



Summary :

Akalissos is a city in eastern Lycia and was probably built before the Greeks arrived in Lycia. The limited information available about the history of the city, mainly inscriptions and some monuments, concerns the Roman Imperial years. At the time the city was the centre of a federal state ('sympolity') belonging to the Koinon of Lycia and minted its own coinage. The city was still inhabited in the Early Christian period.

Geographical Location

Lycia, SW Turkey

Historical Region

Lycia

Administrative Dependence

Province of Lycia

Geographical Coordinates

1. Location

Akalissos is in eastern [Lycia](#), halfway along the course of the Limyros River, about 27 km to the north of Kumluca, at an uninhabited site called Gavuristanlik or Asarderesi, near the present Asarköy. The location was identified in 1842 by Spratt and Forbes with the help of inscriptions found there.¹

2. Historical Background

The suffix –issos of the name proves that the city existed before the Greeks arrived in Lycia.² Most information about the history of the city concerns the Roman Imperial years. According to inscriptions, Akalissos at the time was the centre of a sympolity, whose members were Idebessos and Kormi, to the northwest and east of the city respectively. The sympolity belonged to the [Koinon of Lycia](#) and its citizens held offices in the Koinon during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.³

[Hadrian](#) must have visited Akalissos when he travelled to Lycia in 129 AD during his second journey to the eastern provinces of the empire. According to an inscription, the Boule and the Demos of the city celebrated an imperial visit there; however, because the inscriptions reporting the event were found in Phaselis, on the eastern coast of the Lycian peninsula, it is possible that Akalissos sent representatives to Phaselis to pay their respect to the emperor when the latter visited Phaselis.⁴

Between 140-143 AD the city, just like other Lycian cities, was benefited by Opramoas from [Rhodiapolis](#), who offered the amount of 3,000 denarii for the restoration of damages caused by the severely devastating earthquake of 140/1 AD.⁵ As the centre of the sympolity, the city minted bronze coins in the years of Gordian III (238-244 AD).⁶ The front side depicted the bust of either the emperor or his wife Tranquillina (241-244 AD), while the inscription ΑΚΑΛΙΣΣΕΩΝ appeared on the back side, which depicted either the Dioscuri with Helen or a riding god or hero, Tyche, Herakles or Apollo. Representations on coins provide valuable evidence about the deities worshipped in the city.⁷ Akalissos was also a place of imperial worship, as proven by the inscribed base of a statue representing Emperor Commodus (180-192 AD), which was found in the area and reported the city as neocorus.⁸ The base could possibly bear two statues. The second one may have represented Crispina, although the latter is not reported on the inscription.⁹

There is little information from the following centuries about Akalissos. According to references from *Synekdemos* of Hierocles of Alexandria and Byzantine bishop-lists¹⁰ as well as architectural remains, it seems that the city was still inhabited in the Early Christian



period.

3. Buildings



There are few monuments. Remains of walls from buildings of different periods as well as the ruins of two Christian churches have been preserved. Some tombs carved on the rock are on the hillside to the north, while about 30 sarcophaguses with the name of the city inscribed on them have been traced.¹¹

1. von Aulock, H., *Die Münzprägung des Gordian III und der Tranquillina in Lykien, Istanbuler Mitteilungen Beiheft 11* (Tübingen 1974), p. 35.
2. Bean, G., *Lycian Turkey. An Archaeological Guide* (London - New York 1978), pp. 139-140.
3. TAM II.3, p. 302 and no. 830, 833, 836, 837, 846, 847, 849, 852, 854, 859, 867, 870, 875.
4. Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the end of the Third Century after Christ* (Princeton 1950), p. 620.
5. TAM II.3, no. 905, XVII.E and XIX.D.
6. von Aulock, H., *Die Münzprägung des Gordian III und der Tranquillina in Lykien, Istanbuler Mitteilungen Beiheft 11* (Tübingen 1974), pp. 55-56, no. 1-7.
7. As for the deities worshipped in Akalissos, see Frei, P., 'Die Götterkulte Lykiens in der Kaiserzeit', ANRW II, 18.3 (Bonn - New York 1990), p. 1764 (Apollo), p. 1786 (Dioscuri), p. 1801 (Herakles), and p. 1838 (Tyche).
8. TAM II.3, no. 879.
9. Vermeule, C.C., *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor* (Cambridge Mass 1968), p. 480· Inan, J. – Rosenbaum, E., *Roman and Early Byzantine Portrait Sculpture in Asia Minor* (London 1966), p. 50, no. 7.
10. Hierokl., *Synekd.* 683, 4· *Notitiae episcopatum* I 309, III 265, VIII 361, IX 270.
11. Bean, G., *Lycian Turkey. An Archaeological Guide* (London - New York 1978), p. 140.

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	Spratt T.A.B., Forbes E., <i>Travels in Lycia, Milyas and the Cibyratis</i> , London 1847
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	Frei P., "Die Götterkulte Lykiens in der Kaiserzeit", Haase, W. – Temporini, H. (eds), <i>ANRW II.18.3</i> , Berlin – New York 1990, 1729-1864
	Hirschfeld G., "Akalissos", <i>RE I. 1</i> , 1894, 1142

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	Lycian Turkey http://www.lycianturkey.com
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Hierokl., *Synekd.* 683, 4· *Notitiae episcopatum* I 309, III 265, VIII 361, IX 270.

Chronological Table

2nd-3rd c. AD: Centre of the federal state ('sympolity') of the Koinon of Lycia, issuance of coins.

129 AD: Visit of Hadrian.

140-143 AD: The city is subsidised by Opramoas from Rhodiapolis.

Palaeo-Christian period: Few references and monuments.