NEW RESEARCH IN AIZANOI 2007 – 2009

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In the Roman imperial period, Aizanoi was a middle-sized town in ancient Phrygia, proud of its history and trying to keep up with the level of cultural and urban development, which the cities of western Asia Minor mostly had established already years before. Its way into this position during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods is in many respects still unclear, even though, already in the time of Augustus, Strabo (12, 8, 12) counted the city among the important towns of Phrygia Epitktetos. Recent research in Aizanoi provides further information regarding this early development.

In 1824, the modern town of Çavdarhisar near Kütahya was identified as the site of ancient Aizanoi. In 1926 and 1928, the German scholars Martin Schede und Daniel Krenker studied the ruins of the temple of Zeus in Çavdarhisar, the best preserved temple of modern Turkey. After the terrible Gediz earthquake of 1970 (when this temple fortunately escaped major destruction) German archaeologists came back to Aizanoi to help protect the ruins and to start systematic research. Since then, fieldwork and restoration has been carried out regularly by the German Archaeological Institute in Istanbul. 2010 marked 40 years of continuous German activities at this site. Under the direction of Rudolf Naumann, Adolf Hoffman and Klaus Rheidt, all of them architects and scholars of the history of architecture, the Roman monuments of Aizanoi were studied, while excavations and necessary restoration work was carried out in multiple places of the site, including the temple of Zeus itself, a market building, two Roman baths, the Roman bridges, the Roman stadium-theater-complex, where excavation and restoration works were carried out in the years before 1990, architectural studies until

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1 Cf. Naumann 1979: 8-11 for the literary record, and now Wörrle 2009 for Aizanoi’s Hellenistic history.
2 Naumann 1979; cf. Rheidt 2010: 11-19, also for the history of the excavation.
recently,\(^3\) and a newly discovered late-antique colonnaded street, which has been restored in 1996.\(^4\) Continuous research was undertaken with regard to the ancient pottery.\(^5\) In the region around the city, the so-called Aizanitis, particular focus was laid upon the study of inscriptions, displaced stones from the ancient city and the late-antique and byzantine settlement structures.\(^6\) Studies between 1990 and 2006 resulted in the first plan of the site including all visible ancient and modern remains (fig. 1). Regarding the area of the temple of Zeus, studies revealed that the pseudo-dipteros was erected on top of an ancient settlement mound in the time of the Roman emperor Domitian around 95/6 CE and not in the Hadrianic period.\(^7\) Between 1997 and 2006, at the settlement mound’s southern periphery, below the southern part of the temple square, Klaus Rheidt and his team found the first remains of the predecessor of Roman Aizanoi, the Hellenistic town of the 3rd through the 1st century BC, sandwiched between Roman layers and previously unknown early bronze age strata.\(^8\) Thus, during the last decades, our image of Aizanoi’s ancient history has changed due to intensive research. A new book, edited by Klaus Rheidt, now perfectly summarizes the manifold results of these studies and our knowledge of the urban development of ancient Aizanoi.\(^9\) The magnificently illustrated volume provides important insights into the history of a typical ancient town up to the years of the still preserved town houses of ancient Çavdarhisar, which are a perfect example of a Turkish village of the early and middle 20th century.\(^10\)

In 2007, the takeover of fieldwork in Aizanoi by a classical archaeologist resulted in a new research project, which since then is carried out by Freiburg University under the patronage of and funded by the German Archaeological Institute.\(^11\) The aim of the new project is to clarify the hitherto rather hypothetical Hellenistic and early Roman history

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\(^{3}\) Rohn 2007; see now C. Rohn in: Rheidt 2010: 112-129.
\(^{4}\) Cf. H. Türk in this volume.
\(^{5}\) Ateş 2001; Dikbas 2009; see now G. Dikbas in: Rheidt 2010: 44-46.
\(^{6}\) M. Wörle in: Rheidt 2010: 140-144 with further references; Niewöhner 2007.
\(^{7}\) Settlement mound: Rheidt 2001 with fig. 28; Rheidt 2008 with fig. 6; Rheidt 2009: 1220, fig. 1-2; Rheidt 2010: 18. – Date of temple: K. Jes, R. Posamentir and M. Wörle in: Rheidt 2010: 58-87 (with further references).
\(^{9}\) Rheidt 2010.
\(^{10}\) S. Blum in: Rheidt 2010: 154-167.
of the ancient town, which was one of the important cities in the region between the
'Hellenized' cities of the Aegean shore and central Anatolia during a period of political
and cultural transformation.

What we already know about the pre-imperial settlement of Aizanoi has been the point
of departure for this new research program. Literary and epigraphic testimonia indicate
that Hellenistic Aizanoi was probably a colony of the Attalid kings of Pergamon in a
region, which came into their possession in the later 3rd century BC. At that time, the
Pergamene king Attalos I and the king of Bithynia, Prusias I, were competing for parts
of Phrygia. Land related to the sanctuary of Zeus at Aizanoi was given to settlers, who
possibly came from Pergamon. Struggles over the border lines of the plots of land and
over the properties of this territory were still going on in the Roman period, as
Hadrianic inscriptions on the walls of the temple of Zeus demonstrate. From the
honiorific stele for Menestheus we know that, in the 1st century BC, Aizanoi had a
market place (agora) and other institutions of a typical ancient Greek polis, but we
neither know when these were acquired, nor what they looked like or where they were
located. Further epigraphic and historical testimonia point to Roman military and
political activities in the region during this period. Archaeological evidence adds to
this knowledge. Below the south corner of the Roman temple square, Klaus Rheidt
excavated the walls of a Hellenistic house, which was destroyed by fire after the middle
of the 2nd century BC (cf. fig. 9: 2; 3). Parts of its inventory of pottery were uncovered
lying on the floor of this building. Pottery types and forms of decoration, studied by
Güler Ateş, point to Pergamon as provenance of these vessels. The walls of the house
made of mud brick on a stone foundation were covered with stucco and painted in red
and yellow like in other towns of Hellenized Asia Minor and the Agean area in the 2nd

12 For references and summaries of our knowledge regarding the Hellenistic periods of Aizanoi: Naumann
14 Military activities: Mitchell 1993: 29-31; Tuchelt 1979: 194 no. L 19; Rheidt 2009: 1225; Wörle
For other facts regarding the temple (cult-image) and the hellinized culture (small scale sculpture) of the

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centuries BC. On the floor of another room (cf. fig. 9: 3), Rheidt found a collection of clay seals, which prove to the status and international contacts of the house’s owner, supposedly coming from Pergamon. After its destruction, the fairly rich house was covered by an unusual architectural structure: a stone wall of almost 1,40 m width, founded on wooden piles (cf. fig. 4; fig. 8-9).\textsuperscript{16} Rheidt assumed that this wall was built by Roman soldiers, but he was not yet sure about the exact date of its construction after the middle of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} or during the early 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC. Furthermore, it is still open to debate whether this wall was a fortification or functioned as a temenos wall of the early sanctuary of Zeus, the exact location of which is also still unsure.\textsuperscript{17} Likewise, the question arises, what happened after this wall was destroyed and before, in the late 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE, the temple was built and the citizens of Aizanoi enforced the urban development of their city. Apart from the Hellenistic house and wood-pile-wall, there is only a small amount of evidence for Hellenistic and early Roman houses and workshops on the eastern bank of the river Penkalas.\textsuperscript{18}

Our new research took its starting point from these facts and included geophysical survey and another rectangle of excavation trenches (ca. 20 x 10 m) on the western shore of the river Penkalas, south of the temple of Zeus, to the west of Klaus Rheidt’s area of research (fig. 1-2). The geophysical survey has confirmed that – disregarding the above-mentioned wall on wooden piles – there is no sign of a fortification wall surrounding the settlement of Aizanoi. Rather, ancient structures cannot be traced to the west and south-west of the later temple area, and there is no architecturally defined line dividing this vast area from the settlement remains further to the east.\textsuperscript{19} To the south of the temple, at the southern periphery of the ancient settlement mound, the first layers unearthed since 2007 were the remains of a middle-byzantine settlement (fig. 5).\textsuperscript{20} During earlier excavations, similar remains including graves had been detected also


\textsuperscript{17} Rheidt 2008: 109-111; 118-119, fig. 11; Rheidt 2009: 1226; Rheidt 2010: fig. 178.

\textsuperscript{18} Jes 2002: 50-51 with n. 12-13; 52, with further references.

\textsuperscript{19} von den Hoff 2010: fig. 2.

further to the north, near the temple.\textsuperscript{21} The byzantine structures are located inside and outside a byzantine fortress, which had been built upon the ancient walls of the temple-square of the sanctuary of Zeus around a Christian church located in the ancient temple cella. The fortress had supposedly been constructed during the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{22} The new excavations make clear, that the middle-byzantine settlement, including a paved way, stairways and house structures, was partly built together with the walls of this fortress. Subsequently, the rooms of the houses were renewed and/or reduced in size. In 2009, a deposit of bronze and other metal artifacts was excavated, which must have been laid down during the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, as coins indicate. Other bronze objects and human bones were found, which were remains of byzantine graves. They were transferred together with the surrounding earth during construction works. These deposits and the remains of the graves point to a certain level of wealth of this settlement at the eastern border of the byzantine empire, while the transfer of earth is sign of considerable rebuilding activities during its use. Only outside the walls of the temple court, below the middle-byzantine settlement, late antique or early byzantine structures came to light (fig. 4: ‘spätantik’). They were partly built of re-used Roman stone material and spolia.\textsuperscript{23} Hence, in the late-antique and possibly early byzantine period the Roman temple square must have been ‘respected’ for a certain time. At least it was not a residential area, like in the middle byzantine period, possibly because the area was reserved as source for stone material.\textsuperscript{24}

The known Roman remains of ancient Aizanoi south of the temple of Zeus are drawn together in fig. 4. When the temple was constructed around 95/6 CE together with the huge temple square and its porticoes (fig 4: ‘römisch II’), earlier structures of the settlement mound were destroyed and built over. In the new excavation trenches the latest of these earlier structures was a square building measuring around 15 x 15 m, uncovered in 2007-2009 and built in the early imperial period\textsuperscript{25} (fig. 4: 1 / ‘römisch I’; fig. 6-7). Only its foundation and its concrete inner structure are preserved as well as

\textsuperscript{21} Rheidt 2001: 249-253.
\textsuperscript{22} Naumann 1985.
\textsuperscript{23} von den Hoff/Rheidt 2009: 500 with fig. 3.
\textsuperscript{24} The surface was heavily lowered before the construction of the middle-byzantine fortress and settlement into completely ruined temple-square: Rheidt 2001: 249; Niewöhner 2007: 74, 153.
\textsuperscript{25} von den Hoff/Rheidt 2009: 500-501; von den Hoff 2010: fig. 3-4.

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parts of its outer wall in the west. It consists of a central rounded platform of concrete (opus caementitium), which was at least 1.5 m thick and in which groups of vertical clay tubes for water were inserted in a symmetrical system around the monument's center. The horizontal outlets of these tubes, which were only uncovered in the west, but which can be reconstructed on all sides, point in six different directions. The existence and positions of the triple tubes and the size of the structure let us assume that it was a huge fountain monument of square size with a rounded basin in the center (fig. 7). When the temple square was built, all stones of its upper structure were reused for the high temenos walls, while only the foundation and the massive opus caementitium were left in place. The type and size of the fountain compares well to the so-called Meta sudans in Rome, which was built in the Flavian period. In Asia Minor, such Meta-Sudans-type fountains are very rare. The best parallel is a much smaller fountain excavated in Alexandria Troas near Çanakkale in front of the Roman temple, built during the 2nd century CE. Since the Aizanoi fountain must have been erected in the early 1st century CE, it is not only the biggest fountain of this type, but also the earliest one in the Roman east and beyond. Until recently, we only knew that the water supply of Aizanoi was improved in the early 2nd century. The fountain points to a much earlier date of an elaborated water supply of the city in the early 1st century CE at the latest. The fountain was built near the supposed early sanctuary of Zeus and at the western periphery of the city, thus facing the direction from which aqueducts or water carriers must have reached Aizanoi (cf. fig. 1). The orientation of the monument relates well with another early Roman structure, with the so-called doric square (fig. 4: 2). This was an open public square, situated to the south of the water building, but around 5 m below. As far as earlier studies have revealed, this courtyard was the first architecturally shaped square of ancient Aizanoi. Its date (probably early or middle 1st century CE), function and structure are still to be studied. It is already clear that Aizanoi, as has been argued earlier, started a phase of architectural monumentalization and urban formation very

early, in the time of the early Julio-Claudian emperors, possibly under Augustus.\textsuperscript{29} This process included a public square with a (earlier?) fountain monument above and a well-working water supply. The building of the temple of Zeus and the theater-stadium were chronologically later activities.\textsuperscript{30}

The fountain monument was built over a Hellenistic settlement, of which during earlier excavations the above mentioned remains of a house and the chronologically later wood-pile-wall had been unearthed. Between 2007 and 2009, around 6 m to the south-west of the west corner of the fountain, we uncovered further remains of this wall (fig. 4: ‘späthellenistisch’), which now can be traced in a length of around 40 m to the north-east and 15 m to the north-west with a presumable corner below the walls of the later Flavian odeion on the north-west side of the doric square, but without any indication of towers (cf. fig. 1). During our excavations, the building technique of this wall, already explained earlier by Klaus Rheidt (fig. 9),\textsuperscript{31} once more became clear (fig. 8): The wooden piles, of which only holes remained (fig. 8: a), were around 60 cm long and served as lowest foundation layer. They were covered with a thin layer of smaller stones and broken tile (fig. 8: b). On top of this, a layer of earth and roughly dressed stones were laid down as the massive foundation of the wall. Only on top of this the wall itself was erected (fig. 8: c). In our new excavation trench, the wall on its inner side was accompanied by an open water channel, declining to the south-east. As recognized by Klaus Rheidt, the wall’s building technique is not otherwise known in Asia Minor. Building on wooden \textit{pali} is mentioned by Vitruvius. It is typical for statically or militarily endangered Roman buildings, as protection from undermining or on slippery ground. So far, preserved examples of such buildings exist only in the Roman west.\textsuperscript{32} Thus, the Aizanoi wall must have been built at least in good knowledge of Roman building technique, if not by Roman craftsmen or soldiers. The upper parts and most of

\textsuperscript{29} Jes 2002: 50-51 pointed to an increasing activity of Aizanoi since the time of Augustus. This is further supported by the recent excavation results.


\textsuperscript{32} cf. Rheidt 2001: 264; Rheidt 2009: 1223; see Vitr. 2, 9, 10-11 (for foundations of buildings); 3, 4, 2 (\textit{pali} for temple fondations); 5, 7, 3 (theater fondations); 5, 12, 5 (in harbours); 6, 8, 1.
the foundations of the wall – that is: almost all stones of bigger size – were removed during its destruction. The remaining ditch was filled up with debris, including fragments of the wall decoration of Hellenistic houses. As far as can be determined from diagnostic pottery, the destruction of the wall and the filling up of the ditch happened early during the 1st century AD,\(^{33}\) that is at the time of the construction of the fountain building, for which, possibly, the stones of the wall were reused. The date of the construction of the wood-pile-wall itself is still open, but diagnostic pottery out of its foundation layers now allows a dating around the middle of the 1st century BC.\(^{34}\)

Even though, in the moment, this date cannot be fixed more precisely, it would be of high importance for the history of Aizanoi: The wall must have protected either parts of the ancient city or the sanctuary of Zeus, which already existed in the time of its construction.\(^{35}\) It appears that it had not been built immediately after the destruction of the Attalid settlement, as has been suggested before, nor in relation to the struggles after the end of the Pergamene kingdom around 133 BC. Chronologically it seems as well rather improbable, even though not excluded, that its construction was related to the wars against Mithridates VI in the seventies of the 1st century BC. At the current state of knowledge, based on archaeological evidence, we have to assume that it was built after these events, even though we do not know for which reason. Roman craftsmen or soldiers at least provided their knowledge for its construction. If it was the temenos wall of the sanctuary of Zeus, which currently cannot be excluded, this would explain the missing chronological relation to military activities, but not the technique in an area free of flooding danger. The later fountain monument, due to its position inside the temenos, would then have been part of the sanctuary. By now, the wall at least proves a very good knowledge of Roman technique (if not presence of Romans) in Aizanoi in the middle of the 1st century, and a fairly large-scale building activity before the urban appearance of the town was further developed. Chronologically it brings us to the time when our first record points to the existence of a (certainly earlier) agora and when

\(^{33}\) The same is true for the situation in the ditches above the Hellenistic house, Rheidt 2001: 264.

\(^{34}\) Cf. Rheidt 2001: 264 (shortly after the middle of the 2nd century BC), Rheidt 2008, 118 (possibly not immediately after the middle of the 2nd century), Rheidt 2009: 1223 (between the late 2nd century and the middle of the 1st century BC).

\(^{35}\) Wörle 2009.
epigraphy points to increasing contacts to Rome as well.\textsuperscript{36} What is clear by now is that the wall changed the size of the earlier Hellenistic settlement. It was built over an area, which had been covered by (at that time already destroyed) Hellenistic houses and, thus, the size of the settlement was obviously reduced by its construction: either to enlarge the temenos of Zeus, or to protect a smaller town better against aggressors (but which aggressors?). Between the destruction of the Hellenistic house by fire in the later 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC and the construction of the wall, there appears a time gap of one or two generations, which still awaits explanation.

But what evidence exists regarding the pre-wall settlement of the Hellenistic period?\textsuperscript{37} The modest remains of this period are drawn together in fig. 3, including the Hellenistic house from the earlier excavations (fig. 3: 2; 3). The new 2007-2009 excavation trench, in which the wood-pile-wall was found (So 2), also included stone structures, oriented only slightly differently from this wall and from the walls of the Hellenistic house further to the south-east (fig. 3: 1). These structures were built over by and are thus earlier than the wood-pine-wall. Hence, they belong to the time before the middle of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC.\textsuperscript{38} So far, the evidence is not enough to date and understand house and room structures. It looks as if smaller and more roughly built walls of an earlier period (fig. 3: 1a) were later built over by larger, but still not very carefully constructed walls (fig. 3: 1b), enclosing a slightly bigger open space with two pedestals (?).\textsuperscript{39} The later walls are better comparable to the remains of the Hellenistic house. The earlier walls of lesser quality were built together with a small rectangular structure of mud brick with an opening to the north (fig. 10). Traces of fire on its soil and on its inner walls indicate a use as a kiln or oven. Comparable structures have been found in nearby Eskişehir, in Gordion and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{40} In Gordion the comparable oven can roughly be dated to the

\textsuperscript{36} Wörle 2009. – Jes 2002: 50, also points to the use of the era of Sulla in Aizanoi.
\textsuperscript{37} For the state of knowledge up to 2007 cf. Rheidt 1999: 240-242 with fig. 4; Rheidt 2008 with fig. 11, and now Rheidt 2010: 170 fig. 172 (development scheme of the settlement), 175 fig. 178 (suggested reconstruction of the Hellenistic town).
\textsuperscript{38} Date and function of a wall north of the newly discovered Hellenistic structures still have to be fixed.
\textsuperscript{39} Rheidt 2001: 263, mentions the probability of two building phases of the Hellenistic house structures further to the south-east.
3\textsuperscript{rd} or early 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. Form and technique of such ovens document the ongoing use of iron age techniques in early Hellenistic Phrygia. In Aizanoi, the finds in this area (like in Gordion) included many loom weights and also discarded fragments of lead-glazed-pottery. It looks as if this part of the settlement was equipped in a more regional manner and included workshops, not more than 30 m west of the Hellenistic house of a probably Pergamene settler with Greek-style pottery and wall-decoration. The newly found remains do not show any signs of destruction by fire. Hence, the Hellenistic town of Aizanoi consisted of houses of a higher level side by side with more simple, local-style living and working areas. Only some of its houses were destroyed by fire in the middle or later 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. The question of how the Hellenistic building phases are to be dated exactly and how they formed part of the broader urban or village-like structures in a Pergamene (?) colony, which was partly destroyed by fire, can only be solved by further research.

Hence, recent excavation and research in ancient Aizanoi have already slightly changed our image of this town in the Hellenistic and early imperial period. Thus, Aizanoi's importance for understanding the Hellenistic period in Phrygia and western central Anatolia is increasing. Building on the results of the excavations of the last decades, it has been further confirmed that Aizanoi started to improve its urban organization and infrastructure by constructing monumental buildings not in the late 1\textsuperscript{st} or early 2\textsuperscript{nd} century CE, but as early as the early 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE. This happened less than a century after, under Roman influence, a massive wall of hitherto unknown function had changed the image of the Hellenistic settlement for the first time. This Hellenistic settlement seems to have been at least partly destroyed by fire slightly before, in the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. It appears to have been rather divergent in its structure and outlook and included also production areas on both sides of the river Penkalas and simple, regional-style structures, but it was in use for a rather long period of time at least since the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BC. Further studies in Aizanoi will have to clarify these preliminary results in order to draw a sharper image. By the same token, they will improve our still poorly developed understanding of the culture of western central Anatolia in the time after Alexander the Great and during the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} centuries BC. Comparable
systematic and comparative studies on this period in a region, where the culture of the 3rd and 2nd century BC still awaits detailed studies, are an important desideratum of future cooperative research.

**Image credits:**

Fig. 1–10: Aizanoi excavation (Freiburg / German Archaeological Institute Istanbul)

**Abbreviations:**


Naumann 1979: R. Naumann (ed.). Der Zeustempel zu Aizanoi, Berlin


Rheidt 2010: K. Rheidt (ed.). Aizanoi und Anatolien, Mainz


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Fig. 1: Aizanoi: Ancient remains and modern village (2006)
Fig. 2: Aizanoi: Excavation trenches 1996-2009

Fig. 3: Aizanoi: Hellenistic remains (south of the temple of Zeus)
Fig. 4: Aizanoi: Roman remains (south of the temple of Zeus)
Fig. 5: Aizanoi: Byzantine remains (south of the temple of Zeus)
Fig. 6: Aizanoi: Early Roman fountain monument (from south-east)

Fig. 7: Aizanoi: Early Roman fountain monument (reconstruction)
Fig. 8: Aizanoi: Late Hellenistic / early Roman wood-pile-wall (2009)

Fig. 9: Aizanoi: Late Hellenistic/early Roman wood-pile-wall (reconstruction)

Fig. 10: Aizanoi: Early/high Hellenistic oven