



The antique city of Myra, in the district centre of Demre and surroundings, was built on a plain of the same name. The sea was connected to the city by a canal constructed to the west of the Myros River (today called the Demire River). The port of Andriake (Çayağzı) on the other end of the canal was the centre for access to the sea and trade. The antique city of Myra is famous for its Lycian rock-cut tombs, for its Roman theatre and for the Church of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) dating back to the Byzantine period. The rock tombs, Lycian inscriptions and coins show that Myra was settled from at least the 5th century B.C. According to Strabon, Myra was one of the six leading cities of the Lycian League, and was then named Myrrh in Lycian inscriptions.



- A. THEATRE**
- B. SEA NECROPOLIS**
- C. RIVER NECROPOLIS**
- D. ACROPOLIS**



The 2nd century A.D. was a period of great development in Myra. Many buildings were constructed and restored by the rich Lycians in the city which was the Metropolis of the Lycian League. During the Byzantine period Myra was the leading city of the region for religion and administration. It achieved its popularity through the Church of Saint Nicholas, which was built for Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) who was the Bishop of the city in the 4th century A.D. Myra lost its importance after the 7th century, a consequence of earthquakes, floods with alluvial silt deposited by the river and because of the Muslims coastal raids; and in consequence was reduced to county status after the 12th century. Its remaining consists of a theatre to the south of the acropolis and rock-cut tombs on both sides of the theatre. Inspections have shown that -except for the erecting, firmly built walls from the Roman period- other wall remains dating from the Hellenistic period and even from the 5th century B.C. can be found on top of the acropolis and thereabouts. The theatre on the south foot of the acropolis has tiers of seats and a stage building which reflect the characteristics of a well-preserved Roman theatre. The stage building still stands to the half the height of the second floor.

On both sides of the theatre there are carved rock-cut tombs. One of the most interesting examples of the tombs in Myra, the best examples of rock tombs inspired by the Lycian wooden house architecture, are the tombs with friezes to record the story of the dead person and his/her family.