

A new Late Antique property inscription from the Isaurian city of Germanicopolis recording a landlord by the name of Nikopssianis owner of a *proastion/topothesia*

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The inscribed limestone block, today preserved in the museum of Karaman/Laranda, was found in 2016 during the course of road construction work at Karalar, on the outskirts of Ermenek /Germanicopolis located near the dam about 2 km south of the town centre¹. At the site of Karalar there is also a small *necropolis* including some sarcophagi. The inscription is an informative document concerning agricultural production in Germanicopolis during Antiquity².

The back face of the rectangular block is roughewn. All four sides of the block are cut straight and the traces of the patent hammer are visible as on the facade. The form and the workmanship of the stone suggest that it was probably employed in a wall.

Dimensions: H: 40 cm; W: 61 cm; D: 18 cm; L. H: 2.5-6.5 cm.



† χῆρε φίλε. ὁ θέ-
2 λικ μοὶ διπλᾶ σοὶ
γένεται. τόδε προ-
4 άστιον Νικοψσιανε<ι>
ἐπιλέγεται ἢ δὲ τοπο-
6 ^{vac.} θεσία Τοαρεζα †

“Greeting friend. Whatever that you wish for me get twice as much to you. This (is) Nikopssianis’s proastion; besides, (it) is said as the Toareza topothesia”.

Apparatus criticus and the type of the inscription

L. 1-2: χῆρε = χῆρε = χαῖρε. θέλικ = θέλικς, from the verb θέλω or ἐθέλω.

L. 3-4: γένεται = γίνεται. προάστιον = προάστειον.

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² A project with the title “Agricultural production and production techniques in Ermenek and its vicinity in Antiquity” is presently being conducted by the archaeology department of Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University and I am grateful to the project’s team for the permission to publish this inscription.

Νικοψσιανε, as it stands on the stone, seems to be miswritten and has not been attested before. It should be the proper name of a person, who owned the *proastion*, and it needs to be restored grammatically in the genitive or dative case. A narrow letter was probably missed out by the stone cutter, as there is no broken edge to the stone, nor is there any trace of a letter after the *epsilon*. Only *iota* would fit within the space of the vacancy at the end of the line and it seems to be the most appropriate letter. Therefore, Νικοψσιανει, can be the genitive case³ of a new indigenous personal name, Νικοψσιανις.

L. 6: Τοαρεζα: The first of the suspicious read letters may be *lambda* (not *delta*), the other can also be read as *xi*. This case leads to three more alternative readings, as: Τοαρεζα, Τοαρεξα, Τολρεζα and Τολρεξα. Neither Τοαρεζα nor any of its alternative readings is Greek or Latin. It is not clear whether it was a place name or a personal name. Τοαρεζα can be a feminine place name given to the *topothesia* or it can be a native masculine personal name in the genitive case of the nominative Τοαρεζας, namely an alias of Nikopssianis. In this case the last sentence can be translated as “(it) is also said as the *topothesia* of Τοαρεζας”. In addition, in terms of phonetics, it seems very interesting to see the similarity between Τοαρεζα or Τοαρεξα and Tuareg/Tuareks, the name of the nomadic people of northern Africa.

As to the type of the inscription, the salutation χερε φιλε or only χαϊρε is documented in numerous funerary inscriptions from many ancient regions. The benison sentence of ὃ θέλις μοι διπλᾶ σοὶ γένηται seems as a tradition to have originated from a monotheistic religion. A very similar expression is attested by two funerary inscriptions⁴ from the region of Phrygia as ὅσα εὖ ἐμοὶ διπλᾶ σοὶ θεὸς ἀνταπόδοιτο “*how great blessing (you want) for me, God give back twice as much to you*”. The same prayer is still employed in Anatolia as “*hakkımda ne dūşünüyorsan Allah sana iki katını versin*”. Although this first part of the inscription seems to have been formulated as an epitaph, this is not a funerary inscription. The terms *proastion* and *topothesia* in the second part of the inscription (ll. 3-6) are certainly recorded here not in connection with any cemetery or a tomb⁵. Both of these terms used with the same meaning indicate only a property in the possession of the inscribed stone’s owner. The blessing sentence ὃ θέλις μοι διπλᾶ σοὶ γένηται should also be understood as a statement reflecting the wish of a landowner who wants to produce a high income from his property or estate. Therefore, it can be stated that this type of inscribed document was a “property inscription”.

³ Καδαδανει is attested as a genitive form of Καδαδανις in an inscription from Artanada (Dülgerler) from the region of Isauria, Sterrett 1888, 74-75 no. 128; Zgusta 1964, § 500-13; Brixhe 1984, 73. Another example is Ξιμει, the genitive form of Ξιμις which is recorded in an inscription from Pisidia, see Alkan 2010, 42; for the critics of the inscription, see BE 125, 2012, 663-664 no. 434.

⁴ Anderson 1889, 306-307 no. 246; MAMA VII, 260. Both of these inscriptions were found within the modern village of Piribeyli in the province of Konya (Iconion).

⁵ The term *proastion* together with *necropolis* is only found in Strabo’s account of Alexandria in Egypt. Strabon records a *proastion necropolis*, namely “the *necropolis* outside of the city” of Alexandria, Strab. XVII.1. 10: εἶθ’ ἡ Νεκρόπολις τὸ προάστειον, ἐν ᾧ κήποι τε πολλοὶ καὶ ταφαὶ καὶ καταγωγαὶ πρὸς τὰς ταριχείας τῶν νεκρῶν ἐπιτήδεια. We find the term of *topothesia* in a funerary inscription from the city of Nicaia in Bithynia, but it is not a term employed in the funeral sense. In the inscription the term is recorded as μέσ[η]ν τοποθεσίαν, to describe the middle part of the area belonging to a sarcophagus (τὴν σκάφην [σὺν τῷ περι]κιμένῳ περι[βόλῳ]), for this inscription see INikaia 117.

On the use of the terms προάστιον and τοποθεσία and the historical context of the inscription

As can be understood from the syntax of the second part of the inscription and from the verb ἐπιλέγω, *proastion* and *topothesia* are used as two different terms referring to the same object, the property of Nikopssianis. At first glance it seems difficult to understand why the people of Germanicopolis called this property both *proastion* and *topothesia*. The understanding of the use of these terms depends upon the documents in which the terms *proastion* and *topothesia* are mentioned. Most of the evidence concerning these terms are in the texts on papyrus found in Egyptian cities, especially those dating from the Early Byzantine Period.

Προάστιον: In ancient literary sources the term *proastion* generally carried the meaning of a suburban or military settlement outside of a city gate⁶. Rather than its classical sense in the literary sources of suburban, the epigraphic documents from Late Antiquity, including those on papyrus attest that the term *proastion*, as well as meaning a settlement, was also used to describe a large estate or the maison of a proprietor's field outside a city⁷.

In a text on papyrus from the Egyptian city of Arsinoites concerning a rental agreement⁸, which is dated to the middle of sixth century A.D., the term *proastion* was used as (ll. 5-8):

ὁμολογῶ μεμισθῶσθαι παρὰ σοῦ τὰς διαφερούσας σοι ἐν πεδίῳ Ψαβαθῶτι | πρὸς τοῖς π[ρ]οαστίοις
τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως ἐν τόπῳ κ[λήρου] | κάλο[υ]μέν[ου] Ἰστοπ[ο]νάχβων ἀρούρας δύο “*I declare that I have hired from you two arurai in the properties belonging to you, in the topos of the kleros called Istoponachbon in the Psabathos plain in front of the proastia of the city ...*”. The word *aroura* in this text is employed as a measure of land. It is possible to understand from the text that the *proastia* were the urban settlements outside the city.

In another text again from the city of Arsinoites on papyrus⁹, dated to between 222 and 235 A.D., indicates that *proastia*, in the plural case, were the fields belonging to a village. The relevant lines of the text, which is the petition of a libelland asking for a clarification about his donkey found dead, are as follows:

ἀποδημοῦν|[τό]ς μου περὶ τὰ δημόσια πράγμα|τὰ ἐξεπήδησέν μου ὄνο[ς] θήλια | οὐα ἀπὸ αὐλῆς μου
οὔσης ἐν | τῇ προκειμένη κώμῃ, τῶν δέ | [μου οἰκ]εῖων τὴν ἀναζήτη|[σιν] πο[ι]ησαμένων εὔραν
αὐ|[τὴν κ]α[τ]ὰ τὰ προάστια τῆς κώ[[μη]ς [ἐσ]φιγμένην καὶ οὐ [ζῶσαν], ὑπὸ τίνος δὲ ἀγνοῶ “*When I was from home for the public affairs, my donkey leaped out my courtyard being in the prescribed village (Teptynis), then my familiars, by investigation throughout the proastia of the village, found it exhausted; I am ignorant of this*”.

The term *proastion* also indicates a property of a private person, as in, προαστῖ(ου) Ῥοπλυεῖνου recorded in line 16 of a text on papyrus dating from the 6th-7th centuries found in the city of Aphroditopolis which includes a list of various services¹⁰.

⁶ Husson 1967, 187; Audring 1981; Schuler 1998, 105-107.

⁷ Rouillard 1953, 88-89; Husson 1967, 192-193; Goodman 2007, 27-28.

⁸ DDbDP transcription: sb.18.13885.

⁹ DDbDP transcription: sb.6.9203.

¹⁰ DDbDP transcription: sb.20.14705.

It can be seen from the text recorded on another papyrus¹¹ dated 584 A.D., a payment receipt found in the archive of the famous estate of the Apiones family in the city of Oxyrhynchus, that the *proastion* was a manor house or a bath house:

ἔδο^θ(ησαν) δι(ὰ) τοῦ εὐλαβ(εστάτου) Ἀπολλῶ ἐνοικολ[ό]γ(ου) ὑπὲρ τιμ(ῆς) σπέκλων ξ ἀγορασ^θ-
(έντων) | εἰς χρεῖαν τοῦ λουτροῦ τοῦ προαστίου ἕξξω τῆς πολῆς ἀργυρ(ίου) μυριάδας | χιλίας τριακο-
σίας πεντήκοντα “one thousand three hundred and fifty myriads of silver were paid by the most rever-
ent rent-collector Apollo for the price of 60 windows bought for the need of the proastion outside of the
city”. These 60 windows probably belonged a mansion or to a large estate bathhouse¹² used by the
slaves and/or the labourers who worked the estate.

Τοποθεσία: Ancient literary sources use the term *topothesia* to describe an imaginary place differently from the *topography*¹³ describing a particular place as a country, city, land etc. Despite this, some epigraphic and papyrological documents from Egypt dating from Late Antiquity indicate that the term *topothesia* was used to specify a certain place as a district, land or landed property.

A papyrus text¹⁴ dated to 632 A.D., which includes a contract concerning the tenancy of an agricultural land belonging to a church, records the term *topothesia* in the part between the lines 9 and 15 as follows: ὁμολογῶ μεμισθῶσθαι. | παρὰ τῆς ὑμετέρας λαμπρότητος τὰς διαφερούσας | τῇ αὐτῇ ἀγία
ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν πεδίῳ τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης Βουβάστου ἐν τοπ[οθ]εσί[α καλουμέ(νῃ)] | Θανσελη ἐν πεντάσι
κλονίοις [ἀρούρας πέντε] | πλέον ἔλαττον ἄρουραι ε πλ(έον) ἔλατ(ον) [μετὰ παντός] | αὐτῶν τοῦ
δικαίου. In this evidence, the *topothesia* called Thansele seems to be a large district including the
Boubastos village with its plain (pedion) in which there were agricultural lands and an *ekklesia*.

In a land leasing agreement recorded on a papyrus text¹⁵ from the city of Arsinoite dated 543 A.D., *topothesia* is seen as a district, in a plain where there were some pieces of land. The relevant lines of the text are (ll. 6-10):

ὁμολογῶ | μεμισθῶσθαι> παρὰ σοῦ τὰς ὑπαρ|χούσας ἀρούρας ἐν πεδίῳ | Πεστα ἐν | δισεῖ (δυσι)
τοποθεσίαις ἐν μὲν | τόπῳ κλήρου κ[α]λουμένου | Θανεπάρχου πλησίον τῶν ἐμῶν ἀρουρῶ<ν> ἀρού-
ρας τρ<ε>ῖς καὶ ἐν πεδίο ... “I grant to have been hired from you the arable lands (aroura) at the place
(topos) of the farmland (cleros) called Thaneparchos, near to our lands, in two topothesia in the Pesta
plain (pedion).

In another text on papyrus¹⁶ found in the Egyptian city of Aphroditopolis and dated to 514 A.D., *topothesia* appears also a large rental farmland, called *Pchetos topothesia*, ll. 6-10:

μεμισθῶμαι παρὰ σοῦ | πρὸς τετραετῆ χρόνον ἀπὸ καρπῶν σὺν θεῷ | μελλούσης ἐννάτης ἰνδικ(τίο-
νος) καὶ αὐτῆς τὸ ὑπάρχον σοι | χρακωνος¹⁷ καὶ Χάτιδος¹⁸ ἐν τοποθεσίᾳ | Πιχῆτος ἀγορασθείσας παρὰ
σοῦ παρὰ Εὐλογίου “By the grace of god I have hired from you for four-year apart from the fruits, by

¹¹ DDbDP transcription: p.wisc.2.66.

¹² Husson 1967, 194.

¹³ Ziegler 1937, 1722-1723 s.v. Topographia.

¹⁴ DDbDP transcription: sb.6.9461.

¹⁵ DDbDP transcription: stud.pal.20.142.

¹⁶ DDbDP transcription: p.flor.3.279.

¹⁷ This word can be χ[α]ρακῶνος (vineyard).

¹⁸ The first letter can be misread. The word would be ἰσάτιδος, from ἰσάτις (*isatis tinctoria* / dyer's woad).

making a covenant to begin from the ninth indictio, your property with the vineyard and isatis in the Pchetos topothesia, which you bought from Eulogios”.

In the following passage quoted from a papyrus text¹⁹, from Hermoupolis and dated 476 A.D., including a land leasing agreement, *topothesia* can be understood as a term employed to describe cultivated land, land that could be subdivided into agricultural parcels:

ὄμ[ολο]γοῦμεν ἀλληλέγγυοι ὄντες καὶ ἀλληλανάδοχοι | [-ca.?-] ἐκο[υσί]ως καὶ αὐθαιρέτ[ως με-
μισ]θῶσθαι [παρ]ὰ τῆς σῆς [θ]αυμασιότητος | [-ca.?-] ἐπὶ ἑξαετῆ χρόνον ἀπὸ καρπῶν τῆς ἐ[ύτ]υ-
χοῦς εἰσιούσης πρώτης ἰνδικ(τίονος) | [-ca.?- τὰς] ὑπαρ[χο]ύσας τῆ [σῆ] θαυμασιότητι ἀρούρας δε-
κ[α]οκ[τῶ διακ]ειμ[ένας] ἐν [. . . .].[.][. .] τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως ἐν [δυσι το]ποθ[εσί]αις, ἐν με[ν μ]ιᾶ
τοποθ[εσί]α πρὸς τ[ῶ] γεωρ[γ]ίῳ καλο[υμέν]ῳ Πα . αμ[-ca.?- ἀρο]ύρ[ας] δώδεκ[α], [ἐν] δὲ τῆ ἄλ-
[λη] τοποθ[εσί]α | ἐξ ἀπληρώτου τ[οῦ] καλ[ου]μέ[νου . . .] . ο . .[. .] τὰς ὑπολοιπίους ἀ[ρού]ρας “*we
mutual sureties and giving mutual security agree voluntary and independently that the properties of
eighteen arourai being in your possession in [---] to have been leased from you venerable as free from
fruits for six years from the beginning of the first indictio. [---] of the same city in two topothesiai, twelve
arourai in one topothesia near the cultivated area (georgion) called Pa[.]am[---], the remaining arourai
in the other topothesia on the east wind of [---] called [---]*”.

Topothesia is also employed to describe farmland in another text on papyrus from the city of Oxyrhynchos, dated 179 A.D.²⁰, concerning the sale of a farm; ll. 7-8:

γείτονες τῶν αὐτῶν πωλουμένων ὑμῖν ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐλῆς ἐπὶ τοποθεσία πηχῶν πεντήκοντα
νότου Διογένους καὶ ἄλλ[λ]ων βορρᾶ Σαραπίωνος χρημα[τιζο]ντος μητρὸς Θαισοῦτος ἀπληρώτου
Λουκίου Ἐρεινίου Κρείσπου καὶ ἄλλων λιβὸς οἱ λοιπο[ί] τῆς αὐτῆς αὐλῆς τόποι “*The adjacent lands
sold to you by me, from the court on the topothesia (are) fifthly cubits southward of that of Diogenes
and others, on the north that of Sarapion called as the son of the mother Thaisous, on the east that of
Lucius Herennios Crispus and others, on the west the remaining places of the same court*”.

In a correspondence between Alypoios and Heroneinos documented through another papyrus²¹ from the Egyptian city of Theadelphia and dated 266-7 A.D., the term *topothesia* can be understood as indicating a portion of cultivated land, which was under the responsibility of a house-steward. The relevant sentence of the text, between the lines 10 and 15, is as follows:

τὰ δὲ τεμνόμενα φυτὰ εὐθέως εἰς ὕδωρ βαλλέσθω ἵνα μὴ ξηρανθῆ εἰδότες ὅτι κατ’ ἐκάστην φροντίδα
τῶν φυτευομένων τόπων σημιούμαι τὴν ἐκάστου φροντιστοῦ καὶ κτήματος τοποθεσίαν ἵνα εἴ τις τι
ἐμβάλοι παρὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐγκέλευσιν ἢ τι ἀντὶ Θεβαϊκοῦ ἢ λευκοῦ κηπάδιον ἢ ἄλλο τι κλημὰ ζημιώθη
ζημίαν ἢν μὴ προσδόκα “*For it not to become dry, let the cut plants be thrown into the water; because
each portion of the cultivated land I marked as the topothesia each of the procurator and of the property,
that anyone does not make any attack against my command or against white vineyard of Thebaikos or
against the vines or another any criminal offence which I have not expected*”.

¹⁹ DDbDP transcription: bgu.12.2151.

²⁰ DDbDP transcription: sb.20.14199.

²¹ DDbDP transcription: p.flor.2.148.

It is seen sometimes that a private person had a *topothesia* himself as τοποθεσίας Πινδάρου recorded in a text on papyrus²² from the Egyptian city of Antinoopolis dated to 568 A.D.

An inscription²³ found near the Delta in Egypt, dating from Late Antiquity or the Early Christian period, records a *topothesia* called Boukola that belonged to the οὐσία (*ousia*) of a certain Menas. The *Boukola topothesia* was probably an area of farmland in the possession of Menas. The word *ousia*²⁴ can be understood as describing an estate in the most general sense.

It is consequently clear that both terms *proastion* and *topothesia* were used to indicate the real estates of Nikopssianis. The possession of Nikopssianis must have been an estate comprising two properties, one of which corresponded to one of the meanings of *proastion*, the other corresponded to the meaning conveyed by the term *topothesia*. As can be concluded from the evidence given above on the use of both terms, *proastion* was a residence and *topothesia* was an area of cultivated land. This seems the most meaningful interpretation in accordance with the context provided by this inscription. Namely, the *proastion* of Nikopssianis or in other words the Toareza *topothesia* must have been his farmstead, which comprised of a mansion and some arable land. The people of Germanicopolis probably used both terms *proastion* and *topothesia*, to correspond to an estate or farmstead with a residence and a cultivated land in a single sense.

This farmstead or estate of Nikopssianis in the suburb of Germanicopolis was managed by himself or those who worked under of him as slaves or labourers. The landowner Nikopssianis was probably producing wine²⁵ on his estate. It can not be considered that the property of Nikopssianis formed a large estate, like those in Egypt where there were most powerful families holding very large estates. One of them was the rich and famous Apion family, which is well known through the papyri from the archive found at the city of Oxyrhynchos, and some members of this family held high offices like the consulship in the administration of the Byzantine Empire. The estate of Nikopssianis was possible an agricultural enterprise composed of a farmland with a residence, some workshops and maybe some threshing floor.

During Late Antiquity and later, many landowners like Nikopssianis would have been cultivating the lands in the suburb settlements of Germanicopolis. There are today many small rural settlements dispersed throughout the large area of cultivated land extending from the south of the city to the Calycadnus valley. In the 17th century, the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi visited Ermenek and in his Seyahatnâme (travel book) he described the vineyards and orchards of the town as “varoş-ı bâğ-ı irem” in old Turkish (the garden of eden of the suburb). He also records that there were 12 districts each with one small mosque and 800 masonry constructions within the suburb of Ermenek²⁶.

²² DDbDP transcription: p.cair.masp.2.67162.

²³ SB 1, 1915, no. 5701: † τοποθεσία | ἐπιλεγομένη | Βουκόλα διαφέρουσα τῇ οὐσίᾳ | Μηνᾶ τοῦ μεγ(ίστου) Μαξιμίμου οὔση ἐν τῇ | Κερκεσία † (“*This is the topothesia called as Boukala belonging to the estate of Menas, son of the great Maximus, being in the Kerkesia (village)*”).

²⁴ For usage of the word *ousia* in the meaning of the emperor’s estate in the Egyptian documents, see Thompson 1987, 558; for more detail about this word, see Tacoma 2015.

²⁵ In the gardens of Ermenek there are more than 100 wine workshops. These workshops were found during the course of the surveys conducted by the department of archaeology at the university of Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey, see Aşkın 2016, 103; Aşkın et al. 2017, 179.

²⁶ Evliya Çelebi, Kitap 9, cilt 1, p. 328-330.

Germanicopolis seems to have been a rich city in terms of its agricultural production in Late Antiquity. Politically, this wealth made it an important place amongst Isaurian cities. According to the account provided by the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus²⁷, the notable men of Germanicopolis seem to have taken the role of mediators between the Isaurian bandits who rebelled in 368 A.D. and the Roman troops brought in to suppress them. Some of these notable men, who were influential persons in the government of the city, may have been landowners, who were probably employing some native Isaurian “strong-arm men” to provide security for their estates. These landowners not only served as mediators between the rebels and the Roman troops, but in this way may also have limited the number of strong-arm men willing and able to join in any rebellion²⁸.

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²⁷ Amm. Marc., 27.9.7; Rougé 1966, 300; Matthews 1989, 364-365.

²⁸ Hopwood 1999, 205.

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**Isauria kenti Germanikopolis'den yeni bir Geç Antikçađ mülkiyet yazıtı ve
proastion/topothesia sahibi Nikopssianis adında bir feodal bey**

Özet

Feodal sistemin ortaya çıkmasına neden olan, arazi sahibi zenginler tarafından sahip olunan büyük çiftlikler Geç Antikçađ'ın ekonomik yapısında önemli bir yer almıştır. Genellikle kentlerde ikamet eden bu toprak ağaları kentlerin varoş bölgelerinde malikânelere ve tarım alanlarına sahiptiler. Bu feodal beyler sadece toprak zengini seçkinler değil, aynı zamanda Geç Antikçađ Dönemi yönetiminde de etkin kişilerdi.

Bu makale, Germanikopolis/Ermenek kentinden Nikopssianis adında Hıristian bir toprak ağasının kentin varoş semtindeki mülkiyetini gösteren yeni bir epigrafik belgeyi tanıtmaktadır. Yazıtın çevirisi:

“*Selam ey dost! Benim için istediğin şey sana iki katı olsun. Bu proastion Nikopssianis’in(dir); ayrıca Toareza topothesia diye de söylenir*”.

İlk olarak bu yazıtta birlikte görünen *proastion* ve *topothesia* terimleri Nikopssianis’in mülkiyeti olarak aynı anlamda kullanılmaktadır. Geç Antikçağ’ın papirus ve epigrafik belgeleri, antik edebi kaynaklarda kent kapıları dışındaki varoş yerleşimi ve askeri yerleşim yeri olarak kullanılan *proastion* teriminin Geç Antikçağ’da geniş çiftlik ve malikâne anlamında da kullanıldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Aynı şekilde, edebi kaynaklarda gerçekte var olmayan hayali bir yerin tasviri için kullanılan *topothesia* sözcüğünün, Geç Antikçağ yazıtlarında ve papiruslarında bölge, mahalle, semt ve geniş tarımsal arazileri tanımlamak için kullanıldığı görülmektedir.

Sonuç itibarıyla, Ermenek yazıtında aynı anlamda görülen *proastion* ve *topothesia* terimlerinin, Germanicopolis kentinin bir kenar mahallesinde Nikopssianis isimli zengin bir yurttaşın çiftliğini, yani konutuyla birlikte tarım arazisini göstermek için kullanıldığı anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Ermenek, Nikopssianis, *proastion/proasteion*, *topothesia*, malikâne, çiftlik, feodal bey.

A new Late Antique property inscription from the Isaurian city of Germanicopolis recording a landlord by the name of Nikopssianis owner of a *proastion/topothesia*

Abstract

The large estates owned by the landlords, who caused the emergence of the feudal system, had a significant place within the economic structure of Late Antiquity. These landowners were generally city dwellers possessing residences and cultivated estates outside the cities. These landowners were not only wealthy, members of the agrarian elites, but were also influential persons for the administration in Late Antiquity.

This contribution introduces a new epigraphic document indicating the property (*proastion/topothesia*) of a certain landlord Nikopssianis who was a Christian from the city of Germanicopolis. Both terms *proastion* and *topothesia*, which are for the first time seen together in this inscription, were used with the same meaning for the real estates of Nikopssianis. The papyrial and the epigraphic documents from Late Antiquity attest that the term *proastion* was also used to describe a large estate or an estate house outside of a city with the difference of its classical sense of suburban or a military settlement in the ancient literary sources. Likewise, the term *topothesia*, which is used in the meaning of an imaginary place in the literary sources, seems in Late Antiquity to be a word describing a certain district or a large area of agricultural land.

Consequently, with the use of the terms *proastion* and *topothesia* in this inscription it is suggested that both terms should be understood as indicating Nikopssianis’s farmstead comprising both a residence and an area of agricultural land in the suburb of Germanicopolis.

Keywords: Germanicopolis, Nikopssianis, *proastion/proasteion*, *topothesia*, estate, landlord.