million residents in summers. As mentioned before, there is no tourism management by the locals of the mountain, and the villagers' approach to tourism is just economy oriented.

Before getting into community involvement, the history of tourism in the area should be understood. Turkey adopted a Tourism Encouragement Law in 1982 through which the state prepared itself for the mass tourism via better roads, airports, and hotels. After implementing this law, Turkey had a rapid increase in the number of tourists coming to the country.¹⁵⁵

Turkey was appealing the Western tourists, especially hippies visited rural Anatolia and Sultanahmet on their ways to Iran, India, Nepal, in the late 60s and 70s¹⁵⁶. Kapıkırı witnessed a good number of visitors with their caravans but the first guesthouse in Kapıkırı was established in 1988. Three more were opened in the 90s, and two more in the 2000s.

Most of the tourists to the area are coming from Germany or Austria, and, interestingly, the area is one of the few areas in Turkey that German is more important than English for the local business. The reason for the choice of Germans is probably because of the German publications and academic attention brought to the area. As a local guide, Serçin Mithat says: “The foreign tourist coming to Latmos is different from any other group of tourists. They are well educated, mostly academicians or have prestigious occupations. They are coming here to

¹⁵⁵ Meder Yolal, “History of Tourism Development in Turkey,” in *Alternative Tourism in Turkey*, ed. Istvan Egresi (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2016), 23–24.

¹⁵⁶ Metin Kozak, “Cultural Visitors and Local Residents’ Interactions: Hippies Movement at Sultanahmet in the 1960s,” in *Culture and Cultures in Tourism: Exploring New Trends*, ed. Andrés Artal-Tur and Metin Kozak, 2020.

learn, while the other tourists are coming just for the joy to the other Western Anatolia cities.” and he adds: “Until 2013, I was guiding 200 foreign tourists on the hiking routes of Latmos every year, and our family pension guested nearly 3000 visitors every year half of whom came to the area intending to hike among the heritage of the mountain. However, since 2013, I have not been able to guide not more than 150 foreign tourists in the eight years because of the international policies of the government. The ordinary tourist cares about the beaches, but the target visitors of Latmos care a lot about the politics”.

The tourist profile has moved from the international group interested in heritage to the national group who are nature and geology bound since 2013. Every weekend, in the spring, hikers’ clubs or nature associations comes to Latmos from nearby cities to hike in the mountain. The hiking season is between mid-September to May. Hiking during to summer is not recommended because of the high number of venomous snakes and scorpions on the mountain. These groups do not contribute to the tourism economy in the villages of Gölyaka and Kapıkırı. Also, thanks to the Wikiloc application crowdsourcing the hiking routes of hikers via GPS, the hikers do not need the guide anymore which also economically outrages the locals.

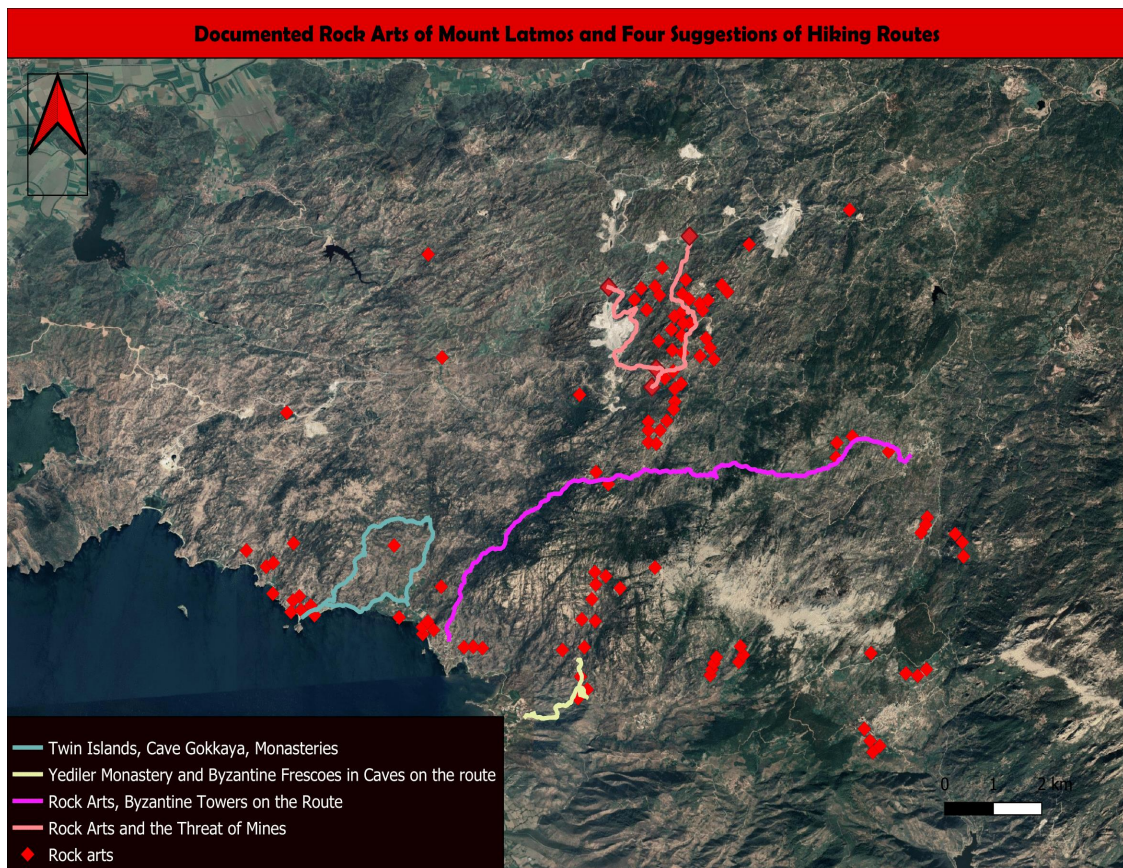


Figure 46-A map created in QGIS by following the suggestions of different hikers sharing their paths. Şahin Yıldız, January 2021

It is important to understand the locals' perception to create a policy on the community involvement. Albert Distelrath and Handan Bilici Altunkayaşier conducted interviews with the villagers of Kapıkırı between 2000 and 2002 about the heritage perception of the locals of a village founded on the ruins of an older civilization and how a village can live an ordinary rural life without harming the heritage elements in any way or distorting the historical architecture with concrete buildings.

According to these interviews, the locals were not well-informed about the importance of the heritage. Some young generation members have prudent thoughts about the heritage; however, the same understanding was not common within the older generations. Most of the locals were angry about the cultural protection of the state towards the heritage elements in

Kapıkırı and its statue of protected area. They were complaining about the statue of the village as a protected area because they cannot build a new house or reconstruct new ones instead of the old ones and they had to deal with many formal paperwork. Even Anneliese Peschlow was not welcomed in the village because of her thoughts contradicting the locals' desires. However, these desires meant building a barn in the middle of bouleuterion, or the building a house at the center of the ancient agora by the local warden of the archaeological site of Herakleia, even a primary school built on the ancient agora by the state.



Figure 47-The primary school on ancient agora. ©Burak Süalp

There are also other types of concerns among the locals. According to a local guide, there is a private estate on Latmos in which some best samples of rock art exist, and the owner of this area tried to wash the prehistoric rock paintings away with an oily liquid because he was fed

up with the hikers and the other visitors. The incident was also published in the newspapers, but perpetrators could not be found according to this news.¹⁵⁷

The villagers had a dilemma, they saw the existing heritage as a gate of income, but they did not care for it because they recklessly wanted to adopt it into their modern lives. A local family even threatened Bilici-Altunkayalıer during the interviews because they had done an illegal construction. The villagers implied that if the state comes to tear this down, they will hold Bilici-Altunkayalıer responsible for that because she asked questions about the recent addition.

As a custom of the villages near Latmos, the sons of the local families should have a house before he gets married. Within families with sons, the inclination to distort the architectural texture is more visible than the families having daughters. Because the first group were generally building a concrete house for their sons adjacent to their old nineteenth-century house, sometimes built out of the ruins of the old city of Latmos or Herakleia. These houses were mostly regarded as ‘useless’ by the villagers compared to the modern houses, although they have an indigenous architectural character. This understanding sometimes causes the forced migration. If the state does not let the locals built a new house, the soon to be married son will have to migrate to nearby cities to live a life, which is a typical case for the village.

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The locals' perception of another village, Karakaya, where mining facilities destructing nature on a larger scale is also noteworthy to understand the community's perception of heritage.

According to Yaşar Beşparmak of Karakaya, the villagers do not care about the heritage of

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.haberekspres.com.tr/ege/8-bin-yillik-kaya-resimleri-tahrip-edildi-h40094.html>

¹⁵⁸ Information above were provided by Handan Bilici-Altunkayalıer via some voice recordings in 2021.

the village. Many of them dream about selling their farms or houses to the mining facilities and relocate to nearby cities. As he claims, there are some villagers knowing some locations of undocumented rock arts in some rock systems, but they demand a large sum of money to show these. Due to his heritage-oriented ideas, he was also not welcomed by the majority of the villagers who were accusing him of trying to change the village's statue into a historical site where strict measures for the architectural change is applied ¹⁵⁹

International Intervention

Non-Turkish scholars took the first steps to institutionalize cultural heritage studies. For instance, world heritage sites: Aphrodisias was excavated by New York University or Ephesus excavations were conducted by the Austrian Archaeological Institute. Some other essential heritage sites were studied/excavated by foreign scholars for the first time, and sometimes Turkish scholars continued these studies, and in the other times, the foreigners continued their studies on the same spots.

This also applies to Latmos, where Theodor Wiegand conducted the first study at the beginning of the twentieth century. This international character igniting the heritage studies in some sites of Turkey was complying with Turkey's westernization ideas. Even though a conservative and political Islamist party has been governing the Turkish state for twenty years, nine of Turkey's eighteen World Heritage Site was inscribed during the last ten years between 2011 and 2021. This rise is also visible in Turkey's inscriptions in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO. There have been twenty new inscriptions to that list in the last twelve years by Turkey. Even though the recent

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Yaşar Beşparmak, May 2021.

controversy on Hagia Sophia, it can easily be said that Turkish state prioritizes the heritage lists of UNESCO and the representation of the heritage of Turkey in the West.

One way to impose protection on Latmos over the state is to bring more international attention to the area both scholarly and touristic. These can be done via UNESCO or the Council of Europe. However, the first case is not applicable because the Turkish state should submit the nomination file, but if there was an attempt for the nomination, the area could be evaluated within the II, IV, VI and VII selection criteria of UNESCO.¹⁶⁰

Although UNESCO is an elusive target for now considering the state's inaction for the expanding mines, the Cultural Routes of Council of Europe program can be an immediate solution to bring international interest for the region. The program was established in 1987, and it promotes cultural routes on which people can walk, hike, drive and witness the local heritage within the same theme and 90% of these routes pass from the rural areas, and the program gives principal importance to the rural heritage. The inscription to the routes brings expert guidance on the management of the area and the program follows specific criteria that help the protection of the areas. There are forty cultural routes within the program as of 2020, but the interest in the program is flourishing.

Latmos can be inscribed to two different routes under the program: Prehistoric Rock Art Trails and Routes of the Olive Tree. The first route was established in 2010 and contains more than two hundred rock art sites in eight different countries of Europe. They are well aware of

¹⁶⁰ II) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; IV) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; VI) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance; VII) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

“the existence and the high value of Mount Latmos.”¹⁶¹ The criteria for the adhesion to the network are:

- a)-application of a legal organism such as a municipality or a delegated company for the management of the area,
- b)-the area should have a visit regime.

The area already having a visitor center that has a visit regime can be inscribed to the trails if an application is made by the municipality of Aydın

The second route, the Olive Tree Route, follows the trails of cultural landscapes shaped by the culture of the olive tree and related lifestyles. Latmos can also be included in this list thanks to the people living in the villages around the mountain depending on olive farming and traditional lifestyles shaped by the deep olive culture both in culinary traditions and economic existence.



Figure 48-The logo of Prehistoric Rock Art Trails can be used in publications or online posts after the adhesion to the network. ©Council of Europe

These adhesions can also bring national fame to the area as it was observed in some other cases where the nomination to UNESCO has created a considerable interest even though this was not the case before the nominations.¹⁶² In that way, accordingly with the Western-

¹⁶¹ Mail sent by Fernando Isasi the manager of the route to Şahin Yıldız with the subject “Adhesion to Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route,” May 18, 2020.

¹⁶² Ferdi Uzun, “Afrodisyas’ta hedef 300 bin ziyaretçi! [300 thousands visitors are aimed in Aphrodisias],” *Anadolu Ajansı*, July 29, 2019.

oriented heritage policies of the Turkish state and the interest in the mountain within the Turkish tourists, the further expansion of the mining facilities and other destructive elements can be prevented.

Bafa Lake, old Latmian Gulf and its current situation

Primary historical sources show the advancement of the Meander delta in time, describing Latmos Gulf as an open sea harbor to an inland sea that can be reached via a canal.

Eventually, the Gulf of Latmos was separated from the open sea with the advancement of the delta of the Meander River during 14th or 15th century creating Lake Bafa ¹⁶³

The lake's ecological health, since the 1960s, has been worsening due to a lack of freshwater that needs to be brought by Meander River, which is also exceedingly polluted and due to the human intervention to the banks of the river. Because the lake cannot refresh its waters, the lake stinks. The number of different bird species living on the lake fell from 27 to 21 in one year (2013-2014). Moreover, the number of birds fell from 78101 to 50601, fishes are disappearing because of the rise in the saltiness level of the lake from 6 ‰ in 1957 to 18‰ in 2014. The mines are also held accountable for this pollution by the village governors.¹⁶⁴

Survival and Protection of Bafa Lake Platform was established under the leadership of the locals in 2014. They organized some events to point out the ecological dangers they face and address the heritage issues from time to time. However, the platform could not survive until

¹⁶³ Herda et al., "From the Gulf of Latmos to Bafa Lake: On the History, Geoarchaeology, and Palynology of the Lower Maeander Valley at the Foot of the Latmos Mountains," 36–40.

¹⁶⁴ Bafa Gölünü Kurtarma ve Yaşatma Platformu, "Bafa Gölü'nün Ekolojik Sorunları ve Çözüm Önerileri Çalıştayı [The Workshop on the Ecological Problems of Bafa Lake and the Suggestions of Solutions].", 5 December 2014, Muğla.

today because of the highly politicized atmosphere that was emerging within the group and suppressing the voice of the locals and diverting the aim of the platform from Bafa Lake to a more general government opposition.¹⁶⁵ Although the inactivity of the platform, the lake has need immediate precautions for the species.

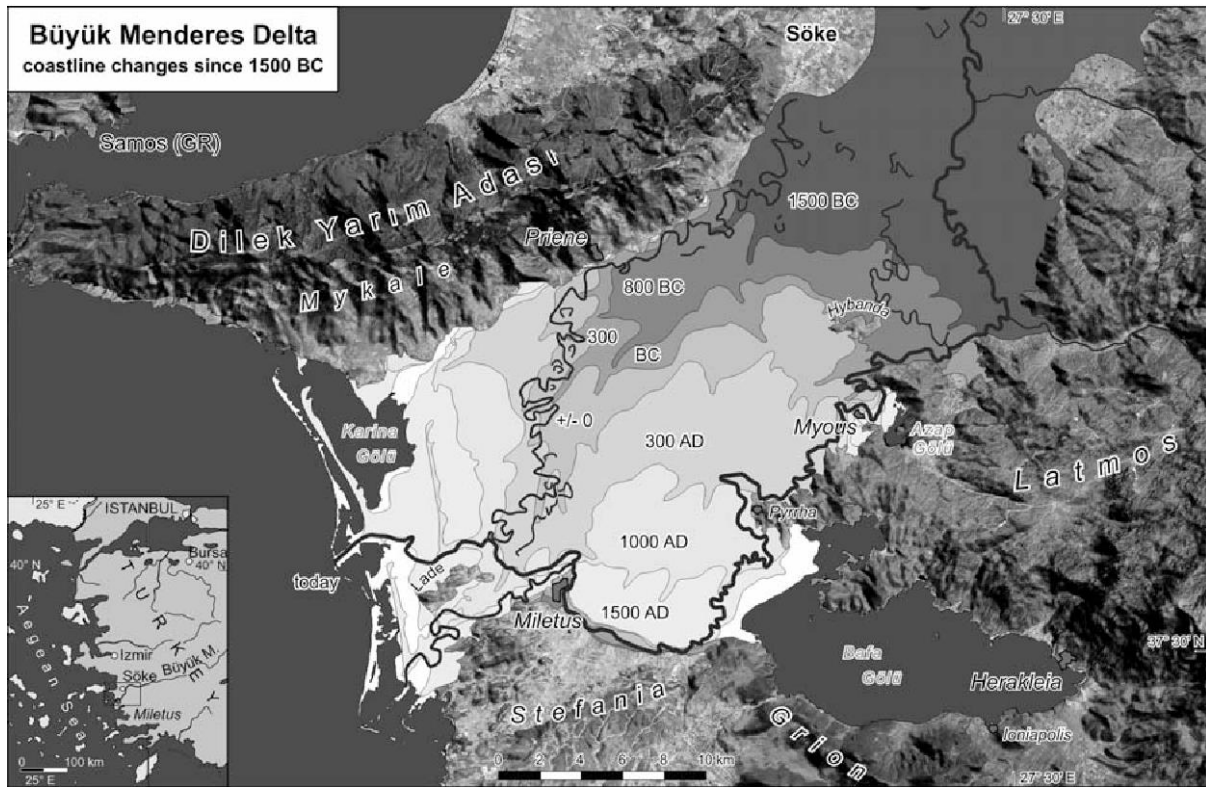


Figure 49-The evolution of Bafa Lake within the coastline changes caused by the Meander River ©Marc Müllenhoff¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Mithat Serçin and Orhan Serçin who was one of the locals taking the first step towards the platform.

¹⁶⁶ Marc Müllenhoff et al., "The Evolution of Bafa Lake (Western Turkey) Sedimentological, Microfaunal and Palynological Results," 2004.



Figure 50-Mass death of the fishes. ©odatv.com



Figure 51-Mass production of algae ©odatv.com

Conclusion

Landscapes are not just the reflection of the modern people's understanding, but they are "understood as magical mirrors that maintain and reflect different impressions of the past. When looking at the mirror, every scholar sees different images, which means that every interpretation is different and depends on the scholar's way of understanding human activity

and changes in the landscape.”¹⁶⁷ Regarding Latmos as this magical mirror, what did the societies of different eras see when they looked at it? One in the second century, imagined Endymion was put an eternal sleep within the enormous boulders of the mountain. Because he wanted to be part of this myth wanted to sense the touch of an immortal/sacred being. Others saw the soul of St. Paul of Latros in the twelfth century and inspired themselves to follow the life of hermits because the mountain was a good place for monastic life reflecting the legacy of St. Paul. The bandit saw a natural fortress when he looked upon the mountain. It was challenging him, so it also can challenge others seeking the bandit. The mine-owner came and saw the profit he could make out of these rocks in the magical mirror. All the different interpretations were shaped by the relation between the mountain and the people. In that way, it can be said that “landscapes [are] the territorial expression of the metabolism that any given society maintains with the natural systems sustaining it. One way of understanding [...] [the landscape] consists of analyzing the path of social metabolism that leaves its ecological footprint on its surroundings.”¹⁶⁸

The metabolism is reflected in the magical mirror as the immense interaction between the people and the mountain, and this relation’s product is cultural heritage. This heritage is constructed both by the physical power and by the power of narratives. Latmos is a sacred space and a cultural landscape because of the monasteries, ancient cities, rock arts, and the narrative focusing on it. It is not just a distinctive spatial being, but an attractive and heavenly mass of rocks created by both the geological evolution of the world and also the narratives

¹⁶⁷ Paivi Maaranen, “Landscape Archaeology and Management of Ancient Cultural Heritage Sites,” in *Landscape Interfaces.*, ed. Henri Décamps, Bärbel Tress, and Gunther Tress (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2010), 258.

¹⁶⁸ C. Montiel Molina, “The Restoration of Forest Landscapes through Farmland Afforestation Measures in Spain,” in *The Conservation of Cultural Landscapes*, ed. Mauro Agnoletti (Wallingford, UK; Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 197.

about the mountain. That is why these inseparable twins creating the cultural landscape (narrative and tangible heritage) should be preserved.

Non-considering the heritage, locals disregard the spiritual dimension of the cultural work that their ancestors and the previous civilizations created, picking the temporal perception of the mountain out. Yörük graveyards of old times on Anatolian Pass of the mountain, for instance, is under the terrible condition as a case of irrelevant approach of the villagers. Here the cultural awareness and relation with the mountain should be promoted. This requires, sometimes, the intervention of the intellectual and sometimes the state and often the promotion of tourism. Many stagnant villages evolved into the most visited areas of Turkey, with their rich heritage revealed by the interference of the intellectuals in the 1990s. This can also happen for Kapıkırı, Karakaya, Gölyaka, Bağarcık and so on. This will also contribute to the understanding relationship between the villagers and the mountain, realizing that the rural matters.

This also applies to the intangible heritage of the mountain molded by the physical characteristics of it. In many field researches I conducted in the area, I encountered that the villagers underrate their dances, myths and songs compared to the highly valued popular culture or non-authentic rural representations enforced upon them in every aspect of their lives. Proper and periodical educational activities within these villages by the municipalities or NGOs can contribute a lot to recognizing this kinship in the heritage aspect, although it is mainly economic nowadays.

As a magical mirror, the landscape is just reflecting the politics of the government and its economic greed over the cultural heritage, even though it tries to be active in the international area of heritage. The visitor of Latmos is worried by the mines more than s/he is fascinated by

the landscape, but it is not alone. The government has removed the ‘national park’ character of Göreme Valley and Rock Sites of Cappadocia, a UNESCO world heritage site, to create space for the new constructions to attract foreign investments.¹⁶⁹ The government’s choice of economic income over the cultural heritage can also be understood with another example. An ancient harbor was explored containing some Neolithic era artefacts during subway construction in Istanbul. The excavated artefacts redated the age of Istanbul to a date that is 8500 years older than it was supposed. Nearly forty shipwrecks, thousands of artefacts from the antiquity, Byzantine and Ottoman era were excavated during the studies. However, Erdogan slammed the excavations by saying: “Is not it a shame to delay Marmaray (subway) for a couple of potteries?”¹⁷⁰

Arousal of academic interest in the area and raising the publicity of the mountain can also decelerate the expansion rate of the mines and maybe stop them forever, although the state prefers the industrial wealth over the heritage in this case. As the state has not intervened until now, international intervention and consultation can be a convenient choice to initiate the complete protection of the area.

Latmos, as a cultural landscape, is not just a sacred mountain of old times but a space of endangered and preservable tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Having many different aspects of heritage, both the narratives of sacrality and tangible heritage from prehistory to the contemporary age must be preserved and understood while drawing attention to the existing and potential threats to the landscape.

¹⁶⁹ Uğur Şahin, “Göreme Vadisi, 33 Yıl Sonra Milli Park Olmaktan Çıkarıldı: Artık Milli Rant Alanı,” *Birgün*, October 23, 2019.

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.diken.com.tr/erdoganin-uc-bes-canak-comlek-dedigi-theodosius-limaninin-devami-ortaya-cikarildi/>

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