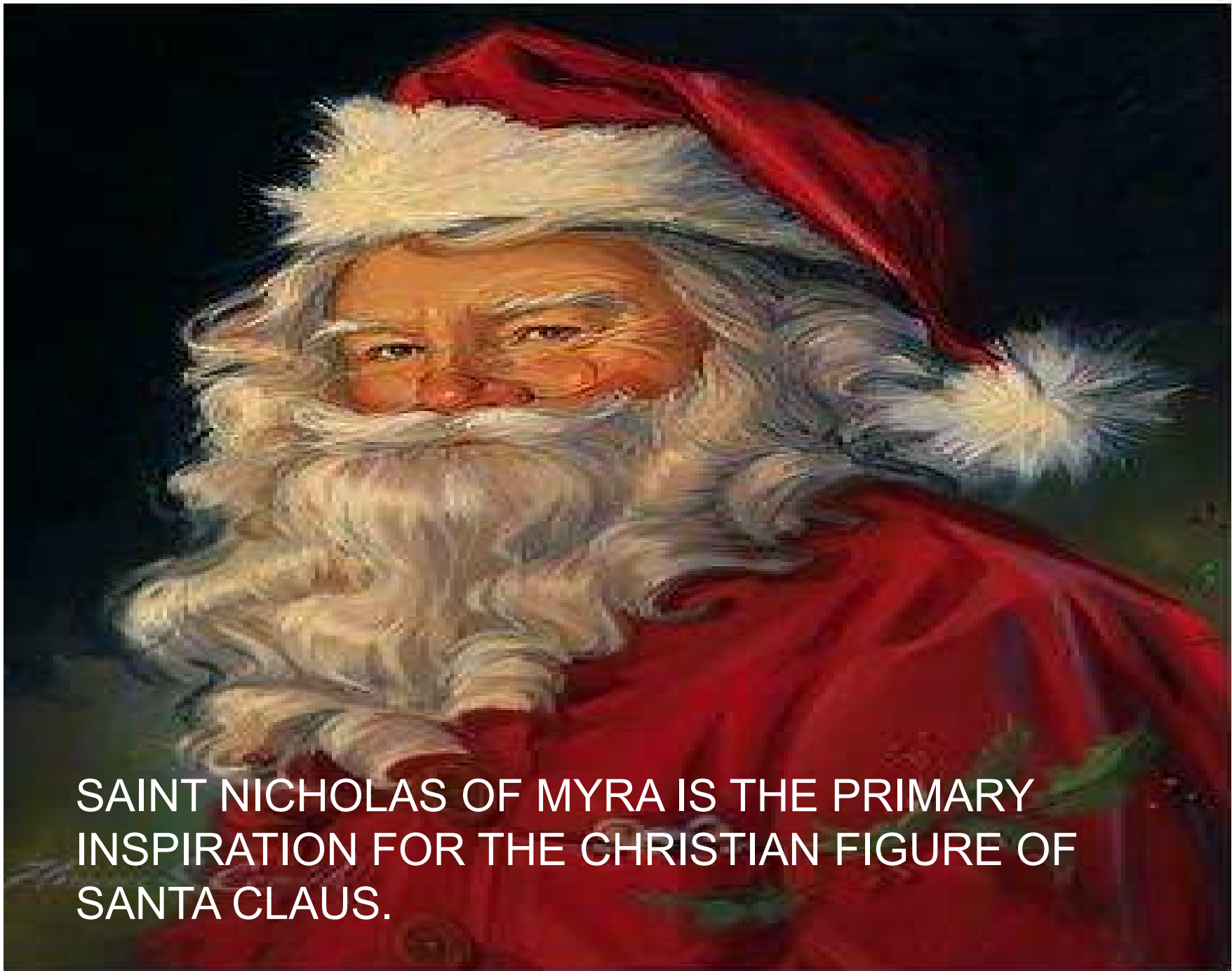




SANTA CLAUS

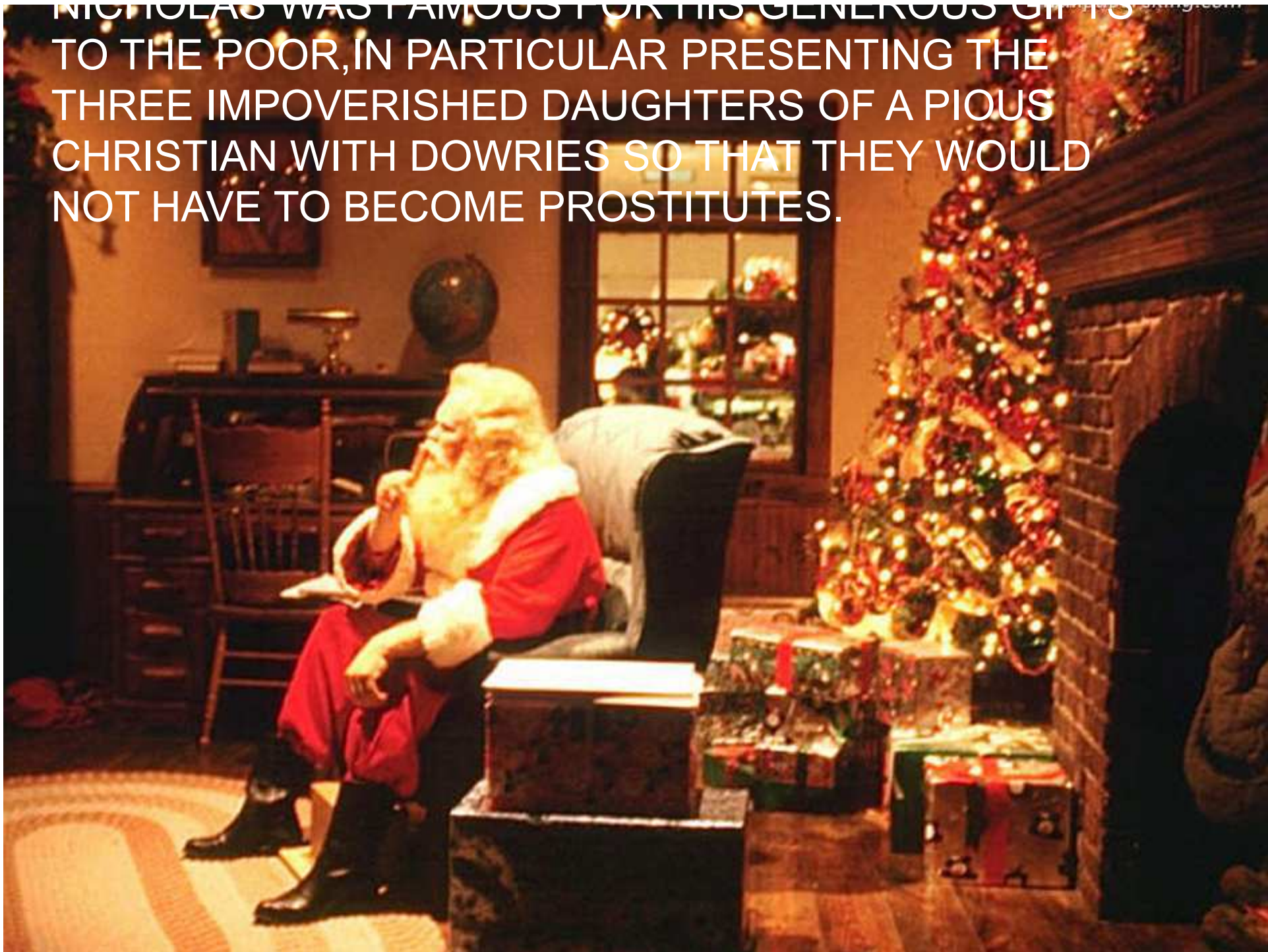


SAINT NICHOLAS OF MYRA IS THE PRIMARY
INSPIRATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN FIGURE OF
SANTA CLAUS.



HE WAS A 4TH CENTURY GREEK CHRISTIAN BISHOP OF MYRA(NOW DEMRE)IN LYCIA,A PROVINCE OF THE BYZANTINE ANATOLIA,NOW IN TURKEY.

NICHOLAS WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS GENEROUS GIFTS TO THE POOR, IN PARTICULAR PRESENTING THE THREE IMPOVERISHED DAUGHTERS OF A PIOUS CHRISTIAN WITH DOWRIES SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE TO BECOME PROSTITUTES.



HE WAS VERY RELIGIOUS FROM ON EARLY AGE AND DEVOTED HIS LIFE ENTIRELY TO CHRISTIANITY.



IN EUROPE(MORE PRECISELY THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM,AUSTRIA AND GERMANY)HE IS STILLPORTRAYED AS A BEARDED BISHOP IN CANONICAL ROBES.



IN 1087 THE ITALIAN CITY OF BARI , WANTING TO ENTER THE PROFITABLE PILGRIMAGE INDUSTRY OF THE TIMES,

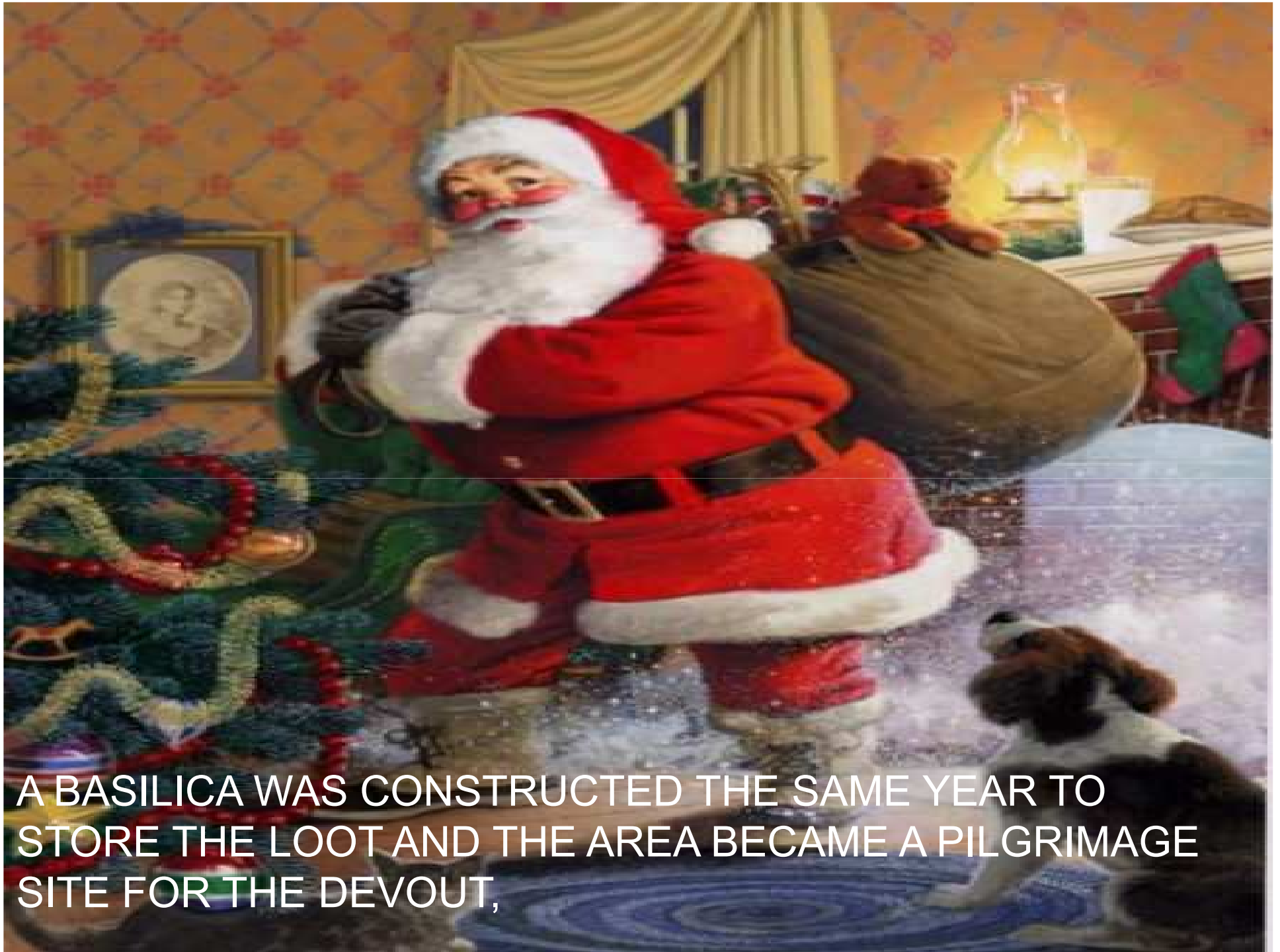


MOUNTED AN EXPEDITION TO LOCATE THE TOMB
OF THE CHRISTIAN SAINT AND PROCURE HIS REMAINS

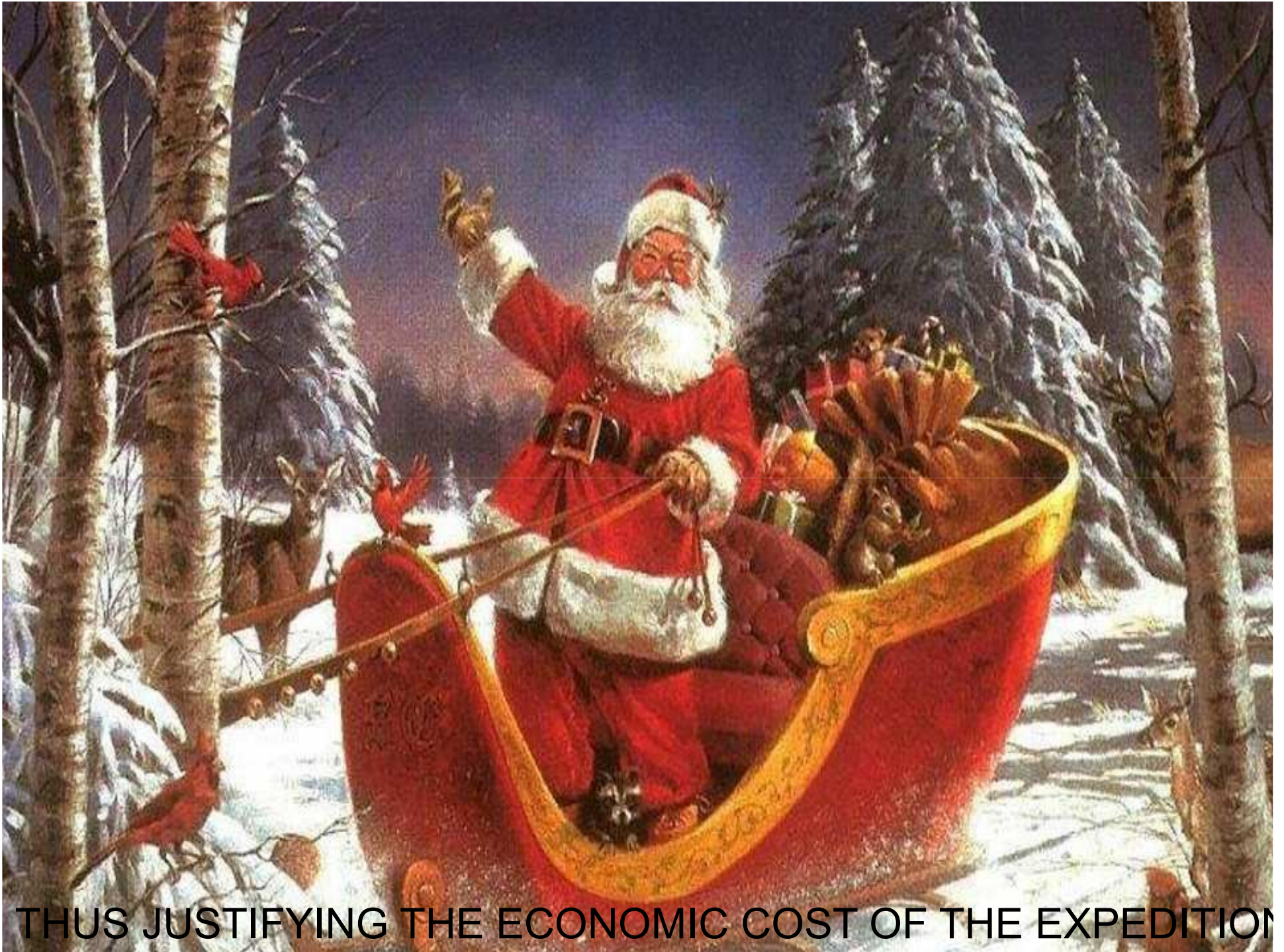


THE RELIQUARY OF ST.NICHOLAS WAS DESECRATED BY ITALIAN SAILORS AND THE SPOILS ,INCLUDING HIS RELICS TAKEN TO BARI WHERE THEY ARE KEPT TO THIS DAY.



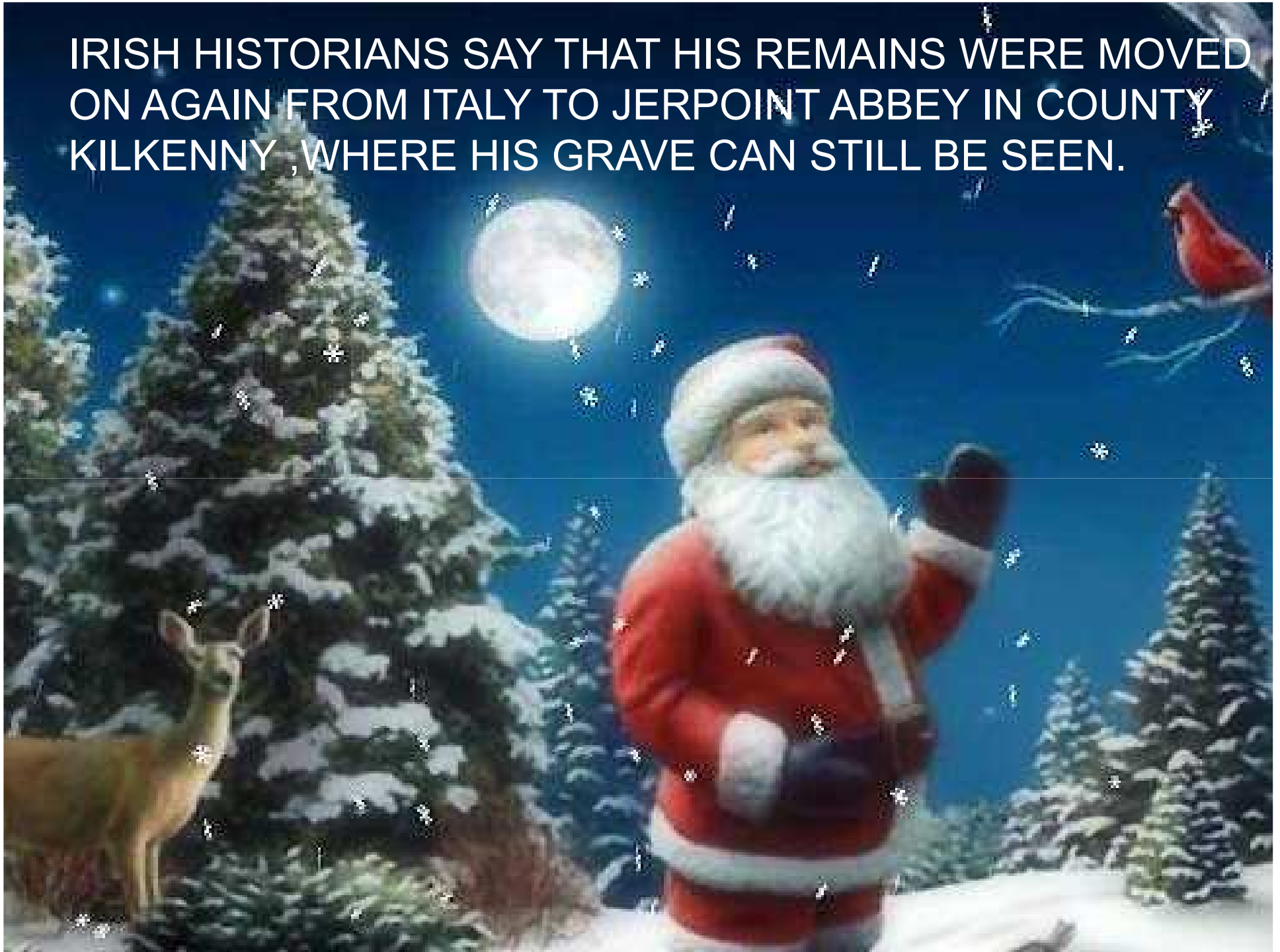


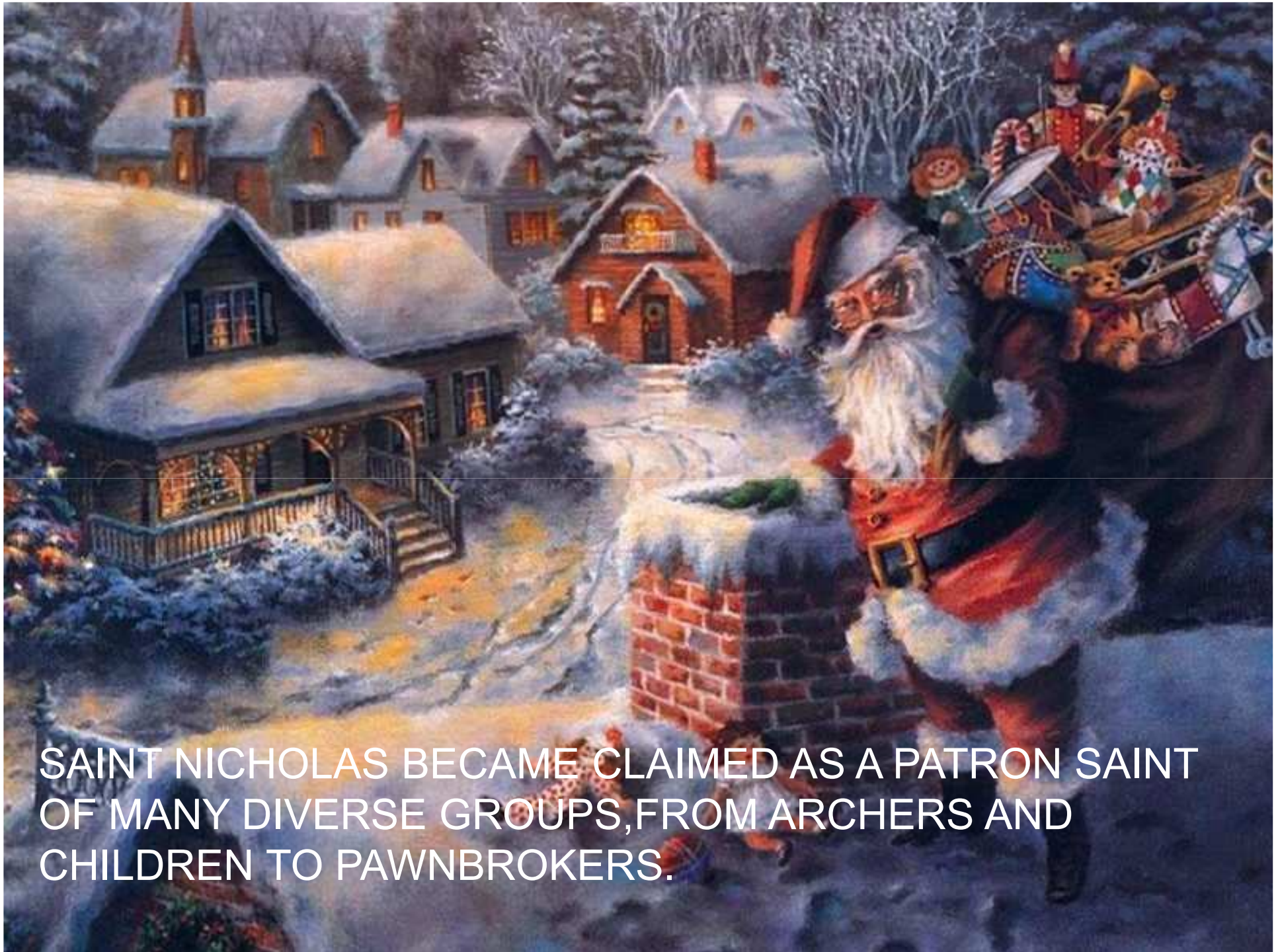
A BASILICA WAS CONSTRUCTED THE SAME YEAR TO STORE THE LOOT AND THE AREA BECAME A PILGRIMAGE SITE FOR THE DEVOUT,



THUS JUSTIFYING THE ECONOMIC COST OF THE EXPEDITION

IRISH HISTORIANS SAY THAT HIS REMAINS WERE MOVED ON AGAIN FROM ITALY TO JERPOINT ABBEY IN COUNTY KILKENNY ,WHERE HIS GRAVE CAN STILL BE SEEN.



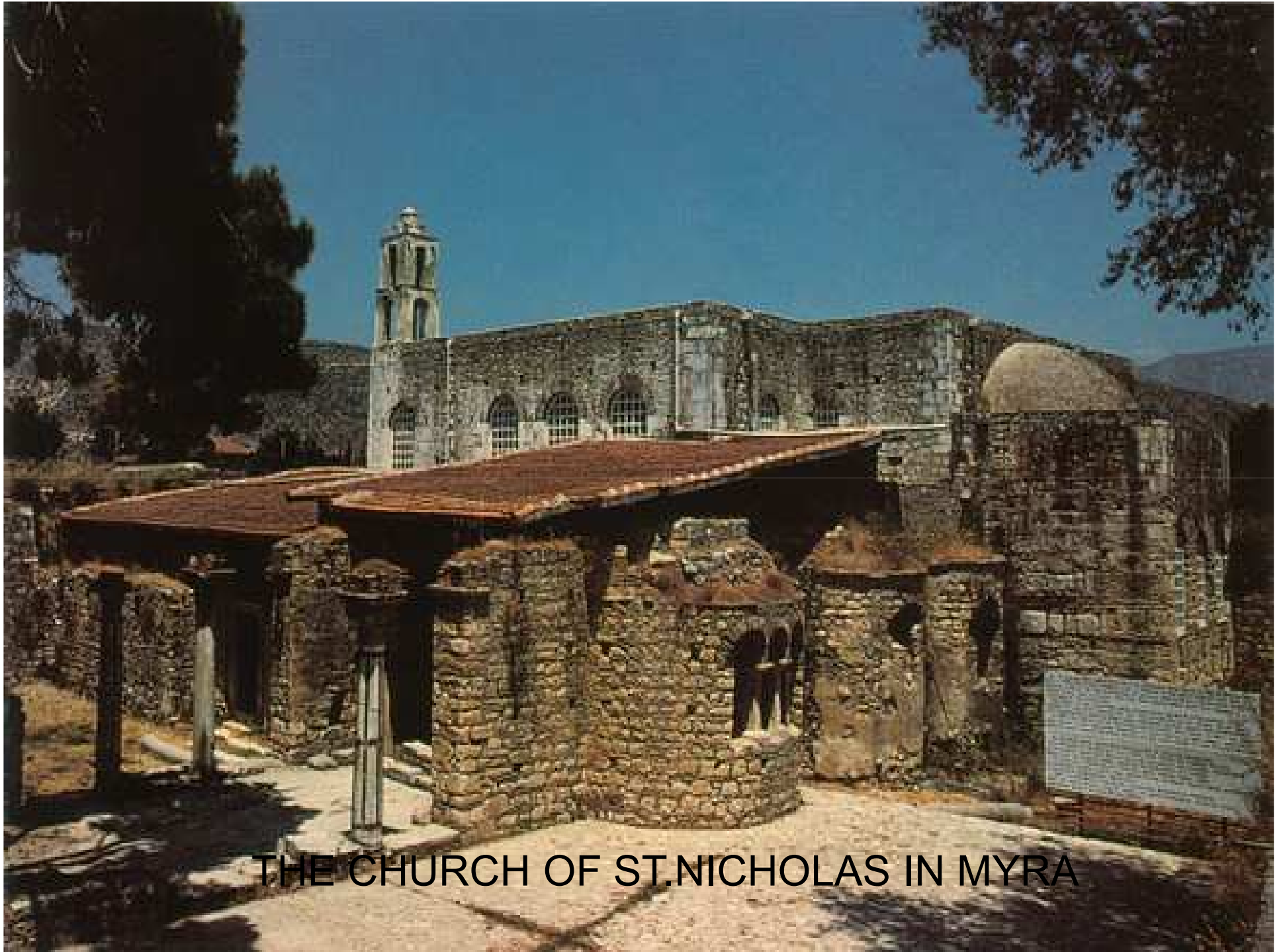


SAINT NICHOLAS BECAME CLAIMED AS A PATRON SAINT OF MANY DIVERSE GROUPS, FROM ARCHERS AND CHILDREN TO PAWNBROKERS.

HE IS ALSO THE PATRON SAINT OF BOTH AMSTERDAM AND MOSCOW.



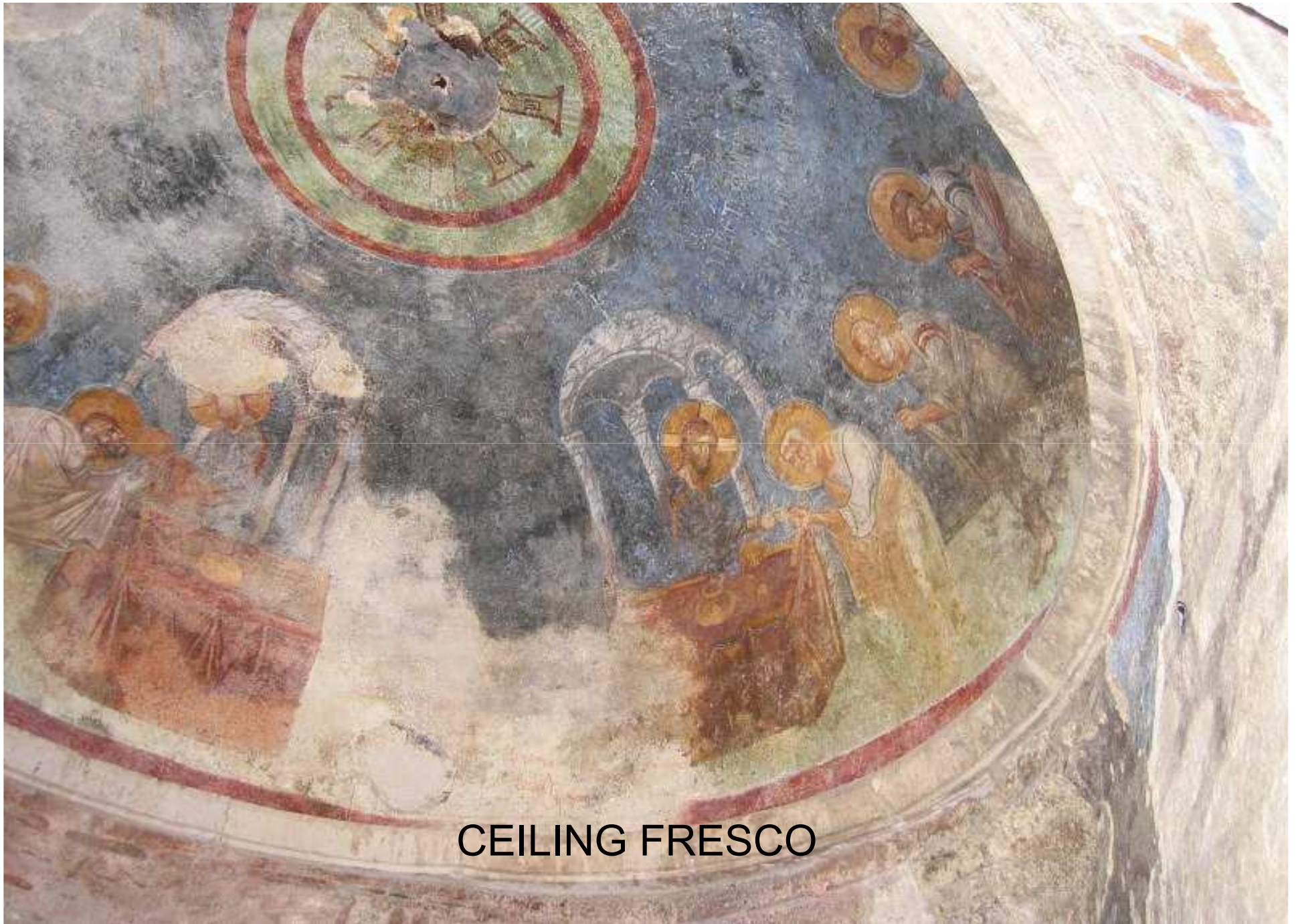
CHURCH OF ST.NICHOLAS
MYRA (KALE/DEMRE)
IN ANTALYA/TURKEY



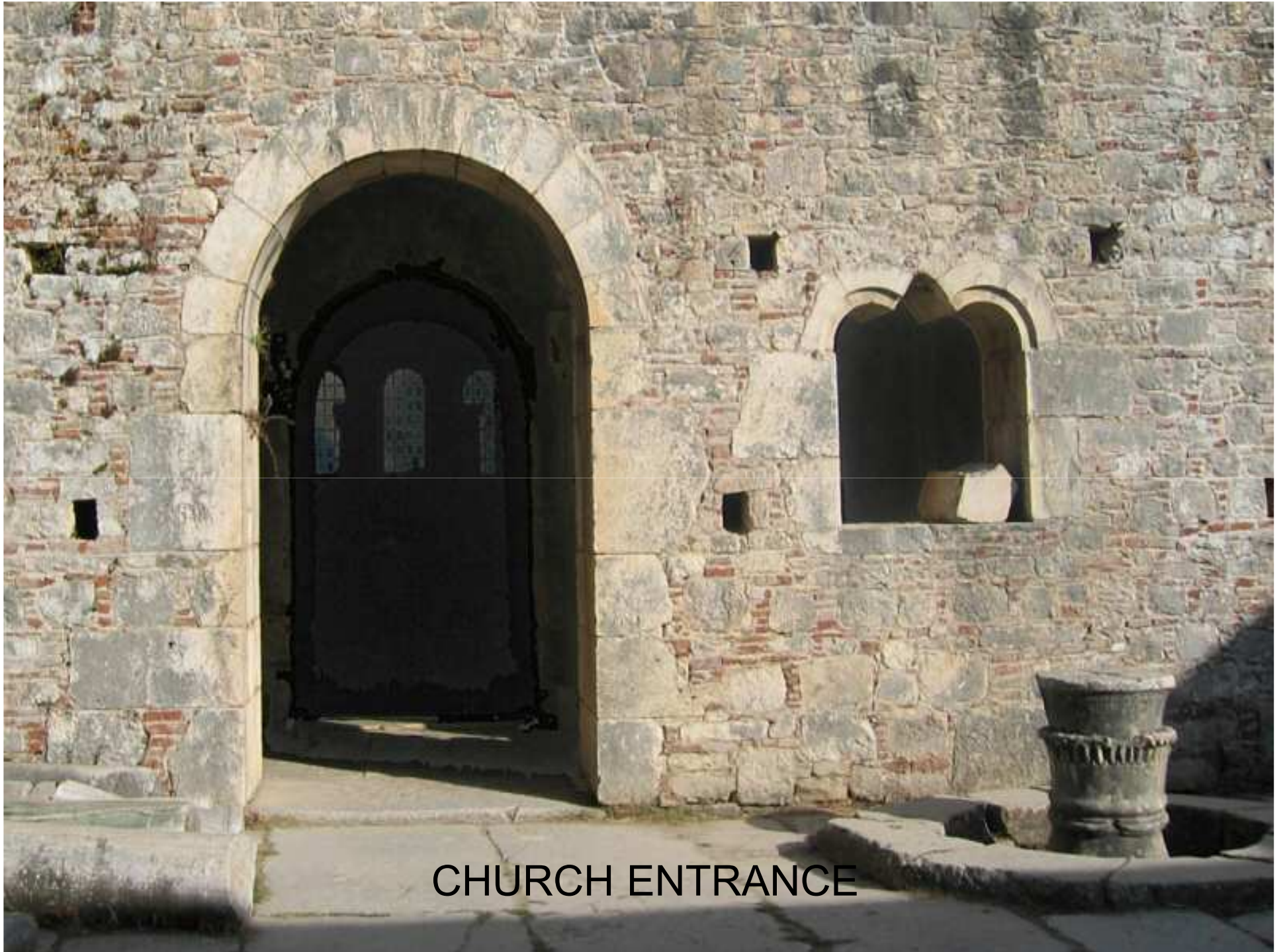
THE CHURCH OF ST.NICHOLAS IN MYRA



CHURCH INTERIOR



CEILING FRESCO



CHURCH ENTRANCE



OPUS SECTILE FLOOR



FRESCO IN A NICHE



INTERIOR, LOOKING TOWARDS THE ALTAR



STATUE OF ST. NICHOLAS OUTSIDE OF CHURCH.

**SAINT NICHOLAS'S
CITIES**

**PATARA AND MYRA
(IN ANTALYA/TURKEY)**

A PICTURE OF SOME OF THE RUINS AT PATARA. NOTE A CITY GATE AT THE LOWER LEFT CORNER AND THE THEATRE SET IN THE HILLSIDE.



A VIEW BACK ACROSS THE CITY RUINS FROM THE TOP OF THE AMPHITHEATRE.



A VIEW OF THE PARTIALLY RESTORED MAIN STREET
OF PATARA.





PATARA GATEWAY

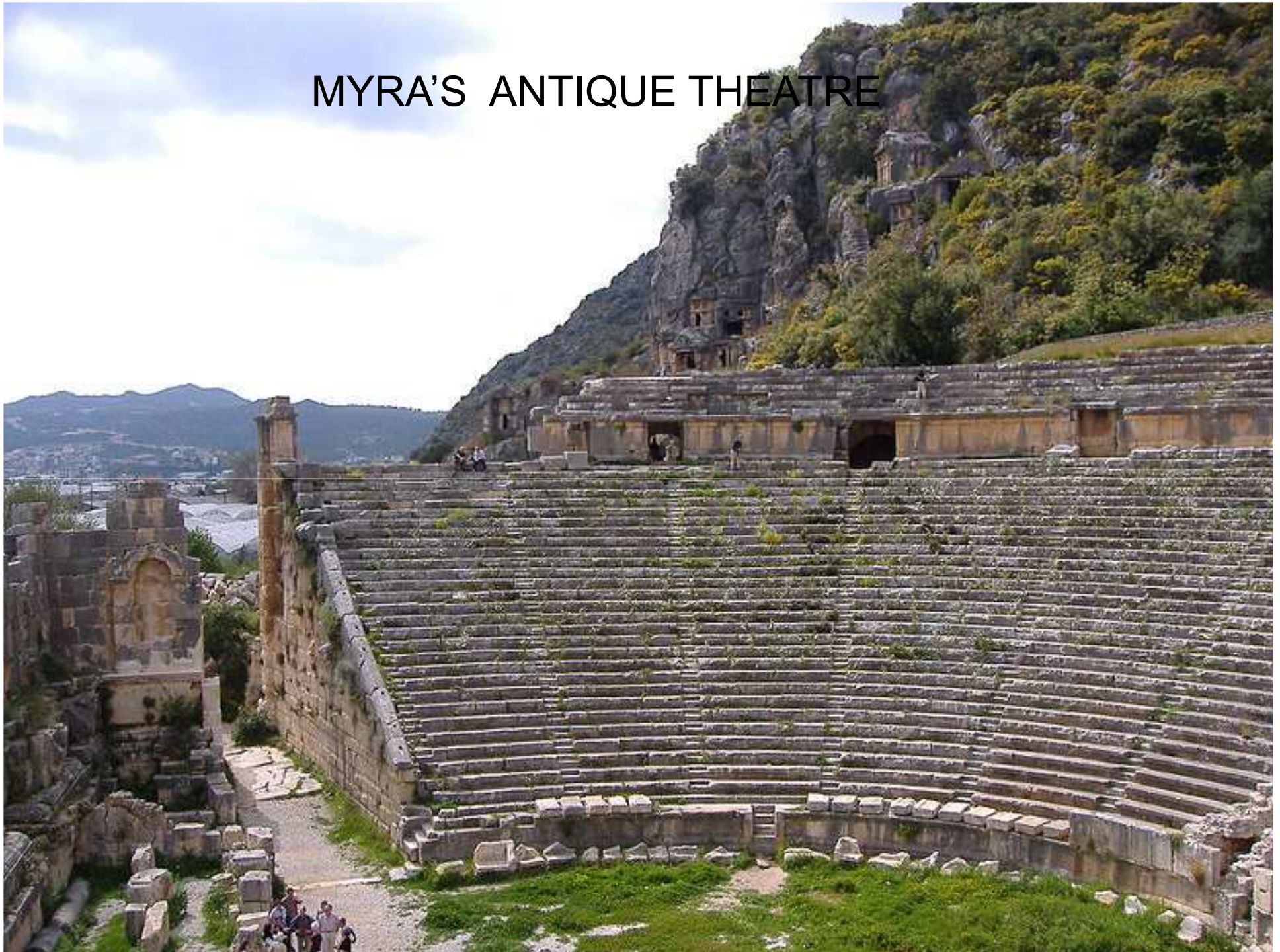


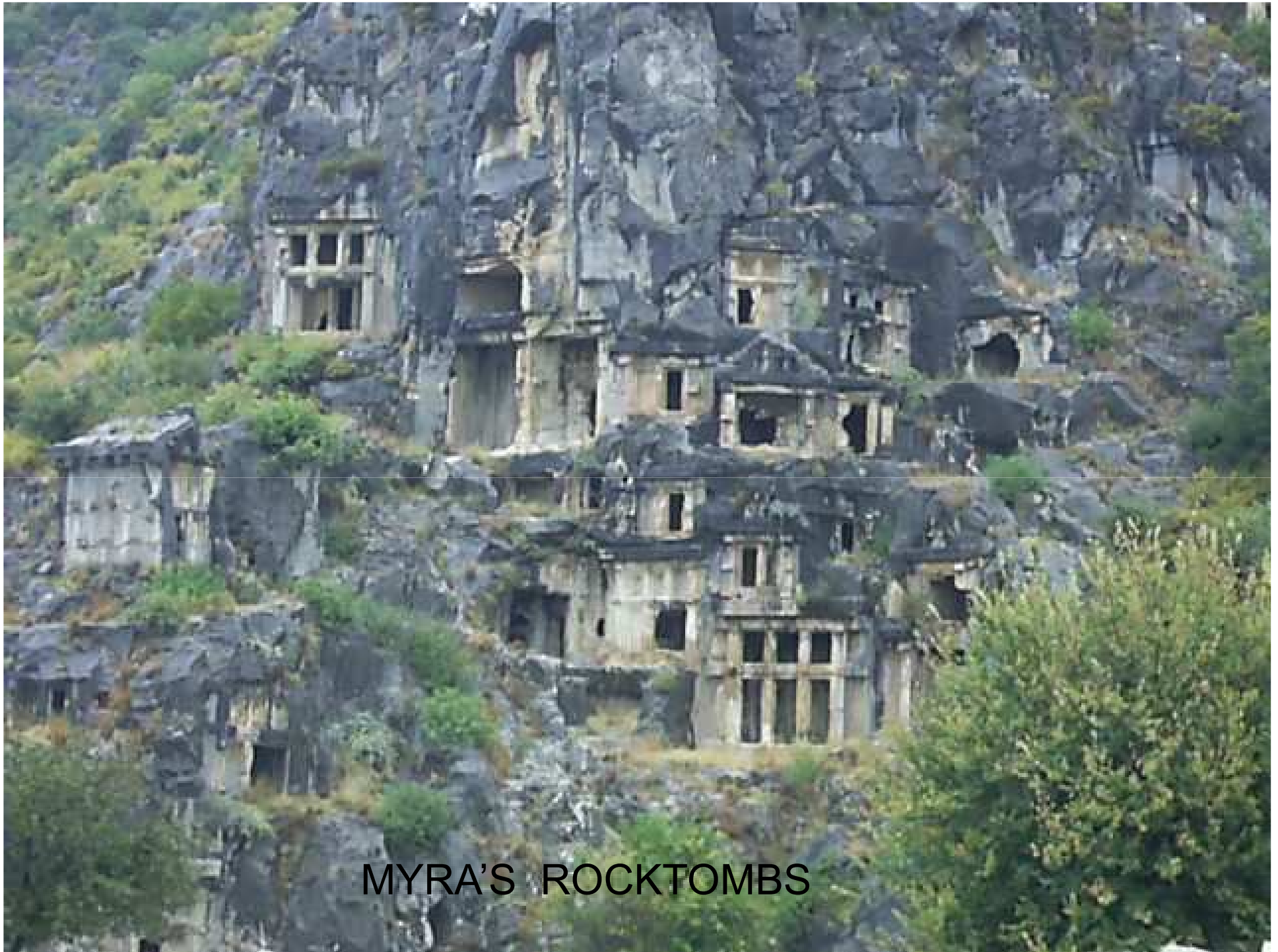
RUINS OF ROMAN DATE BATHS

PATARA'S BEACH



MYRA'S ANTIQUE THEATRE





MYRA'S ROCKTOMBS

ST. NICHOLAS' S REAL GRAVE



SOME OF THE MANY CARVED MASKS AT MYRA'S THEATRE



CHRISTMAS IN TURKEY























