

# Comparative Assessment of Asartepe/Konya Hellenistic Period Settlement and Contemporary Urban Fabric

<sup>1</sup>Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Mustafa Korumaz**, <sup>2</sup>Arch **Ganime Nur Sakalli**

<sup>1</sup> *Konya Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture, Konya, Türkiye*

<sup>2</sup> *Konya Technical University, Graduate Education Institute, Konya, Türkiye*

E-mail <sup>1</sup>: mkorumaz@ktun.edu.tr, E-mail <sup>2</sup>: gnmskill@gmail.com

## Abstract

The village of Yeniceköy (Amblada), located in the Seydişehir/Konya province, has a history dating back approximately ten thousand years. It is estimated that the nearby city of Ververit has a history older than Çatalhöyük. The remains of the city wall, found to the east of Asartepe, are from the Hellenistic Period and indicate the presence of a large temple in that era. Additionally, the wide plain to the west of Asartepe, referred to as the marketplace by the villagers, is believed to have been the city's agora during the Hellenistic period. Interaction between the ancient settlement and the current one is observed, with many building materials from the ancient period being used in current buildings. Many of these materials contain decorative elements and embellishments from the Hellenistic period. Historical research has been conducted on this region, which holds significant cultural depth, comparing the settlement from ancient times to the present day. Evaluations have been made considering the relationship between a Hellenistic period city and a modern city, with a focus on urban conservation.

**Keywords:** Amblada (Yeniceköy); Ververit; Hellenistic Period; Urban Conservation.

## 1. Introduction

The Anatolian geography has hosted urban settlements for thousands of years. These cities generally possess multiple layers and deep historical significance. The urbanization culture inherent in Anatolia can still be observed in modern cities. This cultural accumulation influences the shaping of Anatolian cities, focusing contemporary cities on a point in history, giving them historical depth, and enriching urban life (Aziz Amen, 2017; Aziz Amen & Nia, 2018; Song & Selim, 2022). It can be said that our cities should be preserved with awareness of their historical depth. Particularly in the Anatolian geography, it is observed that almost every settlement area and its surroundings contain archaeological sites, even mounds. It can be stated that new urbanization efforts should be carried out without damaging these areas, which is a conservationist approach.

It can be said that modern Anatolian cities were low-density settlement areas until the 1950s. After this date, it was observed that migration from rural areas to cities began rapidly, and urban populations increased quickly. This rapid population growth increased the need for new residential areas, especially in cities, leading to uncontrolled urban expansion. In some cases, this rapid urbanization had negative effects on the historical fabric, particularly affecting traditional residential areas. In such cities, historical continuity was lost, and historical traces completely disappeared. Nowadays, parallel to rapid population growth, a pressure for change is still observed in our cities. This pressure has evolved from the loss of archaeological sites and urban fabrics to how a qualified conservation approach can be realized. When observing the Anatolian geography, it can be said that the modern urbanite's understanding of conservation has developed, and an awareness of preserving historical artifacts has formed.

Konya, located in the central part of Anatolia, has been an important settlement from past to present. It can be said that both the current city center and its surroundings contain numerous settlements dating back to the prehistoric period. One of these settlements is Yeniceköy, located within the borders of Seydişehir district, 95 km southwest of Konya, near the ancient city of Amblada. Yeniceköy is 13 km away from Seydişehir district center and 20 km from Beyşehir (Saraçoğlu, 1989).

The Seydişehir district has many prehistoric settlements. Among these, Süberde Mound from this period, Neolithic and Chalcolithic period sites, and the nearby settlements of Pisidia region including Vasada, Amblada, Arvana, Elita, and Dalisantus hold significant importance. These settlements were observed to be on important trade routes in later centuries and up to the present day, serving as main centers for the regional economy. After the settlement of the Turks in the region, the city continued to be an important center and has preserved its archaeological and cultural heritage to this day (Kunduracı and Bahargülü, 2016).

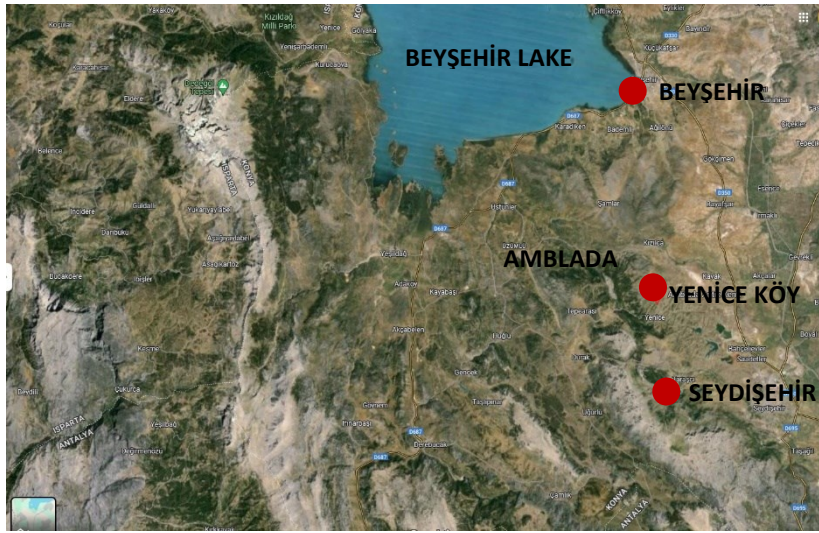


Figure 1. Map of Yenice and its surroundings.

## 2. Historical Context of Yenice Village

The brief history of Yenice Village has been evaluated in two parts: the Classical Period of Antiquity and the post-Republican era.

### 2.1. Classical Period of Antiquity

The history of Yenice Village dates back to 10,000 years ago according to various sources. Notably, the history of Ververit City in the region predates that of Konya/Çatalhöyük. In later years, numerous wall remains and structures from the Hellenistic period were discovered in the region. Specifically, the wall discovered to the east of Asartepe is believed to date back to the Hellenistic period. Additionally, various sources mention a large temple to the northwest of this remains in this region. The existence of this temple indicates that the region was a significant center. It is assumed that the area known today as the marketplace in Aslantepe was the agora of the historical city. These settlements are thought to have been lost due to rising water levels caused by climate changes at the end of the Ice Age (Cohen and Harold R., 1970).

During the Classical Period of Antiquity, which includes the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine eras, Seydişehir was within the boundaries of the Pisidia region of Anatolia. It is known that during the Roman period in the first century BC, the Homanedeis lived in the Tinaztepe caves of Seydişehir (Değerli, 2013). One of the inscriptions found in Yeniceköy shows that the Ambladans referred to Yeniceköy as the "City of the Spartans." It is known that in ancient times, there was a road starting from Isparta/Yalvaç and passing through Yeniceköy to Side, which included many important routes. This indicates that Yeniceköy was on a trade route (Arslan, 2018). Also, there is a significant geothermal source in the village's vicinity (Kavak Village). Hot water flows and travertine formations are still ongoing (Karaisaoğlu, 2013). This source suggests that there was also a thermal health activity in the city, and the architectural and written materials found in Amblada and the nearby Kavak, Seydişehir, and Kızılca prove the historical richness of the city (Ramsay, 1903).

There is also evidence of grape and olive cultivation in the region. With the spread of Hellenism in Anatolia, the use of wine and olive oil started to expand. Archaeological remains in the region frequently depict grapes. Amblada's wines were used in medical diets at that time and were exported to other regions (Arslan, 2018). While today, the upper limit for olive cultivation is accepted as 1000 meters altitude, it is concluded that climate conditions were more suitable during the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Vermoere et al., 2003). Supporting information can also be obtained from Kızılca, established just north of Amblada, known for its wines during the Hellenistic period. Presses identified in the city as a result of research prove that winemaking and hence viticulture existed in this region during ancient times (Baldiran, 2010). Similarly, Ertem (1987) states that Yeniceköy was quite developed in viticulture based on epigraphic works found in the region, and vine leaf and grape motifs are frequently seen on tombstones. Agriculture and agricultural production have developed throughout history due to the opportunities provided by climate and vegetation (Çetik, 1985).

### 2.2. Yenice Village After the Settlement of Turks in Anatolia

With the settlement of the Turks in Anatolia and the Seljuk State making Konya its capital, Oghuz Tribes settled in Seydişehir and its surroundings. The first settlements in this region occurred during the time of Eşrefoğlu Ruler Mubarüziddin Mehmet Bey. Also, during this period, Seyyit Harun Veli and his family, along with forty men, came to this region from the Horasan Region in 1301 and started development activities. Yeniceköy is registered as a village affiliated with the Seydişehir, Gurgurum region in the 1502 cadastral register. The nomadic Turkmen who

settled in the region and known as the Yeniceçililer gave the city its name (Durgunay, 2018). The region was subject to the Karamanids after the Eşrefoğlu Principality and came under Ottoman rule after the 16th century (Bahargülü and Kunderacı, 2016).

In Yeniceköy, there are many structures from the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. These period constructions generally followed Turkish-Islamic urban planning principles, with mosque-referenced constructions shaping the city's structure in this context.

### 3. Yeniceköy as a Layered Settlement

According to Greenhalgh (1987), findings from research conducted in the city so far have proven the existence of settlements in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods through various containers and ceramics. Remains of fortification walls were found on the eastern and southern slopes of Asartepe, known as the original settlement place of Amblada. Similarly, Belke-Restle (1984) found a cistern, architraves, Corinthian capitals, and frieze blocks from a possible temple on the northern side of Asartepe. The church remnants and cross-motif blocks on the hill also indicate that Yeniceköy hosted different civilizations in different periods and contains various architectural traces and signs of these civilizations. In Yeniceköy and villages near Asartepe, reused materials were used in house construction. The villagers preferred these stones for their size, durability, and proximity to Asartepe, making transportation easy. Stones transported from Asartepe were used by villagers in nearby villages for house, barn, and mosque walls. Although the main reasons for transporting and using these stones were their strength and large size, stones with reliefs and carvings also found a place in walls as decorative elements (Swoboda et al., 1935).

In Anatolia, using the architectural remains of previous civilizations in contemporary structures was a widely preferred method for various reasons, and there are many studies on this practice. Although the locations where the building stones were used vary, pieces of stones brought from Asartepe can be found in almost every type of structure. This situation has gained a significant place in Yenice Village's urban identity, where reused materials can be observed as a kind of historical document in almost every building.



**Figure 2.** A soldier relief.



**Figure 3.** A cornice detail.



**Figure 4.** An Incription plate.



**Figure 5.** Ancient material usage on facades.



**Figure 6.** Usege of ancient materials on the mosque façade.



**Figure 7.** Usege details of ancient materials on the mosque façade.

#### 4. Urban Identity, Morphology and Yeniceköy

Yenice Köyü, a settlement that carries the historical depths of the region it is located in, is a place that has acquired a different identity with the construction of buildings using stones taken from archaeological sites. Almost all of the buildings constructed in the last century and reaching to the present day contain reused materials. Therefore, the settlement itself is an indication of the presence of archaeological sites that have existed around it. It can be said that the city has a direct physical unity with archaeological sites in this context.

Yenice Köyü's urban settlement shows similarities with traditional Turkish settlements in general terms. There is a characteristic urban settlement that is fully compatible with the topography centered around the mosque. The buildings are generally constructed by entering from the lower elevation of the slope and being embedded in the terrain. This practice ensures that the settlement is hidden within the natural landscape. Although the settlement places carry the characteristics of traditional Turkish cities in terms of general morphology, differences are observed in terms of facade character. In houses built with materials taken from archaeological remains, a very simple design approach is observed, with square and rectangular masses made of basic geometries, fewer window openings compared to traditional Turkish houses, and limited use of ornamentation and decoration elements. There are very few departures from the characteristic features of traditional Turkish houses, and it is observed that the ground floor and upper floors of the buildings are repetitions of each other. It is observed that stone material and construction technique are used as a decoration element on their own in the facade organization of the buildings. The roof sections added later to the buildings are seen to be incompatible with the existing texture, and it is known that these are not present in original residential architecture.

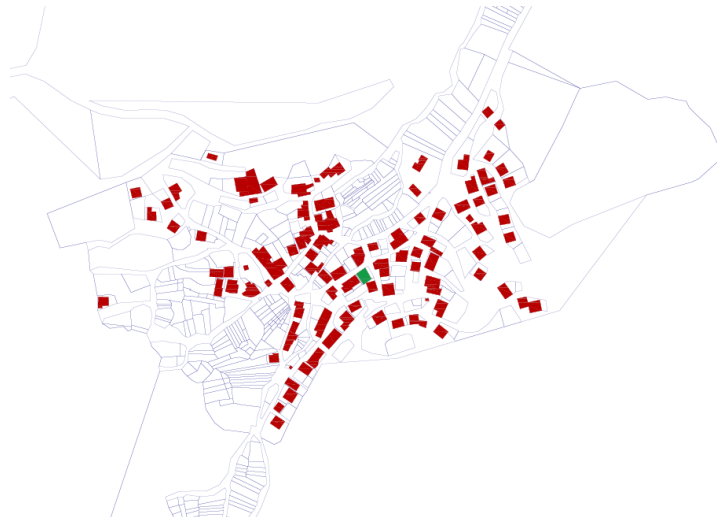
With these qualities, Yenice Köyü bears traces of the architectural traditions of the region that have continued for centuries within the historical depth it is located in. When this subject is examined in detail and the plans of the buildings are analyzed, it is highly probable that there will be many instinctive inspirations from history.

Due to its historical ties, the extensive use of reused materials, and the revitalization of archaeological sites, Yenice Köyü requires the generation of comprehensive conservation interventions. In this context, the strategies to be followed can be listed as follows:

- Detailed studies should be carried out to determine the architectural and urban qualities of Yenice Köyü, and more detailed studies should be conducted regarding the plan schemes and facade characters. Studies should be conducted at the urban and architectural scale for a qualified urban environment.
- It is known that the reused materials that constitute the urban identity of Yenice Köyü are no longer taken from original areas. Materials taken from archaeological sites on buildings and vacant lands should be stored, exhibited in a qualified manner, and information about the region should be provided to future generations.
- The spatial and material relationships of Yenice Köyü with its urban development and surroundings should be studied in more detail.
- Studies should be conducted on how historical depth can be created in the future with the information obtained from the archaeological artifacts in Yenice Köyü and its surroundings.
- It is necessary to achieve regional economic revitalization without compromising the original values of the region by narrating the depths of Yenice Köyü in a qualified manner.
- Similarly, grape cultivation, which has historical ties in the settlement, should be encouraged, and agricultural activities should be supported accordingly.
- Geothermal resources in the region should be utilized for tourism, and assessments should be made for health tourism. Thus, increasing employment and improving livability in the settlement should be ensured.



**Figure 8.** Current urban settlement aerial photograph.



**Figure 9.** Current urban settlement of Yenice Köy



**Figure 10.** Current urban settlement of Yenice Köy



**Figure 11.** Buildings and ruins in Yenice Köy.



**Figure 12.** Urban settlement and topography use.



**Figure 13.** Yenice Köy Urban Pattern.

## 5. Results

Amblada and its surroundings, with a history dating back to prehistoric times, have an important archaeological identity and accumulation. Some of the remains found in Amblada are used in buildings constructed in modern settlements, while others are exhibited. Archaeological, urban, and architectural studies indicate that the ancient city of Amblada has been an important center that has influenced the urban settlement and architectural texture in the region up to the present day. It is important to realize the historical depths of Yeniceköy, which is most affected by this center, and to ensure a qualified rural area development while preserving the historical ties of the settlement. As we observe the loss of our world's natural resources and unique urban fabrics day by day, it becomes clear that settlements like Yeniceköy should be transferred to future generations through qualified architectural and urban

conservation activities. Thus, it can be said that the urban environment in which we are located can be conveyed to future generations with its cultural landscapes.

### Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Conflict of Interests

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### References

- Arslan, M. (2018). Trade in Konya during the Hellenistic Period, in Buluş A. and Arabacı (Ed) Silk Road Journal Special Issue KONYA BOOK XVI. Volume I, pp. 91-111, Konya Chamber of Commerce Publication, Konya
- Aziz Amen, M. (2017). The inspiration of Bauhaus principles on the modern housing in Cyprus. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*, 1(2), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2017.3645>
- Aziz Amen, M., & Nia, H. A. (2018). The dichotomy of society and urban space configuration in producing the semiotic structure of the modernism urban fabric. *Semiotica*, 2018(222). <https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2016-0141>
- Song, H., & Selim, G. (2022). Smart Heritage for Urban Sustainability: A Review of Current Definitions and Future Developments. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*, 6(2), 175–192. <https://doi.org/10.25034/IJCUA.2022.V6N2-5>
- Babazadeh-Asbagh, N. (2018). The Adaptive Reuse of Cibali Tobacco Factory, Kadir Has University. *Tourism Graduate Students Research Congress*, 9, 203-210. Famagusta, North Cyprus. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361417069\\_The\\_Adaptive\\_Reuse\\_of\\_Cibali\\_Tobacco\\_Factory\\_Kadir\\_Has\\_University](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361417069_The_Adaptive_Reuse_of_Cibali_Tobacco_Factory_Kadir_Has_University)
- Baldıran 2010b A.Baldıran, "Wine Workshops in Lycaonia Region (Around Beyşehir-Seydişehir)", in Olive oil and Wine Production in Anatolia During Antiquity, International Symposium Proceedings, (eds. Ü. Aydınoğlu - A.K. Şenol), Istanbul, 2010, pp. 303-363
- Belke-Restle 1984 K.Belke-M.Restle, Galatien und Lykaonien, Tabula Imperii Byzantini, Volume 4, Vienna, 1984
- Çetik 1985, Ali Rıza, Flora of Turkey: I, Vegetation and Ecology of Central Anatolia, Selçuk University Publications:7, Faculty of Literature Publications 1, Konya.
- Cohen and Harold R., 1970, The Palaeoecology of South Central Anatolia at the End of the Pleistocene and the Beginning of the Holocene, *AS*. 20:119-137
- Değerli, A. (2013). Physical and Socioeconomic Structure of Seydişehir in the Ottoman Period, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Selçuk University, Konya
- Durgunay, B. (2018). A Study on the Village Names of Seydişehir District. *Selçuk University Journal of Turkish Studies*, (43), 77-104.
- Ertem H.,1987, Hayri, Flora of Anatolia in the Hittite Period According to the Boğazköy Texts, Turkish Historical Society Printing House, Ankara.
- Greenhalgh J.,1987, Roman Pisidia-A Study of Development and Change, Newcastle University Doctoral Thesis, UK.
- Karaisaoğlu, S., 2013, Sedimentology and Geochemistry of Travertines in the Vicinity of Kavakköy (Seydişehir-Konya), Unpublished Master's Thesis, Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences, Selçuk University, Konya
- Kunduracı O., Bahargülü N., 2016, Turkish Period Monuments in Yenice, in Şimşek S.(Ed), Deciphering of Amblada (Yeniceköy), pp. 150-167. Konya, Selçuk University Publications.
- Ramsay 1902/1903, W.M., "Pisidia and the Lycaonian Frontier", *The Annual of the British School of Athens*, 9, 243-244, 245-273
- Saraçoğlu H., 1989, Mediterranean Region, Teacher Books Series, Ministry of National Education, Istanbul.
- Swoboda, H., Keil, J., & Knoll, F. (1935). Monuments from Lycaonia, Pamphylia and Isauria. RM Rohrer.
- Vermoere, M., Vanhecke, L., Waelkens, M., & Smets, E. (2003). Modern and ancient olive stands near Sagalassos (south-west Turkey) and reconstruction of the ancient agricultural landscape in two valleys. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 12(3), 217-235.