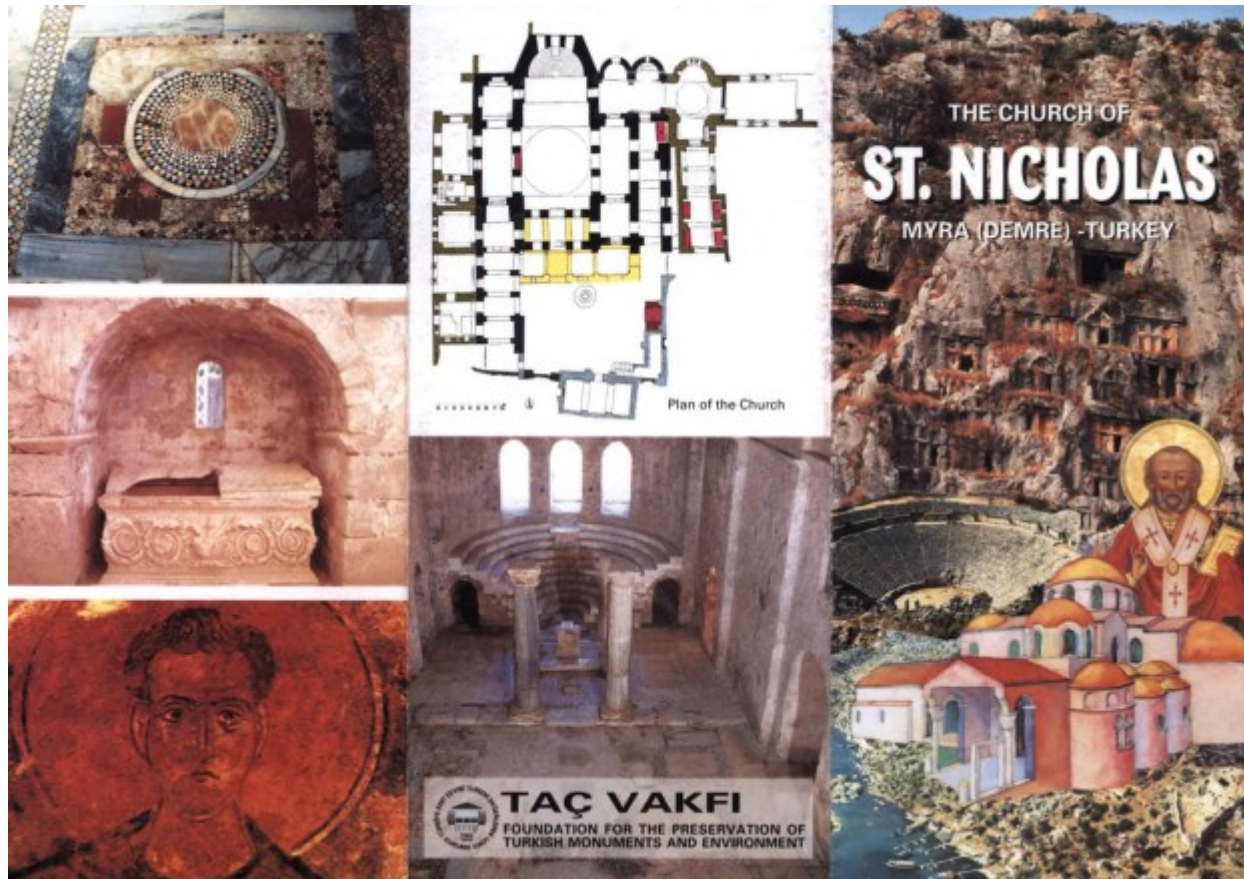


The Church of St. Nicholas in Kale (Demre) county on Turkey's southern Mediterranean coast

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Εκκλησία Αγίου Νικολάου Θαυματουργού, Μύρα Λυκίας, Μικρά Ασία

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH·DEMRE

The Church of St. Nicholas is located in Kale (Demre) county on Turkey's southern Mediterranean coast 140 kms (about 2.5 hours) from the city of Antalya and 48 kms from the town of Ka.

Immediately nearby are the site of the ancient city of Myra, • I rock tombs, and a well - preserved ancient theater.

Myra is just one of the many ancient cities that shelter Anatolia's rich cultural heritage. The church, which is located on the southern slopes of the town, was dedicated to St. Nicholas, a Christian saint known as «Noel Baba» in Turkish and as

«Santa Claus» in English. The structure we see today was originally built in the first half of the 6th century after an earthquake in 529. Some time later, probably in the 9th century, it was renovated at which time the church was decorated.

The structure is known to have undergone repairs in 1042 during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachus and Zoe. In 1862 the church was subjected to a reconstruction by August Salzmann that impaired its original features. It continued to be used as a house of worship until the 1920s.



The Nicholas to whom this church was dedicated was born in the city of Patara during the second half of the 3rd century and who was educated in Xanthos (modern Km1k). After taking church orders, he eventually rose to the rank of archbishop in Myra (modern Demre) The date of his death is traditionally given as 6 December 345 or 362 but it may have been as early as 326. The archbishop was buried in a tomb in the same city and a church dedicated to him was erected over it. Generous to the poor and special protector of the Innocent and wronged, St Nicholas was also the patron saint of sailors.

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On 29 April 1087, some Italian merchants gained access to the tomb and broke it open. They removed some of the bones and carried them back to Italy with them where, regarded as relics, they were installed in a church in Bari, also dedicated to St. Nicholas. The remaining bones are now preserved in the Antalya Archaeological Museum, where they are on display.

Foundation for the Preservation of Turkish Monuments and Environment (TAÇ Vakfı) was founded in 1976 in Istanbul with the encouragement and moral support of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism. The foundation's aims are to protect and preserve the artistic and cultural assets of Turkey, of the Turkish nation, and of Anatolian civilization as well as their architectural heritage, their cultural, aesthetic, and touristic values, and all documentary evidence pertinent to these concepts and also to ensure the continuity of the past and future cultural linkages of these values. The foundation has entered into a thirty-year cooperative agreement with the ministry for the purposes of expediting the ongoing excavation work at the St Nicholas church, ensuring that structures are restored and preserved, equipping them with modern amenities and facilities, and making them more accessible to visitors. Under the agreement TAÇ Vakfı will spend the first five years completing the technical studies that are needed, procuring the material resources that are required, and completing the monument's restoration and equipping phases. All the accounts and progress of the foundation's restoration and use projects are scrutinized by an international auditing firm.

We invite everyone who takes an interest in such matters to come to the aid of monument that is the property of all humanity.

For more information and your grants :

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