This paper contains a brief presentation of some of the monasteries and churches dedicated to St. Nicholas in Anatolia and Turkish Thrace. Our work on the subject was based mainly on previous research and a number of travel journals published between the 16th and 20th centuries. The main areas of interest in this connection are Bithynia, Mysia, Cappadocia and Thrace in each of which we have carried out surveys.

As concerns the other regions, we shall contend ourselves with briefly citing some striking examples. This paper, which will constitute the basis of an extensive future study, will hopefully shed some light upon the development of the St. Nicholas cult in Anatolia and Thrace.

Central Anatolia (Galatia, Lycaonia and Cappadocia: Fifteen St. Nicholas churches—or monasteries are located in Central Anatolia. The oldest among these is the monastery of Germacoloneia, which is today a ruinous site situated near Sivrihisar. H. Dernschwamm, who visited Germacoloneia between 1553-55 quotes the contents of the inscription in his journal. The inscription states that the monastery was founded in 897 by the Great Strategos and Drungarios Gregoras during the reign of Emperor Leon VI and his son Alexandros and was dedicated to Saints Nicholas of Myra, Basilios of Caesarea and Hypathios of Gangra.

It is of interest to note that eleven out of the fourteen Nicholas churches in Cappadocia are located around Niğde, namely in Güzelyurt, Uluagac, Akyamaç, Helvadere, Kıcığaç, Kıcükköy and Sivrihisar - Aksaray. The remaining three are to be found at Kayseri, Başköy and Mustafapaşa. The monastery of Mustafapaşa (Sinasos), the oldest dating example, consists

1. This study is a revised and updated version of the paper "St. Nicholas Churches in Anatolia" read at the Second International St. Nicholas Symposium in Antalya in 1987. The surveys were carried out between 1975 and 1980 in Cappadocia, 1982 and 1989 in Bithynia and Mysia, 1987 and 1988 in Thrace.


of four rock churches dedicated to Saints Barbara, Sabas, Nicholas and Menas. The feasts of all four saints are celebrated during December. The exact date of the foundation of the Monastery, which also contains a hagiasma and two wall churches dedicated to John the Baptist and John the Theologian, has not been established, but the church of the Theologian contains an inscription dated 848. According to another inscription in the church of the Baptist we know that a certain Bishop Bartholomew of Damsa restored the building during the fourteenth century. The books by A. Leblédes and N.S. Rhizos introduce two other Nicholas monasteries in the Niğde region. Several researchers point out that one of these, the monastery in Kütükköy (Mimason, Dylimisun), which has undergone restoration in 1834, was originally a Byzantine church. This is supported by a map of the Konya region drawn by Kyrillos, the Metropolitan of Konya, in 1812. The other monastery located at Kızılağaç was visited in the early 1900s by H. Rott, who observes that it was in a ruinous state. The St. Nicholas monastery in Kayseri is known to have existed in the nineteenth century.

Minor rock churches are to be found at Akyamaç (Kanatola), Başköy (Katabassos), Sivrihisar, Uluagaç and Güzelyurt (Karbala). Several of these were used as healing centres or votive places. An example is the underground church at Akyamaç, visited specially by malaria patients in search of cure.

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2. Rhizos, ibid. note 5, 106; Leblédes, ibid. note 5, 110.


4. Rott, ibid. note 5, 114; Leblédes, ibid. note 5, 110.

5. Rhizos, ibid. note 5, 56; Leblédes, ibid. note 5, 53-54.

The existence of no less than five Nicholas churches in Guzelyurt is evidence of the extent of the St. Nicholas cult in the Hasan Dağı region. The fact that is gained particular strength during the nineteenth century is evidenced by extensive restoration and construction activities carried out at that time. In this context, the St. Nicholas churches at Küçükköy, Helvadere and Sinasos have undergone restoration in 1834, 1858 and 1868 respectively. The feast of St. Nicholas was celebrated in Helvadere till early twentieth century. On that day, the church rite was followed by a colorful parade in which the local Muslims as well as the Christians took part, with the donor of the largest sum to the church carrying the famed icon of the Saint.

Thrace: The most important religious complex dedicated to the saint is the Monastery in Midye (Medeia). An article written on the subject by S. Eyice and N. Thierry dates the complex to the period between the seventh and ninth centuries. It is not known, however, when and why the monastery was dedicated to St. Nicholas. French traveller Hommaire de Hell, who visited the site in 1846, uses the term "Byzantine crypt" for the monument and does not comment on its name. In 1912 K. Skorpil mentions a Nicholas icon and various other religious objects as having originated from this church. F. Dirimtekin, without citing a source, states that the church apse formerly contained the representation of a "perspiring St. Nicholas" and that the sacred water of the Hagiasma was distributed to visitors on special days. Pointing out that Hell had not seen the icons and the religious objects in 1846, Eyice stated that this

1. For Sinasos and Küçükköy see above p.124, note 5; for Helvadere see, W.J. Hamilton, Reisen in Kleinasien, Pontus und Armenien, Leipzig 1843, II, 222; Leblés, ibid note 5, 117; Pétropoulos-Andréadis, ibid. note 10, 80-81.
4. X.Hommaire de Hell, Voyage en Turquie et en Perse exécuté par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1846,1847 et 1848, Paris 1854-60, esp. Vol.I,pl.XII,1, 374-76, Atlas, pl.IX.
material can not be dated to the Byzantine period and may have been transported to Greece in 1923.

We know certain Bektashi convents in the region were originally churches dedicated to St. Nicholas. Among these are the Binbiroglu Tekke to the east of Pnarhisar (Brysis) and another Tekke near Babaeski (Boulgarophygon). The former is known to have been existed in the first half of the nineteenth century; the latter was a well-known place of pilgrimage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and is widely covered in journals written during this period. The relics kept at the convent were revered by both Christian and Moslem population. The Christians believing them to belong to St. Nicholas, while the Moslems regarded them as the remains of the body of Sari Saltik, a Moslem Saint believed to be identical with Saint Nicholas. A number of burrying places in Anatolia and Balkans, as well as in various European countries popularly known as the tomb of Sari Saltik were widely-visited places of pilgrimage.

A number of nineteenth century publications mention the existence of churches dedicated to St. Nicholas around Tekirdag in Thrace. According to the data provided by A. Papadopoulous-Kerameos a monastery church located at the village Naipkoy or Mermer, near Kumbag (Chrysomylon) is "on the location of an Early Christian church". According to the surveys we have conducted in Thrace, other currently non-existent St. Nicholas churches are located at Gazikoy (Ganos), Marmara Ereğlis (Heraklea Perinthus) and Gelibolu (Kallipolis).

2. F.W. Hasluck, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, Oxford 1929, 54, 431, 578, 579.
3. For the life of Sari Saltuk see, Hasluck, ibid. note 18, 429-33.
4. A. Papadopoulous-Kerameos, "Archaiotes kai Epigraphai tes Thrakes". Ellinikon Philologikos Syilogos, Parartema to Vol. 16 (1886), 65-113, esp. 97. During the research carried out by Robert Ousterhout (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and myself in 1987 and 1988 we failed to locate any religious monument in Naipkoy. For the results of this research see,Y.Ötöken-R.Ousterhout, "Notes on the Monuments of Turkish Thrace", AnatSt 39 (1989). 121-149.
Certain sources mention another church dedicated to the Saint as being among the numerous churches ruined by a fire which occurred in Enez (Ainos) in 1867. The "circular building", "close to the Gate of the Market Place" which forms part of the city walls in Vize (Bizye) is also a monument dedicated to St. Nicholas.

**Marmara region:** Byzantine sources mention two Nicholas monasteries at Mount Olympus (Uludağ) in Bithynia. A small hermitage dedicated to the Saint, first mentioned in 844, is known to have existed at the south of Bursa (Prusia ad Olympum) known today. Another monastery situated around the present village Gümüştepe (Misi); B. Menthon and R. Janin places it on the stream Nilüfer at a point 500 meters east of the monastery of St. Andreas. We were able to find during a survey in 1986 the foundations of one of the three monasteries located to the east of Nilüfer; an excavation would enable to locate this monastery exactly, which is mentioned in Byzantine sources in 1327.

An edict dated 1349 and signed by the Emperor John Kantekuzenos the Sixth makes mention of another Nicholas church in the region. The Emperor recognizes the church as being the property of a certain monastery in Vatopedi. According to the source the church is located at Pylopython, which is identical with the present day village Söloz to the south of İznil Lake. Today the village contains no medieval monuments at all.

A document dated 1272 records the Metochion of St. Nicholas belonging to the Church of St. Demetrios in Istanbul, which was built during the reign of Michael Paleologos the Eighth. R. Janin places the church in the

1. For the church in Enez see, G. Lambakes, Periegeseis. *DChAE* 8(1908), 3-41, esp. 8 note 2.
6. For the monasteries see Menthon, *ibid.* note 24, Carte du Mont Olymp.
vicinity of the Nicholas Hagiasma in Arnavutköy, the present-day Muradiye district of Armutlu, at the south of İzmit Bay. F.W. Hasluck visited an Hagiasma at Bozburun (Kap Poseidon) to the west Arnavutköy, but does not mention any remains of a church. T. Corsten describes in a recent study a "single-aisle church" among the ruins of a monastery, located at a distance of "2-3 hours on foot to Arnavutköy" but fails to give any information about the dedication.

A small Nicholas chapel built in Post-Byzantine era has survived intact; it adjoins the southern side of the eighth century church of the Archangels in Sige (Syge). The complex was a religious centre of some importance and has for centuries constituted an extensively visited place of pilgrimage for the sick people. It was especially known for its miraculous power to cure the mentally disturbed.

A St. Nicholas Monastery on the Island of Marmara (Proconessos) was recorded in a source dated 1264; it was visited in the latter half of the nineteenth century by M.J. Gedeon. According to F.W. Hasluck, a Nicholas church existed in the early twentieth century in Darca (Aritzion) to the south of Gebze. C. Friedrich, who visited the Island of Imroz (Imbros) also in early twentieth century briefly describes two Nicholas churches on the island.

Black Sea region: Our information relating to the two Nicholas churches constructed in Trabzon (Trebisond) between 1204-1461 is based on written sources. The first of these was located near the Chrysokephalos church, known

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1. Hasluck, ibid. note 18, 466.
2. T. Corsten, *Die Inschriften von Apameia (Bithynien) und Pylai*, Bonn 1987, 159; in 1986 we came upon the existence of a church near Arnavutköy, when we were told, by the Director of the Gemlik Public Library, of a letter he had received from a villager informing him of the destruction of its floor mosaics.
7. For the churches and monasteries in the Black Sea region see, A. Bryer-D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, Washington 1985, for the monuments in Trabzon see, ibid. 229 no. 103-104 and 250.
today as the Ortahisar Mosque. The church and the founder’s house were sold before 1426 by the nun Makrina Debalatlissa to the Empress Theodora, who gave the property to the monastery of Pharos. The second, a chapel from the nineteenth century "In the parish of St. Marina near Leontokastron", has drawn the attention of scholars due to the two inscriptions. One inscription built into the south wall dated 1281 suggest an earlier foundation.

The Nicholas churches in the village Başar (Staman) and Ünye (Oinaion) near Maçka have also vanished. The basically single-apsed St. Nicholas chapel located on an islet in Ünye was visited by many travellers in the nineteenth century. Dated to Byzantine era, the chapel was restored in 1629 and again between 1836-38.

Other regions: We shall now make brief mention of a number of other Nicholas churches in Anatolia. Probably the oldest among these is the famous church in Demre (Myra). This church which owes its existence to the tomb of St. Nicholas was first constructed in the sixth century. It was rebuilt in the eighth, probably extended in the eleventh century with the addition of the annexes and restored in the nineteenth century. In his guide to Turkey published in the nineteenth century C.Wilson mentions two Nicholas churches in Mugla (Moballa) and Izmir (Smyrna). The St. Nicholas church in Isparta

1. Janin, ibid. note 24, 281-82. The autor states that the property was given to the Pantocrator monastery in Pharos in the year 432. On the other hand Bryer-Winfield, ibid. note 35, 229 no.103 claimed that it is the Metochion of the Pharos monastery in Trabzon.


3. Bryer-Winfield, ibid. note 35, 296 no. 48 (Başar), 103, pl. 27 b (Ünye).

4. For references see, Bryer-Winfield, ibid. note 35, 103.


(Baris) first visited by J. Arundell in 1834 and described by H. Rott in his book. He notes the "single apse", the "vault and dome" and dates the church according to its architectural features to the early Middle Ages.

1. F.V. Arundell, Discoveries in Asia Minor including a Description of the Ruins of Several Ancient Cities and especially Antioch of Pisidia, London 1834, 1. 349; Rott, ibid. note 5.