

ANSWERS TO THE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SAGALASSOS

Why did people settle on this mountain slope?



Defense: Defense must have been one of the main reasons to settle on these steep cliffs overlooking the valley.

Natural resources: Water was also abundant here. The geology of the region consists of limestone top layers over clay beds. Rain and snow seeps through the rocks down to the clay layers and springs through the cracks. Scientists recorded several dozens natural springs in the region of Sagalassos.

The valleys of the region were even more fertile than today; the natural rocks provide high quality building material and the local clay is suitable for ceramic production. The region is also rich in ores (e.g. iron ore).

Trade: During the Imperial period, Sagalassos was connected to the harbours of the Aegean and the Mediterranean seas by a new road system as well as to the new Roman colonies established in the region. The site was not an isolated mountain settlement, but had been well incorporated into the Imperial road network of Anatolia.

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Who lived here, when?



One knows that during the 3rd millennium BC, the Luwians, related to the Hittites, settled in these region, which in Classical times became known as Pisidia.

Under the successive political powers ruling over Anatolia, the population of the town went through various acculturation phases. They thus took much of the ancient Greek culture and started to speak ancient Greek, like the whole Near East. During the Imperial period they continued developing their own culture with this Greek, but also with Roman influences.

From the 4th century AD onwards, until the final occupation in the 13th century AD, they became christianized and eventually became part of the Byzantine Empire. In the course of the 13th century they were absorbed into the Seljuk Empire.

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How did they make a living?



The economy of the city was mainly based on farming, especially grain that was delivered to the Roman troops (both sold and as part of the taxation system) and during Imperial times also olive culture for the production of locally consumed olive oil.

They also may have exported fir to Egypt to be used for architecture and ship building.

Another source of income, from Augustus (25 BC – 14 AD) onwards, was the industrial production of the so-called 'Sagalassos red slip ware', or locally made table wares, found in Western Anatolia and sporadically throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

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When did they leave and why?



The city continued to flourish until the middle of the 6th century AD. From 541-542 AD onwards the bubonic plague decimated several times the population and caused enormous damage to the economy.

A very strong earthquake, most likely with its epicentre in the city itself, levelled it ca. 590 AD.

After this catastrophe survivors of the original population continued to inhabit dispersed, sometimes fortified hamlets amongst the ruins, until the Seljuks, in the mean time, settled in Ağlasun, destroyed in the middle of the 13th century AD the last mid-Byzantine stronghold on the Alexander Hill.

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How was the site rediscovered?



The ruins of the site were rediscovered in 1706 by a French traveller, Paul Lucas, who at the request of the French King Louis XIV undertook a travel in the Ottoman Empire.

Yet it took until 1824 before the English reverend F.V.J.Arundell deciphered the name of Sagalassos in a local inscription.

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Who is excavating here and how are the excavations financed?



Since 1990 the site has been excavated by the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) under the direction of Prof. Marc Waelkens, regionally known as 'Marc Bey', who is leading a completely international and largely Turkish team.

The excavations and research in the 1200 km² large territory of the ancient city are financed by means of Belgian scientific projects obtained after international peer reviewing, but also by some private Belgian benefactors.

The conservation and anastylosis projects have been sponsored mainly by Belgian private families, companies and banks, but since 2006 also by the Turkish AYGAZ (part of the Koç Holding) and some local Turkish companies.

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Where do the recovered finds and statues go?



All finds, selected by the representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, go to the Museum of Burdur, where the most beautiful items and statues are also on display.

What is not on display is stored under the supervision of the Museum of Burdur.

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**What does the name Sagalassos mean?
Does it have a connection with Ağlasun?**



Sagalassos is a typical Luwian name. However, its meaning is not known. Ağlasun is derived from the name Agalassu recorded as early as the 11th century AD, when one bishop of the city was called 'Bishop of Agalassu'.

The Seljukid Turks living in Ağlasun adopted and adapted the name for their site in the valley below the ancient city. Thus, there is a clear connection between the two names.