

ROUGH CILICIA

East of Side you enter Cilicia, an umbrella term for two regions that are really very different. Taking one of the proposed starting points of Cilicia, that is Alanya (map C, 7), the coastline stretches for well over 400km to the barrier of the Amanus Mountains, now the Nur Dağları, the ‘Mountains of Light’. Over time the distinction between the west and the east portions developed and they became known respectively as **Cilicia Trachea** (from the Greek meaning ‘rugged’) and **Cilicia Pedias** (from the Greek meaning ‘flat’). In English those regions have become Rough Cilicia and Smooth Cilicia and the traditional border between them is the Limonlu (map D, 5) river.

The name Cilicia is said to be related to the Assyrian *Que* and is more likely to have referred to **Smooth Cilicia** (the area covered by the next chapter) since it was here that the Assyrians had their entry point into Asia Minor. At least, that was the case in the early 2nd millennium BC, when with the blessing of the local ruler, Assyrian merchants set up a trading colony there to tap the riches of Anatolia, and also a thousand years later, when the Assyrian Empire expanded into upper Mesopotamia. Controlling the Cilician Gates, the gap between the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus, was vital in both cases. Although this was not the only entry point to the Anatolian Plateau (nor a particularly easy one, at over 1000m altitude and very narrow), the alternative, up the Göksu Valley in the hinterland of Silifke, was a long way off to the west. This much was also known to the Hittites, who gained control of the Hurrian kingdom of Kizzuwatna to access Syria. One can say therefore that Smooth Cilicia was an area of international and strategic importance, with the gateway to the Anatolian Plateau to the north and offering routes across the passes on the Amanus to the east. It so happened that this area was comparatively small, with a challenging geography, a marshy plain bisected by unruly rivers forever changing course, and backed by high mountains with deep-cut valleys. While it managed to make a living throughout prehistory and history, it was never strong enough to resist outside pressure. Its orderly aspect today, with tilled fields, booming cities and a modern network of highways, is very recent. Widespread malaria and abject poverty may now be a thing of the past—but it is a past that is not so distant.

The area covered by this chapter, **Rough Cilicia** (the Assyrian *Khilakku*), had a completely different historical trajectory. It had no valuable lines of communication to offer and as a result could be—and in the past was—bypassed. Alexander the Great disregarded the area entirely, proceeding in a straight line from Ankara to the Cilician Gates and east, though Rough Cilicia must have been under Persian control then. In addition, it lacked alluvial arable land by the coast or inland, which would have made it difficult to sustain a large urban population. Beyond Alanya, the coast offered no large harbours but instead a myriad small ones, which in due course encouraged the rise of piracy. On the whole, Rough Cilicia is a story of survival in

adverse conditions and of neglect. The Greeks did not even try and settle there and most of the Roman activity in the area consisted in pushing the intractable locals, the Isaurians, back up the mountains. In the end it was the Isaurians who came out on top (*see box*).

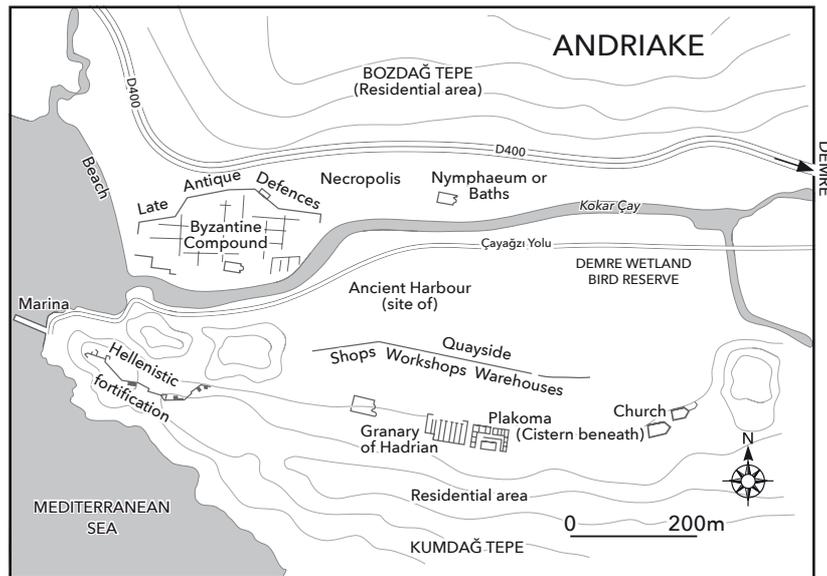
YOU CALL ME PIRATE?

Cilicia and pirates are two words that often go together. But piracy was not a Cilician invention; it was as widespread in antiquity as raiding, its equivalent on land. Private entrepreneurs indulged in it as much as states. Moreover, the latter used the suppression of piracy as a handy excuse to intervene in other people’s affairs. A few examples will suffice. At the height of its power, Athens raided and plundered lesser states as a way of ‘encouraging’ them to sign up to friendship treaties. Its definition of clearing the seas of pirates was wide and comprehensive: it was the perfect excuse for any sort of hostile action. The Romans did no less, having might on their side. In 338 BC, when they wanted to create a veteran colony at Antium, which entailed dispossessing the locals, they presented it as an anti-piratical operation. They did the same in the Balearic Islands and with the Ligurians.

In spite of these anti-piratical operations, piracy was rife in the whole breadth of the Mediterranean, but particularly well entrenched in the east, along the stretch of coast that the Romans needed in order to control access to Syria, Mesopotamia and ultimately Egypt. This, in other words, meant the Gulf of Antalya and the coast of Rough Cilicia. The latter, though poor and short of natural resources, had a particular physical makeup that was favourable to small, local, private initiatives. The rocky coast provided a myriad small coves and shelters, the sort of topography where local knowledge is indispensable. After the Ptolemies lost control of this stretch of coast, where they had developed a few small harbours to tap the inland timber resources, the locals took over and, it is said, expanded into slave raiding and other nefarious activities.

Those locals were the **Isaurians**, the perfect example in antiquity of the pirate as ‘barbarian’ and ‘other’. They took neither to Greek niceties nor to Roman rule; they preferred the hideouts of the Taurus peaks to the protection of the emperor. They were content to carry on their business, using the small harbours and coves and keeping their families and riches inland in defended sites (there are some polygonal towers in Rough Cilicia that still await explanation), possibly often relocating. This applies to Zeniketes, who had his headquarters at Olympus (p. 114) and to Rough Cilicia. The coastal cities (e.g. Antalya, Side and Alanya) were complicit in providing a market, and though Rome railed about the practice, it did so only half-heartedly.

The Romans had begun to tackle the problem in the early 1st century BC, when their relentless drive east, which began with the Illyrian wars of 229–219 BC, brought them this far. After various attempts, it was Pompey the Great who



to enjoy the view, shows the taste of the new elite, now abandoning the inward-looking Roman peristyle house and happy to build outside the town.

Andriake appears to have waned even earlier than Myra, around the 6th century. The reason for this was probably due to the **deterioration of the harbour**, which started silting up, while the air became foul and unhealthy. After 655 there is no evidence of any attempt to rehabilitate the damaged structures. Andriake is not mentioned in medieval portulans and there are no coins beyond the 7th century. The replacement harbour, active for pilgrims and trade from around the 10th century, was 3.5km away to the east at Taşdıbi (see below).

EXPLORING ANDRIAKE

Andriake is not fully equipped for visitors, certainly less so than Patara, but it is catching up fast. Its life span has been shorter and its remains are less impressive. It was never a city; it belonged to Myra. Its archaeology is difficult. On the other hand, the site has a clearly-signed path and is wheelchair friendly. Its main attraction is the **granary** (although in its identification as such, the same reservations apply as for that at Patara; p. 83). Built by order of Hadrian, the eight-room structure, possibly once fronted by a porch, was probably a store in a more general sense; as the inscription at the front says, these were horrea, a generic term for storerooms, not necessarily implying grain. Measuring 63m by 32m, it had a pitched roof covering three rooms on either side. Holes have been identified for a wooden structure to cover the middle. The roof was tiled. Now fully restored and rebuilt, it is open as a museum (open daily 1 April–1 Oct 8.30–7, 31 Oct–14 April 8–5.30; on the first day of religious holidays closed until noon; charge) with very interesting Lycian artefacts.

The next stop must be the massive vaulted **underground cistern** in beautiful ashlar in the **plakoma**, the extensive agora (40m by 30m), a paved square as the name indicates. The cistern is on the south side while the other three sides had shops in the porticoes. A wooden walkway allows you to get a good close-up view of this monumental structure: it is really impressive. This area had gone out of use by the 6th century AD. A huge murex shell midden, for the mollusc that produces **purple dye**, shows that this was the centre of operations about that time. The cistern would have come in handy because the process of dyeing, one step further than producing the dye itself, requires a lot of water. We can be sure that no dyeing took place at Aperlae (p. 86); there just is not enough water to spare. Additionally, since purple dye processing is a smelly job, it is normally carried out away from habitation and in positions with favourable winds; one can conclude therefore that at the time when this area was given over to dyeing, the nearby granary had fallen out of use and this part of town was no longer residential. According to the investigators, the **ecological damage** caused by such intense exploitation (six million molluscs are estimated to have been processed here and by the end these were mainly juveniles) may have a direct correlation with the present scarcity of murex in the surrounding waters.

TAŞDİBİ (STAMIRA)

When trade and pilgrimage picked up in the 10th century, by which time Andriake had fallen out of use, Myra revitalised the harbour at Taşdıbi to the east, between Taşdıbi and Sülüklü beaches (it is very probable that the sailors from Bari landed here when they came for the bones of St Nicholas; p. 93). Taşdıbi can be reached by driving due south to the sea from the centre of Demre and taking Kõmürlük Cd to the west. It will lead you to Taşdıbi plaj. The site is a small promontory which now has a modern harbour on its south side. There is not much there left to see; the passage of time has been unkind to Taşdıbi. However, a quick look from the top of the promontory, with views of Myra's kastron, of Kekova island to the west and of Cape Gelidonya to the east, explain the Hellenistic remains, possibly a tower. At the time of the Byzantines' last effort to control maritime trade in the region, the Byzantine 'reconquest' of the 10th century, which first began to totter with the defeat at Manzikert (1071) and finally foundered just 100 years later after another defeat at Myriokephalon, this harbour was known as Stamira.

The 35m-long **rock-cut landing stage**, identified on the east side of the promontory where the water is deep and where operations would have been well protected from the west winds and gales, dates from this period, unless it is Hellenistic. In about 1225 the Seljuks built a tower (*manar*) on the promontory, which explains why the location appears in medieval sources as 'Torre di Stalimure'. Scanty remains of the structure, which was still use in Ottoman times until it was pounded by a tsunami in 1741, suggest that it was circular, built on a platform, quite thick walled (1.2m) and c. 25m tall. The interior was of wood. In its heyday the manar would have been part of a chain controlling the coast. The term 'manar' is Arabic for 'guiding light', suggesting that it may have acted as a lighthouse.

INLAND CILICIA: EXPLORING THE VALLEYS

As the Anti-Taurus mountains turn northeast, there are valleys to the north to explore, carved out by the Ceyhan and its tributaries. This was congenial land for the Armenians, who liked high ground for their castles, but it was also a transit route from early times, as the Sirkeli relief shows.

THE SİRKEĪ RELIEF & YILANKALE

To see the **Sirkeli relief**, follow the Yilankale sign on Route 400, north of Yakapınar (map D, 6). After the castle (see below), an unmade road will lead you to the bank of the river opposite the Sirkeli *hüyük*. The relief is at the base of the *hüyük* and barely 5m above the water level. The relief represents, according to the inscription, King Muwatalli II (1306–1282 BC), who moved the Hittite capital south from Hattuša to Tarhutnassa, a location not yet identified, and defeated Ramesses at the battle of Kadesh (1285 BC). He was quite a key international figure. This is the oldest Hittite rock relief currently known. Here the king is dressed in ceremonial garb with the curved staff, the lituus, and the royal insignia, suggesting that he was performing a religious ceremony or encountering the divine. Another relief discovered later, 13m downstream, has a figure wearing the same attire. Unfortunately the inscription appears to have been erased in antiquity. The *hüyük* itself has been excavated and shows occupation from the Chalcolithic onwards. The carving could relate to diplomatic exchanges between the rulers at the time of territorial disputes in the Levant.

YILANKALE

Yilankale, the ‘Castle of the Snakes’, will be just behind you. This impressive fortress sits on a limestone outcrop, over 200m long with a complete view of its surroundings, today a peaceful agricultural environment with its share of greenhouses. The Armenians or the Byzantines had different concerns. The **medieval road** would have come past the castle on its north edge while the approach to it was to the northwest. It is not surprising that this part of the circuit is the most defended, with four **towers** and a **bastion**, enough to deter anyone. The whole north area is higher, a separate bailey with its own gate guarded by two towers. The defence was further reinforced by the design, as the access route made a sharp right-angled bend. Inside are a chapel and cisterns. In the bastion are more cisterns, making the garrison self-sufficient. The other two baileys are to the south, also protected by towers. The circuit follows the contour of the outcrop, which in places is very jagged. This style of defence would have appealed to an Armenian baron, even to an Armenian king.

Moreover, there are **Armenian symbols** carved in the rock, for example the stylised crosses with the four splayed arms (a little like a Maltese cross). The **relief over the main gateway**, with a seated figure flanked by two worn rampant lions, was originally interpreted as a representation of King Levon I (1180–1219). However, his pose does not match the representations on his coins: he is sitting in an Oriental fashion. There are also details of construction, such as the use of brick in cisterns, that do not correspond to the Armenian manner. This could have been a Byzantine construction reworked by the Armenians.

Access to the ruins is now from the south, where the car park is. Follow the path and prepare for a scramble. There are many stones about and a lot of loose rubble. Remember that the moniker ‘Yilankalesi’, which introduces the idea of snakes, may have some foundation in truth. Wear good shoes, watch where you walk and take care where you put your hands.

ANAVARZA

For Anavarza (map D, 6), continue north on Route 817 and take the marked right-hand turn at Ayşehoca in the direction of Dilekkaya. You will soon be staring at the big rock.

Anavarza is all about this rock: the name derives from the Persian *nabarza*, meaning something like ‘it cannot be conquered’, a boast which clearly refers to this great cliff, over 1km long, with a sheer west side and an east face that is slightly more approachable but not much. It is situated up the basin of the Ceyhan, where the Çukurova penetrates the Anti-Taurus mountains next to one of its tributaries. The site is on the way to Cappadocia and Malatya and enjoys maximum **intervisibility** with other surrounding heights. It must have attracted attention from early on.

HISTORY OF ANAVARZA

A Hittite and Assyrian presence is not backed up by hard evidence but must be taken into account. However, the earliest material we have is **Hellenistic** and should be considered in the light of the Karasis Kale, 20km to the north and now overlooking the Kazan dam. This has proven Seleucid origins dated to the early 3rd century BC. At Anavarza, where building and rebuilding, earthquakes and destruction have obliterated a lot of evidence, the Hellenistic presence is mainly attested by coins, suggesting that minting began in the mid-2nd century BC, when Anavarza was still Seleucid or in the hands of the Egyptian Ptolemies. There is a strong possibility that this was then a **veteran settlement** in which military duties were combined with agricultural development. The extent of the Hellenistic occupation is not known. On the rock, Hellenistic pottery has been found and there is evidence on the east side—which is more exposed and has a gentler slope—of a defensive wall. Spolia have been interpreted as the remains of a temple that appears on coins and was possibly dedicated to Zeus. No earlier material has been found. But the rock has not yet been excavated, only surveyed.

One of the baths is now the **Museum** (*open daily April–Oct 9–7, Nov–March 8–5; charge*), where you can admire the artworks that have been discovered in Side, including a couple of sphinxes from the theatre and, not far from them, the statue of a Roman emperor dated by the style of the armour to the 2nd century while the head was reworked to depict a 4th-century ruler (in the process the head became disproportionately small). While you visit, appreciate the layout of the baths, where you could progress on a circuit from cool bath (frigidarium) to steam room (sudatorium) to warm bath (caldarium) to cool bath (tepidarium), then changing room (apodyterium) and exit, without ever retracing your steps. The garden, situated on the original palaestra, is used to display the larger exhibits, among a profusion of flowers and strutting peacocks.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

GETTING THERE AND AROUND

Antalya airport to the east of the city is your reference point. There is a shuttle (Bus 600) from the airport to the *otogar* in Antalya itself and the airport is also connected to the city by tram, for which you can buy a ticket at the stop outside the domestic terminal (have some coins with you). Practically all the sites listed here will be available to visit on organised tours. The alternative is to hire a car, which can be done at the airport. From the *otogar* on the west edge of Antalya there are coaches to a wide number of destinations.

WHERE TO STAY

Accommodation in the area is concentrated in **Side**, right at the tip of the peninsula. Here building restrictions apply because of the archaeology, so there are no big buildings but a sprawl of small rooms, with plenty of ups and downs (steps and ramps) and in a fine setting full of flowers. Try the **Leda Beach Hotel**

next to the museum (*ledabeachhotel.com*; T: 90 242 753 1046), which offers an exceptional breakfast spread, or the **Yükser Pansiyon** (*yukser-pansiyon.com*; T: 90 242 753 2010), an interesting stone building with a car park in a quiet spot in Lale Sk.

WHERE TO EAT

In **Side**, the tip of the peninsula is crammed with eateries competing for space with the souvenir shops. The **Elia Restaurant** (a name inspired by olives) overlooking the harbour will serve you some fabulous fish. The restaurant is open-air, perfect for a warm summer evening.

WHAT TO DO

For the **Aspendos International Opera and Ballet Festival**, see p. 153–4.

North of Manavgat, go canoeing, rafting or hiking in the **Köprülü Canyon** (*koprulucanyon.com*) in the stunning national park of the same name.

