Author: Marianna Mastrostamati . The ancient Greek geographer and historian Strabo ((63 BC - 21 AD) in his " Geographica" writes about this region: «Then Korykos a high mountain and a port named «Kasystis» and another port called Erythras", specifically, "Korykos" the mountain Koraka (Cape Koraka in Turkish Koraka Burnu), "Kasystis" the port of Salpitza or Mersini and Erythras's harbour, Agrilia Bay. Thus the connection of this region to the ancient Erythrae is directly historical.

The ancient Greek city of Erythra or Erythrae (later Lythri, today called Ildiri) was capital of the region. According to Pausanias was named from Erythro who was the son of *Radamanthys*, when the Cretans extended their dominion and settled there in the 14th BC century. The pre-Greek tribes, Kares and Leleges lived in Erythrae before the Cretans. Erythros as a mythical person, gave his name to the city and obviouslery adapted it from the plant «Rubia the Coloring» or Erythrodanon (Rubia Tinctorum), the common Rizari or Alizari that grows across the peninsula even today. From the root of the plant from ancient times until the development of Chemistry was produced the red paint which was used in coloring the yarns and fabrics and even wall-paint. In addition to the used of the paint, the ancient Erythraeans carried on an export trade of large quantities. The port they used to the south was the "Erythrae's port" mentioned by Strabo. This was the port of Alatsata which was later named Agrilia.

After the fall of Troy (13th-14th century BC) the way for the Greek tribes was clear and a mass colonization of Asia Minor coast began. The Ionians came to Erythraea, together with the cities Phocaea, Levedus, Clazomenae, Teos, Colophon, Ephesus, Priene, Myus, Miletus, Chios

and
Samos
comprise the
Ionian Dodecapolis
(twelve Ionic cities). Later
Aeolian Smyrna
will join the Ionic League.

According to Pausanias and Strabo, one of the Erythraean tribes, residing in Chalkis: «there is (ἐστιν) country called Chalkis, leading to the edges of the open sea», to the horizontal axis of Ionic peninsula that extends to Cape Punta (today called Top corp.) and these tribes are the Chalkidians. In the middle of this axis extends the Erythraean cultivable plain where the city of Alatsata was later founded.

The cities of Ionian Dodecapolis strengthened the loose ties of « Panionium », which was a meeting of the leading noble representatives of the cities. On the occasion of the festivals (feasts) in the Holy Grove of Mycale (between Priene and Miletus) they would honor the national god of Ionians who was
Poseidon Heliconius
and discuss the issues for which they were all concerned but this would not however lead to their merging as a single state.

This weakness was exploited by the Persians, to whom finally subjugated until the arrival of Al exander the Great
who liberated them. Alexander died young, without having time to put a solid foundation on this vast state that is inherited by his descendants, who continue to battle as enemies each one in an effort to conquer the share of the other. Thus, the Erythraean masters succeeded each other until Erythrae fall to the Romans. The oppression of «
Pax Romana
» with heavy taxation, the raids of pirates who plundering the coast, the massive large earthquakes which occurred in the region and repeated every six years (the 17, 23 and 29 AD) all contributed to the major disasters to the Greek world.

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Thus, the masters of Erythrae mutually succeeded each other until Erythrae fall to the Romans. The oppression of "Pax Romana» with heavy taxation, the raids of pirates who were plundering the coast, the massive earthquakes which occurred in the region and repeated every six years (the 17, 23 and 29 AD) all contributed to the major disasters to the Greek world.

The Roman Empire was divided in to two parts: the Western and the Eastern or, Hellenic Byzantine, as it was to be called, which prevailed for several centuries in the Balkans, in Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean. Erythrae during this period, lived once again a normal, peaceful life. They were defined as the headquarters of the 30th of the 36th Dioceses of the metropolis of Ephesus. They remained as such until the 7th century, when the appearance of the Arabs loyal to Prophet began, the Seljuk, the Venetian and finally the Ottoman Turks.

The massive emigration of the people who were terrified from the killings and the looting leaves Erythrae without the Greek element. Only few people betake to the Hill of Erythrae and they were locked up within the castle of Acropolis.

In the early of the 12th century, Alexios the A', drives out the Ottoman Turks, but then came the Crusaders who are nibbling the foundations of the Byzantine Empire, which was already in constant wars with Turks and Slavs. The Hellenism in the coast of Asia Minor was falling to the decline.

In the early part of the 13th century, Erythrae is deserted, and the center of gravity that is growing steadily in this region in that time, is the Byzantine Linoperamata in Cesme**.** Until the emergence of Genovese, the Linoperamata served mainly the two imperial monasteries of the nearby islands: the monastery of
Nea Moni
(New Monastery) of
Chios island and the monastery of
Theologos
of Patmos Island, both having real estate in Erythrae, in the regions of Efheia, Kalothikia, Estilar and Anachorias or Anachorion.

According to the map of Helen Glykatzi - Ahrweiler (Sorbonne University) [1] , *Efheia* and *Kalothikia*, are located in the east of Alatsata city, probably in the place where the

Zechtineri
(today called Zeytinler) and
Sirantami
(today called Barbaros), while Estilar is probably part of Karampourna (today called Karaburun), which during Byzantine times was named Stylarion.

The farmlands of the monastery of *Nea Moni*, which sometimes appear to be mentioned with the name "*Anahorias*" and sometimes as "*Anahori on* ", are located to the west and within the borders of the later-founded city of Alatsata. It is referred to as having a "
Chapel of Holy Prodromos with its fields
».

In the early part of the 14th century – according to Guilaum Adam – the masters of Erythraia were neither the Turkish masters of Smyrna, nor the Genovese Zacharias, masters of the island of Chios. Paul Lemerle characterizes the region as "no man's land". However, the 1335 masters of Erythrae were the Ottoman Turks, because history mentions the meeting of Emperor Andronikos Palaiologos the Third' – who recaptured Chios island – with his ally Oumour Pasha, who was Emir of Aydin,taking place at the imperial galley, due to the reluctance of the emperor to feel welcomed on the territory of Erythrae, which until now was Byzantine.

....to be continued

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[1] Hélène Ahrweiler – Glykatzi, L' histoire et la geographic de la region de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317) «Travaux et Mémoires» Paris 1965

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