

WHY DERBE?

AN UNLIKELY LYCAONIAN CITY FOR PAUL'S MINISTRY

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Summary

This article discusses Paul's visit to Derbe contextually within the first journey as well as his subsequent visits to this minor Lycaonian city. It reviews the difficulty of earlier travellers and scholars such as Davis, Sterrett, and Ramsay to localise the site. The discovery of two inscriptions naming Derbe have more precisely situated the site, yet some ambiguity remains. Paul's projected routes between Lystra and Derbe as presented in maps and atlases are reviewed. The authors' autopsy of this area provides fresh insights into Paul's route between the two cities. The article closes with a suggested reason why Paul visited Derbe on his first journey and thereby founded a community of believers there.

1. Historical Background

Derbe was an unlikely city to be evangelised by Paul, for it was a minor settlement on a spur of the Southern Highway and apparently without a Jewish community. Derbe begins to feature in Greco-Roman history in the first century BC through the writings of various Greek and Latin authors. Located in southern Lycaonia (Fig. 1), the region was attached to the Attalid kingdom after the Treaty of Apamea (188 BC), then to the province of Asia after its founding in 129 BC, and finally to the province of Cilicia in the mid-first century BC.¹ Whether the territory of Isauria included Derbe has been debated. Derbe was the

¹ Sviatoslav Dmitriev, 'Observations on the Historical Geography of Roman Lycaonia', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 41 (2000): 349.

easternmost settlement of Isaurike, a district of Lycaonia (Strabo 12:6:2-3).

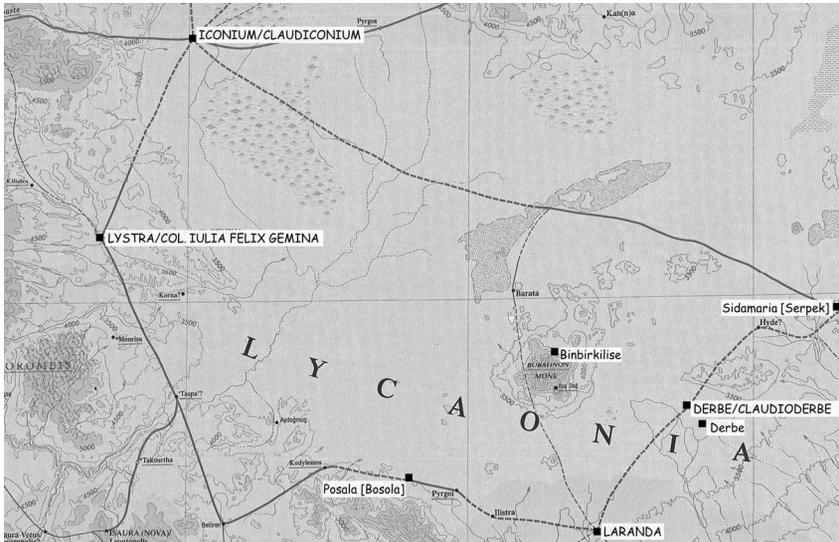


Fig. 1. Region of Lycaonia²

In September 51 BC Cicero set out for Cilicia, passing through Iconium and Cybistra.³ Syme notes that the shortest route through Barata is ‘deficit in water and unsuitable for an army’, thus surmises that Cicero would instead have taken the longer road by way of Lystra, Derbe, and Laranda.⁴ According to Syme, the description of Cicero (*Ad Fam* 15:2) about his return confirms this route: ‘I thought that I ought to direct my march through Lycaonia, the Isaurians, and Cappadocia.’ While in Derbe, Cicero (*Ad Fam* 13:73) was probably hosted by a local dynast named Antipater Derbetes who ruled not only his own city but also Laranda (Strabo 12:1:4; 14:5:24).⁵ Marek notes that Laranda was

² From the digital map *Asia Minor in the Second Century C.E.*, courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center.

³ Dmitriev, ‘Observations’, 352 esp. n.11. James K. Wilkinson, ‘Cicero’s Governorship of Cilicia’ (M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1959): 42. His sketch map IV makes an unnatural loop down into Isauria and then fails to note the junction at Laranda with the more direct road through Derbe to Cybistra.

⁴ Ronald Syme, ‘Observations on the Province of Cilicia’ in *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler*, ed. William M. Calder and Josef Kiel (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939): 309. Note the order of these three; Derbe is the middle city, but more about this later.

⁵ David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (2 vols; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950): vol. 2, 1253 n.61, follows this view.

the larger settlement situated at a nodal point 'to trade and productive agricultural lands long before Greek and Roman sources mention their old or new names'.⁶ Antipater, called a robber (ληστής), was killed after 36 BC by Amyntas, who made Derbe his royal seat. Amyntas himself was killed in 25 BC by the widow of the king of the Homonodensians (Strabo 12:6:3). Augustus incorporated his kingdom into the new province of Galatia, which include Lycaonia and its cities, including Derbe (Strabo 12:5:1).⁷ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, however, write that when Paul visited 'the city was not under Roman rule but still under the rule of Antiochus IV'. Their view follows the interpretation that Antiochus named the city in honour of the emperor after he received Lycaonia from Archelaus II in AD 35 (Ptolemy 5:6:17).⁸ Jones instead observes that Claudioderbe presumably got its prefix at the same time as Iconium and similar cities which were refounded as Roman colonies during his reign, from AD 41–54. He concludes, 'It might be argued that Derbe, therefore, probably received its prefix from Claudius and was not in Antiochus' kingdom.'⁹ Mitchell agrees that 'the imprint of Claudius is marked over the whole of south Galatia'.¹⁰ The exact date when Derbe became a colony is unknown. But given Claudius's activity in Asia Minor early in his reign, such as the creation of the province of Lycia in AD 43, it was likely a colony when Paul visited in the late 40s and certainly on his second and third visits. Rothschild has suggested that Derbe may have been part of the itinerary for the assize tour of the provincial governor.¹¹

⁶ Christian Marek, *In the Land of Ten Thousand Gods: A History of Asia Minor in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 171.

⁷ Barbara Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 208.

⁸ Cilliers Breytenbach and Christiane Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia and Adjacent Areas: From Paul to Amphilochius of Iconium* (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 209; see also Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, 1405-406 n.21.

⁹ A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971): 413 n.21. George Ogg, 'Derbe', *NTS* 9.4 (1963): 367-70 addressed this issue in light of Ballance's re-siting of Derbe, concluding that Derbe's relationship with Galatia in Paul's day was at present 'an open question whether it was then inside or outside it'.

¹⁰ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia* (vol. 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 95.

¹¹ Clare K. Rothschild, 'The Denouement of the South Galatian Hypothesis', *NovT* 54 (2012): 342 n.28.

2. Derbe and Paul's First Journey

On the first journey Paul and Barnabas entered Lycaonia after preaching in the synagogues in Pisidian Antioch and Iconium but were forced to leave them because of persecution (Acts 13:50; 14:5).



Fig. 2. Paul's first journey¹²

Acts 14:6-7 provides not only an introduction but also important information on the next stage of the journey: *συνιδόντες κατέφυγον εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περιχώρον. κακεῖ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν*. First, their reason to flee Phrygia was again persecution; second, the cities were situated in Lycaonia and not in Phrygia;¹³ third, they passed through the countryside¹⁴ between

¹² Courtesy of Tutku Tours.

¹³ Whether Iconium was situated in Phrygia or Lycaonia remains a debated question of ancient geography. Magic, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, vol. 1, 455-56; vol. 2, 1311-12, places Iconium in Phrygia, while Mustafa Hamdi Sayar, 'The Ancient Roads of Lycaonia' in *Crossroads: Konya Plain from Prehistory to the Byzantine Period*, ed. Çiğdem Maner (Istanbul: Ege, 2019): 235-40 places it in Lycaonia.

¹⁴ *Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περιχώρον* functions grammatically as an appositive to *τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας*. While this is the only substantival use *περιχώρος* of in Acts, Luke uses it five times in his gospel (Luke 3:3; 4:14,37; 7:17; 8:37).

Lystra and Derbe; and fourth, despite adversity, they preached the gospel in Lycaonia. Verses 8-19 describe their ministry in Lystra, culminating in Paul's stoning until apparent death. Verse 20 suggests a miraculous intervention when the local disciples prayed for Paul and, after being restored to life, he returned surreptitiously back into Lystra. The next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. Until this point in the narrative their names have been linked with the conjunction καὶ; here the construction is σὺν τῷ Βαρναβᾶ. Therefore, Paul seems to be the initiator of the decision to go to Derbe (cf. Acts 9:27 for Barnabas in that role).¹⁵ Arriving in Derbe, Paul undoubtedly still bore visible bruises on his head and body from the stoning. An additional result of the stoning might have been damage to his vision (Gal. 4:15). Sight impairment including visual acuity loss and visual field loss is a common effect of traumatic brain injury (TBI).¹⁶ Verse 21a summarises the nature of their ministry in Derbe: εὐαγγελισάμενοί τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοῦς. Rather than travel directly to Syrian Antioch through the Cilician Gates, Paul and Barnabas returned to the three cities where they had experienced adversity in order to strengthen the disciples and appoint elders in the congregations (14:21b-23).¹⁷ Presumably, they had also appointed elders in Derbe before leaving.

3. The Localisation of Derbe

In the early twentieth century Ramsay framed the question of Derbe's location in this way: 'The determination of the exact site of Derbe was for a long time a most serious want in the geography of the New

¹⁵ A similar diversion happened on the second journey when Paul left Thessalonica because of persecution (Acts 17:5-10). Jeff Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014): 35 writes 'Berea was situated not on the Via Egnatia but just south of this major east-west highway. This suggests that Berea was not part of Paul's original itinerary but that he ended up there out of the need to avoid the political charges awaiting him in Thessalonica.'

¹⁶ For a brief discussion of the possible physical effects of the stoning, see Mark Wilson, *The Spirit Said Go: Lessons in Guidance from Paul's Journeys* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017): 38.

¹⁷ It is noteworthy that in 2 Tim. 3:11 Derbe is not mentioned as a city where persecution took place while Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra are cited; see Barry Beitzel, *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, 2009): 257.

Testament.¹⁸ Of the four middle-Galatian cities visited by Paul on his three Anatolian journeys, Derbe was the hardest and last to be localised. Leake in 1824 placed it on the eastern slope of Binbirkilise, near Madenşehir.¹⁹ Brewer visited the area several decades later and concurred with Leake: ‘The evidence in favor of Col. Leake’s hypothesis that Derbe was situated at Bin-bir-klissa [*sic*], if not conclusive, seems to us pretty satisfactory.’²⁰ Arundell, however, was not convinced by this localisation and instead looked elsewhere. He opted for a church tradition that Derbe ‘is positively said to be on the mountain slope beyond Derben Bogaz, nine hours from Iconium, and that the ruins are actually yet in existence’. Nevertheless, he hedges on his identification: ‘If these are not really the ruins of the Derbe of St. Paul, it may possibly have stood at a place, in Maj. Rennel’s map, called Olu Dervine, between Erekli and Karabunar.’²¹

Davis, on his second journey in Asia Minor in 1874,²² travelled through Cilicia and Lycaonia. After leaving Ereğli, his party rode eight hours to a site called Devleh. The next day an Armenian guide took him to nearby Serpek to view an ancient sarcophagus buried there. From his own observations and comments of the villagers, Davis was ‘convinced that this is the site of Derbe ... indeed, the present name is but a corruption of the ancient name. “Derbe” would very often be called “Derve” by the country people.’²³ Because of a shortage of water at Serpek, the locals had moved the village to another site, but continued to call it Devleh, which Davis concluded still preserved the ancient name. During his tour of Serpek Davis saw blocks of stone, rock tombs, foundations, inscriptions, and the form of an acropolis,

¹⁸ William M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St. Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907): 385.

¹⁹ William M. Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, ed. John W. Barber (1824): 101, though Leake two pages later states that Derbe remains ‘to be discovered’. Rev. E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey: A Journal of Travel* (London: Edward Stanford, 1879): 308 identified this site as Lystra.

²⁰ Josiah Brewer, *Patmos and the Seven Churches of Asia Minor together with Places in the Vicinity* (Bridgeport, CT: Bradley & Peck, 1851): 322. William M. Ramsay and Gertrude L. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909): 432 reiterate this: ‘The site of Derbe was not fixed until a few years ago when Sterrett identified it; Leake held that it was at Bin Bir Klisse.’

²¹ Francis Arundell, *Discoveries in Asia Minor* (vol. 2; London: Bentley, 1834): 91-92.

²² Davis’s first journey to Caria, Phrygia, Lycia, and Pisidia is recounted in *Anatolica* (London: Grant, 1874).

²³ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, 273.

concluding, ‘This was all that could be seen of ancient Derbe.’²⁴ From his description and the map accompanying the volume, the site today is recognised as Sidamar(i)a, modern Ambar, while Devleḥ is Ayrancı.

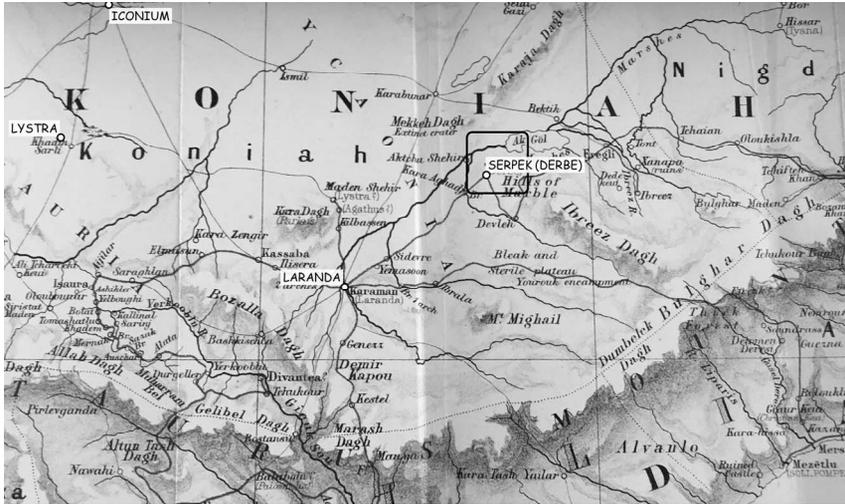


Fig. 3. Davis’s localisation of Derbe

French, whose expertise lay in, among other things, the Roman road network of Anatolia, describes this part of Davis’s journey: ‘Starting from Anbar village (formerly Serpek or Anbararası), he came through the village of Kaleköy, crossed through the range of the Çakır Dağ via the defile immediately N of Cinasınören (Karaağaç?) and then rode directly across the plain to Sudarağı and Alaçatı and finally to Karaman.’²⁵ At Sudarağı, which Davis calls Sidevre, he saw many ‘hewn stones and blocks marble, with a few columns’ and ‘a few inscription, but all were obliterated and illegible’.²⁶ Interestingly, Davis did not attempt to connect this realia with a possible site nearby.

²⁴ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, 278. He provides his own colour illustration of the site between pages 278-79 entitled ‘SITE OF DERBE (on small central hill) Karajah Dagh in the distance’. Villagers did show him a decorated sarcophagus buried on the site that he described in detail (pp. 279-85). For an illustration and description of this famous sarcophagus type, see Alpay Pasinli, *Istanbul Archaeological Museums* (Istanbul: A Turizm, 2001): 106-108.

²⁵ See David French, *Canhasan Sites I, Stratigraphy and Structures* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1998): 1. The site Davis called Yemasoon (p. 290) is now called Alaçatı.

²⁶ Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, 288. Interestingly, Davis’s route adds additional weight to the hypothesis addressed later that the route of the road from Heraclea Cybistra passed south of Yalnızdağ.

Nevertheless, his identification was the first to localise Derbe northeast of Laranda.

Sterrett, after his 1885 journey through the region, wrote ‘I consider that the ruins of Bosola and Losta/Zosta, being so near together, represent one and the same ancient city. This city I should like to call Derbe.’ He noted that little can be derived from Acts regarding the site of Derbe. But upon reading the account, ‘one is impressed with the idea that Derbe cannot be far from Lystra, and Lystra has been found to be at Khatün Serai’.²⁷



Fig. 4. Sterrett’s localisation of Derbe

²⁷ J. R. Sitlington Sterrett, *The Wolfe Expedition to Asia Minor* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1888): 22-23. Sterrett was sent out by the newly founded American School of Classical Studies at Athens (p. iii). He travelled several times with the photographer John Henry Haynes and is depicted in several of his photographs; see Robert G. Ousterhout, *John Henry Haynes: A Photographer and Archaeologist in the Ottoman Empire 1881-1900* (Istanbul: Cornucopia, 2011): 44, 46, 47, 99.

Ramsay agreed with Sterrett generally and also thought that Losta and Bosala were the same ancient city called Posala. Nevertheless, he faulted Sterrett for failing to consider the impressive höyük (*tel*) at nearby Gudelinis. In 1901 Ramsay and his wife visited Gudelinis, which he calls 'the greatest centre of ancient life in the neighbourhood'. However, on the barren mound they found only two pieces of realia – a small marble piece of an Ionic volute and two or three letters on a fragment of an inscription.²⁸ However, in another publication he states that he found several inscriptions on the mound in 1901, 'all of the Byzantine period, except one small fragment of good Roman time'.²⁹ This localisation of Derbe towards Lystra and northwest of Laranda stood for half a century.³⁰

Then two inscriptions from a different locality were discovered. In 1956 Ballance discovered an inscription on the slope of Kerti Höyük near Ekinözü (formerly Aşıran) that suggested Derbe was located there. Because of its size and weight, Ballance reasoned that the stone could hardly have been brought from elsewhere. Dating to AD 157, it is a dedicatory inscription by the *boule* and *demos* of Derbe (*SEG* 16:758).³¹ Nevertheless, Ballance was troubled that no evidence of a Byzantine settlement was found on the mound at Kerti. During a later visit he was shown a second inscription at the village of Sudurağ (called Sidrova by Ballance) that names Michael as the most God-loving bishop of Derbe (5th-6th century; *ICG* 659).³² Since the stone purportedly came from Devri Şehri ('City'), an extensive site four kilometres south- southeast of Kerti Höyük, Ballance had little doubt

²⁸ Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, 395. A picture of the site is provided on the opposite page.

²⁹ William M. Ramsay, 'Lycaonia', *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien* (vol. 7; Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1904): 75.

³⁰ For example, the article on 'Derbe' by W. M. Calder in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (vol. 3; Chicago: Howard-Severance, 1915): 72 states 'Up to 1911, certain epigraphic evidence fixing the site had not been found, but Ramsay's identification meets all the conditions, and cannot be far wrong... Its territory touched the foothills of Taurus on the South, and the site commands a fine view of the great mountain called Hadji Baba or the Pilgrim Father.'

³¹ M. H. Ballance, 'The Site of Derbe; A New Inscription', *Anatolian Studies* 7 (1957): 147-51. It is pictured in Plate IX (b). For more on the inscription, now in the Konya Archaeological Museum, see B. H. McLean, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions of the Konya Archaeological Museum* (London: BIAA, 2002): 17 no. 47.

³² The inscription, now in the garden of the Karaman Archaeological Museum, is featured on the cover of *Derbe, Karaman, Kertihöyük* by M. Vehbi Uysal (Kayseri: Dizgi ve Bası, 1990).

‘that it is Derbe’.³³ The Karaman Museum website describes it: ‘Today the place called Dervi Mevkii is approximately 500 metres in diameter with a very low elevation; however, it appears as a low mound containing ancient remains.’³⁴ In the bed of the nearby İbrala (Yeşildere) stream, architectural and ceramic pieces from the Byzantine period onwards have been found.



Fig. 5. Ballance’s localisation of Derbe at Devri Şehri

Van Elderen, during his numerous visits to the same area, was also shown the same civic inscription, but was told it came from Kerti Höyük, seven kilometres north. He also reported that a fragment of a finely inscribed tombstone of a *presbyteros* (elder) of a Christian church was found in a village near Kerti Höyük.³⁵ Regarding the localisation of Derbe, Van Elderen concluded, ‘It must be located in

³³ M. H. Ballance, ‘Derbe and Faustinopolis’, *Anatolian Studies* 7 (1957): 139-41. Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament* (Boulder: Westview, 1981): 92 follows this identification as does Zachos Georgios, ‘Derbe’, *Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World* (2001). [TinyURL.com/TB70-Wil-33a](https://www.tinyurl.com/TB70-Wil-33a) (accessed 1 June 2019).

³⁴ The change in spelling from Derbe to Devri is explained through the transliteration of the beta (β) in old Greek to a ‘v’ in new Greek and Turkish. The form ‘Devri’ results from the transposition of letters from ‘Dervi’. Original Turkish text: ‘Bugünkü “Dervi Mevkii” olarak adlandırılan yer, aşağı yukarı 500m. çapında çok az yükseltisi olan, fakat antik dönem kalıntılarını içeren alçak bir tepelik görünümündedir’. [TinyURL.com/TB70-Wil-34a](https://www.tinyurl.com/TB70-Wil-34a) (accessed 23 May 2019).

³⁵ Included among these might be the unpublished late-Roman inscription in the garden of the Karaman Archaeological Museum, Inventory No. 2058, whose provenance is also said to be Sudurağı.

the vicinity of Kerti Höyük, and in all probability on Kerti Höyük itself.³⁶ This would make the site similar to Lystra – an acropolis mound surrounded by an urban area and fields for agriculture.



Fig. 6. Kerti Höyük³⁷

Kerti Höyük was recently suggested as the possible location of the Hittite city Tarhuntašša. In the thirteenth century BC Muwatalli II, known for his role in the battle of Kadesh, moved the capital southward to split the kingdom between two kings, two lands, and two armies. Attempts have been made to localise it on Kızıldağ, fifteen miles north of Karaman. However, as Dönmez observes, the hieroglyphic inscriptions there indicate ‘that Kızıldağ was more a sacred place than a settlement befitting the structures of the capital’. Regarding the localisation of this ‘lost city of history’, she concludes: ‘Further, if the identification of *Derbe* with *Tarhuntašša* is correct, then this increases the historical importance of Kerti Höyük, especially in terms of long-

³⁶ Bastian Van Elderen, ‘Some Archaeological Observations on Paul’s First Missionary Journey’ in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970): 59. This inscription now stands in the garden of the Karaman Archaeological Museum.

³⁷ Photograph courtesy of Mark Wilson.

term processes.³⁸ Excavations that would hopefully shed further light on the site began in 2013, but have not continued, unfortunately.³⁹

A recent cultural inventory of sites in the province of Karaman done by local Turkish archaeologists also places Derbe at Kerti Höyük. Interestingly, the site of Devri Şehri is not included among the alphabetical list of sites in the area.⁴⁰ Yet in a recent publication on Christianity in Lycaonia, Breytenbach and Zimmermann take an equivocating view: the two mounds on which the inscriptions were found would be in Derbe's territory, and 'the city would be close to the ancient road from Laranda to Sidamaria'.⁴¹ Since the route of the road in this area is not known precisely, the localisation of Derbe given by these authors is ambiguous.⁴² All major Bible atlases published in the past decade place Derbe northeast of Laranda rather than at its previously localisation to the northwest.⁴³ However, the inexactness of the pin-drop on most maps fails to distinguish if Kerti Höyük or Devri Şehri is indicated.⁴⁴ Beitzel specifically identifies the site with Kerti

³⁸ Şevket Dönmez, 'The Contribution of New Research to Hittite Historical Geography of Amasya Province' in *Places and Spaces in Hittite Anatolia I: Hatti and the East*, ed. Metin Alparslan (Istanbul: Turkish Institute of Archaeology, 2017): 81, 90 figs. 18-20.

³⁹ The excavation was a joint project of the Karaman Museum and the archaeology department at Konya University. However, no results have yet been published in the annual report issued by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Ercan Er shows several photos of the excavation in 'Derbe (Kerti) Höyük'. TinyURL.com/TB70-Wil-39a (accessed 22 May 2019).

⁴⁰ Cengiz Topal, *Karaman Kültür Envanteri* (Karaman: Karaman Museum, 2009): 72. The size of Kerti Höyük measures 450 × 250 metres.

⁴¹ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 209. Interestingly, on Map 6 (p. 190) they mark Derbe between Sudarağı and the Yalnız Dağ, but with a question mark.

⁴² This ambiguity is also reflected in Richard J. A. Talbert, ed., *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2000): map 66L, which places 'DERBE/ CLAUDIODERBE' at Kerti Höyük and 'Derbe' at Devri Şehri.

⁴³ F. Van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1959): 4, 14 still shows Derbe northwest of Laranda. However, twelve years later the site is correctly localised northeast of Laranda in Denis Baly and A. D. Tushingham, *Atlas of the Biblical World* (New York: World, 1971): 141.

⁴⁴ Tim Dowley, *The Kregel Bible Atlas* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002): 82, 84, 85; Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *Carta's New Century Handbook and Atlas of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2007): 242, 244, 246; James B. Pritchard and Nick Page, ed., *HarperCollins Atlas of Bible History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008): 167; Adrian Curtis, *Oxford Bible Atlas* (4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 169, 173; Ian Barnes, *The Historical Atlas of the Bible* (New York: Chartwell, 2010): 293; John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* (Wheaton:

Höyük,⁴⁵ while the *IVP Atlas* links Derbe with Devri Şehri.⁴⁶ The GPS co-ordinates given on the Digital Atlas of the Roman World similarly localise Derbe at Kerti Höyük.⁴⁷

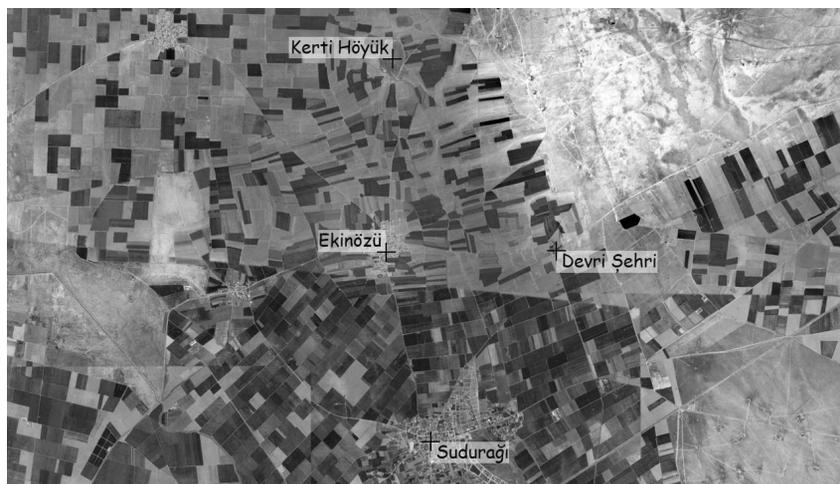


Fig. 7. Locations of Kerti Höyük and Devri Şehri⁴⁸

4. The Route from Lystra to Derbe

The surviving fabric of the Roman road network indicates that Paul initially travelled either eastward as proposed by Beitzel, or southward as depicted in the *Barrington Atlas*.⁴⁹ This section, informed by personal autopsy of the area, will describe and assess each possibility

Crossway, 2010): 241, 242, 247; Carl Rasmussen, *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010): 225 (Fig. 2 in article), 228, 231; John A. Beck, *Discovery House Bible Atlas* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 2015): 298, 300, 303. This is also the case for A.-M. Wittke, E. Olshausen, and R. Szydlak, ed., *Brill's New Pauly Historical Atlas of the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 227.

⁴⁵ Beitzel, *New Moody Atlas of the Bible*, 257; cf. 259, 261. However, the map on 259 incorrectly states that at Derbe 'Timothy joins Paul and Silas' (cf. Acts 16:1).

⁴⁶ Paul Lawrence, *The IVP Atlas of Bible History* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006): 153. However, Derbe is omitted altogether on the maps of the second and third journeys (pp. 154, 161).

⁴⁷ DARE (<http://dare.ht.lu.se/places/21521.html>): 37.348569, 33.361453. Pleiades (https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/648620/?searchterm=Derbe*) unfortunately provides the wrong co-ordinates: 37.3607866667, 33.326976.

⁴⁸ Courtesy of Google Earth.

⁴⁹ Personal communication with Beitzel (10 November 2017); Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, map 66L.

to determine which is most tenable. Topography and climate make it unlikely that Paul travelled from Lystra to Derbe over a direct route. While the distance as the crow flies between them is 95 kilometres, no evidence exists for such a straight-line course in antiquity.⁵⁰ Settlement and transport patterns in southern Lycaonia were shaped by the availability of agriculturally significant water, as reflected by the location of Neolithic, Chalcolithic, early Bronze Age, and Roman-era settlements. Communities were located along the Taurus Mountains, to the south of Karadağ (Black Mountain), and on the alluvial fan of the Çarsamba River south of Konya.⁵¹

Lystra sits in a well-watered valley in the Taurus foothills that rise along the western edge of the Konya plain. The Botsa Deresi ('Creek') on the south side of the höyük flows copiously year round. Today, as undoubtedly in Paul's time, the fields surrounding Lystra produce abundantly. Derbe lay south east of Lystra and was one of a number of settlements between Karadağ and the Taurus foothills along the southern edge of the Konya plain. These were watered by precipitation runoff from Karadağ as well as streams flowing down from the Taurus, like the Hacıpasa Dere, which passes within a few metres of the base of Kerti Höyük.⁵²

Separating Lystra from Derbe was a sparsely populated, semi-arid plain where rainfall amounts drop significantly and temperatures rise sharply in the summer.⁵³ A direct route between the two cities would have needed to transit this plain for much of its course. Even today conditions on the plain, although benefiting from a substantial regional irrigation scheme, recall the description of Strabo (12:6:1) regarding the plateaus of Lycaonia as 'cold, bare of trees, grazed by wild asses, though there a great scarcity of water'. As mentioned previously, it is this area that Cicero avoided when travelling between Iconium and Derbe.⁵⁴ Unsurprisingly, given such topography, climate, and

⁵⁰ Rothschild, 'Denouement of the South Galatian Hypothesis', 342 n.28 observes that 'Derbe was not on the *via Sebaste*, but was not far off'. Whether 95 kilometres by air or 122 kilometres by road, neither measurement is 'not far off' in normal reckoning.

⁵¹ James Mellaart, 'Early Cultures of the South Anatolian Plateau, II: The Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages in the Konya Plain', *Anatolian Studies* 13 (1963): 208-209; Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, map 66L; Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 38-39, 209.

⁵² Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 209.

⁵³ Mellaart, 'Early Cultures', 208-209; Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, map 66L; Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 38-39.

⁵⁴ Syme, 'Observations on the Province of Cilicia', 302-303.

settlement patterns, no road-related remains have been found that suggest the existence of a direct route in the Roman, Byzantine, or Ottoman periods.

Reconstructing the Roman-era road network in the immediate vicinity of Lystra has proven challenging since no curbing, cobbling, rutting, or cuttings have been located. The evidence here consists only of milestones dating to the second and third centuries AD. In his explorations, Ramsay found no Roman road remains near Lystra and concluded that the nearby stone bridges constructed of spolia were Turkish. He posited that the roads used by Paul were not maintained after Lystra and Derbe lost their imperial importance when threats diminished from 'Pisidian and Isaurian mountaineers'. The Roman road network, according to Ramsay, shifted eastward away from these 'second-rate' cities to provide more direct communication between Iconium and Laranda.⁵⁵ Perhaps reflecting this shift is a line of barrel-vault cisterns passing through Kavak east of Lystra. These are aligned on a north-south axis from Kayhüyük and the abandoned and flooded village of Apa, the possible site of ancient Taspā.⁵⁶ The nearest physical road remains lie fifteen kilometres east-southeast near Seçme and twenty-eight kilometres south-southeast at Taspā. These and surviving milestones indicate that a road ran to the east on to the Konya plain as proposed by Beitzel and to the south through Belören to Laranda as depicted in the *Barrington Atlas*.

Beitzel suggests that Paul took a road that ran from Lystra through Kavak on to the Konya plain and connected to a road conjectured by French to link Iconium and Laranda. Neither is depicted in the *Barrington Atlas*. French describes the latter road as a 'hypothetical reconstruction, based on the proposition that the name of Laranda was omitted' from the Tabula Peutingeriana.⁵⁷ Beitzel's primary reason for

⁵⁵ Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, 407; William M. Ramsay, *Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christian History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906): 296.

⁵⁶ The Turkish village was relocated during the construction of the Apa dam and reservoir. Foundations and finished stone block, perhaps quarried from ancient Taspā, are visible when the water level of the reservoir recedes. See David French, 'The Site of Dalisandus' in *Epigraphica Anatolica, Zeitschrift für Epigraphik und historische Geographie Anatoliens, Heft 4*, ed. Ekrem Akurgal, Reinhold Merkelbach, Sencer Şahin, and Hermann Vetters (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1984): 88.

⁵⁷ David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor, Vol. 4: The Roads, Fasc. 4.1, Notes on the Itineraria* (Ankara: BIAA, 2016): 31. French's hypothetical road roughly follows the line of the modern Turkish highway D715 between Konya (Iconium) and Karaman (Laranda).

suggesting this as the likely Pauline route is that a milestone to the east of Lystra at Kavak dates to Hadrian while those found south of Lystra at Hatunsaray date, at the earliest, to Maximinus. Additionally, he notes that the stones located further south at Gūrağaç, on the route depicted in the *Barrington Atlas*, date even later, to the time of Diocletian.⁵⁸

French catalogued four stones at Hatunsaray and a like number at Kavak. One (101C) and possibly two (101B) of the Hatunsaray stones were found north of the höyük and likely stood on the road to Iconium, not on a road running south or east. French in his final catalogue dates the remaining two Hatunsaray stones to Maximinus (101A) and Septimius Severus (101D). The earliest of the Kavak stones (102A) dates to the reign of Hadrian, or possibly Antoninus Pius, predating the oldest example south of Hatunsaray by roughly a century.⁵⁹ One of the Kavak stones (102B) preserves Lystra as its *caput viae*.⁶⁰ The four stones at Kavak and the *caput viae* of Lystra are evidence that a road ran eastward from Lystra to Kavak, as posited by Beitzel. One of the Hatansaray stones (101D), located 2.6 kilometres southeast of Lystra, may also serve as evidence for that road.⁶¹ This Lystra to Kavak road aligns neatly with the Lystra to Kilistra road depicted in the *Barrington Atlas* to create a line of communication from the Konya plain through Lystra to the Via Sebaste east of Pappa-Tiberiopolis.

From Kavak, situated on the edge of an alluvial plain at an altitude of 1,070 metres, the road proposed by Beitzel appears to have gently ascended what is now a dirt and stone road to a pass in the ridge to the east. Peaks of that ridge rise to 1,405 and 1,462 metres. At the crest of the pass the terrain drops precipitously to the Konya plain. A 3.5-metre-wide rock-cut roadbed immediately below the crest indicates the ancient roadbuilders were not dissuaded by the precipitous terrain and continued to forge their road as straight as possible to the east.⁶² The width of the cuttings is not inconsistent with the pass having accommodated a major road as evidenced by French's 'Pilgrim's Road'

⁵⁸ Personal communication 10 November 2017.

⁵⁹ The stone may have been moved, since it is currently used as a headstone in a cemetery in Kavak. The stone bears a distance of IV or 6.4 kilometres calculated at 1,609 metres per Roman mile. The straight-line distance between the stone and Lystra is 10.2 kilometres.

⁶⁰ French, *Roman Roads Vol. 3. Fasc. 3.24*, 166-72.

⁶¹ This stone is built into a field bridge at N37°35'11.43" E32°21'38.23", which is visible in Google Earth.

⁶² The cuttings are located at N37°34'23.9" E32°30'43.1" and visible in Google Earth.

narrowing from 6.5 to 3–3.5 metres in steep terrain.⁶³ The location and alignment of the roadbed suggests that a Lystra–Kavak road could have connected with an Iconium–Laranda road near modern Çumra. This road could have also linked to the Iconium–Barata route suggested by French. It may have passed to the east of Çumra and ran south of Barata to pass through Madenşehir (Binbirkilise) on the northeast side of Karadağ. From Madenşehir the road may have continued on to Tyana.⁶⁴ Madenşehir is less than 20 kilometres from Kerti Höyük and 25 kilometres from Devri Şehri. While French assigned the road to the Byzantine period with continued in use in the Ottoman era, it may mark the path of an earlier route.

Physical evidence for a direct Iconium–Laranda road consists of two Ottoman bridges and a single barrel-vault cistern. If the road existed in the Pauline era, reaching it or a road to Barata from Kavak may have been seasonally challenging. Between Kavak and Çumra lies the alluvial fan of the Çarşamba, which left a large swampy area south of Iconium when flooded by spring rains. Breytenbach and Zimmermann argue that the regional road network avoided this area.⁶⁵ If the road descending to the Konya plain did not connect to an Iconium–Laranda or Barata road, it may have served to facilitate travel to communities in and around the Çarşamba's alluvial fan.

Beitzel's proposed route is supported by milestones and roadbed cuttings in the vicinity of Seçme on the western edge of the Çarşamba fan. We know of no additional road remains east of Seçme that might indicate a connection to the conjectured Iconium to Laranda road. While possible, Beitzel's proposal is constrained by topography and has limited archaeological realia to support it.

The second possible route would have initially taken Paul south-southeast from Lystra, through the assumed site of Taspā, before turning eastward at Belören for Laranda and Derbe, as depicted in the *Barrington Atlas*. This route reflects ancient settlement patterns and is supported by physical road remains and topography. Travelling this route, Paul would have experienced terrain that was populated, watered, and hospitable. Between Lystra and Taspā the road appears on

⁶³ David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor Fasc. 1: The Pilgrim's Road* (Oxford: BAR International, 1981): 21.

⁶⁴ David H. French, 'The Site of Barata on the Konya Plain', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27 (1996): 93-114.

⁶⁵ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 151-53, 166, 176.

the Tabula Peutingeriana, and a milestone at Taspas physically attests to the road.⁶⁶ This stone is chronologically the earliest of those catalogued by French in the area and dates to the reign of Titus, perhaps within three decades of Paul's initial visit to Galatia and predating the earliest Kavak stone by as many decades.⁶⁷

While there are no unambiguous road remains between Lystra and Taspas, the route depicted in *Barrington* lies under or near modern asphalt and dirt roads that neatly align with the trace provided by the atlas. That trace passes through the villages of Hatunsaray, Çatören, and Orhaniye before reaching Taspas. Ottoman bridges crossing the Bayındır Deresi west of and at Orhaniye may stand where the Roman road crossed. Barrel-vault cisterns appear at intervals along that trace from Çatören through Orhaniye as it approaches Taspas. Lines of barrel-vault cisterns originating to the west and passing through Akören (ancient Mourisa) and from the north passing through Korna also align on Taspas.⁶⁸ While these rural cisterns have not been definitively studied or dated as a group, barrel-vault cisterns are commonly found at Roman and Byzantine urban sites throughout Turkey. Inspired by Roman and Byzantine examples, Seljuk and Ottoman engineers may also have utilised the form to support their transport networks as well.⁶⁹ Thoroughly documenting and mapping the cisterns south of Lystra may allow for a more thorough understanding of the ancient road network that is all but lost to modern road construction and the farmers' plough.

Substantial ancient road remains – cut roadbed, rutting, and curbed, cobbled surface – have survived in the immediate area of Taspas. On the stone plateau above the north side of what was the Çarşamba River, now the Apa Reservoir, are numerous rock-hewn tombs, apparently the Taspas necropolis. The *Barrington Atlas* depicts the ancient road descending the plateau past the western edge of that necropolis to the Çarşamba, as evidenced by 300 metres of rutted road surface and

⁶⁶ French, *Roman Roads Vol. 4, Fasc. 4.1*, 24, 31; William M. Ramsay, *The Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey, a Diary* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909): 277; David H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor Vol. 3: Milestones, Fasc. 3.2: Galatia* (London: BIAA, 2012), 172-73.

⁶⁷ French, *Roman Roads Vol. 3: Galatia*, 172-73.

⁶⁸ Both the Via Sebaste to the north and west of Perga and the ancient road between Attalia and Laodicea below Termessos are similarly marked by barrel-vault cisterns.

⁶⁹ For an introduction to cisterns, see Larry Mays, George P. Antoniou, and Andreas N. Angelakis, 'History of Water Cisterns: Legacies and Lessons', *Water* 5 (2013): 1916-40, esp. 1923-31, 1934-35.

roadbed cuttings.⁷⁰ Immediately below the necropolis the road is joined by a similar road that descends the plateau from the east though the tombs of the necropolis.⁷¹ Under the waters of the reservoir is a first-century milestone seen by Ramsay who mused 'that the milestone has stood here through the interval of more than 1,800 years, since it was first erected and engraved'.⁷² On the south side of the reservoir a curbed, cobbled road surface, traceable for 600 metres, emerges from the water and passes a large, metal-clamped stone platform of fine work, possibly the remains of a monumental tomb.⁷³ On the south side of the Çarşamba the road from Lystra split, with branches running to the southwest and south-southeast. French traced the southwest fork to Isauria. He followed the south-southeast fork to Belören, identifying the höyük southeast of the village as the site of Dalisandus.⁷⁴ From Belören, French traced the road down the valley to the east past Gurağaç and Güneybağ (now Güneysınır) to Kodylessos.⁷⁵ French catalogued two stones at Gurağaç, noted also by Beitzel. One is a block (38A) while the other a broken cylinder (38B). Both date to the reign of Diocletian and Maximianus as Augusti. Neither provide a distance and may not be milestones.⁷⁶ The roads depicted in the *Barrington Atlas* through and to the south of Taspa reflect French's survey work.⁷⁷

Additional road remains may indicate that at Taspa a fourth road ran east to other Çarşamba river communities and possibly through Aydoğmuş to Kodylessos. Breytenbach and Zimmermann identify the villages of Dineksaray, Yenisu, and Balçıkhisar along the Çarşamba as crossing points where settlements and early Christianity flourished.

⁷⁰ The cuttings and rutting located at N37°22'34.88" E32°30'28.09" are visible in Google Earth.

⁷¹ The cuttings and rutting located at N37°22'31.35" E32°30'35.30" are visible in Google Earth.

⁷² Ramsay, *Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey*, 172-73.

⁷³ The cobbled road surface located at N37°21'42.05" E32°30'45.51" and the platform at N37°21'41.86" E32°30'49.42" are visible in Google Earth.

⁷⁴ French, 'The Site of Dalisandus', 88-89, 93.

⁷⁵ Belören appears as Elmasun on older maps, and Güneybağ is now a neighbourhood of Güneysınır; see French, 'The Site of Dalisandus', 88-89.

⁷⁶ David H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor Vol. 3: Milestones, Fasc. 3.7: Cilicia, Isauria et Lycaonia (and South-West Galatia)* (Ankara: BIAA, 2014): 54-55.

⁷⁷ At the time, however, French was unaware of the necropolis on the heights to the north and the roadbed that passes through it; personal communication 6 January 2013.

Epigraphic material abounds in these villages.⁷⁸ A road from Taspā through Dineksaray and Aydoğmuş to Kodylessos would have been shorter than one through Belören and easier to transit since it circumvented the foothills of the Taurus. Breytenbach and Zimmermann also observe that Aydoğmuş, an early bishopric, is notable for the number of its Christian inscriptions, since here were found the ‘earliest traces of post-Pauline Christianity to survive’.⁷⁹ While suggested by the Taspā road remains and topography, physical evidence for a route through Aydoğmuş is limited to the Ottoman bridge at Dineksaray, which may preserve the location of an earlier river crossing. French conjectured a Taspā–Aydoğmuş–Kodylessos route on the final version of his Adana sheet (3:2:1) in his album of maps.⁸⁰

The documented road from Taspā through Belören and the possible road through Aydoğmuş met at a höyük known as Gödelisin, the likely site of ancient Kodylessos.⁸¹ A milestone, not catalogued by French, was found here. Like the stones at Gurağaç, it bears the names of Diocletian and Maximianus.⁸² Portions of the street grid of the ancient city survive as depressed lanes bordered by foundation heaps. Entering that grid from the southeast is a long, shallow depression which appears in satellite imagery to join the modern road near Emirhan. This may represent the course of the ancient road to Laranda.

From Emirhan the road can be followed with ease as it passes through ancient Posala (Sterrett’s Derbe), Pyrgoi, and Ilistra over modern asphalt highways and dirt roads from which Ottoman-era cobbling periodically emerges. West of Posala and between the villages of Emirhan – where two barrel-vault cisterns still stand – and Akarköy lies the remains of a rural settlement, now called Çürük Ümü Ören. There, on the south side of the modern road, an old well continues in use. Behind it is an uncovered, deep rock-lined well that may date to

⁷⁸ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 176-83. Ottoman bridges incorporating substantial spolia cross the Çarşamba at Dineksaray and Balçıkhisar.

⁷⁹ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 197-98, 203.

⁸⁰ David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor*, Vol. 3, Fasc. 3.9, *An Album of Maps* (Ankara: BIAA, 2016): 11.

⁸¹ Stephen Mitchell, ‘Map 66 Taurus’ in *Map-by-Map Directory to Accompany the Barrington Atlas of the Ancient World*, ed. Richard J. A. Talbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2000): 1017. The höyük is located at N37°16’55.41" E32°46’38.41".

⁸² Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 204.

antiquity.⁸³ Unlike the surrounding area, Çürük Ümü Ören is uncultivated. Lying amid its weeds are numerous cut and finished blocks, two of which are inscribed. Of the two, one remains legible. This gravestone is engraved with a gabled house façade, an axe, and a wreathed inscription that honours a man named Paul by his sister Ouanalis.⁸⁴ Three road surfaces are visible 100 metres north of the wells.⁸⁵

From Çürük Ümü Ören the road passes to the immediate north of Akarköy (formerly Losta or Zosta), where a Roman garrison was once stationed.⁸⁶ Sterrett found the area of the village particularly rich in epigraphic remains and catalogued twelve inscriptions when he visited in 1885.⁸⁷ Dressed block and architectural fragments now decorate the village park and lie scattered in a vacant lot south of the Merkez Cami ('Central Mosque'), which incorporates spolia in its construction. Nearby are the remains of a Byzantine chapel or baptistery.⁸⁸ Perhaps the dedicatory inscription at Çürük Ümü Ören once decorated a wall of this structure.⁸⁹ Older villagers at Akarköy recall a stone road, no longer visible, that ran through their fields northwest of the village to the south side of a cemetery.⁹⁰ East of Akarköy the modern road passes through the north side of Özyurt, the late Roman town and bishopric of Posala.⁹¹ The map of Calder and Bean shows a route from Posala running directly east to Derbe with another fork southeast to Ilistra and

⁸³ The wells are located at N37°16'07.00" E32°48'59.00".

⁸⁴ The left side of the stone with its engraved saw has broken off and is now missing. Ramsay examined a similar stone dedicated to a martyr named Paul near Posala; see *Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christian History*, 295, 322.

⁸⁵ Under the high embankment of the modern highway lies an older asphalt road which is exposed as the alignment of the two briefly diverge. The asphalt of that road was laid directly over a curbed, cobbled surface. This surface is intermittently visible for 100 metres as it emerges and disappears under the highway. While scantily preserved, its curbing and cobbling is consistent with Ottoman-era paving visible further east along the road.

⁸⁶ Stephen Mitchell, 'The Enemy Within: Rome's Frontier with Isauria between Konya and the Taurus Mountains', lecture 5 November 2013. TinyURL.com/TB70-Wil-86a (accessed 25 May 2019).

⁸⁷ Sterrett, *The Wolfe Expedition to Asia Minor*, 22-28.

⁸⁸ Personal autopsy by Wagner during a site visit with Stephen Mitchell and Sabri Aydal in 2013.

⁸⁹ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 206.

⁹⁰ Wagner interview with villagers in 2013.

⁹¹ Mitchell, 'Map 66 Taurus', 1019; Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 203.

Laranda.⁹² However, no other map posits an ancient road between Posala and Derbe, nor is there epigraphic or physical evidence for this route. Before it was asphalted, an Ottoman-era cobbled surface was periodically visible on what was a wide, all-weather dirt road passable year round between Posala and Kazımkarabekir. Kazımkarabekir was ancient Pyrgoi and, like Posala, dates to the late Roman period.⁹³ Entering Kazımkarabekir from the northwest, the road passes a restored Seljuk mosque and exits to the southwest through an Ottoman gate with an arch constructed of interlocking voussoirs.

The surface of the road between Kazımkarabekir and Yollarbaşı remains dirt and gravel through which an Ottoman-era cobbled and curbed surface can be periodically observed. It is a wide, all-weather road that enters Yollarbaşı south of the höyük, the site of Roman Ilistra.⁹⁴ The *Barrington Atlas* depicts the route continuing eastward from Ilistra; from Yollarbaşı, the road continues with a substantial visible Ottoman-era cobbled, curbed, and splined surface. However, the alignment of the road abruptly changes 2.6 kilometres east-northeast of the Ilistra höyük⁹⁵ and 200 metres east of that point the road crosses a Roman bridge.⁹⁶ This is the only bridge of unambiguous Roman work between Lystra and Laranda. Visible is a single arch of well-finished and fitted voussoirs. With a width of 8.3 metres, the bridge was capable of carrying a major dual-carriage highway like the Via Sebaste.⁹⁷ The location of the bridge and its alignment indicates the Roman road passed north of the höyük, departing from the Ottoman surface, which passed to the south. The change in alignment appears to represent a historic civic shift. Where the Roman road passed, an earthen ramp ascends the acropolis, presumably reflecting Ilistra's civic and commercial centre. When the road was repaired in the Ottoman period,

⁹² W. M. Calder and George Bean, 'A Classical Map of Asia Minor' (Ankara: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1958).

⁹³ Mitchell, 'Map 66 Taurus', 1016.

⁹⁴ Mitchell, 'Map 66 Taurus', 1019. The bishop of Ilistra participated at Nicea alongside the bishop of Laranda; see Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 203.

⁹⁵ The road bend located at N37°12'07.06" E033°03'23.68" is visible in Google Earth.

⁹⁶ Personal autopsy by Wagner during a site visit in 2013 with Stephen Mitchell and Sabri Aydal, who identified the work as Roman. The bridge is located at N37°12'07.91" E033°03'31.75".

⁹⁷ David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor, Fasc. 2: An Interim Catalogue of Milestones, Part 2* (Oxford: BAR 1988) 520-21.

its original line was shifted southward as evidenced by a restored Seljuk mosque, Ottoman baths, and an early cemetery.

A few hundred metres east of the Roman bridge the Ottoman road surface fades. Where the road intersects the Konya–Karaman highway stands a well-preserved Ottoman bridge of ablaq masonry. Here the ancient road is absorbed by a four-lane modern motorway some ten kilometres north-northwest of Karaman, ancient Laranda. The track in the *Barrington Atlas* follows that motorway to Laranda before turning northeast to Derbe. No unambiguous road-related remains or epigraphic material are known that might illuminate the route from Laranda to Derbe. While the intervening terrain would pose little challenge to an ancient road builder, extensive irrigated agricultural activity southwest of Kerti Höyük and Devri Şehri may now obscure any surviving fabric of a road.

Given the available evidence, the route from Lystra to Derbe as depicted in the *Barrington Atlas* remains the most tenable route for Paul's first journey and also how he returned to Lystra from Derbe on his second and third journeys. It respects the contemporary regional settlement pattern by cleaving to the populated, well-watered uplands of southwest Lycaonia. Challenges of topography are avoided as it circumvents the flood plain of the Çarşamba south of Iconium and the semi-arid plain west of Karadağ. The route is reasonably well supported by milestones and road remains as well the only Roman bridge between Lystra and Derbe. It is of sufficient width to have carried a major Roman highway. The oldest known milestone (AD 79–81) between Lystra and Derbe marks the route. Nevertheless, a more direct route, which deviates from *Barrington* at Taspas, may have passed through Aydoğmuş before rejoining it at Kodylessos. This shortcut is suggested by road remains through the Taspas necropolis, the ancient settlements along the Çarşamba, and topography, so we favour it as the likely Pauline route. It is worth noting the area between Lystra and Derbe is vast and has not been carefully surveyed in its entirety. Additional epigraphic, road surface, and bridgework may be uncovered, which would yield a more accurate and precise understanding of the Roman road network of southern Lycaonia.

Kalesi (Gökçeyazı).⁹⁹ Turchetto, however, argues persuasively that the Via Tauri continued past modern Ulukışla before arcing westward along gentler terrain through Çayhan¹⁰⁰ before arriving at the Greco-Roman site of Heraclea Cybistra (Ereğli). The city was an important hub in the road system connecting Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Lycaonia.¹⁰¹

West of Heraclea Cybistra the road curved northwest over a low pass before descending into a long flat plain on the north side of Düre Dağ until Sidamaria. There the main road ran northwest to Iconium while a branch turned southwest to Laranda.¹⁰² Sidamaria was an important city in the Roman era, especially known for its style of marble sarcophagi (2nd-3rd centuries AD).¹⁰³ The *Barrington Atlas* shows the road next passing through Hyde and north of Yalnızdağ/Çakır Dağ before turning south to Derbe. The track is depicted cutting through the mountain's western end rather than going around it;¹⁰⁴ however, there is no evidence of a rock-cut pass in that area.

Alternatively, Turkish archaeologist Sabri Aydal, who was a native of the area and local road expert, shows on his regional maps of Karaman and Karadağ a dotted track running south of Yalnızdağ and skirting the mountain's eastern end before turning southwest.¹⁰⁵ Between Kaleköy and Sidamaria the road is depicted by Aydal as

⁹⁹ Friedrich Hild, *Das Byzantinische Strassensystem in Kappadokien* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1977): 63. See also Friedrich Hild and Marcell Restle, *Kappadokien: Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Science, 1981): 188-89, 299-300, and the map in the endboard. This later was an important caravan route as evidenced by the thirteenth-century Kamareddin Han between Kilan and Yeniyıldız.

¹⁰⁰ Jacopo Turchetto, 'Beyond the Myth of the Cilician Gates' in *The Ancient Road Network of Central and Southern Cappadocia*, in *La Cappadoce méridionale de la préhistoire à la période byzantine, Actes du 3èmes Rencontres d'Archéologie de l'IFEA (Istanbul, 8-9 November 2012)*, ed. Dominique Beyer, Olivier Henry, and Aksel Tibet (Istanbul: Zero, 2015): 195-96.

¹⁰¹ Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, 66R, however, depicts the road junction northeast of Heraclea Cybistra.

¹⁰² A picture of the roadbed east of Sidamaria is on the front cover of David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor Vol. 3: Milestones, Fasc. 3.8, Errata and Indices* (Ankara: BIAA, 2015).

¹⁰³ Topal, *Karaman Kültür Envanteri*, 312. Today the modern highway D330 branches northwest from Ereğli to Konya, avoiding the ancient route through Sidamaria.

¹⁰⁴ Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, map 66L.

¹⁰⁵ The maps entitled 'Karadağ Gezi Planı' and 'Karaman Gezi Planı' were created for visitors to tour the region and see its various natural and historical sites. However, these maps have had limited distribution.

branching northwest to Iconium. However, locating this junction at Sidamaria, as *Barrington* does, makes more geographical sense.¹⁰⁶ Before Kaleköy an ancient bridge has been documented,¹⁰⁷ which carried the road next past Kaleköy Höyüğü, where surface remains have been dated to the Hellenistic and Roman periods.¹⁰⁸ Derbe was situated next after Kaleköy. While either route around Yalnızdağ is possible, its southern traverse is more likely given its directness and the archaeological realia found along it.¹⁰⁹ That Davis travelled along this southern track over a century earlier, discussed above, further validates its probability.

Alternatively, Mitchell, following Aydal, has suggested that Paul's route through the Taurus on his second and third journeys did not go through the Cilician Gates. Instead he travelled down the Mediterranean coast from Tarsus to Elaiussa Sebaste and Corycus, where a road turned inland to Olba.¹¹⁰ Schnabel has suggested that Paul possibly did missionary work in these Rough Cilician cities during his earlier years based in Tarsus (Acts 9:30).¹¹¹ Milestones found near Apa, Yenisu, and Olba marked this Flavian road dating to AD 80 that ran from Lystra, the *caput viae*, to the Mediterranean coast.¹¹² Suggestions that Paul used this Roman road are anachronistic, since he made these journeys in the 50s before it was established. Yet this route along the Calycadnus (Göksu) River has been used since the late Bronze Age.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ David H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor Vol. 3: Milestones, Fasc. 3.3: Cappadocia* (London: BIAA, 2012): 20 map 5.1.1 likewise shows the junction at Sidamaria.

¹⁰⁷ Topal, *Karaman Kültür Envanteri*, 433. Old bridges in Turkey are difficult to date. However, it is significant that the three bridges in the area datable to the later Karamanoğulları and Ottoman periods do not run along the proposed Roman track but instead run northwest-southeast near Ayrancı; see Topal, *Karaman Kültür Envanteri*, 322-24.

¹⁰⁸ Topal, *Karaman Kültür Envanteri*, 432.

¹⁰⁹ French, *Roman Roads Vol. 3: Cilicia, Isauria et Lycaonia Cilicia*, 14 map 5.1.1 also shows the route passing south of Yalnızdağ.

¹¹⁰ Mitchell, Lecture 'The Enemy Within'; Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 34 n. 17, 208 n. 547 also mention the existence of this road.

¹¹¹ Eckhard Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church* (vol. 2; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press): 1060-63, 1067-68.

¹¹² By mentioning Olba, French seems to suggest that Paul passed through here on his way northward to Lycaonia; see David French, 'Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor' in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994): 53.

¹¹³ A. Matessi, A. Gürel, C. Kuzucuoğlu, and L. d'Alfonso, 'East of Konya: Settlements, Routes and Environment in Southern Cappadocia, and the Political

The more important route in the mid-first century AD started farther down the coast at Seleucia ad Calycadnum (Silifke) and followed the Calycadnus inland. This and the Olba road joined north of Claudiopolis before continuing northward to Laranda. Since Paul's first stop on the second and third journeys was Derbe, not Lystra, he would need to backtrack at Laranda if he used either of these routes from the Mediterranean. However, it is more likely that Paul took the shorter and more familiar route through the Cilician Gates to Derbe.¹¹⁴

The initial stage of the third journey from Syrian Antioch to Ephesus is compressed to one verse, ἐξῆλθεν διερχόμενος καθεξῆς τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν (Acts 18:23). Although there is no explicit mention of the Lycaonian cities of Derbe and Lystra, their visit is implied in Luke's description.¹¹⁵ An exclusively Lukan word, καθεξῆς (Luke 1:3; 8:1; Acts 3:24; 11:4), suggests a sequence of one thing after another in space.¹¹⁶ The geographic description here is similar but slightly different from that in 16:6: Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν. In chapter 16 the Lycaonian cities had already been mentioned, so this descriptor is meant to include Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. In chapter 18 these cities are included among the Galatian cities visited before the Phrygian cities of Iconium and Pisidian Antioch.¹¹⁷ Their activity of strengthening the disciples, also done on the previous journeys (Acts 14:22; 15:41), anaphorically suggests that Derbe was one of the cities in Galatia through which they passed.

Landscape of South Central Anatolia during the Second Millennium BC' in *Crossroads*, ed. Maner: 134, 158 map A.

¹¹⁴ Currid and Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas*, 242 map 12-C provide a helpful topographic map of the Cilician Gates, concluding that 'Paul almost certainly traveled through this pass on his second and third missionary journeys.' Nevertheless, they incorrectly assert that the Cilician Gates were 'the only way to travel by land between southern Asia Minor and the Levant'.

¹¹⁵ A direct route to Iconium from the Cilician Gates bypassing Derbe and Lystra is suggested in Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (3rd ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1993): 184 map 252.

¹¹⁶ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988): 61.1.

¹¹⁷ Wilson formerly believed Luke's descriptions in chapters 16 and 18 reflected the same geographic reality, but now thinks the order reflects a similar although not exact reality; see Glen L. Thompson and Mark Wilson, 'The Route of Paul's Second Journey in Asia Minor: In the Steps of Robert Jewett and Beyond', *TynBulTynBul* 67.2 (2016): 224.

Later in Ephesus a disciple named Gaius, called Paul's travelling companion (συνεκδήμιος; Acts 19:29), was seized during the riot.¹¹⁸ The plural Μακεδόνας suggests that both he and Aristarchus were Macedonians. Yet on the third-journey return to Jerusalem an individual with the Roman name Gaius is said to be from Derbe while Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (Acts 20:4; cf. 27:2). Metzger notes that this interpretative problem is a 'well-known crux'.¹¹⁹ The Alexandrian text in 19:29 is singular (Μακεδόνα), which suggests that only Aristarchus was Macedonian, so it is possible that dittography exists in the text.¹²⁰ Perhaps Gaius joined Paul in Derbe on his way to Ephesus, like Timothy joined Paul and Silas in Lystra on the second journey (Acts 16:3-4).¹²¹ Because of the lack of a *patria* for Timothy in 20:4, Barrett speculates that this 'suggests but does not positively affirm that Timothy's home was in Lystra whereas the association with Gaius might suggest that Timothy came from Derbe. Both were Lycaonian towns, though some distance apart.'¹²² The omission most likely results from Timothy's background being so extensively presented in 16:1-3 that Luke saw no need to insert Lystra again.

6. Conclusion

Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe after Paul's stoning in Lystra. While unstated, it was undoubtedly to escape further persecution from the

¹¹⁸ The plural Μακεδόνας suggests that both men were Macedonians; however, the Alexandrian text here is singular (Μακεδόνα) suggesting that only Aristarchus was Macedonian. For the possibility of dittography here, see F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990): 418.

¹¹⁹ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975): 475-76. See his extensive note for a full discussion.

¹²⁰ See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 418. John Wineland, 'Derbe', *Anchor Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (vol. 2; New York: Doubleday, 1992): 145 also identifies the Gaius in these two texts in Acts as the same person from Derbe. However, John Gillman, 'Gaius', *ABD*, vol. 2, 869 leans towards identifying him as Macedonian.

¹²¹ See Mark Wilson, 'The "Upper Regions" and the Route of Paul's Third Journey from Apamea to Ephesus', *Scriptura* 117.1 (2018): 20.

¹²² C. K. Barrett, *Acts 15-28* (New York: T&T Clark, 1998): 948. Barrett thinks the connection of Gaius to Derbe may be an error and that the reading in 19:29 is correct: he was a Macedonian.

Jews of the area and to provide a safe place for Paul to recover from his injuries (Acts 14:19-20). Why Derbe was chosen when the larger regional center Laranda was skipped is also unstated. Acts 14:6-7 does state that Paul and Barnabas preached in the Lycaonian region between Lystra and Derbe, so it is possible to conclude with Breytenbach and Zimmermann that Christianity arrived in Laranda ‘as early as Paul’s missionary journeys’.¹²³ While Laranda was a major transportation hub, it was not a Roman colony like Claudioderbe. A likelihood is that someone from Derbe was in Lystra, heard Paul’s message, saw the healing miracle, and became either a convert or enquirer of the gospel. Just as Sergius Paulus had invited Paul and Barnabas to visit his *patria* Pisidian Antioch,¹²⁴ this individual likewise invited Paul and Barnabas to accompany him back to Derbe. While the connection of Gaius to Derbe is intriguing, it cannot be known if he was the initial reason that Paul first came to Derbe. Nevertheless, Paul did go to this unlikely Lycaonian city.

¹²³ Breytenbach and Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia*, 208.

¹²⁴ Mark Wilson, ‘Saint Paul in Pamphylia: Intention, Arrival, Departure’, *Adalya* 19 (2016): 231-32.