SAINT PAUL
and
THE SEVEN CHURCHES

SAINT PAUL and THE SEVEN CHURCHES of ASIA MINOR

Padraic Rohan

foreword by John Freely

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Table of Contents

This is a historical guide to the major Turkish sites associated with Saint Paul, and to those sites of western Asia Minor known in Revelation as the Seven Churches of the Apocalypse. It aims to summarize what the archaeological record and written sources tell us about these sites, and to use these manuscripts and ruins to illuminate how the people who lived and died here helped to transform the ancient world. Though this book goes beyond the breezy historical surveys of most guide books, those visiting these sites are advised to travel with a standard guide book, which contains current information on site schedules, transport, lodging, food, and leisure.

My gratitude to Nan and Patrick Rohan, Sean and Hilary Finlay, Karen Mattern, Katharine Gilmartin, Sibylle Cizenel, Jim Frey, Brian Johnson, and John Freely. I am indebted too to all those who appear in the bibliography, especially H.V. Morton, George Bean, and Clive Foss. I swim in this sea, but responsibility for what I swallow is mine alone.

A Note on Turkish pronunciation

Turkish letters have only one sound, and vowels are usually short. C has a j sound, and cami (mosque) is pronounced jahmee; ç is a ch sound; ş is a sh sound; ğ lengthens the preceding vowel, so dağ (mountain) is pronounced dah; ö sounds like the i in girl; ı sounds like the io in cushion; and the ü sound doesn't exist in English, but is pronounced as the German or French tu.

FOREWORD

It's my pleasure to introduce Padraic Rohan, writing on several Turkish sites through the lens of St Paul and St John of the Apocalypse. Padraic is a journalist and an academic, and a student of history in the broadest and best sense. The Biblical history of Turkey has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves, and I hope that this book will bring this history to a larger audience.

I served in World War II in east Asia and then received a Ph.D. in physics, and I've spent much of my long life in Turkey, exploring a fascinating past often neglected by westerners. Whether science or religion, politics or economics, I've followed the human story down many hidden byways here. An omnivore's approach is the best, and varied training and experience is necessary in order to understand the "dizzying ferment", as Padraic says, of this story. His trajectory is similar to mine: his first degree was in engineering, but he has travelled extensively throughout the middle east, as a journalist and researcher. And we both have roots in the small village of Annascaul, on the Dingle peninsula in the far west of Ireland. It takes an exile and a global citizen to produce the kind of book you now have in your hands.

Very few books even begin to capture the richness of the history of this land. I sometimes despair of guide books and academic treatises – the first too shallow, the second too impenetrable. But this book is a delight, sifting the overwhelming weight of history here down to the human level, and showing why it matters today. Having made a life in Turkey, Padraic brings a rare depth of knowledge to this book. His writing is a treat, vigorous and spare, and it would be difficult to find a book that better explains Turkey's importance to Biblical history, as well as the place of Biblical history in world history.

John Freely
Istanbul

GLOSSARY

Acropolis – settlement or citadel built on a high point, and often the historic center of a city

Agora – literally, gathering place; usually served as a marketplace in the center of an ancient city

Apodyterium – in a Roman bath, the changing room

Architrave – a beam, often decorated, resting atop columns

Basilica – originally referring to an open Roman public building, later to an important Christian church

Bouleuterion – meeting-place of the council of citizens, sometimes used also as a small theater

Caldarium – in a Roman bath, the hot room

Caravanserai – a roadside inn usually built along trade routes

Frieze – an architectural element, usually a decorated bas-relief above eye level

Frigidarium – in a Roman bath, the cold room

Heroon – a shrine dedicated to a Greek or Roman hero

Necropolis – literally, city of the dead; a large cemetery

Nymphaeum – monumental fountain

Odeion – a small theater, often using the bouleuterion

Palestra – ancient Greek or Roman wrestling school, usually part of a public gymnasium

Peristyle – an open colonnaded courtyard within a wealthy home

Propylon – an outer monumental gateway

Prytanaeion – the seat of municipal government

Stoa – a colonnaded walkway, often lined with shops

Tepidarium – in a Roman bath, the warm (tepid) room

Tetrapylon – literally, four gates, a monumental structure often at a crossroads

Byzantium
Constantinople
Perinthus
Calchedon
Nicomedia
Diospolis
Bithynium
(Claudiopolis)
PROPONTIS
(SEA OF MARMORA)
Cyzicus
Nicaea
Lysimachia
Aenus
Abydus
Dascylium
Prusa
BITHYNIA
Mt. Olympus
Ilium
(Troy)
Ida Mts.
MYSIA
Gordieum
Dorylaeum
Adramyttium
Pergamum
Mytilene
Lesbos
Cotyaeum
Ancyra
Pessinus
Amorium
Thyatira
Mt. Dindymus
PHRYGIA
Cyme
Phocaea
Magnesia
Elaea
Sardis
Ceramon-agora
Ipsus
Caystrupedium
Mt. Sipylus
Smyrna
Synnada
Philadelphia
Eumenia
Antioch
Erythrae
Colophon
Hypaepa
Mt. Timolus
Celaenae
Apamea
Ephesus
Tralles
Colossae
Laodicea
Samos
Magnesia
Alabanda
Sagalassus
Miletus
CARIA
PISIDIA
Patmos
Iassus
Mylasa
Bargylia
Halicarnassus
Calymna
Cos
Caunus
Cibyra
Termessus
Perge
Lystra
Isaura
ISAURIA
Amorgus
Cnidus
Astypalaea
Syme
Telus
Rhodes
Telmessus
LYCIA
Attalia
PAMPHYLIA
Phaselis
Xanthus
Patara
Myra
Coracesium
Selinus
(Traianopolis)
Chelidoniae Is.

LAGONIA
Halys R.
Iris R.
Thermodon R.
Amasia
Cabira
Neocaesarea
Comana
Zela
Gaziura
P O N T U S
Lycus R.
Paryadres Mts.
Nicopolis
Satala
Domana
Zigana
Trapezus
Cerasus
(Pharnacia)
Tripolis
Cotyora
ARMENIA MINOR
Tavium
Sebastia
Euphrates R.
Eastern Euphrates
Arsamosata
Mazaca
(Caesarea)
Halys R.
Nyssa
Mt.Argaeus
CAPPADOCIA
Melitene
Garsaura (Archelais)
Nazianxus
Comana
Carmalas R.
T A U R U S M T S
COMMAGENE
SOPHENE
Amida
Samosata
Tyana
Sarus R.
Augusta
Pyramus R.
Amanus Mts.
Tela
Edessa
Apamea
Zeugma
Resaina
Carchemish
Carrhae
Batnae
OSRHOËNE
Mopsuhestia
Tarsus
Adana
Issus
Cyrrhus
Hierapolis
CILICIA
Soli
(Pompeiopolis)
Aegeae
Gulf of Issus
Alexandria
ANTIOCH
Beroea
Seleucia
Seleucia
Nicephorium
SYRIA
Thapsacus

INTRODUCTION

The land which is now Turkey has perhaps the richest history of any country in the world, stretching back over ten thousand years to some of the oldest agricultural settlements in the archaeological record. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are born here, and genetic analysis confirms that here in northern Mesopotamia, now southeast Turkey, wheat was first domesticated. This entire peninsula is called Anatolia, which comes from the ancient Greek, "land of the rising sun"; it is also called Asia Minor. The Turks are relative newcomers, arriving only a thousand years ago.

This book focuses geographically on the cluster of the seven churches of Asia Minor mentioned in the book of Revelation. Soon after Jesus was executed, Paul spent much time evangelizing here; and soon after Paul's execution, the Roman authorities here banished another preacher whom they considered a threat. In exile on the island of Patmos, John wrote Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse.

Within a few centuries, the Roman empire would be transformed by social forces that people like Paul and John were helping to create; and Paul and John were themselves molded by centuries of volatile interaction between Greek and Jewish culture. To understand this time and place and its connection to our own, we must range beyond western Asia Minor in the first century of our era. We'll clamber over archaeological ruins here, scour museums around the globe, and examine what survives of the written record.

These ruins and fragments offer tantalizing and often haunting clues about people whose views on religion, slavery, women's rights, and democracy were very different from our own. In the sixth century BC, Pythagoras of Samos founded a philosophical school that was also a mystical religious brotherhood. Religion was a constant part of daily life in Greece and Rome: every public assembly, every drama production, every sports event, every trip to the doctor took place under divine patronage. For the Hebrews too, religion so thoroughly permeated life that the term religion does not occur in the Old Testament. In ancient Rome, a marriage contract was a property right of the man over the woman. No Greek or Roman citizen ever questioned the existence of a huge underclass of slaves, and the famous code of the Christian emperor Justinian in the sixth century AD was the most complete collection of laws regulating slavery ever assembled in human history. As for democracy, ancient Greeks usually used the term in a pejorative sense, while today it's an obligatory shibboleth.

A quick sketch of our main historical periods will help to put into perspective the often dizzying ferment of ethnicity, language, migration, war, and social revolution that we will encounter. Though for our purposes the Mycenaean Greeks make a suitable starting point, it's important to keep in mind that the archaeological record of western Asia Minor goes back millennia before this, and that the western assumption that our culture began with the Greeks is inadequate and provincial. Herodotus, a Greek of the fifth century BC born in Halicarnassus, now Bodrum, in the southwestern corner of Asia Minor, has justly been called the father of history. Yet he himself acknowledged that the Greeks owed a massive cultural debt to the Egyptians. The Greeks based their astronomy on Babylonian observations and took their alphabet from the Phoenicians. In the British Museum in London, the Neues Museum in Berlin, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, and the archaeological museum on Samos, we see the complex intermingling of Egyptian, Phoenician, and Greek art. I hope that this book will serve as a portal into your exploration of this fascinating land. Whatever our beliefs, ethnicity, or nation, this history is our own. For better and for worse, these times and peoples – the Greeks and Hebrews, the Lydians and Persians, the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the birth of two great religions and their intimate and tempestuous relationship – have swayed the arc of human history and helped to create our world today.

A sarcophagus from Sidon on what is now the Lebanese coast, fifth century BC, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

The walls of Troy.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Mycenaean Greeks

(Sixteenth to twelfth centuries BC)

These are the seafaring marauders immortalized by Homer, conquering in "well-benched ships to plow the wine-dark sea." Their settlements have been found from Italy to Cyprus, and their artifacts have an even wider spread: Mycenaean pottery has cropped up in Spain and Egypt, their swords in the Caucasus, and their bronze double-axes dated to the thirteenth century BC in Ireland and England. They conquered the Minoans, a sophisticated but declining society centered on Crete, and had contact with the Hittites, an Indo-European culture whose capital lay in central Asia Minor. They adapted the Minoan script to their language in a writing system that we call Linear B, which used eighty-seven signs for different combinations of consonants and vowels. Only professional scribes could handle its complexity.

Homer called them Achaeans, and the Hittite written record of the thirteenth century BC refers to a kingdom of powerful seafarers in the west called the Ahhiyawa. The circumstantial evidence identifying the Achaeans as the Ahhiyawa is compelling, and linguistic evidence connects the Hittite and Homeric names for Troy. In the eighth century BC, Homer in the Iliad wrote down the epic poetry that had been transmitted orally for centuries, of the Greeks laying waste the land of the Trojans and besieging their city:

"Now squad on squad, gate to gate they fought –

but how can I tell it all, sing it all like a god?

The strain is far too great. Everywhere round the wall

The surging inhuman blaze of war leapt up the rocks."

It takes imagination to appreciate the site of ancient Troy, a jumble of at least nine main archaeological layers. It was a wealthy city commanding the Hellespont, entrance to the Marmara and ultimately to the Black Sea. But the harbor long ago silted up, a common problem for the cities along this coast. The evocative works of art found here by archaeologists are mostly in Berlin. It was likely among the first places that the Greeks came into contact with the Anatolian fertility goddess Cybele, whose cult would later influence so strongly Greek and Roman religious practice.

The Mycenaean Greeks perished in the great invasion of the Sea Peoples. Late in the second millennium BC, every Hittite site in central Anatolia was destroyed, and almost every city on the Mediterranean between Greece and Palestine was razed and not rebuilt. The written record vanished from the Aegean, and when the Greeks recovered writing centuries later, it would be via the Phoenician alphabet. The dark age obliterated Greek memory of the Hittites, and even Herodotus appears to have known nothing of them.

A statue of Cybele, in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara.

Archaic Period

(Ninth to sixth centuries BC)

The Mycenaean period ended in a common historical pattern – these former conquerers were inundated by new conquerers and chased out of their homeland. At least three new Greek waves washed up on the western shores of Asia Minor, the Aeolians in the north around Troy, the Ionians in the center, and later the Dorians in the south. Our geographical focus confines us to the Ionian Greeks. They warred with the peoples they found here, most notably the Carians; and the twelve most important Ionian city-states (including Miletus, Priene, Ephesus, Samos, and Chios) formed a confederation which we call the Ionian League or Panionic League.

Miletus was by far the most powerful and probably the oldest of the Ionian cities. Much earlier, the Hittites had called it Millewanda, and Homer mentions Miletus as the home of the "Carians of uncouth speech" who came to the defense of Troy. Herodotus says that the Ionian invaders slaughtered the Carian men and took the women as wives; and so these women bound themselves by oath, never to sit at table with their husbands or call them by name. Beginning in about the eighth century BC, Miletus founded dozens of colonies in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Some of these colonies are still living cities, including Sinope (now Sinop), Trapezus (now Trabzon), and Amisus (now Samsun). Milesians also led the Greek trading colony in Egypt, founded in the late seventh or early sixth century BC.

The Ionians innovated in art and science, and attempted to explain natural phenomena without recourse to the caprice of the gods. Homer was an Ionian – the strongest tradition connects him with Smyrna (now Izmir), but another connects him with Chios. Anaximander of Miletus produced the first map of the world that we know of, and Thales of Miletus around 600 BC predicted a solar eclipse, but the feat is not as impressive as it sounds. He predicted only the year, 585 BC. He has one of the strongest claims to authorship of the ancient maxim, Know Thyself, inscribed at the temple of Delphi. He thanked the gods for three things – he was a human and not an animal, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian.

By the mid-sixth century BC, Lydia, a Hittite successor-state based at Sardis, had conquered all of the Ionian city-states except Miletus. Interaction between Lydia and the Greeks went back centuries before this: Greek mythology is riddled with references to Lydia, and the Lydian king Gyges of the seventh

century BC had given much gold and silver to the temple at Delphi in return for favorable pronouncements. It was around this time that Lydia invented coinage. Money had been in use long before this, but precious metal guaranteed by government stamp was a Lydian innovation, which quickly spread to the Greek cities of the coast.

In the sixth century BC, the Lydian king Croesus funded the construction of the greatest temple in the Greek world, the temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Built entirely of marble, it was three times bigger than the Parthenon in Athens. Herodotus included it in the seven wonders of the world. It faced west instead of the usual east, so as to awe those arriving by sea. Columns almost twenty meters high supported the roof, and some of the column bases survive in the British Museum, carved with bas-reliefs almost two meters high, one inscribed with the words, "donated by Croesus."

Ancient kings had always found it politic to lavish money on temples, but Croesus may have also found it wise to limit their power. Herodotus tells the strange tale of Croesus setting out to test all the oracles of Greece. From his capital at Sardis he sent messengers to the temples of the Ionian cities and also of mainland Greece. All the oracles were asked, on the hundredth day from the messengers' departure from Sardis, what Croesus happened to be doing at that moment. Each oracle wrote its response, and the messengers returned home. Croesus gathered the responses and read them one by one – and then claimed that only the oracle at Delphi had been able to see that, on the hundredth day, he had been eating a dish of tortoise and lamb cooked in a bronze cauldron. He declared Delphi to be the only true oracle, perhaps with the intention of marginalizing the Ionian temples closer to home.

Lydia soon fell to Cyrus, the Persian king who had allowed the Jews of the Babylonian exile to return to Jerusalem. Sardis became a Persian provincial capital, and the Ionians, unable to unite, fell to Persian rule. Miletus, with its four harbors, housed the Persian fleet, and the cities generally managed their own affairs under a Greek king approved and supported by the Persian satrap at Sardis. In the first years of the fifth century BC, the Ionians revolted. Under Milesian generals and with Athenian help, a force burnt Sardis; but the Persians soon defeated the rebels near Ephesus and sacked Miletus, killing the men and enslaving the women. Miletus never regained its former glory.

Classical Period

(Fifth and fourth centuries BC) and

Hellenistic Period

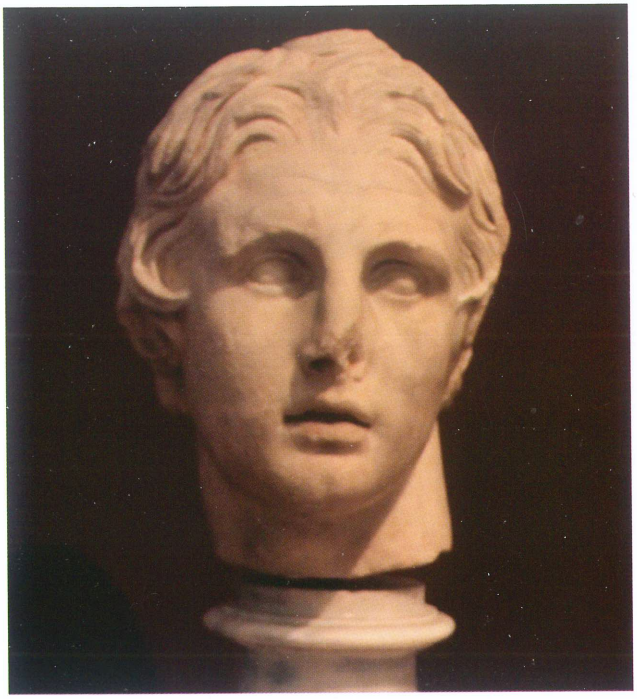
(Late fourth to first centuries BC)

The Persian kings Darius and Xerxes both led armies through Asia Minor to invade Greece, and both were repulsed. They weighed heavily upon the land and people, and Herodotus speaks of rivers "drunk dry" by the men and beasts in the Persian armies. The Greek city-states set up the Delian league under Athenian leadership, with the sole purpose of resisting Persia. This league was eventually transformed into the Athenian empire, which Sparta destroyed in the Peloponnesian War. As the Greek cities tore each other apart, Persia again ruled the eastern Aegean coast. In the late fifth century BC, a renegade Persian prince marched from Sardis with an army of Greek mercenaries led by the Athenian Xenophon.

Then Alexander, like Apollo pulling a pirate sun across the sky, consolidated the fragmented Greeks, conquered Persia, and pulled into his orbit the lands from Nile to Indus. His empire shattered upon his death in 323 BC, and warring fragments lay astraddle Eurasia from Afghanistan to Egypt. His former generals founded their own dynasties, including the Seleucids in Persia and Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt.

The Hellenistic period began with the death of Alexander. Despite the internecine war, Greek culture flourished and penetrated into these conquered lands with lasting and profound consequences. In the eastern Mediterranean, Greek would be the language of the cities and of the ruling class for a thousand years, and the Islamic conquerers continued to use Greek as an administrative language in Egypt and Syria until the late eighth century AD. Greek was a living language in Asia Minor almost up to our time.

In the third century BC, Aristarchus of Samos proposed the first known heliocentric model, and Eratosthenes in Alexandria measured the circumference of the Earth to a remarkable degree of accuracy. In the next century, Hipparchus of Nicaea used Babylonian astronomical data to discover the precession of the equinoxes, caused by changes in the earth's axis of rotation; and also calculated the mean lunar month to within a second and the year to within six minutes. His star catalog was still in use



Alexander the Great, in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

eighteen centuries later. The first time we placed the sun at the center, and the first accurate measurement of our planet, are moments in human history comparable to the moon landing or the splitting of the atom.

The ferment between Greek and Hebrew culture is of central importance to early Christianity, and almost every city explored in this book contains archaeological evidence illustrating this complex interaction. In response to Hellenization, the Jewish community split between those who compromised with their Greek overlords and those who rejected them. Seleucus, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, built Antioch as his capital, and settled a colony of Jews here, granting them political equality. Many Jews settled in Alexandria, and by 200 BC, the Jewish colony here had translated the scriptures into Greek and become advisors to the Ptolemies. But civil war raged in Jerusalem, each faction fighting for the high priesthood and scheming to bring the Seleucids or Ptolemies against its rivals.

Western Asia Minor came first under the rule of Lysimachus. In 281 BC the Seleucids defeated him and settled thousands of Jewish families in Lydia and Phrygia. Lured by the promise of citizenship, many more Jews migrated from Babylon to the Ionian cities. In the early second century BC, the Seleucids sacked Jerusalem and instituted the worship of Zeus in the temple. They declared Judaism a capital offense, and tortured and killed Jews for not eating pork and for refusing Greek rites. Judas Maccabeus, who drove the Seleucids from Jerusalem two years later, also shored up his faction in the ongoing civil war: rival Jews, dead on the battlefield, were conveniently found with idolatrous tokens in their garments.

Imperial Roman Era

(Late second century BC to fourth century AD) and

Late Antiquity

(Fourth century AD to eighth century AD)

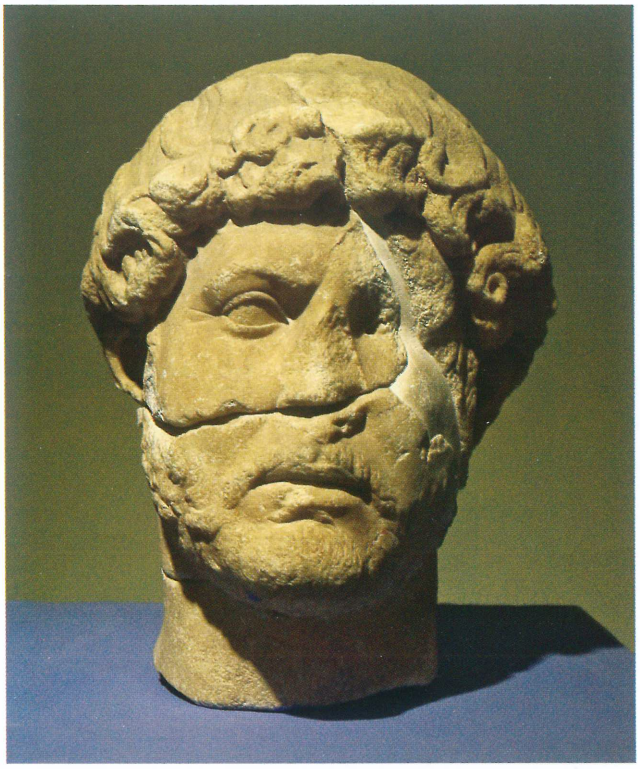
Rome was a Greek successor-state. It had taken its alphabet and religion, its art and philosophy, directly from the Greeks with few changes. The Latin language never penetrated the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, and in Roman Asia Minor most inscriptions and surviving manuscripts are written in Greek. Though we speak of the Hellenistic period down through the first century BC, a messy transition to Roman rule had already commenced the century before. In 195 BC, Smyrna recognized its rising power and instituted the worship of deified Rome. This imperial cult dressed itself in the old Greek cults, and soon prevailed in all the Ionian cities. The worship of kings had long been the custom here, and the imperial cult attempted to bind the new provinces to Rome.

The people and land of Asia Minor endured a succession of wars, as Roman generals fought the Seleucids and later Mithridates, a king of Pontus on the Black Sea. When Mithridates conquered the province of Asia, he ordered the massacre of all Romans here. About a hundred thousand were executed, and the principal bloodbath occurred at Ephesus, where Romans fled vainly to sanctuary in the temple of Artemis. After the Roman general Pompey defeated Mithridates, he met with Jewish leaders at Antioch in 64 BC. Three competing embassies made plain that the Jews were in a state of civil war, as each faction attempted to secure recognition from the new overlord. Rome reserved the right to appoint the high priest, but gave the Jews tax breaks and the right to coin their own money. More important, the Jews were exempted from emperor-worship and free from conscription.

The Sadduccees, the traditional party of the high priests, vied with the more populist Pharisees; the Zealots were dedicated to the overthrow of the Roman overlords; the Essenes, known today through the Dead Sea scrolls, rejected politics and theology; the Therapeutae in Egypt lived in even greater seclusion than the Essenes. Numerous written sources – the Roman senator Tacitus, the Hellenized Jew Josephus, the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, Maccabees and Acts of the Apostles in the Bible – attest to a multitude of Jewish prophets and revolutionaries, most of whom came to a bad end, whether beheaded in Herod's dungeon or hacked down by Roman cavalry at the Jordan or crucified on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

One Pharisee bribed Rome to make him high priest, then refused to pay tax. He was executed. When the Parthians, mounted bowmen from the Caspian, invaded in the early first century BC, they installed the Sadduccee party in the high priesthood. Rome ejected the Parthians and appointed Herod to keep order. When Jesus was a boy, the death of Herod triggered another revolt, and the Syrian governor crucified thousands of Jews to quell it. Mountain and desert were awash in apocalyptic schisms, and in Jerusalem priestly factions battled. An Egyptian prophet, with thousands of followers, encamped outside Jerusalem, driven off by Roman troops. The governor soon sent troops against another upstart prophet at the Jordan, scattering, slaughtering, and imprisoning his followers, and beheading the prophet.

A passover riot in AD 50 killed thousands in the temple in the reign of Claudius. The Roman magistrates crucified the ruling Jews for this fiasco, and all Syria erupted in revolt and bloodbath. The Romans besieged Jerusalem, and the fractured Jews within the city fought each other and torched their own corn supply. Famine and disease gave way to cannibalism, followed by the massacre or enslavement of the inhabitants. In the early second century AD, the Jews revolted twice more, and each time were brutally suppressed; and Rome banished the Jews from Jerusalem.



The Roman emperor Hadrian, who suppressed a Jewish revolt late in his reign. From the archaeological museum in Bergama (Pergamum).

In the midst of plenty, Romans gradually lost the will and the ability to fight, and the legions came to employ tribal mercenaries, who often used their experience and knowledge against their employer, and over centuries rose from servant to ally to master. Meanwhile, coup and counter-coup rent the empire asunder, the fractured legions elevating their commanders to the status of emperor; and these pretenders had to plunder the people to pay their soldiers. In the third century, the empire disintegrated. With

The frescoes of Karanlık Kilise, the Dark Church, in Göreme. Very few stone inscriptions survive in Cappadocia, and most of our evidence comes from frescoes and murals. Göreme has the highest concentration of churches in Cappaodocia. (Next Page)


ΗΛΙΟΥ
ΑΝΔΡΕΣΓΑΛΙ
ΛΑΙΟΙΤΗΣ
ΤΗΚΑΤΕΒΛΗ
ΠΟΝΤΕΣΕΙΣΤΟ
ΟΥΝΟΝ
ΙΩ
ΠΑΥ
ΜΡ


ΟΥΤΟΣΟΙΔΑ ΜΑΛΗΦΑΙ
ΜΩΝΕΣΤΟΝ ΔΟΝΟΝ
ΥΜΑΘΗΤΕ

the rise of Persia, a Gothic confederacy on the Danube, and war-bands on the Rhine, every frontier collapsed. When Septimus Severus died in York in AD 211, he was the last emperor for eighty years to die in his bed. Emperors were assassinated by their own troops, or killed in civil war with another Roman general, or captured and executed by the invading tribes. The Goths invaded Asia Minor in the reign of Gallienus (AD 253-268), ending more than three centuries of the Pax Romana, the Roman Peace; and in his reign alone, nineteen pretenders to the throne died violently.

At the start of the fourth century, six emperors ruled over the various fragments of the empire. Constantine reunited the fractured empire, and converted to Christianity on his deathbed; but his sons fought and employed tribal mercenaries against each other. Theodosius I had employed Gothic tribes as mercenaries, giving them land in Phrygia; and their revolt at the end of the fourth century sucked in many slaves and dispossessed peasants. All of western Asia Minor was devastated, and those who could fled to the coast and islands. His sons' inheritance was the final division of the Roman empire. Again civil war between the princes, and again each sent the tribes against his enemy. In the fifth century in the reign of Justinian, Rome changed hands five times, Africa was regained and lost, and the Nika riots devastated Constantinople, tens of thousands of people slaughtered by imperial troops in the streets. The Persians reached Antioch and the eastern Mediterranean, and new tribes invaded. Goths sometimes fought with the empire, sometimes against.

Christianity had benefited from the instability of the old order, but Christian emperors were no more scrupulous than any other; and in late antiquity in particular, the people were plundered mercilessly by their own provincial governors. The Persians reached western Asia Minor in the early seventh century, sacking cities and plunging this region into a dark age.

The Islamic and Byzantine Periods – Crusaders and Turks – the Ottoman Empire

For most of the previous half-millennium Rome and Persia had been at war, and if there happened to be a lull, as in the fifth century, it was only because each was struggling under a deluge of tribal raiders. In the seventh century, a new Islamic ruling class filled the space wasted by the titanic wars between Rome and Persia; and Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch submitted to Islamic overlords. Though at least two Arab armies invaded Asia Minor in the seventh and eighth centuries, this region remained Greek and Christian until well after the Turkish conquest.

Elmalı Church

Cappadocia in central Asia Minor was a no-man's-land between Rome and the new Islamic empires. Caesarea (modern Kayseri) was captured in 647 and 726, and the people here took refuge in the underground cities of Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı, barricading themselves in with large round stones. The Arab armies smoked them out. The people of this region also suffered the massacres of the iconoclasts (image-breakers), in which a puritan revival condemned as heretical all images except the cross. Though Cappadocia had a rich Christian heritage dating back to the first century, very few of its churches survived this tumult; the surviving masterpieces date from much later.

In this period, the names we've been using begin to warp, and new terms often distract from fundamental continuity. Historians usually date the fall of the western Roman empire to AD 476, an utterly

artificial boundary – this was merely the first time that a western Germanic emperor had refused to accept a titular overlord from Constantinople. The Roman empire had changed its capital, its religion, its language; it had cooked in a dizzying ferment of ethnicities; it had gone through dozens of cycles of consolidation and disintegration. But still the people of this society called themselves Roman, right up to the Ottoman sack of Constantinople in AD 1453. It requires three words and six syllables to say "Greek Orthodox Christians" in English, but only one syllable in Turkish: Rum. The term Rome carried such prestige that the Seljuk Turks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries styled themselves sultans of Rum. The Greek emperors never called themselves Byzantine, and neither did anyone else until the sixteenth century, well after Constantinople had fallen.

The term Byzantine is nevertheless useful to describe these Greek-speaking Christians. The cave churches and monasteries of Cappadocia beautifully illustrate this changing culture; and Karanlık Kilisesi (the dark church) is the finest surviving example of eleventh-century Byzantine art. Narrow twisting stairs through the rock open into a small narthex and then a hall with four columns. Two side apses flank the central apse in the shape of a cross, and the only source of

The frescoes of Karanlık Kilise, the Dark Church, in Göreme. Very few stone inscriptions survive in Cappadocia, and most of our evidence comes from frescoes and murals. Göreme has the highest concentration of churches in Cappaodocia.

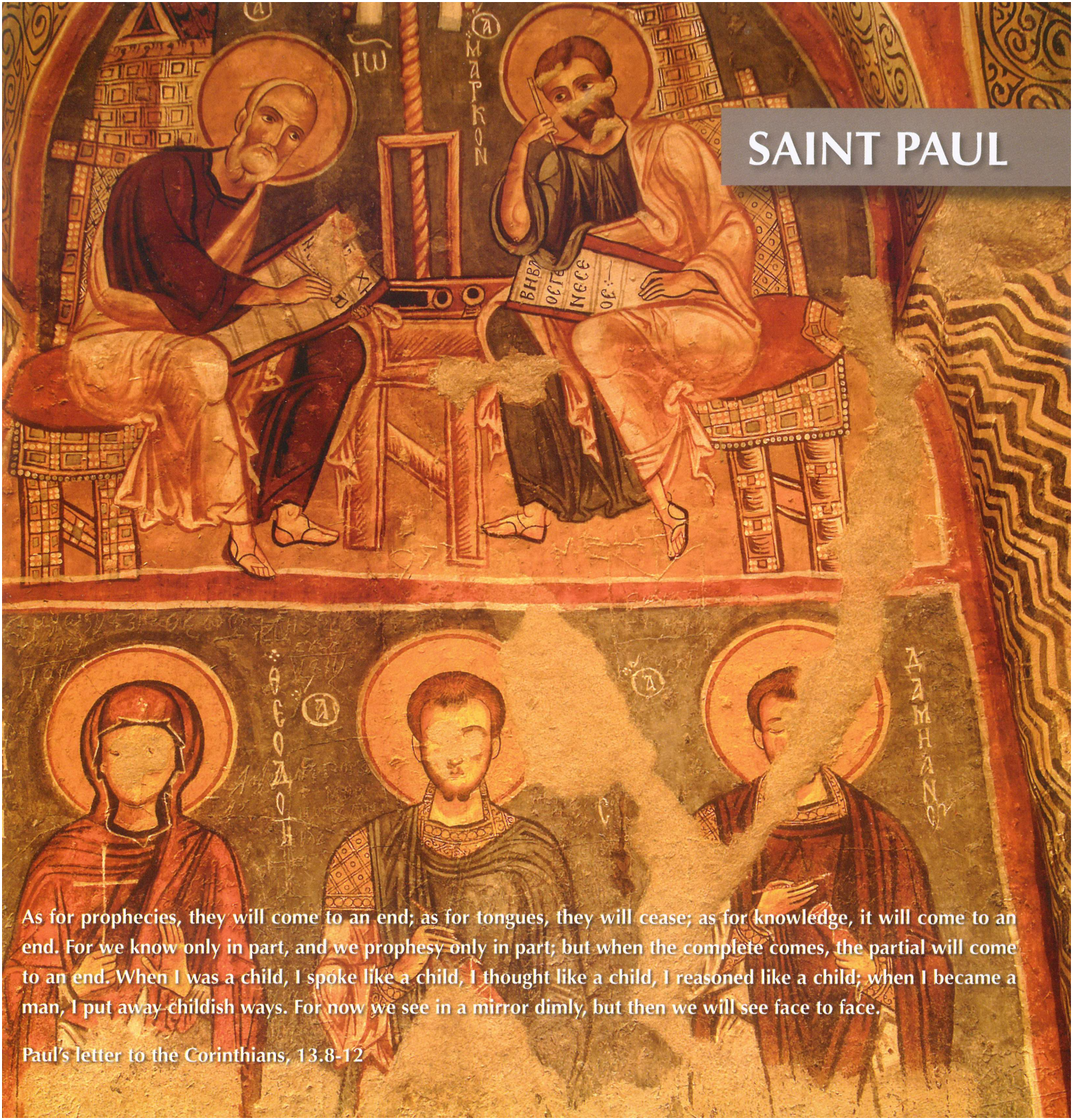
light is a small opening in the narthex. The darkness has preserved the frescoes: Christ Pantocrator (Ruler of All) in the two large domes, the last supper, and the three kings of the east bearing gifts for Jesus. Also depicted are the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey, and his arrest by Roman soldiers.

The Arab invasions five centuries before had been only temporary; but when the Seljuk Turks captured Caesarea (modern Kayseri) in 1067, the Byzantine empire lost Cappadocia forever. In the late eleventh century, envoys from Constantinople traveled to a church council in Italy to plead for help against the Turkic invaders. But the cure was worse than the ailment, and the crusades have been called with much justification "a Christianized Viking raid", a dreary litany of siege and plunder and plague and cannibalism, of launching the decapitated heads of prisoners over city walls. Western European warlords, known as Latin Christians, carved out fiefdoms along the eastern Mediterranean; but the brunt of the crusades was borne by Greek Christians, the very people who had called for help. In the twelfth century, the Greek emperor used Turkic mercenaries against the crusaders, and the French and Venetians sacked Constantinople at the start of the thirteenth century. Most of the Byzantine empire was divided among the Latin warlords, many ruling only a small Greek island or patch of coast. Fragments of the empire continued under Greek-speaking emperors, including western Asia Minor.

In the thirteenth century, the Seljuk Turks fell to the Mongols, and Turkoman tribes fleeing the Mongol advance settled in western Asia Minor. Several refugee dynasties carved out territory, among them the Aydin, Karaman, and Ottoman march-lords. The cities of western Asia Minor endured a swirl of warlords and mercenaries: the petty Turkic chieftains, Latin and Greek Christians, a rising Ottoman power, and the depredations of Timur (Tamerlane). The Byzantine empire was well into its final disintegration, as Greek princes fought civil wars and Asia Minor became steadily Turkish. When the Ottomans finally took Constantinople, the empire encompassed only the walls of the city, the last remnant of the military despotism of the Caesars, erected on the banks of the Tiber fifteen centuries before. But Latin crusaders had struck the mortal blow.

By the eighteenth century, most of the Greek Christians here spoke Turkish as a mother tongue. In the nineteenth century, many merchants from mainland Greece immigrated into Asia Minor; and by the early twentieth century in some of these cities, Greeks formed a slim majority of the population. Many Christians fled or were massacred in the subsequent wars; and those who survived, including many Turkish speakers, were deported to Greece in the population exchange.

Fresco in the Karanlık Church, Cappadocia. (Right)



SAINT PAUL

As for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I put away childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 13.8-12

SAINT PAUL

The first fifteen Christian bishops of Jerusalem were Jews, and they only renounced Judaism to regain access to Jerusalem after they had been banished. Early Christianity was a radical Jewish sect, which the more traditional Jews attacked. The early Christians received a valuable ally in a Hellenized Jew named Paul, a thug who had before persecuted and murdered them, and whose repentance and revelation turned him into their most successful evangelist. Without Paul, Jesus would likely be remembered today as one among many Jewish prophets and revolutionaries and messiahs.

The Bible first calls him Saul, and then Paul after his conversion; but he had had these two names his whole life, one for the Jewish community and one for his identity as a Roman citizen. Though born in Tarsus, on the eastern Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor, Paul was educated in Jerusalem and became a formidable rabbi. By his own account, he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He may have been present in the Sanhedrin, the high court of Judaism, when Stephen, the first martyr of Christian tradition, was condemned to death. Stephen told his judges, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?" Paul was present when Stephen was stoned to death. He set out to bring the Christians of Damascus to Jerusalem in chains, but on the road to Damascus he became a follower of Jesus.

When the traditional party found that he had turned traitor, they set a guard on the gates of the city. He escaped over the walls of Damascus in a basket, and later fled Jerusalem when he learned of a plot to kill him. He reappears in the written record several years later, and from here on his life was dedicated to evangelizing, mostly in Asia Minor and Greece. Several times beaten and flogged by Jews and imprisoned by the Roman authorities, he was eventually executed in Rome. The people he met in the synagogues and marketplaces would have seen him as one of many travelling preachers and philosophers. We hear of his confrontations with sorcerers and false prophets, of his healing the sick and raising the dead; and often he resembles Moses and Aaron battling magicians at the court of Pharoah.

In a wealthy and decadent empire, Paul tapped a deep spiritual yearning, and told Jew and Gentile alike of a master whom he had never met, executed

Saint Paul, in the Chora Museum, formerly Saint Savior in Chora, in Istanbul.

outside Jerusalem not long before. Asia Minor and Greece were his most important recruiting grounds. Unlike Judea, Syria, and Egypt, which suffered the chaos of the Jewish revolts, Asia Minor thrived under the Pax Romana; and Christianity grew up here. Over three centuries, this movement became a social revolution which grew so powerful that it was eventually incorporated into the ruling apparatus of the Roman empire. The archaeological record of Asia Minor tells the story of the transformation from polytheistic imperial Rome into Christian late antiquity, and throughout this book we will explore in detail this fascinating evidence.

More than anyone else, Paul was the midwife of Christianity. He struggled with the more traditional Jewish Christians, who viewed with horror his mission to bring Gentiles into the church. His letters are the earliest part of the New Testament, and we will examine his fundamental influence upon nascent Christianity through the lens of four cities of Asia Minor that he visited on his missionary journeys: Antioch (modern Antakya), Iconium (modern Konya), Assos, and Miletus. He also spent much time in Ephesus, which is treated in the section on the seven churches of Asia Minor.

ANTIOCH
(Modern Antakya)

Founded as the capital city of the Seleucid dynasty, Antioch on the Orontes became one of the largest cities in the world. Antiochus was the father of Seleucus I Nicator, the founder of the dynasty; and the Seleucid kings are said to have founded nine Seleucias, sixteen Antiochs, and six Laodiceas (after a sister-wife). A temple to Zeus once stood on the hill behind the city, but the summit now houses only a castle dating from the crusades. Many houses on the hill today have a third-story terrace shaded by a grapevine growing up from the ground. Its trunk is often eight or ten centimeters in diameter at the base, snaking out of a low window or sprouting from the roadside, up two or three stories across streets and alleys to flourish on a latticework, providing shade to a terrace.

Ancient Antioch had four quarters: the first holding Greek settlers; the second holding the Jews and a native population which spoke Aramaic; and the third and fourth holding newer waves of settlers. The Caesars built baths, aqueducts, and a colonnaded street over five kilometers long. Hellenistic and Roman Antioch had a reputation for debauchery, with its theaters and races, baths and games. The Jews here were among the most prosperous in the diaspora, but they were a community apart. The many synagogues were somber islands in a sea of hedonism. No remains of these synagogues have been found, but a table inscribed with a menorah has been uncovered. The rich archaeological record lies buried beneath a living city, and very little has been excavated.

Antioch superbly illustrates the messy process of Hellenization. The successful revolt of the Maccabees against Antiochus IV set an important precedent for Jewish hardliners, yet when the people of Antioch revolted in 140 BC, the Maccabee high priest in Jerusalem sent Jewish soldiers to the Seleucids to put down the revolt. Thousands were killed and the city ruined. In the early first century BC, a Jewish commander from Babylon was allowed to settle in the area with his troops and relatives. And during the Jewish revolts in Judea, the Hellenized community here tried to show its loyalty to Rome by sacrificing to idols.

After Stephen was executed, many followers of Jesus fled here. They called themselves believers, or brethren; and here in Antioch they were first called Christian. The Jews would not have referred to this radical sect as followers of Christ, for Christ meant messiah. It's likely that the Gentiles were the first to use the term Christian, and the church at Antioch was the

Saint Peter's church in Antioch, modern Antakya (Hatay).

Mosaic of Soteria (awakening), Antakya Archaeological Museum.

first congregation to include Gentiles. Antioch was a base for Paul for all three of his missionary journeys. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul recounts his version of an argument with Peter, one of the twelve original disciples and first bishop of Rome. The ceremonial observances of Jews required that they not even eat with Gentiles, and Peter, as a good Jew, had refused to eat with Gentile Christians. Paul criticized him, but the rest of the Jewish Christians sided with Peter, and Paul left Antioch. There is no evidence he ever returned.

At the northeast edge of the modern city lies a cave church, St. Peter's (Senpiyer Kilisesi). Carved into the mountainside, most of the wall is igneous rock with some masonry; and from the north side of the altar, an escape tunnel winds up and into the mountain, long since filled in. The floor has mosaics from the fourth and fifth centuries AD; and though plaster still lies on the walls, there is no sign of the frescoes once here. The facade dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century, when crusaders controlled the city. Though this grotto is often passed off as the oldest church in the world, it's important to re-

member that Christians in the time of Paul worshiped in private homes.

For the adventurous and fit, the Iron Gate is well worth the climb. South of the church rises a small gorge where the river empties into the valley. From the steep ridgeline above, the ruins of the old city wall plunge down from the summit winding and twisting. Small caves and alcoves dot the cliff, and masonry juts into space, part of a much older complex and extensive network of walls originally att least two meters thick. Sticking to the north side of the gorge, climb past well-kept cinderblock homes. Huge stone blocks lie in the mouth of the gorge far below, likely a secondary dam. Most of the structure was long ago swept away in winter floods, but a narrow neck supports a large head of masonry.

The gorge rounds back into the mountain towards the east, and spanning the riverbed is the Iron Gate, a dam in the city walls to prevent winter torrents from inundating the city. Much of the masonry dates from the time of Justinian, and recycled Greek inscriptions and reliefs face

Oceanus Mosaic, Antakya Archaeological Museum.

inward. Pictures taken in 1932 show a much more extensive structure, which may have collapsed in an earthquake, but the lack of rubble shows that this was used as a quarry. Upstream, two separate channels flow through here down to the mouth of the gorge. Rubbish is everywhere.

Back in the town center, the archaeological museum has some of the best Roman-era mosaics anywhere in the world. Also here are marble busts from the first and second centuries AD, including a magnificent satyr and a philosopher. Some Hittite and Assyrian cuneiform tablets also survive, but the mosaics from Roman times are the prize here: Nymphs and centaurs, gods and heroes, the flute and the spear; Hercules as a boy strangling serpents; Eros, god of love, carried across the water by the Psyches; and the massive floor mosaic of the Megalopsychia Hunt.

Yet at the very time these priceless works of art were being created, the empire was undergoing a revolution from within. In the corner of the museum lies a far more somber and sober sculpture, from Palmyra with a Syriac inscription, dated to the third century: man and woman shoulder to shoulder in a funerary bas-relief. The woman is veiled, a little hair showing; the man bearded, holding a small cross in his left hand.

In the late fourth century, a shepherd's son named Simeon was born near here. After a youth spent in a monastery, he walked out into the mountains east of Antioch, and placed himself atop a column twenty meters high, his permanent perch until his death over thirty years later. He became known as Simeon the Stylite (Greek for pillar). A monastery and citadel still stand between here and Aleppo. His disciples kept him in food and water and presumably a chamber pot of some sort, while he did interminable sun salutations, received supplicants, and railed against the excesses and corruption of Antioch and the empire.

He was the first of the pillar saints, many ascetics across the Christian world imitating his example. The ruins of the monastery of Simeon Stylites the Younger (Aziz Simon Manastırı) can still be seen fifteen kilometers south of Antioch; and as late as the tenth century, Saint Lazarus the Stylite inhabited a pillar in the vicinity of Ephesus. That such a drastic choice resonated with so many illustrates the desperate tensions within society at the time. The corruption and decadence behind this classical facade spurred the pillar saints to their mad and final choice, their emaciated and filthy frames casting a strange and terrible beacon across Eurasia. Pilgrims journeyed from Gaul and India to pray at the foot of Simeon's pillar, Arab tribes battled for the honor of his blessing, and monarchs proclaimed his sainthood.

ICONIUM
(Modern Konya)

Paul was here on his first and second missionary journeys, and perhaps on his third journey as well; he traveled from Antioch through the Cilician Gates of the Taurus mountains into the interior of Asia Minor. On this route centuries earlier, Xenophon had mentioned the robber tribes here, and even Alexander and the Seleucid kings had had trouble here. Newly and tenuously pacified, this region was a part of Phrygia, famous for its slaves. Phryx was a synonym for slave in Hellenistic and Roman times. Though the upper classes of this region spoke Greek, inscriptions found here show that the Phrygian and Celtic languages survived centuries of Hellenization. Paul ran into Romans, Greeks, Jews, Lycaonians, and Phrygians, as well as Celtic-speaking Gauls in the surrounding country; and in his letter to the people here, the term Galatians encompassed this ethnic kaleidoscope.

South of Konya lies one of the oldest cities in the archaeological record (see box), and about 180 kilometers west of Konya near the village of Yalvaç lie the ruins of Pisidian Antioch. When Paul tried to preach in the synagogue here, he was chased out. From here he and his companion Barnabus came to Konya, converting Jews and Greeks to Christ. Among the converts was Thecla, a young woman who left her fiance to follow Paul. In the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, we find a description of Paul so unflattering that it could be true: "a man of little stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining and nose somewhat hooked, full of grace; for sometimes he appeared like a man and sometimes he had the face of an angel."

But Paul's preaching had split the synagogue. Pauline and traditional factions coalesced in the city, and Paul and Barnabus were forced to flee to the surrounding country. About thirty kilometers south of Konya lies a town called Lystra (now Klistra). According to the Acts of the Apostles, after Paul healed a lame man here, the town wanted to worship him and Barnabus as Greek gods – Paul as Hermes, and Barnabus as Zeus. Though Lystra had no synagogue, we hear that the Jews of Iconium convinced the Gentiles here to attack Paul, who was stoned and left for dead outside the town. Yet he had made converts here, and visited again on his second missionary journey.

A century ago, stretches of the Seljuk city wall still stood in places, containing fragments of sculpture

About sixty kilometers south of Konya lies Cumra, the nearest town to Çatal Höyük, which is among the largest and oldest known Neolithic sites in the world. Excavations are ongoing, but the earliest habitation so far dates to about 7500 BC. Fascinating paintings from about a thousand years later have been found here, depictions of vultures and wild boars and headless people. Plaster reliefs of cats, perhaps jaguars, have also been found.

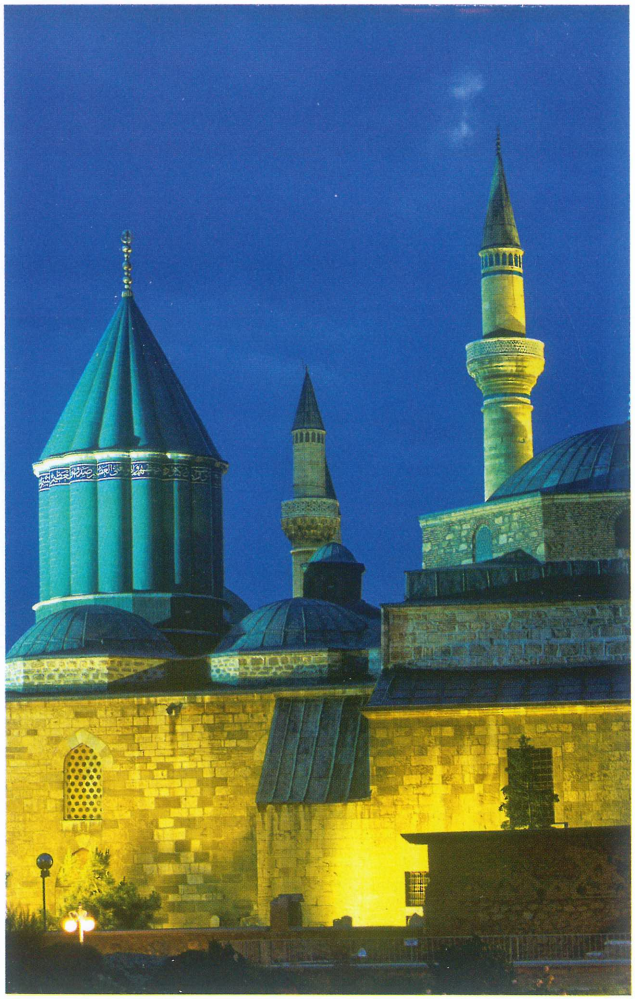
The mud-brick houses were accessed through roofs of timber with thick layers of clay, and the dead were buried in the homes. Some headless bodies have been uncovered, and this culture had the curious custom of covering the skulls of their ancestors in clay and painting them. In a corner of most homes were the remains of bull altars, horns mounted in clay.

and Greek and Latin inscriptions. After Paul's day, Konya was made a Roman military colony, which accounts for the abundance of Latin inscriptions here. Today the only remains of Roman-era Konya are in the archaeological museum. The prizes are the classical sarcophagi and the Çatal Höyük finds, but out in the garden, exposed to the elements, is a wealth of evidence for the ferment that transformed Asia Minor and the entire Roman empire. The garden is full of sarcophagi and statues from central Anatolia, warriors with lion pelts draped around them, rippling muscles caught in the act of administering the death stroke. Other sarcophagi are more placid but no less alive, the matron or law-giver in full classical glory. Others look more Christian than classical, almost iconoclastic – none of the extravagance and beauty of the classical type, but plain, stern, more primitive faces.

The Hercules sarcophagus in Konya Archaeological Museum.

Two female statues very different from each other embody this shift. Both are from the second century AD, one from Doğan Hisar west of Konya, the other from near modern Niğde in Cappadocia: a statue-relief, carved out of a column, of Nike, goddess of Victory, looking out, noble and sad; and a funerary stele of another woman, far sterner and more inward-looking. This woman might not see what's in front of her face, so great is the inward concentration. The level of Christian art is far lower: simple repentant people with right hands over hearts; the recurring motif of a man on a charger; primitive depictions of what seems to be the Virgin Mary; and four-point stars with crosses embedded in each.

Konya was at its height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD, as the capital of the Seljuk sultanate of Rum. Close to the archaeological museum is Alaeddin Tepesi, the hill where the Seljuk citadel once stood. In the early twentieth century, this priceless site was demolished to build tea gardens; but a twelfth-century Seljuk mosque survives, Alaettin Camii. It contains some recycled Roman columns,



Rumi's mausoleum, Konya.

and its mihrab is painted to look like Seljuk tiles. Two Islamic schools (medrese) built in the thirteenth century have museums on site: the Ince Minaret Medresesi (school of the slender minaret) holds gorgeous Seljuk wood and stone carvings; and the Sırçalı Medrese (school of the glazed tile) has a collection of Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Karaman, and Ottoman tombstones.

This city is now a Sufi pilgrimage to the tomb of the great Persian poet and teacher Mevlana, known in the west as Rumi. Born in eastern Persia, now Tajikistan, he spent most of his life here in the capital of the Seljuk sultanate of Rum; and upon his death his disciples founded the order of the whirling dervishes. All dervish orders were suppressed by the early Turkish Republic, but a gigantic white stone structure called the Mevlana Culture Center has recently been built east of here to showcase the whirling dervishes. The slow bowing is very beautiful, and a spiritual continuity is undeniable.

The museum connected to Mevlana's tomb has a priceless collection of illuminated manuscripts, including two books of poetry (mesnevi) written by Mevlana and dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and a sixteenth-century copy of a mesnevi of Hafez of Shiraz (Divan-i Hafiz Sirazi). Just as evocative as this grand mausoleum is the crowded and unpretentious cemetery next door, with tilted and eroded Seljuk tombstones, jostling with modern Turkish ones, trees sometimes planted over the body. The most humble gravestones are cinderblocks, with well-tended flowers and palms planted over the body.

The Temple of Athena, Assos.

ASSOS

In his second and third missionary journeys, Paul's route from central Asia Minor to the coast is unknown. The Bible is vague, saying only that the Holy Spirit forbade his preaching in Asia and Bithynia. Given the violence he suffered in the region of Iconium, it's likely that synagogues in other cities were warned of his presence. The most likely route, from Iconium to Pisidian Antioch to Laodicea and then to the coast, seems to be ruled out if we accept the view of early church fathers Marcion of Pontus and Hippolytus of Rome, as well as of much modern biblical scholarship, that Paul's letter to the Ephesians was

really addressed to the church at Laodicea (see the section on Ephesus for a full discussion). In this letter, Paul states that he knows this congregation only by reputation; but this need not mean that Paul was never in Laodicea. It's possible that on one or both of these journeys Paul simply crossed quickly through Phrygia and Lydia without stopping to preach.

On his third and final journey, Paul reached the coast at Ephesus, where he stayed for more than two years before getting chased out by a mob (see the section on Ephesus). After sailing for Greece, he returned across the Aegean to Alexandria Troas, then south overland to Assos to board his ship here. He had a long sea journey to Jerusalem ahead of him, and he likely wanted to stretch his legs a final time. Assos was only a way-station, and at this time there is no evidence of a Christian community here.

On these windswept cliffs, colonists from Lesbos had built a temple to Athena in the sixth century BC. From here is a magnificent view of Lesbos, the third-largest Greek island. In the fourth century BC, Hermias, a eunuch and disciple of Plato, ruled here; and as a guest of Hermias, Aristotle started his first school here. Reliefs from the temple of Athena are now in the Louvre and in the archaeological museum in Istanbul. North of the temple of Athena are cisterns and a stretch of Byzantine-era walls leading to a fourteenth-century mosque built of fragments of a sixth-century church. A cross is carved over the door.

Bathhouse on the acropolis, Assos.

The theater, in the lower city, Assos.

The ruins of the old perimeter wall meld into the cliff, and a jagged and tumbling path leads down the south slope of the acropolis towards the harbor. To the west is the gymnasium, with a colonnaded courtyard and a church built much later in its north-east corner. Just west of this is the main gate, called West Gate. Its two towers and adjoining wall are some of the best-preserved Hellenistic walls in Turkey. The ancient road leading through this gate is lined with ancient graves.

From the gymnasium towards the harbor lies the agora, bouleuterion, and theater. The north side of the agora had a two-story stoa, while the steep slope required a three-story stoa on the south side. The top floor of the south stoa opened onto the agora to the north, and had a view of the sea to the south. Shops occupied the middle floors, and the ground floor had cisterns and baths. On the west side was a temple built in the second century BC, which became a church well after Paul saw it. On the east side was a Hellenistic bouleuterion. The ancient harbor that Paul sailed from no longer exists.

MILETUS - DIDYMA

From Assos, Paul arrived in Miletus via Lesbos, Chios, and Samos. All these once-proud city-states were already well past their prime; and the harbor at which he disembarked has long since silted up. Miletus was once on a narrow peninsula with four harbors, three in the west and one in the east. The ruins of Miletus are now eight kilometers from the Aegean; and the old island of Lade is now a hill above the plain.

Paul had sent a message to the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet him here – he was in a rush to get to Jerusalem in time for the Pentecost, and it's also possible that Ephesus was still too hot for him. To the elders he said, "And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the spirit, not knowing what shall befall me there; except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and affliction await me."

He told the elders that they would never see him again, and warned them that "after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock". There doesn't seem to have been a Christian community here in the time of Paul, for he was only here to meet with the Ephesian elders. But a Jewish community existed here. In the Hellenistic theater, many seats had inscriptions on them to reserve places. One reads "place of the Jews and God-fearers"; the God-fearers were Gentiles who were not full converts to Judaism.

More traditional Jews, including many early Christians, would not have been caught dead in the theater, which they called "the church of Satan". Another inscription on the theater seats reads "place of the goldsmiths of the Blues". The Blues were one of the factions in the chariot races; and the rivalry between the Greens and Blues, who instigated the Nika riots in Constantinople in the reign of Justinian, make our worst sports hooligans look like choir boys. Another inscription mentions a strike by workmen in the theater, referred to the arbitration of the oracle of the temple of Apollo at Didyma. The upper level of the theater gives an excellent view of the site, and a caravanserai was built in front of the theater in Seljuk times.

Behind the theater to the north across the plain is the Lion Harbor, oldest and best of the four harbors here. In heavy rains, the plain becomes a marsh. Two lion statues guarded the harbor, and one remains. Back to the southeast are the ruins of a synagogue and then a large harbor monument, decorated with reliefs of dolphins and tritons (a creature half-man

The theater at Miletus.

and half-fish). Apparently dedicated to Pompey to honor his suppression of piracy, the monument was then recycled and dedicated to Augustus. A marble quay once stood here, the closest the sea came to the city center.

Just north and east of the harbor monument are the Roman baths, whose caldarium and apodytherium are still standing. East of the harbor monument is the temple of Apollo Delphinus, the Delphinion. Some altars date to the sixth century BC, one dedicated

to the goddess Hecate. Almost two hundred inscriptions have been found here, some going back to the sixth century BC. This temple was used as an archive in Roman times.

South of the temple are the Capito baths, dedicated to the governor of Asia and Egypt in the reign of Claudius. In the southeast corner is the hypocaust. On the west side of the temple is the Harbor Gateway, entrance to the Sacred Way, which leads sixteen kilometers south to Didyma. Walking down the Sacred Way, on the left is a stoa, and on the right is the north agora, built in the fifth century BC and then renovated in Hellenistic times. Shops lay behind the stoa.

At the end of the stoa, the Sacred Way becomes a plaza. On the east is a fountain originally three stories high, with statues of gods and goddesses in roofed niches on all three levels. Fragments of this fountain are preserved in Istanbul and Berlin. Adjacent to this is a structure of the third century AD, which was converted into a church in the fifth century. On the west side of the plaza is a bouleuterion dedicated to Antiochus IV, the Seleucid king who had desecrated the Jews' temple in Jerusalem. Seating 1500 people, it is one of the oldest surviving structures in the city, built in the second century BC.

From this plaza through the north gate lies the south agora, perhaps the largest agora in the Greek east. This gate is also known as the Market Gate, and has been reconstructed in the Pergamum museum in Berlin. It was built in the second century, after Paul's day. Shops lay behind stoas on the east and south sides of the agora; and these shops opened to the agora and also to the outside streets. In the southwest corner of the agora is the Ilyas Bey Mosque, built in 1404; and on the west side is a long storehouse and a temple of Serapis. The baths of Faustina lie to the west. Dedicated to the wife of Marcus Aurelius in the second century AD, it is really a gymnasium with baths attached. A series of furnace rooms lead to the vaulted central caldarium, the largest hall in the complex. Hot air circulated through clay pipes in walls and beneath floors. The apodytherium, tepidarium, and frigidarium lie beyond, as does the Hall of Muses, which once held statues of the nine muses and other deities.

On the gymnasium's southwest corner begins the stadium, seating fifteen thousand people; and beyond is the west agora and massive walls, which were stormed by Alexander's soldiers in 334 BC. To have held out against him, Miletus must have had delusions of its former grandeur,. To the south is Kalabaktepe, the original hilltop settlement dating to around 800 BC. This is where the Carians lived, before the men were murdered and the women enslaved by the Ionians.

Statues and tombs line the Sacred Way south sixteen kilometers to the temple of Apollo at Didyma, the third-largest temple in the Greek world after that of Artemis at Ephesus and that of Hera on Samos. Some of these statues are in the Egyptian style, and are now in the British Museum. The oracle seems to have predated the Ionian arrival, and inscriptions found here go back to the sixth century BC. It was marginalized by Croesus (see historical overview, archaic period); and when Cyrus defeated Croesus, the high priests here, the Branchidae, surrendered the temple treasury to him. These priests then marched east with him to escape the retribution of their fellow Greeks. We hear later that Alexander's army found descendants of the Branchidae in the region of Samarkand, and Alexander ordered them slaughtered for their ancestors' treachery.

The Temple of Apollo, Didyma.

The site had long been abandoned when it was finally destroyed by the Persians in the fifth century BC. The temple we see today was begun by Seleucus I Nicator around 300 BC. It had a forest of 120 columns almost twenty meters high, three of which have been re-erected. A medusa frieze on an architrave is still on site. According to later reports, the priests here fasted for three days before delivering their prophecy in writing. Trajan restored the Sacred Way in AD 100, and through the third century the oracle was still active. But Christianity contributed to its decline, and in the fifth century a church was built in the sacred precincts. In the second and third centuries, the oracle made remarkable pronouncements about Christianity. To the question, was Jesus god or man, the oracle replied:

"He was mortal according to the flesh, a wise man of wondrous works,
But when he was seized by Chaldean judges
Nailed with stakes, he fulfilled a bitter death."

"Chaldean judges" refers to the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile. Another man asked how to turn his wife away from Christianity:

"Let her go as she wishes, persisting in her vain delusions,
Singing in lamentations for a god who died in delusions,
who was condemned by judges who deliberated justly,
And killed in hideous fashion by the worst of deaths."

"The worst of deaths" was crucifixion, reserved for slaves and non-citizens who had committed sedition. Paul could not be crucified, because he was a Roman citizen. After Miletus, he continued on to Jerusalem, where Jews from Asia agitated against him, telling the authorities that he had brought Greeks into the temple and defiled the holy places. The Roman tribune who arrested him was at first under the impression that Paul was an Egyptian prophet, who had led four thousand men of the Assassins out of the wilderness.

To those who believed that only a Jew could be a follower of Jesus, Paul said that the Mosaic law was dead to Christians. His first letter to the Corinthians says, "All things are lawful unto me". But many Gentile converts interpreted this passage in a way very different from that which Paul had intended. In the same letter, he also spoke at length against those followers of Jesus who rejected the resurrection. The denial of the resurrection seems to have been universal among Gnostic Christians of the second century. Gnosis is usually translated knowledge

Medusa, from the architrave of the temple of Apollo. (Righ

or enlightenment, and many of these Christians honored Jesus as a prophet but denied his divinity. Gnostic Christians generally believed that the God of the Old Testament was not God at all, but a minor and malevolent deity; they thus rejected the major prophets of the Old Testament as tools of this deity.

followed Plato's teaching in dividing body and soul. The orthodox reacted against this threat by persecuting Gnosticism, defining their own canon, and incorporating Plato and Greek learning into mainstream Christianity.

An inscription found in Miletus from the third century AD reads, "The senate and people of the city of the Milesians, the first settled in Ionia, and the mother of many and great cities both in Pontus and Egypt, and in various other parts of the world." In her prime Miletus had founded Sinop on the Black Sea; and a thousand years later, in the second century AD, Marcion of Sinop was expelled from the church and branded a heretic. He had rejected the entire Old Testament and all the gospels except for a pared-down version of Luke. He had also rejected several of Paul's letters as fabrications, including the letter to Titus and the two to Timothy. The first letter to Timothy warns against "gnosis falsely so-called", a clear injunction against Gnostic Christians. Marcion was the first to attempt to define the Christian canon of Holy Scripture, and

I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door which no man can shut; for you have a little power, and you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3.8, John's letter to the church at Philadelphia

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR

The early Christians saw signs that the end of the world was at hand, in plagues and earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, and in the unparalleled vices of the Caesars. In the book of Revelation, the tone of prophetic authority goes far beyond that of the apostles. John had a vision of Jesus himself speaking: 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'

Christian tradition holds that this John also wrote the gospel of John, but some early church fathers disagreed. In the second century, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, said that there were two Johns, and 'also two tombs in Ephesus, and that both are called John's even to this day.' In the third century, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, said that Revelation was written by someone else named John who was buried in Ephesus. Most modern scholars agree that it is highly unlikely that both texts were written by the same person.

The Hellenized Jewish communities here in western Asia Minor were the nuclei of Christianity. John was of this community, a Greek-speaking Jew who saw no contradiction between being a Jew and also a follower of Jesus. He had incurred the ire of the Roman authorities, who exiled him to the island of Patmos. It was here towards the end of the first century AD, in the reign of Domitian, that he wrote Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse.

In his time, Jews and Christians had begun to differentiate into two distinct groups, but the process was yet incomplete. Christianity itself was still nebulous and undefined. John's teachings commanded intense allegiance among Christians in western Asia Minor, but were rejected elsewhere. For most Chris-

The altar of the basilica of Saint John, Selçuk.

tians, the book of Revelation was for centuries an apocryphal text, only later accepted into the canon of Holy Scripture.

The Jewish communities in the Roman empire were exempt from emperor-worship, and thus so were the first Christians. But the Gentiles who converted were not exempt, and Christians came under intense pressure to participate in the imperial cult of emperor-worship. Persecution and schism threatened to tear nascent Christianity apart. This is the context of the book of Revelation: apostles and bishops executed, and the brethren tempted into insidious compromise. John's message was clear: no compromise. No participation in the imperial cult, 'the throne of Satan'; no fellowship with the false prophets of Gnostic Christianity, who taught 'the deep things of Satan'; hatred for Jews who had rejected Christ, 'the synagogue of Satan'.

The basilica of Saint John, with Selçuk in the background.

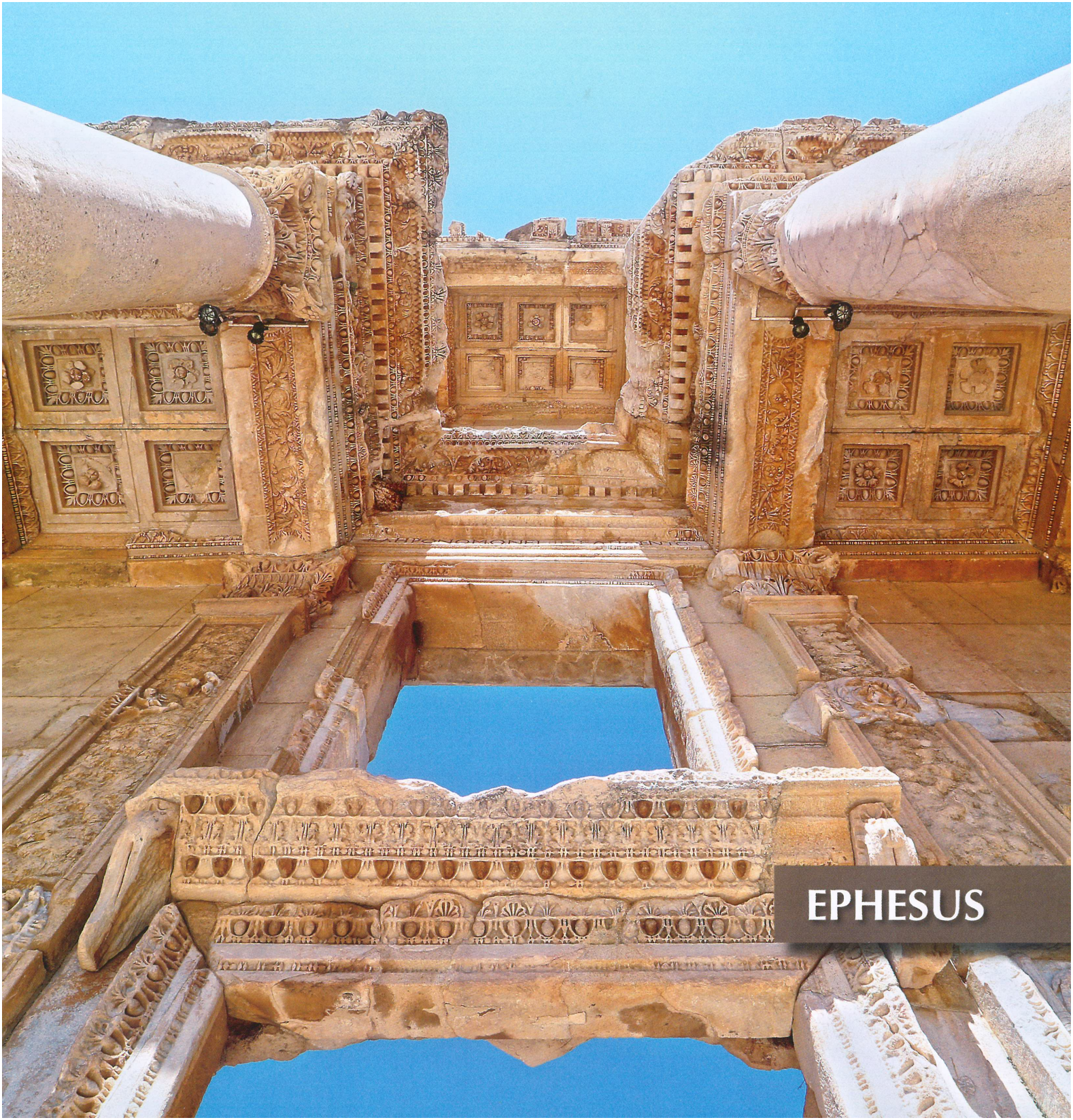
It's difficult to call this antisemitism; it was more a family quarrel, for John was a Jew. But he believed that the true Israel followed Jesus. To Smyrna and Philadelphia, John condemned those who say that they are Jews but are not. To Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, he condemned the Gnostic Nicolaitans, who call themselves apostles but are not. To Pergamum and Thyatira, he forbade the eating of food sacrificed to idols. To Pergamum he mentions a prophet from the book of Numbers in the Old Testament, Balaam, who tempted the Hebrews to eat food sacrificed to idols. Pergamum was the center of the imperial cult, and anyone who refused to eat such food would be cut off from civil society. Thyatira had many guilds, whose rituals included the sharing of food sacrificed to idols; and Christians who refused these rituals would be cut off from the commercial life of the city. Other Christian leaders favored a compromise on this issue, but not John.

The basilica of Saint John, Selçuk

Despite the clear symbolism of the seven churches, these were places he knew well. He may have been a circuit preacher, as the churches are ordered in a loop – Ephesus up the coast to Smyrna, then north to Pergamum, then a southeast arc to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. He praises the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia for resisting temptation, and mixes praise and blame to the churches of Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira. To the church of Sardis, he says, 'you have the name of being alive, and you are dead'. But his harshest words go to the church of Laodicea:

'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.' John seems familiar with Laodicea's banking and mercantile wealth, and also with its many fountains and baths, their hot, cold and tepid waters. As we will see, the church which most felt John's lash would grow into his staunchest proponent in the centuries to come.

The Library of Celsus, Ephesus. (Right)



EPHESUS

EPHESUS

Long before the arrival of the Greeks, Ephesus had attracted pilgrims to the sanctuary of the Anatolian fertility goddess Cybele; and this worship persisted well into the Roman imperial period. Under the Greeks, Cybele was renamed Artemis, but the virgin hunter of Greek mythology is far from this voluptuous and exotic fertility goddess. Her breasts promise plenty for all, and on her lower body are carved bulls, lions, sphinxes, and a chimera. The geographer Strabo said that her cult's eunuch-priests had a Persian title (Megabyzi, meaning "set free by God" or "given by God"); and these priests were always non-Greeks chosen from abroad. They were accompanied by a chanting throng of virgins. Plutarch compared them to the Roman Vestal Virgins in Rome, and much later the retinue of Christian bishops included a chanting choir of virgins. Just as the Greeks had absorbed the ancient Anatolian cults, Rome co-opted the Greek traditions for its imperial cults, and Christianity also preserved vestiges of the ancient polytheism.

Ephesus used to lie atop the hill behind the temple of Artemis. In antiquity the sea came right up to the temple, but today it's twelve kilometers away. Heraclitus of Ephesus, a pre-Socratic philosopher, envisaged the natural world as an endless series of exchanges between opposites; and the ancient literature refers to a book he wrote that was deposited here in the temple as a dedication to Artemis. When Xerxes returned home through Asia Minor in 478 BC, he protected this temple, but allowed his soldiers to pillage other Ionian shrines. The temple was burned in the fourth century BC and soon rebuilt, and destroyed by the Goths in the third century AD.

Artemis of the Ephesians, in the archaeological museum in Selçuk.

The foundations of the temple of Artemis, with the basilica of St John in the background. The column has been re-erected.

Many claim that the temple was destroyed in AD 401 by a mob led by Saint John Chrysostom, the Golden Mouth; but despite this tale's wide circulation, no hard evidence supports it. For centuries afterwards, the temple was used as a quarry for Byzantine fortifications and churches. In the sixth century in the time of Justinian, a basilica was built over the tomb of John on the hill behind the temple. This basilica of Saint John and many other nearby structures contain recycled materials from the Temple of Artemis. It also seems that statues of horses and gorgon heads from this site were taken in the sixth century AD to adorn the royal palace in Constantinople; but the oft-cited claim that columns now in the Hagia Sophia came from here cannot be corroborated.

The basilica of St John. It measured 120 by 40 meters, and originally had six large domes and five small ones.

The Persian Royal Road from Susa terminated here, but the main archaeological zone was settled only from the late fourth century BC, when Lysimachus, Alexander's general, transplanted the populace here. The walls of Lysimachus are among the few surviving pre-Roman ruins, and stand along the crest of the mountain to the south of the city. This was the most important city in proconsular Asia, but it never recovered from the slow silting up of the harbor and from the Persian sack in the early seventh century and Arab sacks in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The Prytaneion

Most of the population migrated back to the hill, which developed a heavy ring of fortifications composed of a core of rubble faced with recycled marble. By the ninth century this site was known as Theologos, after the basilica, Saint John the Theologian. For the next few centuries, it passed back and forth between Byzantine, Aydin, Seljuk, and Catalan warlords. A report from the twelfth century claims that the basilica was so dilapidated that tesserae from mosaics fell on the priest's head while he said mass; later reports speak of a mosque erected in the ruins of this basilica. Between here and the site of

the temple of Artemis in the late fourteenth century, the Aydin Turkic chieftains built the Isa bey Camii. In the eighteenth century, the English traveler Chandler reported that the main building materials used by the Greek peasants and townspeople were marble and granite fragments from the ruins. Amidst the waves of conquerers and the slow silting, the temple of Artemis was lost. A series of European archaeologists searched in vain for this, the greatest temple of antiquity, and finally discovered it in the nineteenth century.

This is the largest excavated area in the world, and only a fraction of the ancient city has been uncovered. From the Magnesia Gate, the road leads past the east gymnasium to the upper agora. On the east side of the agora is a baths complex, and to the south is a monumental fountain. A temple that some experts ascribe to the Egyptian goddess Isis lies in the middle of the agora. On the north side of the agora are a series of structures. The bouleuterion, or senate chamber, which seems to have also been used as a small theater; left of here is a sacred precinct, which contains numerous archaeological layers.

The Bouleuterion.

Then comes the prytaneion, the political and religious center of the city. Several cults occupied this space, including that of Hestia Boulaia, which kept an eternal fire burning. Several other cults were introduced here during the Roman imperial age – that of Apollo, Demeter, and the emperors. A group of inscriptions found here, dating from the second and third centuries AD, concern the supreme magistrate of the city, who presided over the mystery cults and performed sacrifices. The membership lists for the colleges of priests were found carved on columns here: the official roles included inspector of entrails, fumigation specialist, flute player, trumpet, basket bearer, perfume bearer, and hierophant. Some of the members of the college held high civic office, and about half were Roman citizens. Though the prytaneion was later looted by Christians, archaeologists uncovered two statues of Artemis here.

A relief of Nike, originally part of the Heracles gate.

The entire upper agora was abandoned after the Persians sacked the city in the early seventh century AD, and later became a graveyard. To the west through the square of Domitian, the temple of Domitian is on the left. This was the second temple of the imperial cult in Asia, and Domitian was the first Roman emperor who insisted on being called God the Lord. It's perhaps no accident that John wrote his attack on the imperial cult when it was at its most extreme and blasphemous. Fragments of a colossal statue found here, perhaps eight meters tall, are now in the archaeological museum here. Some sources call this the temple of the Sebastoi (Revered Ones). After Domitian was assassinated, his memory was ritually damned, and the temple was rededicated to his brother Titus and father Vespasian.

The Fountain of Trajan.

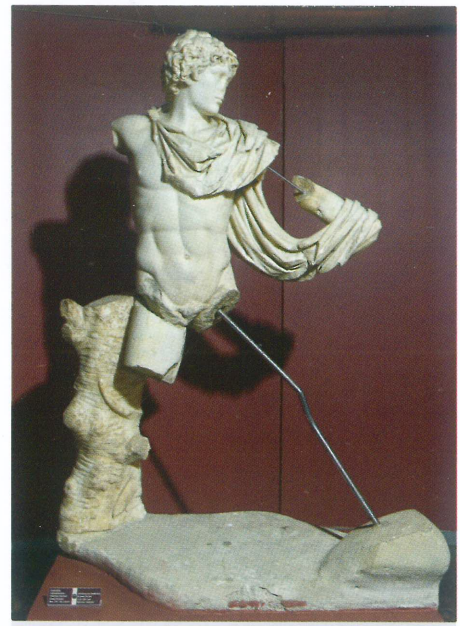
In a long eastern hall of this complex is an inscription museum, containing pieces from the seventh century BC until the Byzantine era; it's rarely open. Lying in the square of Domitian is a relief of Nike, originally part of the Heracles gate, from which begins the street of the Curetes, originally the Street of the Embolos. We call it the street of the Curetes for the inscribed columns from the prytaneion here. The Fountain of Trajan is on the right. Built in the time of Augustus, it had two stories and funneled the city's water supply from the aqueduct to the various quarters. Just before the so-called temple of Hadrian, a road leads up to the right up to a Byzantine palace above the theater. Continuing along the street of the Curetes, the Temple of Hadrian lies on the right. On the dedication to this temple, the name of Hadrian is preceded by an unknown deity, perhaps Artemis, for the front arch contains a keystone bust of Cybele-

The Temple of Hadrian.

A relief of Medusa, in the Temple of Hadrian.

Artemis, and on the back is the gorgon Medusa. A nearby inscription on a statue base honors Hadrian "for his unsurpassed gifts to Artemis: he gave the goddess rights over inheritance and deposits and her own laws; he provided shipments of grain from Egypt, he made the harbors navigable and diverted the river Kaystros which silts up the harbors."

Along the street of the Curetes about thirty meters below this temple, George Bean in the 1970s found a statue base whose inscription mentioned the sacred college of silversmiths, the same silversmiths who rioted against the preaching of Saint Paul. In the fourth century AD it was damaged by fire or an earthquake, and then restored. Reliefs found here illustrate the messy transition to Christian worship: Athena and other Greek deities lie in a row, and then the emperor Theodosius and his family on either side of Artemis. Theodosius had outlawed polytheistic worship and used imperial armies to impose Christianity, and yet here he is depicted side by side with Artemis.



A statue of Androcles, the mythical founder of Ephesus, now in the Izmir archaeological museum.

Behind this temple are the Baths of Varius (or Scholastica), constructed in the fourth century AD using recycled material from the prytaneion. Ceramic pilings from the hypocaust heating system are still visible; and columns here were covered by inscribed lists of the members of the college of Curetes, similar to those found on the walls of the prytaneion. A famous figurine with an enormous phallus, now in the archaeological museum here, was found in the adjacent structure, suggesting that it may have been a brothel.

Towards the library past the temple of Hadrian, on the left side of the street of the Curetes lie the remains of terraced mansions, in front of which is the octagonal tomb of a teenage girl, perhaps Arsinoë, younger sister of Cleopatra, whom Mark Antony murdered here in 42 or 41 BC. Next to this tomb is a heroon, a monument honoring Androcles, the mythical founder of Ephesus. Excavations are ongoing in the terraced mansions, which had inner courtyards, frescoed walls, mosaic floors, heating systems, and running water. These houses were destroyed in the early seventh century AD in the Persian sack, and were likely a source of rich plunder. Centuries later, poorly built huts covered this area.

At the end of the street lies the reconstructed Library of Celsus, which once housed the priceless reliefs and statues that are now in the Ephesus Museum in Vienna. The interior of the library was a single large room over fifteen meters high, surrounded by three floors of galleries. On the ground floor in the walls are ten rectangular niches which likely held books, and similar niches perhaps stood on the upper floors as well. A menorah was inscribed on an upper step of the library. Between the library and the

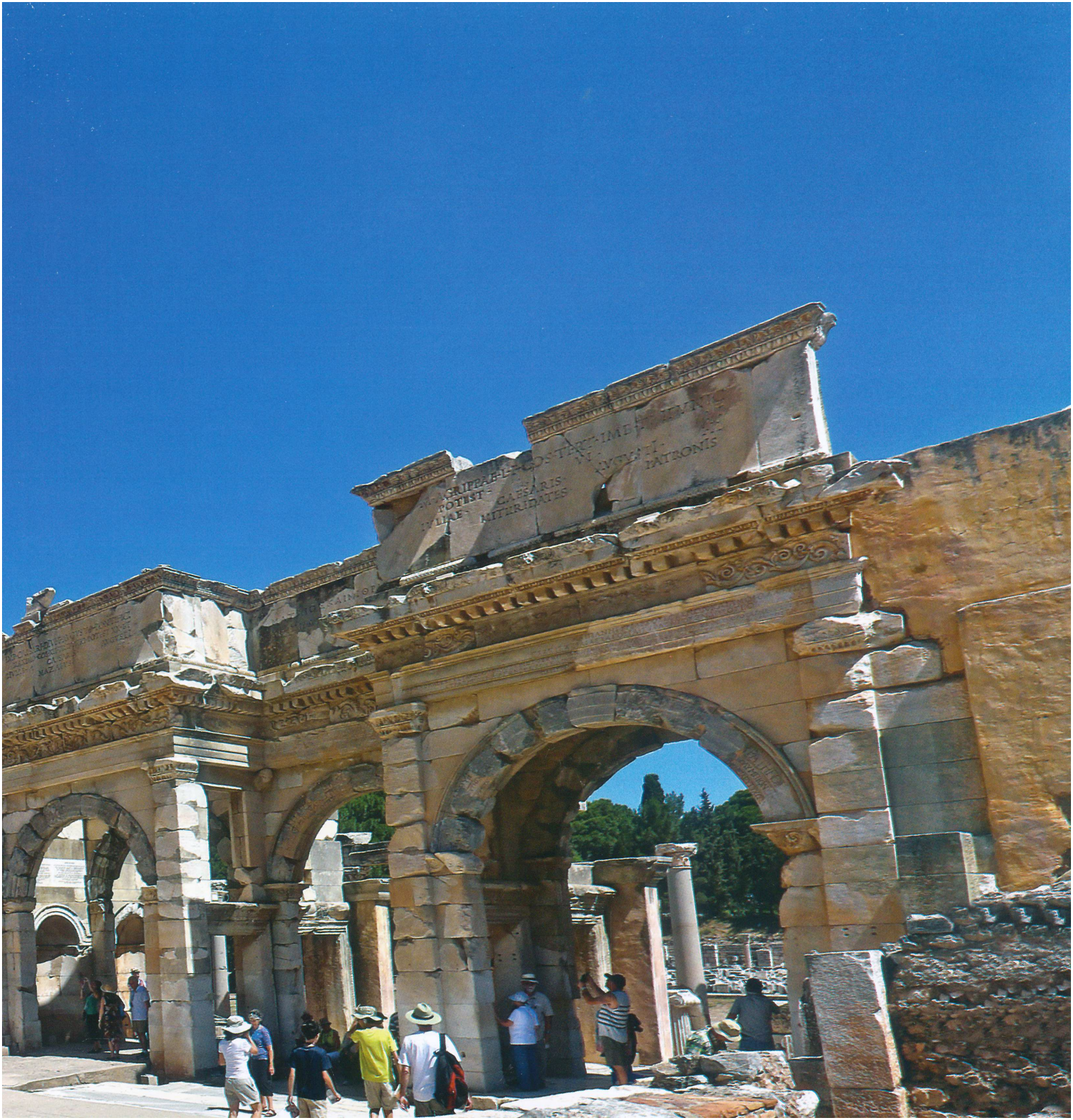
lower agora is a three-arched gate of Mazeus and Mithridates – not the Mithridates who had slaughtered Roman citizens here in 88 BC, but a wealthy freedman who dedicated the structure to Augustus. In the wall between gate and agora, an inscription was found praising a market-inspector for keeping down the price of bread; and in a niche of the same gate on the opposite side, perhaps an irate shopkeeper fed up with the smell scrawled these words: "Whosover relieves himself here shall suffer the wrath of Hecate" (a Greek goddess of the underworld).

Off the lower agora is the Temple of Serapis, constructed in the second century AD. An Egyptian god whom Ptolemy I incorporated into Greek practice, Serapis and his cult spread to almost every city in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. The columns of this massive temple rose over twenty meters, each formed of a single block of stone. Quarter-circular grooves in the floor mark the spot where a heavy double door swung inwards. The temple later became a church, and the remains of a baptistery in the east corner can still be seen.

The lower agora was surrounded by stoas, behind which were shops. It was reconstructed in the reign of Augustus, and Nero added a two-story basilica

One of four female statues of the Library of Celsus: Sophia (wisdom), Arete (virtue), Ennoia (judgment), and Episteme (knowledge). These are copies; the originals are in the Ephesus Museum in Vienna.

The Library of Celsus. (Next Page)



The theater.

on the east side. Through the agora, a marble street leads to the theater, one of the largest in Asia Minor, seating over twenty thousand. Constructed in the Hellenistic period, it was altered extensively in Roman times and was the scene of the famous silversmith riot. Paul said, "gods made by human hands are not gods at all", and a silversmith named Demetrius, belonging to a guild which made silver shrines of Artemis, stirred up a mob. They dragged two Christians into the theater, chanting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Paul immediately left, as Ephesus had become too dangerous for him. He had been here twice, in AD 54 and 56, staying in Ephesus longer than in any other place except perhaps Rome. He had preached in the synagogue for a few months until he was kicked out, and then for almost two years taught elsewhere in the city. He had not been the only one agitating in synagogues – Apollos, a disciple of John the Baptist, had made converts here among the Jews, but this little community soon joined the Christians. According to Acts, Paul battled exorcists here, and the apocryphal Acts of Paul is full of miracles protecting him from the wild beasts of the amphitheater.

His letters to Corinth illustrate the worsening trouble here: "We should like you to know, dear friends, how

serious was the trouble that came upon us in the province of Asia. The burden of it was far too heavy for us to bear, so heavy that we even despaired for life." Many scholars believe that he was imprisoned here, and a building about a kilometer west of the theater, near the harbor at the end of the walls of Lysimachus, is known as Saint Paul's prison. Though it's probable Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus, no evidence connects this structure to him.

At the end of the first century, Paul's Ephesian disciples assembled his various letters, and there was almost certainly some hanky-panky involved. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is problematic, for its oldest surviving manuscripts nowhere mention Ephesus. This letter was probably an encyclical sent to the region of Laodicea. When the Pauline corpus was codified, many heretics, including Marcion, the Gnostic Christian from Sinop, refused to accept as genuine all of Paul's letters; and the judgment of modern biblical scholarship aligns almost exactly with that of Marcion.

From the theater, a marble street about twelve meters wide leads 600 meters to the harbor, built about 400 AD and called the Arcadian way after the emperor Arcadius. An inscription found on this street lists various bureaucratic charges: anyone selling salt or parsley had to buy a license for one denarius; a proclamation of victory in the games cost six; registering a birth cost one, but if the mother was of a class barred from having children, such as a priestess or slave, it cost 100 denarii. North of the Arcadian way are baths, a gymnasium, and the hall of Verulanus, the setting of Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho of the second century AD. Near the car park is a stadium, with the ruins of a church in its northwestern end.

Through late antiquity the city thrived, but the Persian sack of the early seventh century brought all this to an end. The baths and gymnasium fell to ruin, eventually covered with poor rubble houses which extended over the Arcadian way. Parts of the theater were also occupied by crude houses, and the palace above the theater became a site of small dwellings and a cistern, necessary now that the aqueduct was ruined. City walls constructed in the seventh or eighth century reduced the area of the city by half, and each quarter now had to provide for its own water supply.

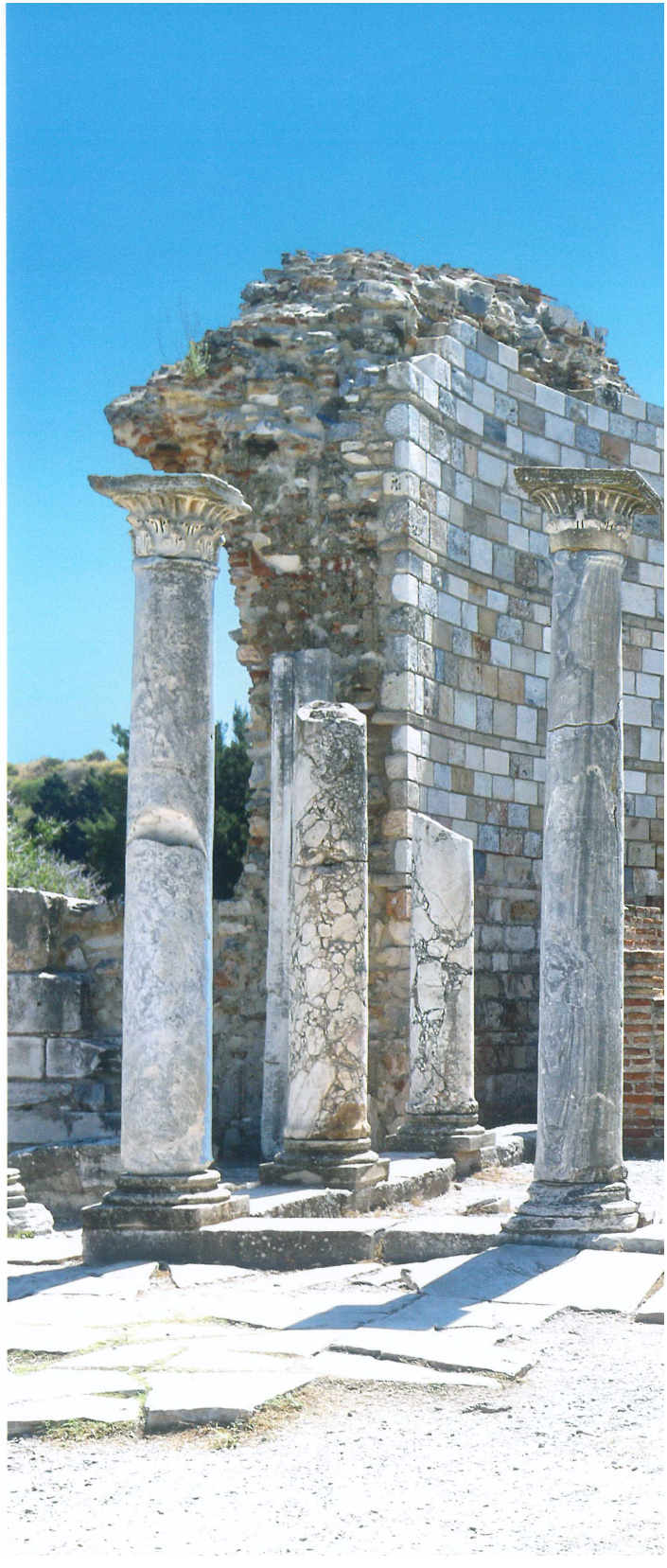
Near the theater and north of the Arcadian way lies the so-called Double Church. Built in the second century, this long and narrow building, 260 by 30 meters, seems to have originally been a basilica or

In the nineteenth century, an invalid German named Catherine Emmerich had visions of the Virgin's home on a mountain above Ephesus, and described it in detail. She had never been to Ephesus, but in 1891 a search party followed her instructions and came across this house. At the time, local Christians gathered here on the feast of the Assumption. The masonry dates from the sixth or seventh century AD, but the foundations possibly go back to the first century.

One tradition holds that the apostle John brought Mary here, but another tradition claims that Mary died on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Whatever the truth, Christian and Muslim pilgrims flock here to tie prayer flags common in eastern Christianity and at heterodox Islamic shrines. The site offers a fascinating continuum of worship from Cybele to Artemis to Mary.

south stoa of a monumental temple, the Olympeion, dedicated to Hadrian. Abandoned after the Gothic sack, its ruined western half was then converted into a church. It was the first cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In the early twentieth century, a plaque was discovered in the narthex, indicating that this was the site of the third ecumenical council, held here in AD 431; yet some scholars dispute this evidence.

Whatever the truth, this council illustrated how far Christianity had come, or gone, from the days of Jesus and Paul. When Christianity became the empire's official religion, it turned upon itself; and Christians inflicted far greater sufferings upon each other than the Romans ever had upon the early martyrs. At first persecuted, Christianity then received corporate status within the empire. Roman emperors granted all Christian clergy exemption from all service and taxes, and bishops were tried not by civil courts but by their own peers. But many church councils and most episcopal elections were scenes of scandal, riot, and murder. The state-supported religion was called orthodox, and opposition was called heresy; and seemingly absurd differences of doctrine were mere symbols of identification with or opposition to the government. Those who rejected the decision of a council were making a political statement, and especially in those tumultuous early years, what one council had ruled orthodox might be ruled heretical at the next council.



The so-called Double Church.

A fresco in Chora Church, Istanbul, of Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria.

Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria, ruled as an absolute monarch. He persecuted rival sects, destroyed synagogues, and plundered the Jews and expelled them. He employed mobs of monks as mercenaries, who butchered the female philosopher Hypatia in church. The monks of rival sects rebelled, and street warfare consumed the city. The emperor Theodosius made the leader of a rival sect, Nestorius, the archbishop of Constantinople; Cyril preached war upon the heretic and enrolled the Roman bishops in his cause.

At the council at Ephesus in AD 431, 159 bishops attended. Cyril brought consummate skill in parliamentary maneuvers, as well as an army. He booted the emperor's representative from the proceedings and bribed and threatened the assembly, who then voted to oust Nestorius. Fifty eastern bishops retaliated, voting to expel Cyril and his minions. Cyril's faction took the cathedral and withstood a siege; and hasty epistles and excommunications flew like clouds of arrows above the very real blood in the streets of Ephesus.

Two decades later in 449, armed fleets out of Egypt disembarked at another council at Ephesus, whose result was again decided by riot, siege, and murder. Two years later at Chalcedon, now Kadıköy on the Asian side of Istanbul, the assembled bishops rejected this "robber council" at Ephesus, and the ensuing controversy fragmented the church. Many Christians in Asia

Ruins near the altar.

Minor, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia rejected the imperial decree. They often called themselves anti-Chalcedonians, and the emperors and patriarchs in Constantinople tried in vain to bring them back to the fold.

At the eastern end of this church was a large apse, then a bishop's palace. A baptistery of octagonal white marble lies on the northern side of the courtyard, and in the floor of the central room is a font for immersions, with steps leading down each side.

In the sixth century, a domed brick church was constructed in the early cathedral's western half. This was the only major building erected within the walls during the Byzantine period. It was later destroyed, and in the dark age a small basilica was built between it and the east end of the cathedral, eventually surrounded by graves. The remains of these churches have almost completely overlaid the cathedral of the Virgin, but the courtyard remains unaltered. The eastern half of the structure was eventually covered in crude houses, and the site seems to have been abandoned by the twelfth century.

Seven Sleepers. On the opposite side of the hill from the main archaeological site, a necropolis lies in a ravine opening into the cave of the Seven Sleepers. In the time of the emperor Theodosius II (AD 408-450), a church was built here over a catacomb system with ten chambers, on which Frankish, Greek, and Armenian pilgrims of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries scrawled graffiti. Legend says that Christians fleeing the Decian persecutions of the mid-third century slept in this cave, to awake centuries later. Similar traditions exist in many other places.

SMYRNA
(Modern İzmir)

A mere collection of villages throughout the archaic and classical periods, Smyrna rose to become the most important port in the eastern Aegean. The other Ionian coastal cities suffered as their harbors silted up, but Smyrna lies on a gulf, not a river mouth; and of the seven churches, only Smyrna is still a metropolis. Now called Izmir, it is the third-largest city in Turkey.

The original settlement lay on the northeastern end of the gulf at Bayraklı. Around the tenth century BC, Aeolian Greeks settled here, soon displaced by Ionians. The temple of Athena here seems to have been destroyed twice, by the Lydians and the Persians. Homer was probably born here, although other traditions connect him to Chios. Lydia conquered Smyrna in the seventh century, and about 600 BC the father of Croesus, Alyattes, plundered the temple of Athena here. Alyattes also plundered a temple of Athena near Miletus, and Herodotus said that the Delphic oracle

Cisterns on the acropolis.

ordered him to rebuild. The archaeological record at Bayraklı may corroborate this: ruins of a temple influenced by Hittite and Phoenician culture have been dated to this time. Greek religion contains many archaic references to Lydia, and the peoples of Asia Minor prayed to Dionysus, god of wine and the harvest, well before the Greek arrival. Temple art depicts the spring festival and the opening of the new wine casks, with a parade float made of a ship on wheels, a motif common in Egyptian art.

Since Izmir is still a thriving city, archaeological excavations have been minimal. Legend tells of Alexander passing through, and while asleep on this hillside he had a dream that the city should be moved here. Though preserved on many coins from the Roman period, this story traces back only to the second century AD. A century earlier, Strabo had said that Lysimachus and Antigonus had moved the population here.

The acropolis hill is known as Kadifekale (Velvet Castle). The Greeks called it Mount Pagus, but very little of Hellenistic Smyrna survives. The archaeological museum houses several masterpieces: a bronze head of Demeter from the fourth century BC found off the coast of Bodrum, old Halicarnassus, corroded but beautiful and haunting; and another bronze of a runner. Also here is a magnificent marble statue of the second century AD from Ephesus, thought by some scholars to be Androcles, the mythical founder of Ephesus. In a funerary stele from Halicarnassus, a priest from Roman times wears a beard remarkably similar to those depicted in Assyrian art.

For the adventurous and fit, the hillside warren from the Basmane rail station up to the citadel is well worth exploring. Despite the destruction of the early twentieth century and the general decay, there is great beauty and charm here. Ottoman inscriptions frame doors of buildings that no longer exist, and graffiti on walls warns against using the neighborhood as a tip: "whoever dumps rubbish here, may his child get cancer". Vines from the roadside wind up to shade a terrace two and three stories above, and the scent of jasmine is in the air. It's easy to get lost in this hillside slum, but the massive Turkish flag flying above the citadel is the best guide.

Inside the castle are the Byzantine cisterns, whose stone arches still hold up the roof. From here water was piped down to the city. The agora can be seen from here, lying about halfway to the water. The stadium on the west side of Mount Pagus is now thickly covered with houses, and the theater, used as a quarry, has long since disappeared. Walls once stretched from here down to the gulf. At the height of Seleucid

The agora.

power, astute leaders here officially recognized the rising power of Rome, and in 195 BC established a cult of deified Rome. After Seleucid rule ended, the city entered the orbit of Pergamum, and in 129 BC became part of the Roman province of Asia.

Religion connected Smyrna to the surrounding cities. An inscription from Roman times found in Sardis honors the wife of one of the high priests of Smyrna. The rich were expected to serve as high priest, and they often tried to avoid the expense involved: in the second century AD, Aelius Aristides, a rich merchant from Smyrna, declined to serve, but two months later the council elected him despite his attempts to prevent it. He appealed to the governor and was exempted on grounds of ill health; but had to see off two more attempts to make him high priest. Festivals and sacrifices drew in all the cities of the province; and Ephesus, Pergamum, and Smyrna squabbled for the right to lead the procession, much as ambassadors today jostle for precedence. In one festival, Smyrna omitted Ephesus

from the decree of a joint sacrifice, which triggered such outrage that the emperor had to settle the dispute.

The agora's west side is closed for excavation; but the bouleuterion, or senate chamber, occupying the northwest corner can be seen from the street. Heavy foundation stones still support standing arches, although most arches were filled in long ago, perhaps as defense against siege. Found here were fragments of a magnificent relief sculpture of Demeter and Poseidon. The west portico is a warren of heavy arches and columned galleries, and the basilica on the north side is under excavation. Built after the earthquake of AD 178 atop the foundation of a Hellenistic temple, it was three stories tall and one of the largest basilicas of the Roman period.

Just west of the agora lies Havra Sokağı, the street of the synagogue. John famously called the Jewish community here the "synagogue of Satan". No ancient synagogue has yet been uncovered, but the written record suggests that one lay near the water. Soon after John wrote Revelation, about AD 105, Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, passed through here on his way to Rome to be executed by wild beasts in the Colosseum. He wrote to the first known bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, who was burned at the stake in the stadium here along with several other Christians from Philadelphia.

In the absence of a proper Roman amphitheater, cities in Asia Minor often used the stadium for executions and gladiator combat. Many Christians from here perished in the Decian persecutions of the mid-third century. The church of St Polycarp, built in the seventeenth century, lies north of Konak at the intersection of Vali Kazım Dirik Caddesi and Necatibey Bulvarı. Its frescoes are worth seeing, but the church is open only to groups.

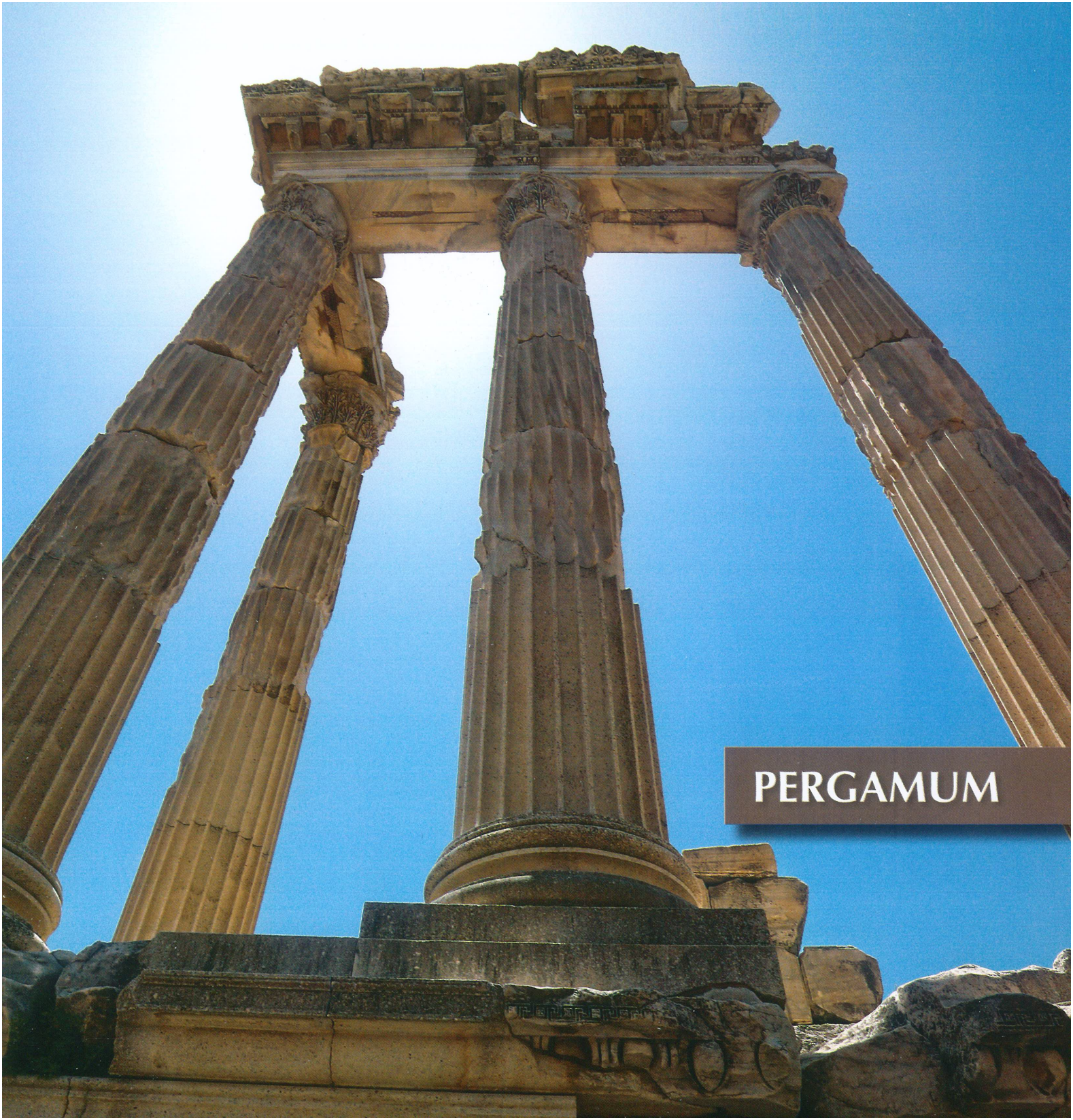
Through late antiquity Smyrna thrived. An aqueduct was built in the fifth or sixth century from springs south of the city. When the Arabs took the city in the seventh century, they were unable to take the citadel; and between the Arab invasions and the arrival of the Turks, Smyrna became the most important port in the eastern Aegean, as the harbors of the other coastal cities had silted up. The city was fought over by the Seljuks and Byzantine emperors; and in the thirteenth century, when Genoa helped the Greek emperors retake Constantinople from the crusaders, they were given trading concessions which made them masters of Smyrna. The Knights of St John, the Aydin chieftains, Venice, and Timur (Tamerlane) also briefly occupied, and often one set of warlords held the citadel while another set held the city. Timur's troops massacred the Christians of Smyrna, and by the time the Ottomans conquered, the city was ruined and almost totally abandoned. But it recovered quickly, soon becoming the second most important port in the empire.

The substructure of the agora.

The Kızlarağası Han, a beautiful old caravanserai west of the agora, is a warren of shaded shops and tea-houses. Connected to its south side is the Hisar mosque. Just west of the han, near the entrance labeled Cuha Bedeston (covered bazaar) and down a side street about twenty meters, on the right lies an old structure with high arched ceilings that was likely part of the old caravanserai, now occupied by workshops. In cosmopolitan Ottoman Smyrna, Turks, Greeks, Jews, and Armenians lived here in separate quarters, and the courtyard of the archaeological museum is full of inscriptions in Ottoman Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, and Armenian. The Ottomans had welcomed Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain, and many settled in Smyrna. In the seventeenth century, Sabbatai Sevi was born into the community of Sephardic gold merchants here. He proclaimed himself messiah and gathered a following through the Ottoman empire and Europe. As his disciples began an exodus to Jerusalem to prepare for the end of the world, the authorities took notice. He was summoned to Istanbul by the sultan, who offered him a choice: conversion to Islam, or death. He chose conversion, and many of his disciples likewise became Muslim. This sect, known as the Dönme (The Converts), persisted up to modern times. A few synagogues still exist here, including the Bet Israel synagogue southwest of the archaeological museum on Mithatpaşa Caddesi.

In the eighteenth century, most people in Smyrna were Muslim. Throughout the nineteenth century, many Greeks had immigrated here from the western Aegean, and many western Christians too, Catholic and Protestant, had flocked to the opportunities in this trading hub. By the early twentieth century the city was mostly Christian. After World War I, a Greek army landed here and tried to secure a piece of the dying Ottoman empire. This army was soon chased out, Smyrna burned, and tens of thousands of Christians perished. Those who survived, often Turkish-speakers whose families had lived here for centuries, were forced to emigrate in the population exchange. Yet this city is the only one of the seven churches in which Christians still worship.

Columns of the Temple of Trajan. (Righ


PERGAMUM

PERGAMUM

The world has many immortal hilltop citadels, but Pergamum is surely one of the greatest. Rising over 400 meters from the valley floor, its name comes from the Greek pergamos, meaning inner citadel. The oldest pottery shards on the acropolis date from the eighth century BC; and for the first few centuries of the city's existence, the pottery styles here show the influence of Assyria, Egypt, and Phoenicia – the motifs include the sphinx, griffin, siren, and wild goat. From the sixth century, the Attic pottery style of Greece began to predominate, and Pergamum soon became a Greek city. The earliest extant mention of Pergamum comes from Xenophon, who led an army of Greek mercenaries from Sardis in the late fifth century BC, to fight in a Persian dynastic war.

Alexander the Great had taken a Persian mistress, who bore a son, Heracles. Mother and child resided at Pergamum, but the child was quietly executed after Alexander died. Lysimachus used this citadel as a bank, and when he died in 281 BC his high counselor, a eunuch, founded the Attalid dynasty. In the early third century, the Gauls invaded and pillaged the rich cities of Asia Minor. In the usual pattern, these tribesmen, at first employed as mercenaries, soon overwhelmed their employers. Every state in Asia Minor, including the Seleucids, paid tribute to

The Temple of Trajan.

the Gauls. Eumenes I, adopted son of the eunuch counselor, defeated the Seleucids near Sardis, and his son Attalus I stopped tribute to the Gauls. The ensuing war and the defeat of the Gauls made Pergamum one of the great cultural centers of the Greek world.

Defeated by Rome in the Punic wars, Hannibal fled to the Seleucid court at Antioch, and seems to have convinced Antiochus III to try to eject the Romans from Greece. Eumenes II allied with Rome, and in 190 BC at Magnesia-under-Sipylus, now Manisa, they defeated the Seleucids and Hannibal. The Seleucids never again contended for power in the Aegean, and as Rome's client Pergamum ruled all Asia Minor west of Ankara. Antalya, the great port on the Mediterranean coast, takes its name from Attalus II, who in his will left his kingdom to Rome. But Rome had to fight to enforce this claim. When Mithridates occupied western Asia Minor, he ordered the massacre of all Romans here, who fled to the temples. But when the written record mentions the inviolable sanctuary of the holy places, it is usually because a violation has occurred. Just as the temple of Artemis at Ephesus was the scene of a bloodbath, so it was at the Asclepion of Pergamum. We are told that Roman citizens clung to the statues here as the soldiers of Mithridates murdered them.

The Sacred Way leading to the Ascepion.

In the Iliad, Asclepius was not a god, but a human physician whose sons served as doctors for the Greek army at Troy. In one myth, Zeus killed him for raising the dead, just as Prometheus was punished for giving fire to mortals. But in classical times Asclepius became a god, one of the witnessing deities of the Hippocratic oath; and asklepiad became a common synonym for doctor. Temples dedicated to him dotted the Greek world, but the Asclepion at Pergamum, southwest of the modern town, was among the most important. Galen, born here in the second century AD, was the court physician for Marcus Aurelius. Most of the remains of the Asclepion we see today date from the great rebuilding that happened in this century.

Entering the site, the sacred way leads through a propylon into the temple complex. To the right is a library, a single room with niches. The middle niche on the east side once held a statue of Hadrian, and the others held books. To the left of the propylon is the temple of Zeus-Asclepius. Only the lower courses remain of its ashlar masonry, and trees sprout in the ruins. On the other side of this temple is a treatment building. Originally two stories tall, only the lower survives, an arched gallery around a superb central core of masonry, with heavy stone basins for washing and bathing, and an underground tunnel linking it the center of the courtyard. Some of the arches were long ago filled in with stone, mortar, and brick, and this structure perhaps became a makeshift fortress; in the troubled third century AD, new walls left the Asclepion outside the city. After it had fallen into ruin, it was reoccupied with crude dwellings and a church.

In the center of the courtyard near the tunnel exit lies a sacred fountain. To the west are the incubation chambers, some dating from Hellenistic times, and underneath these archaeologists found evidence of an earlier temple dedicated to a female deity. Three small temples in the courtyard north of here were also found, but only faint traces survive. According to written accounts, before entering the incubation chambers a patient had to wash, dress in white, and offer sacrifice of a white sheep garlanded with olive branches. A patient slept here and either awoke cured or else related his dreams to a priest, who interpreted the dreams and prescribed a regimen. In AD 215 the emperor Carcalla sought treatment here, but the priests couldn't cure him. Another patient said that he dreamed that he had to cut off part of his body to save the whole; but the priest decided that if he parted with a ring he was wearing, the god would deem it sufficient. Many simple graves were found in and around the incubation chambers, and some skeletons showed evidence of sickness. Perhaps the graves indicate a hasty burial to cover up failed treatments.

The treatment building.

But the priests were not complete charlatans, for they prescribed practical treatments too. For constipation, prolonged fasting; diet and exercise were common treatments, and the fountains dotting the courtyard were used for hot, cold, and mud baths. The theater lies on the northwest edge of the courtyard and seated 3500. Looming over the Asclepion is the hilltop citadel. Today one can drive or take a sky-tram up to the summit. To see the sites of the lower slopes, it's best to take the sky-tram up and walk down.

On the acropolis, the citadel walls date from the fifth or early fourth century BC. The back side is a steep cliff leading down to a reservoir, and pine and olive trees fall down the hill and into the distance. The foundations of the walls in places blend into the bedrock like works of nature, and huge sections of the wall have fallen away, lying below like upturned sedimentary rock. The gaps have been filled with more primitive masonry and by recycled column bases and other fragments of old monuments. There is a bit of tacky restoration, but on the whole the site exudes a desolate and beautiful melancholy.

The walls of the acropolis.

From the car park up to the summit, the structures along the wall have been identified as Attalid palaces. From the highest point, to the north the ruins of the ancient wall jut from the falling ridge, and a ruined aqueduct can be seen in the distance, built in the second century AD to replace a Hellenistic pipeline. At least seven aqueducts once led here, and a siphon system brought water up to the acropolis. Near the summit, an arsenal from the third or second century BC has been uncovered. 900 rounds of spherical shot of thirteen different calibers were found here in the excavations. The inscriptions found here tell the same story they do elsewhere in Asia Minor: even when Pergamum became the capital of the Roman province of Asia, the language of the Roman overlords never displaced Greek.

Looking down to the west over the town, the Asclepion is visible. On the acropolis just north of the theater is the Temple of Trajan, built by his successor Hadrian. Colossal cult statues of both emperors once flanked the temple, and are now in the Pergamum Museum in Berlin. We usually think of the Hellenis-

tic age as a time of Greek cultural dominance, but it's also a time in which eastern culture penetrated into Greek and Roman society. No synagogue has yet been found at Pergamum, but menorah fragments have been uncovered; and we hear that, in 62 BC, the Roman governor here confiscated a small amount of gold sent to the temple in Jerusalem. Jewish colonies had spread through Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, disciples of Mithra had established a temple in Rome by the first century AD, and the number of times that the Roman senate had banned Egyptian magicians and Chaldean astrologers only shows how popular they had become. Hellenistic kings were worshiped as gods, a pretension they had adopted from the Persian and Egyptian traditions; and Rome inherited this practice. As capital of one of the richest Roman provinces, Pergamum was a natural center for the new imperial cult – Satan's throne, John called it.

"I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; you hold fast my name and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells." Antipas was likely a martyred bishop of Pergamum. For over fifty years Pergamum had a monopoly on emperor-worship in Asia Minor. A temple to Augustus was erected, probably in the lower city, but it hasn't yet been found.

The temple of Trajan.

The substructure of the Temple of Trajan.

An architrave has been set up on the platform of the temple of Trajan, the only Roman structure in the upper city. The magnificent ashlar masonry can best be appreciated from below, where its heavy arches still stand. Between each arched passageway, vaults extend into the hill under the temple, supported by even wider arched vaults. The masonry was originally clamped with iron, which was later plundered; and the outer wall was rebuilt to hold cisterns.

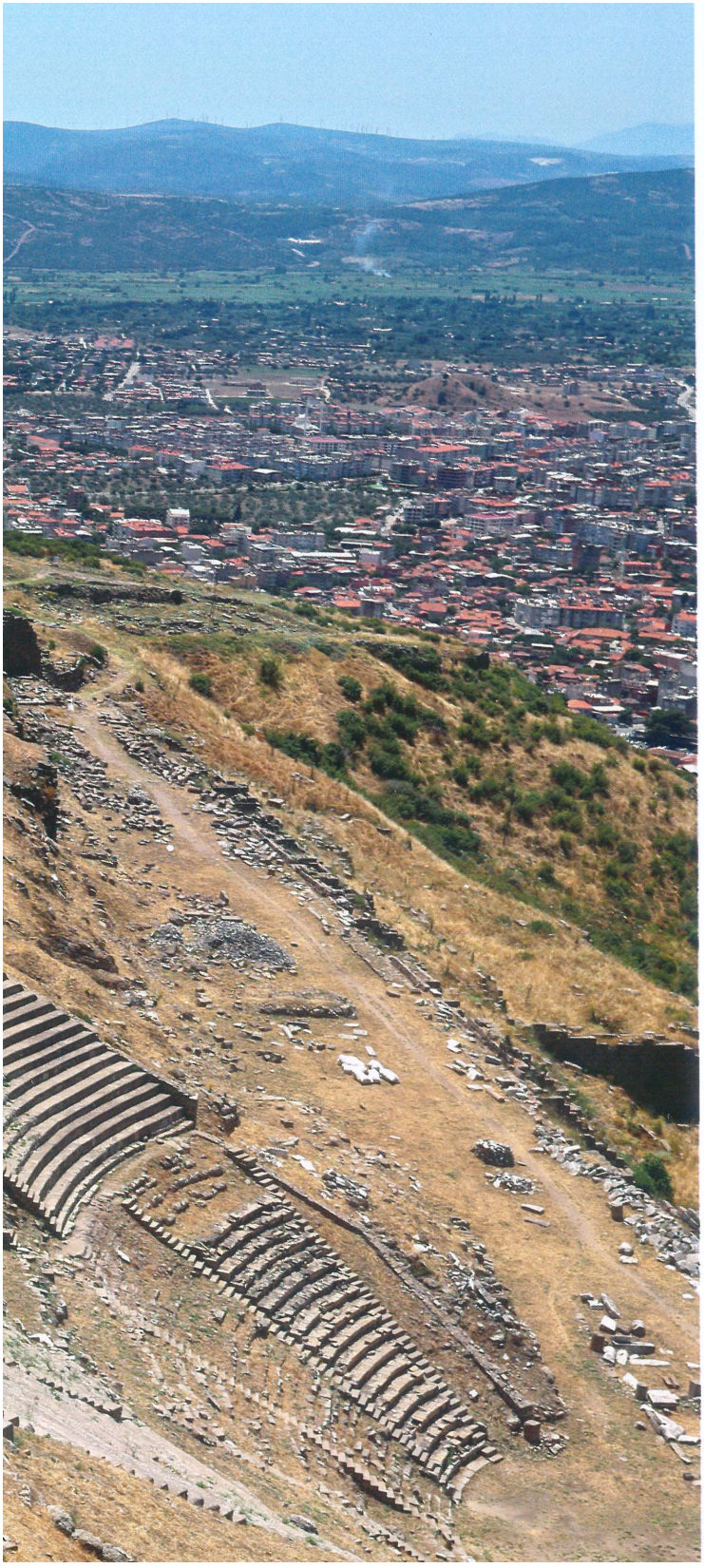
The Temple of Trajan. The architrave can be seen in the center.

Continuing south, just east of the theater is the sanctuary of Athena Nikephorus (Bringer of Victory). This is the oldest surviving temple here, built in the fourth or early third century BC. Only the stepped platform remains, but excavations unearthed a colossal statue of Athena and fragments of a frieze that had a sculpture of the owl of Athena and the eagle of Zeus, now in Berlin. On the northeast side of the temple stood the library. A generation ago four chambers of the library still survived, including a reading room whose walls were full of sockets that had once supported wooden shelves. These chambers no longer exist, but many of the rocks littering the ground in the northeast corner have sockets in them. Built in the reign of Eumenes II, this library apparently competed with the library at Alexandria. A Roman writer of the first century BC said that Ptolemy had prohibited the export of papyrus in order

The acropolis. The fan shape at center is the theater.

to slow the growth of the library here, so Pergamum turned to parchment, using animal skin. The Ionian cities had long written on animal skins, but the paged book or codex was a Pergamene innovation.

Two small churches, constructed from fragments of old monuments, were discovered on the acropolis. One of them was built among the ruins of the temple of Athena, and the other on rubble covering the entrance to the theater. Both churches were surrounded by graveyards, lime kilns, and crudely-built houses. The theater held ten thousand people. Due to the steep hillside, its design differs from that of the standard hemispherical Greek theater; but the splendid location more than made up for any acoustical flaws.



In the third century AD, a bishop of Thyatira and several others were brought here and executed; and this is the last hint that Pergamum was still exerting its influence on the cities and people around it. Of the vast numbers of inscriptions unearthed here, very few date from late antiquity. But although Pergamum ceased to be a religious or political center, in the fourth century it was still famous for a school of sophists and magicians, fortune-tellers and clairvoyants. In AD 351, the future emperor Julian the Apostate, who attempted to suppress Christianity and return the empire to polytheism, studied philosophy here.

Coins of the sixth century AD are abundant in other cities of western Asia Minor, but not here. An Armenian from Pergamum, Bardanes, also called Philippias, was a general under Justinian II, and himself became emperor after Justinian was assassinated. In the seventh and eighth centuries, Arab armies twice took Pergamum. A horrid story was recorded during the siege of AD 716-717, that a magician told the people that the city would be saved if they dipped their right hands into a cauldron in which an unborn baby cut from its mother's womb had been boiled. Besides alluding to the cannibalism that often prevailed in besieged cities, this story is also evidence that the school of magicians still carried great weight with the people.

The theater.

The Altar of Zeus.

The written record is almost blank for the next several centuries, and the churches erected in the ruins of great temples date from this dark age. Though this period, all the cities of western Asia Minor suffered the usual vicissitudes of Turkic, Greek, and Latin warlords; but from great heights Pergamum had become less important than Thyatira, Miletus, and Priene. In the thirteenth century, Theodore Lascaris, whose family had fled from Constantinople as Venetian and Frankish crusaders pillaged it, established a state in western Asia Minor. At Pergamum, while climbing to the acropolis, he reflected sadly on the ancient grandeur here which the people of his time couldn't even imagine, much less imitate. He saw the current dwellings, no doubt similar to those crude houses built next to the churches over the rubble covering the entrance to the theater, and compared them to mouse-holes in a great house.

From the theater, down the hill a short way lies the Altar of Zeus. From here, looking back towards the theater across the steep hillside, the temple of Dionysus, later rededicated to the emperor Carcalla, just north of the stage stands out. Only the stepped platform of the altar of Zeus remains, with pine trees rooting in the ruins. Built during the reign of Eumenes II, the friezes of this altar commemorate the victory over the Gauls. John of Ephesus in the sixth century destroyed the altar, whose fragments were used to build a new defense wall. Now in Berlin, these friezes depict a battle between gods and giants, symbols of Pergamum versus the Gauls. Under the pine tree, enjoy the shade and contemplate the masterpieces created here – among the finest we humans have ever produced.

The upper agora lies just below, where in the early twentieth century a marble head of Alexander was discovered, now in the Istanbul archaeological museum. Following the road down from the agora, ruins of workshops and houses line both sides of the street. Several sites are currently under excavation. Building Z is a public peristyle building with floor mosaics of Dionysus and also theater masks. The gymnasium complex, with baths and a theater, lies to the east, built on three terraces.

The Hellenistic temple of Hera faced south, and next to it is a possible prytaneion. To the west lies the Sanctuary of Demeter, continuously in use from the third century BC until late in the Roman imperial period. A sacrificial stone was found here, to tether sacrificial animals, and the temple foundations form the band of stone midway up the hill as seen from the modern town. From close up, the monumental buttresses of ashlar masonry look like those of an Egyptian temple. In much of her cult, men were not allowed, and festivals reenacted the kidnapping of Demeter's daughter Persephone by Hades, her life-giving grain cut short by winter.

Below the gymnasium complex is a residential quarter, including a peristyle building with two-story stoas. The lower agora has no gated entrance, but stairs of fine masonry lead up to it from the street below. Begun in the early second century BC, the lower agora was surrounded by two-story Doric stoas on one side, and by a three-story stoa on the slope. The balls found here are from the arsenal on the acropolis. South down the hill and across the modern highway is the gate of Eumenes, part of a new wall extending the city further down the hill. The ashlar foundation of the walls can still be glimpsed in places, with a medley of crude masonry and reused fragments on top. Along the wall at regular intervals are round towers, added to and strengthened by successive conquerers.,

The Sanctuary of Demeter.

The Roman city extended further down the hill into the plain, and fragments of the enlarged defense wall can still be seen in the modern town. Proceeding down from the gate of Eumenes back to the Kızıl Avlu and modern town, many houses along here seem to have been built in a way similar to the Byzantine towers built atop the ashlar masonry of Eumenes. Some of these houses are abandoned and their arches filled in, but many are still inhabited. Large cornerstones with small and medium-sized stones form the walls, and in the inhabited houses yellow or red paint has been slopped into the cracks.

The Kızıl Avlu, or Red Court, was built in the second century AD as a temple to the Egyptian god Serapis. Three stories high with pipes for running water, it has a courtyard over 200 meters long, much of which is hidden under the modern town. A double-vaulted tunnel still carries the river underneath the structure, just as it was designed to do. Its red brick superstructure was originally covered in marble, and such a structure would not have been built outside the walls. Near the Laleli Camii (Tulip Mosque), built in 1440 between the Asclepion and the modern town center, stands a crumbling arch constructed of the finest ashlar masonry, with small trees sprouting on top. This was apparently the south gate of the Roman theater.

From here towards the town center, a beautiful minaret from Seljuk times lies just north of the sixteenth-century Şadirvan Camii (Mosque of the Fountain).

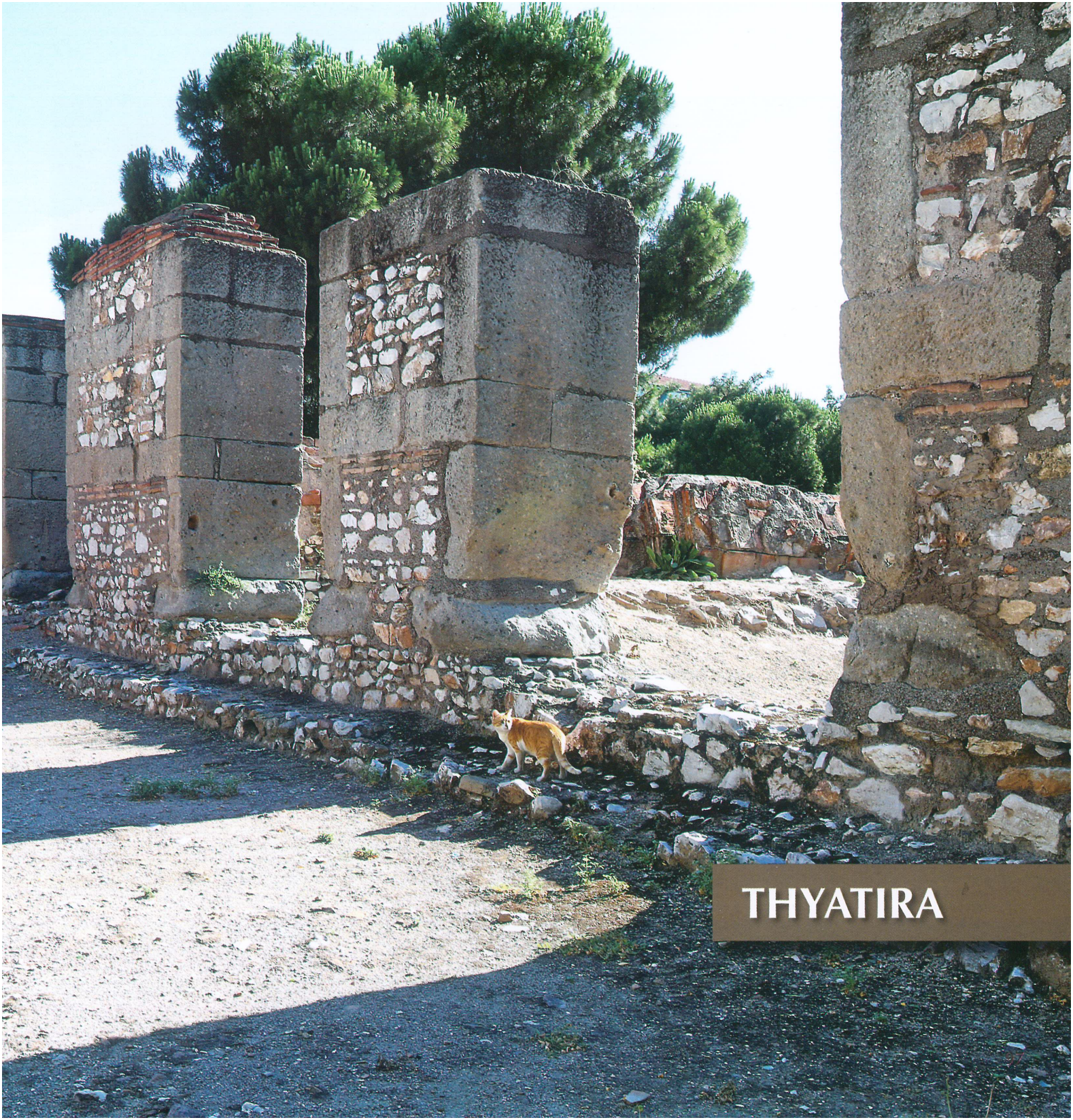
In late antiquity, churches were built into the lower agora and on the ruins of the temple of Serapis, and the temple seems to have been used as a quarry. But the church of Saint John, on the site of the temple of Serapis, was now outside the walls, for in the third century AD, perhaps during or immediately after the Gothic invasion, a smaller fortification was built to protect only the Hellenistic city and acropolis. The plain and Asclepion were abandoned. A few centuries later, the ring of fortification was even smaller, built largely of fragments of old monuments and enclosing only the summit of the acropolis. This was the wall using fragments from the altar of Zeus.

The church of Saint John was destroyed in the Arab invasions, and then rebuilt. To defend against the Turkish invasions, the lower city on the slopes of the acropolis was again fortified, closely resembling the walls of the third century AD. When the Turks finally conquered, the church of Saint John became a mosque. Hebrew inscriptions from the Ottoman period have been found here, and in the late 1970s the ground floor of the north tower was still used as a mosque.

The ruins of the Red Court, first a temple to Serapis, later a church and then a mosque.

Nike, goddess of Victory, in the Bergama archaeological museum.

The basilica of Thyatira. (Right)


THYATIRA

The archaeological site around the basilica.

THYATIRA

Pliny the Younger said that the Lydian name of this city was Pelopia. In the early third century BC, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, Seleucus I Nicator, named this city Thyatira. When the Seleucid army marched from Antioch through Asia Minor towards Pergamum, after passing through the mountains of Phrygia, it passed Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, and Thyatira. Macedonian soldiers were settled here, and the Seleucids brought thousands of Jewish families from Babylon to Lydia and Phrygia. Though a less protected city is hard to imagine, Thyatira became a military center and the gateway to Pergamum. In 190 BC, the Seleucid army regrouped here after the defeat at Manisa.

Ancient inscriptions from Philippi on mainland Greece refer to Thyatira's purple dye, and the city was a center of the wool trade and dyeing industry. In the Iliad, Homer mentioned two Lydian women skilled in dyeing purple, and centuries later the Acts of the Apostles spoke of a Thyatiran woman working as a purple-dyer in Philippi. Ancient coins and inscriptions from this region show that Thyatira had many guilds: tanners, smiths of copper and bronze, potters, fullers, linen weavers, wool workers, leather artisans and slave dealers. Purple dye was expensive and often a royal prerogative – in Roman times, born in the purple meant emperor. The trade-guilds were intimately connected to polytheistic worship, and Christians in these guilds were likely under extreme pressure to conform to ritual and tradition. John's letter to Thyatira is the longest of the seven, criticizing them for tolerating the priestess Jezebel, who "is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols".

The museum here houses a relief almost two meters tall, from the fifth century BC, of a man with Assyrian features, beardless and holding a bird; yet the man lacks the stylized calf muscles so common in Assyrian art. Also here are coins from Pergamum from the second century BC, showing the "cista mystica", a sacred basket from which emerge entwined serpents; and also coins showing Athena on one side and Cybele on the other. The double-headed battle ax was a common motif on Thyatiran coins. Fascinating clay oil lamps are also here, one depicting a sitting person feeding a man-sized eagle, or perhaps Prometheus getting his liver eaten.

The structures so far unearthed here date back only to Roman times. A well-preserved Roman basilica lies across the street from the museum, and a colonnaded avenue has been discovered east of the excavation era. On the right side of the entrance to the basilica, arches at least four meters in diameter have been filled in, and the brick superstructure long ago lost its marble facing. The basilica walls have given way in places, perhaps caused by an earthquake; and fallen chunks of wall blend into the earth like sedimentary rock. The top of the arch is at ground level, and much more lies beneath. Sarcophagi, column bases, capitals, inscriptions, architraves, and fallen marble arches lie in a jumble around the basilica.

A Greek inscription near the basilica.

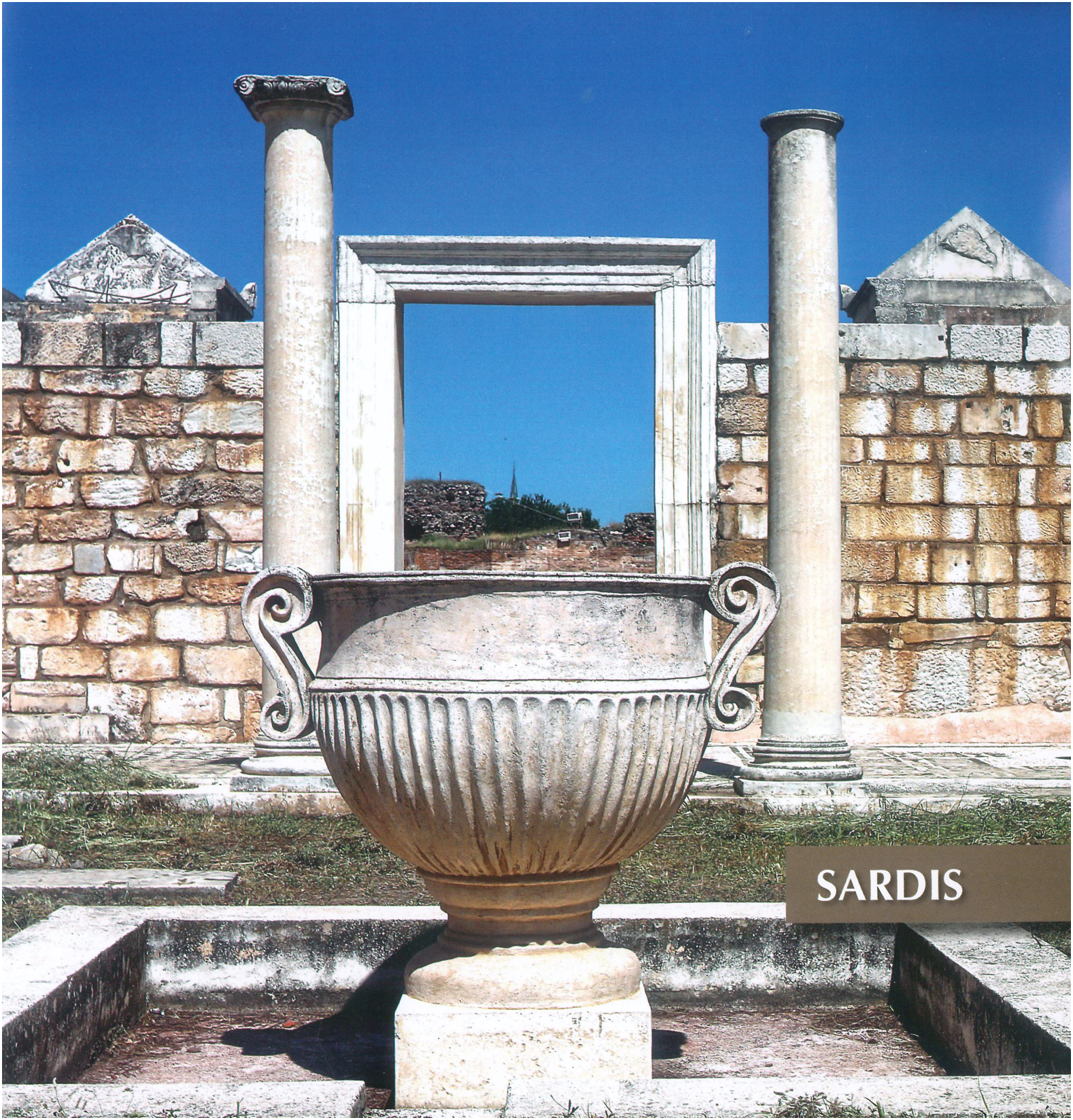
Hadrian visited Thyatira in AD 123, and Caracalla in the early third century. Around this time, we hear of a bishop of Thyatira and several others taken to Pergamum to be executed. A bishop of Cyprus of the fourth century said that the Christians of Thyatira were followers of Montanus, who drew his inspiration from the book of Revelation (for a fuller discussion, see the section on Laodicea and Hierapolis). It is likely that Montanist strength here in Lydia and Phrygia helped to get Revelation accepted into the canon of the eastern church.

From late Roman times until the third crusade, Thyatira is virtually absent from the written record. It shared in the calamities of invasion and plague, and one of the richest areas of the Roman empire suffered widespread depopulation. In the early fourteenth century, the emir of Manisa conquered; and in the fifteenth century Thyatira was absorbed into the Ottoman empire. The name of the town is now Akhisar (White Castle). A Greek Orthodox population still existed here in the early nineteenth century, but a western traveler tried to converse with the town's priest in Greek, and found that he spoke only Turkish.

The courtyard east of Ulu Camii (Supreme Mosque) contains the foundation of the apse of a Byzantine church, and large stone blocks in the southeast corner of the mosque, as well as the walls on the southern side, likely predate Christianity. This site likely cycled through the common pattern, from temple to church to mosque. Akhisar shared in the influx of Greeks and Armenians through the nineteenth century, and by the early twentieth, Christians seem to have formed a slim majority. Massacre and expulsion followed, and the bishop must have fled to Britain, for today the Greek Orthodox bishop of Great Britain carries among his titles Metropolitan of Thyatira. He resides at Thyatira House, 5 Craven Hill, London W2.

A Greek inscription.

The synagogue at Sardis. (Right


SARDIS

The gymnasium.

SARDIS

A natural fortress at an important transit point on the route between the Aegean and the interior of Asia Minor, Sardis was destined for greatness. Two springs on the citadel hill helped the people endure long sieges, and in times of peace the plain below produced an agricultural surplus. Mycenaean pottery shards from the thirteenth century BC have been found here, probably indicating conquest – the Mycenaean Greeks were in Asia Minor to plunder its rich cities, which would not have adopted voluntarily the pottery styles of these raiders.

The Assyrian written record mentions Sardis as the capital of the Lydian kingdom, and the surrounding hills are pockmarked with hundreds of Lydian tombs dating back to the seventh century BC. The Pactolus riverbed was rich in gold deposits; and there is a legend that Midas, the ancient Phrygian king, rid himself of the golden touch by bathing in this river. To collect the gold, a sheepskin was placed in the shallows of the river, the flecks adhering to the wool. This was likely the origin of both the legend of the golden fleece and the phenomenal wealth of the Lydian kings.

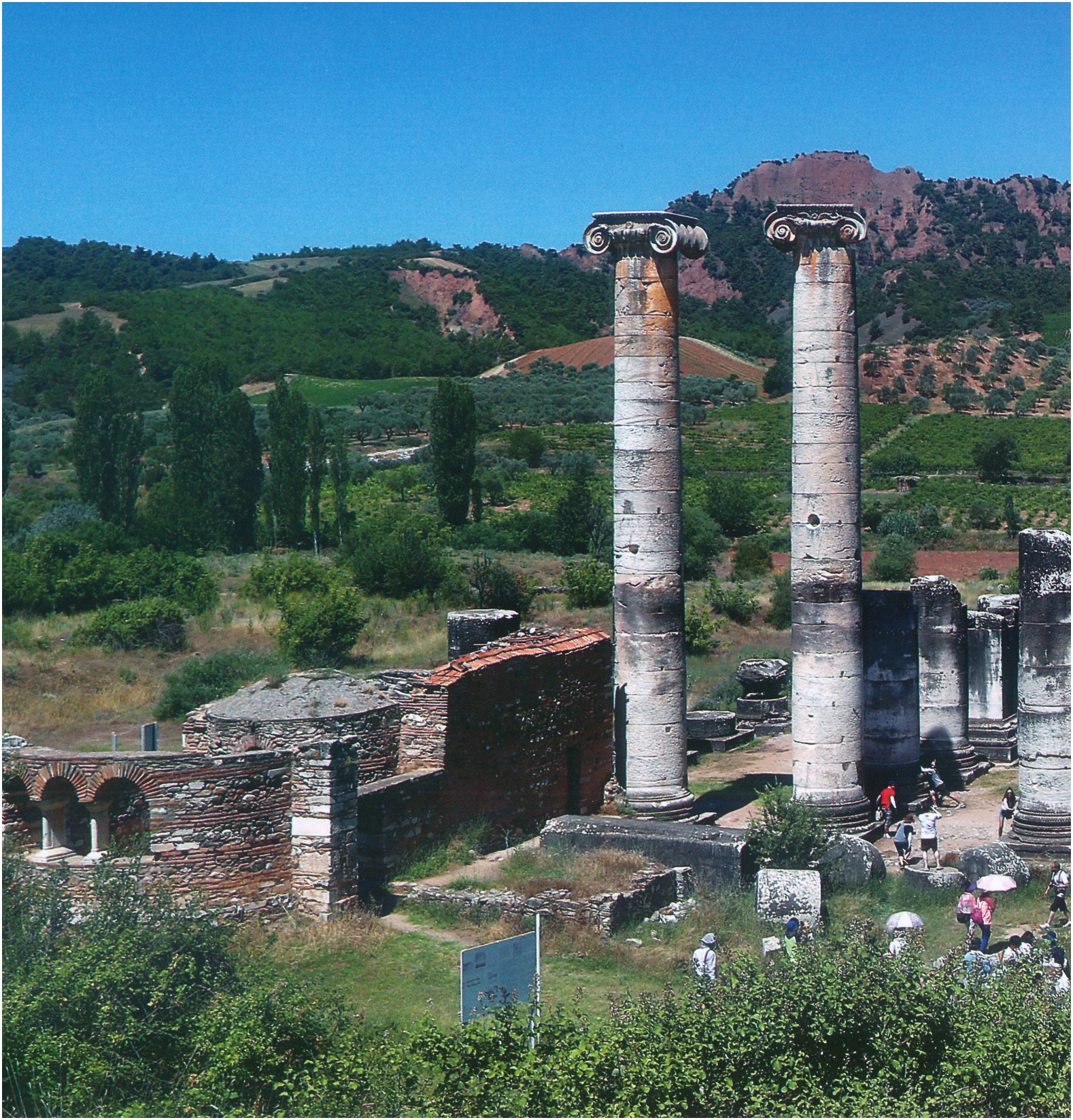
Under Croesus in the sixth century BC, Sardis was at its peak. It would never again be so large or so wealthy. Cyrus conquered in 546 BC and made the city a Persian provincial capital; and Artaphanes, a governor of Sardis, sent for representatives of all the Ionian cities and forced them to take an oath – to submit to his arbitration instead of raiding each other. Between the Pactolus and the citadel, Croesus had built a temple to Cybele, which was destroyed

The Temple of Artemis.

in 498 BC in the Ionian revolt. In Hellenistic times, Sardis became the western capital of the Seleucids. It remained a Greek city for eighteen centuries until the Turkish conquest; and though over time the memory of many biblical cities of western Asia Minor was lost, the location of Sardis was never forgotten.

The highway through the modern town of Sartmustafa runs east-west; and in the center of town is a signposted road leading south towards the temple of Artemis. After a survey of this area and the acropolis, we will return to the highway and the main excavation area. Three or four hundred meters south of the main road towards the temple of Artemis lies Sector PN, or Pactolus North. Among the many finds here are a gold refinery of the sixth century BC, mosaics from a Roman villa, and several churches. The basilica church of the fourth century AD had three aisles; in the north aisle is a grave older than the church, probably a shrine to a saint. The floor is paved with mosaics of floral and geometric designs, and the interior walls have frescoes. Built over this basilica was a smaller thirteenth-century church

The Temple of Artemis, with the acropolis in the background. (Next Page)



with several domes and ornate exterior decoration. The brickwork of the domes was in the same style as many Byzantine churches of Constantinople of the same period.

Continuing towards the temple, a sign on the left marks the turnoff up the hill to the pyramid tomb and also the acropolis, which we'll return to. Further along is the entrance to the temple and a compound for excavators, and next to this are reconstructed Lydian houses. In the sixth or fifth century BC, an altar was constructed; then came a Hellenistic temple of the Ionic order, with eight columns on the short end and twenty on the sides, rising about twenty meters. Work on the temple continued at least through the second century AD, when it became a temple of the imperial cult. Colossal statues of the emperor Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina were built here, Antoninus as Zeus and Faustina as Artemis. The heads alone are about a meter high. But the temple was abandoned in the troubles of the next century, and alluvium from nearby streams began to build up.

Unlike those of most archaeological sites, these two massive columns have never been re-erected, but have survived all earthquakes and landslides since antiquity. According to scattered reports, twelve columns were still standing in the mid-fifteenth century; by the early eighteenth century, six columns stood with the architrave still atop them; by the early nineteenth century, only three stood and the architrave had fallen; and very shortly another fell, for we hear in 1824 that only two still stood. The fallen architrave is the temple's largest complete surviving block, weighing over twenty-three tons.

This temple conducted the usual banking activities, and a long contract in Greek, probably from the late fourth or early third century BC, was found inscribed on a temple wall, recording a loan of 1325 gold slaters to a man named Mnesimachus, and listing his collateral and penalties. Two short texts in the Lydian language, probably honoring column donors, were also found here; and one fragment is now in the Manisa Museum. By the fourth century AD, the temple had become a quarry; and Christian slogans from this century and the next have been carved into the masonry, including crosses incised to ward off the old gods worshiped here. Also found in the temple area was a Hellenistic funerary stele reused in the fourth century AD by a tailor named Julianus. The inscription refers to him as a bracarius, which originally meant one who made trousers. Romans had scorned trousers as a barbarian fashion; but in late antiquity this fashion spread even to the aristocracy, and bracarius soon became the general word for tailor.

Behind the surviving columns, a Christian basilica, Church M, was built in the late fourth century. The contrast between the almost pharaonic temple and this small and unpretentious church superbly illustrates the transition to late antiquity. Alluvium had slowly covered the temple area, and church M was built on a layer of deposits over a meter thick, using the temple as a quarry. A head of Zeus was broken and incorporated into the apse, and paving stones were also taken from the temple. A large brick arch has been filled in, and the dome of the church is perfectly preserved, because a landslide in the seventh century buried the east end of the temple and the church with it. A hoard of coins outside the north doorway dates from the beginning of the fifth century, likely buried because Gothic tribes in Roman pay had turned on their employer and were pillaging the region.

For the adventurous and fit, the acropolis is well worth the climb. Sturdy shoes, long pants, and water are essential. Returning north towards the town, turn up to the right at the sign for the pyramid tomb. From the pine forest, head uphill as directly as possible; trails branch and split many times down below, but once at the ridge, the way becomes clear, and there's only one route up. On the west slope of the acropolis hill about three hundred meters up is a Persian stepped pyramid tomb. Watch for pottery shards and evidence of masonry, and soon fragments of the old wall come in sight. The so-called flying towers, thin

The so-called flying towers, the last surviving fragments of a system of walls around the acropolis.

necks of earth supporting large fragments of wall, have survived centuries of erosion, earthquakes, and landslides.

The main trail carries you past the summit, then switches back. Two cave-chambers are carved into the mountain, the bigger underneath the summit. Do not enter these chambers – the ground is a steep and unstable scree opening onto the cliff face. Past these chambers, the Turkish flag at the false summit can be reached, but only a mountaineer should attempt the summit itself. Returning to the point at which the trail switches back, the wall spreads out to the south.

From these walls opposite the cliff face, the chambers just under the summit can be seen. The masonry facing on the acropolis was probably shaken loose by the many earthquakes over the centuries. Far below is the temple of Artemis, and the hillside opposite is studded with rock-hewn tombs from the sixth century BC up to the Roman era. This vantage is a fine place for a water break, and to reflect on those who slaved and ruled and fought and died here.

On the north side of the acropolis, tunnels leading down the north slope have been uncovered. Fragments of the wall date to the sixth century BC, and another wall constructed in the third century AD descended from here to surround the Roman city below. The flying towers on the western approaches probably belong to this third-century construction. Seven meters high and built of regular courses of rough stone, it contains almost no recycled material. Only one major structure, Bath CG at the eastern end of the city, was left outside these walls. In this region, baths just outside city walls are a common feature, a bulwark against plague.

But most of the fortifications on the southern acropolis were built in the seventh century AD. In AD 660, an imperial army arrived to rebuild Sardis, destroyed in the Persian invasion. The walls they constructed were around ten meters high and three meters thick, a core of rubble faced with old inscriptions and other fragments dating from the fourth through sixth centuries AD. Though composed of recycled material, these walls stood with very few repairs into the fifteenth century.

Back down and out to the highway, before exploring the gymnasium complex and central city, we pass to the eastern end of the city. The Pactolus was the ancient axis of the city, but when Antiochus III conquered in the late third century BC, he moved the city east under the foothills of the acropolis. Just

under a kilometer east of the gymnasium complex, up to the right over a fence and through olive orchards and grape vines lie a series of arched chambers built into the hillside. The arches of the middle chambers have a diameter of at least ten meters, and two smaller chambers flank them. Back to the west along the contour of the hill lies the theater, which held twenty thousand people. Inside, the seating area now blends into the hillside; and were it not for the corrugated roofing protecting ongoing excavations, it would seem just another gully. The stadium lies just north, and between here and the gymnasium complex, the hillside is littered with crumbling masonry. On the plain east and northeast of the gymnasium complex are three or four mounds covered in vineyards, likely the residence of the provincial governor. Buildings C and D are Roman basilicas.

The gymnasium complex is the most extensively restored structure of ancient Sardis. It consists of an elaborate entrance portal, the marble court; an open colonnaded exercise ground, the palestra, about eighty meters square; meeting rooms; hot and cold baths; and a large swimming pool. A long hall on the south side of the palestra was converted into a synagogue in the late third century AD. In the fourth century, Constantine looted Sardis to decorate his new capital, and many treasures originally in this complex were taken to the Hippodrome in Constantinople. The marble court was built in the third century AD, and its brick floor was originally covered in patterned marble. It had been decorated with columns and pilasters, and an inscription found here dating from the fifth century AD refers to the boule, the city council. Behind the court is an oval pool, a frigidarium, and the ruins of a heated bathhouse.The interior was decorated with marble sculpture and mosaic floor, and fountains adorned the niches around the pool. In one fountain water flows through the mouths of serpents. A marble floor was laid over the mosaics around AD 500, and capitals from the colonnade lining the palestra have been dated to the late fifth century AD.

A Jewish community may have been here as early as the fifth century BC; and in the third century BC, the Seleucids transplanted thousands of Jewish families from Babylon to Lydia and Phrygia. This community was granted semi-autonomy, with its own schools and courts; yet slowly they adopted the language and civic institutions of the Greeks. This is the largest known synagogue of the ancient diaspora, and its central location is evidence of the prosperity of the Jewish community here. Excavated inscriptions attest that many Jews served on the city council and in the imperial government. Some Hebrew inscriptions have been found, but the vast majority are in Greek.

The facade of the gymnasium.

The courtyard of the synagogue.

The resemblance between this synagogue and a Christian basilica is striking. The forecourt held a relief of Artemis and Cybele turned upside down. The main hall, used for instruction and worship, had mosaic floors, marble sculptures on the walls, and frescoes on ceilings; and at the western end are three rows of benches covered in marble. The mosaic floors contained no Jewish motifs, and among the marble statues was a sculpture of a charioteer. Such a symbol of Roman frivolity would be impossible in a less Hellenized Jewish community, and is difficult to imagine even in a Christian church. The eagle table and the stone lions are the only known cases of pagan sculpture reused in a synagogue.

About AD 400, along the south side of the gymnasium complex a row of two-story shops was built

These carved eagles were reused in the synagogue. They now flank the entrance of the archaeological museum in Manisa. The eagles at the site of the synagogue are replicas.

A row of shops bordering the gymnasium complex. *(Next Page)*

The row of shops, with the gymnasium in the background.

of brick and recycled marble fragments. The main street was paved with marble and lined with a colonnade, and sidewalks covered in mosaic gave access to the shops, which included a locksmith, a tool shop, a dye works, and a restaurant. Iron and bronze locks have been found in the excavations, along with balances, utensils, and window panes. Six of the shops were almost certainly owned by Jews, and ten of them by Christians.

This area and the synagogue show evidence of continual renovation until the Persian sack of AD 616, and the subsequent fate of the Jews here in unknown. Perhaps they rose up against the Romans and assisted the Persians, as the Judean and Syrian Jews had. During the war with Persia the emperor Heraclius had ordered the conversion of all Jews in the empire, and some were no doubt absorbed into Christianity. Others probably fled east – Jews and heretical Chris-

The entrance to the synagogue.

tian sects had long found greater freedom of religion under the Persians, and would soon find the same under Islamic rulers.

The written record fleshes out the complex relationship that existed here between Jewish, Christian, and polytheistic worship. In the second century AD, the bishop of Sardis, Mileto, excoriated the Jews for crucifying Christ, yet, like most Christians of Asia Minor at the time, celebrated Easter on the Passover, which the orthodox condemned as heretical (the Quartodeciman controversy).

In the fourth century, Chysanthius of Sardis entered the school of Pergamum. He first read Plato and Aristotle and studied rhetoric, then moved on to the

mystical teachings of Pythagoras; he was finally initiated into the sacrament of theurgy, by which the soul is separated from the body and joined with the divine. At Pergamum he was a mentor to Julian, who later became emperor and attempted to abolish Christianity. Chrysanthius returned to Sardis, becoming high priest and founding a branch of the Pergameme school here. We hear that he abstained from pork, never bathed, and affected poverty in the manner of Christian monks. His disciples studied philosophy and rhetoric, but were famed as miracle-workers and magicians who claimed to cause statues to move and speak. Yet even before Chrysanthius died, the temples and altars of Sardis seem to have fallen to ruin.

When the army arrived in AD 660 to rebuild the acropolis walls, it also restored the highway. The shops and colonnades along the southern side of the gymnasium complex were razed, and the new road was built over the ruins of the colonnaded street. The gymnasium complex became a quarry, its marble ground up for lime or used directly as building material. The same had been done three centuries before in the time of Diocletian and Constantine, and for the same reason – to defend against Persian invasion. In the fourth century, the route from Smyrna to the Anatolian plateau was rebuilt, and the military was the most important traveler on this highway.

Sardis in late antiquity was a military center, hosting the most important imperial arms factory in the region. The workers in this factory formed a hereditary guild. The guilds, or collegia, were originally free associations, but membership gradually became compulsory, and were useful tools of the government to impose taxes and forced labor. Two inscriptions here refer to these guilds, one describing a strike by construction workers, the most detailed evidence yet found of working conditions in late antiquity. In AD 459, the provincial governor arbitrated between employers and building artisans – stone-workers, marble-cutters, and mosaic-makers. The inscription shows that strikes had been frequent, workers leaving their work unfinished and obstructing the work of others. The agreement stipulated that, if wages were paid, work would be completed; that, if a worker did not complete a job, then the guild would appoint another member to finish it; that, if the new worker also left the job unfinished, then the guild would pay a fine and the worker would be prosecuted; that, a worker excused by his employer would be guaranteed a job upon his return; that, in case of a worker falling ill, he had twenty days to return; and that, if he did not return, then the guild would appoint another worker in his place.

The other inscription is a collective tombstone of the assistants of a guild of clothes merchants, and recent excavations complement this find. Across the high-

The House of Bronzes.

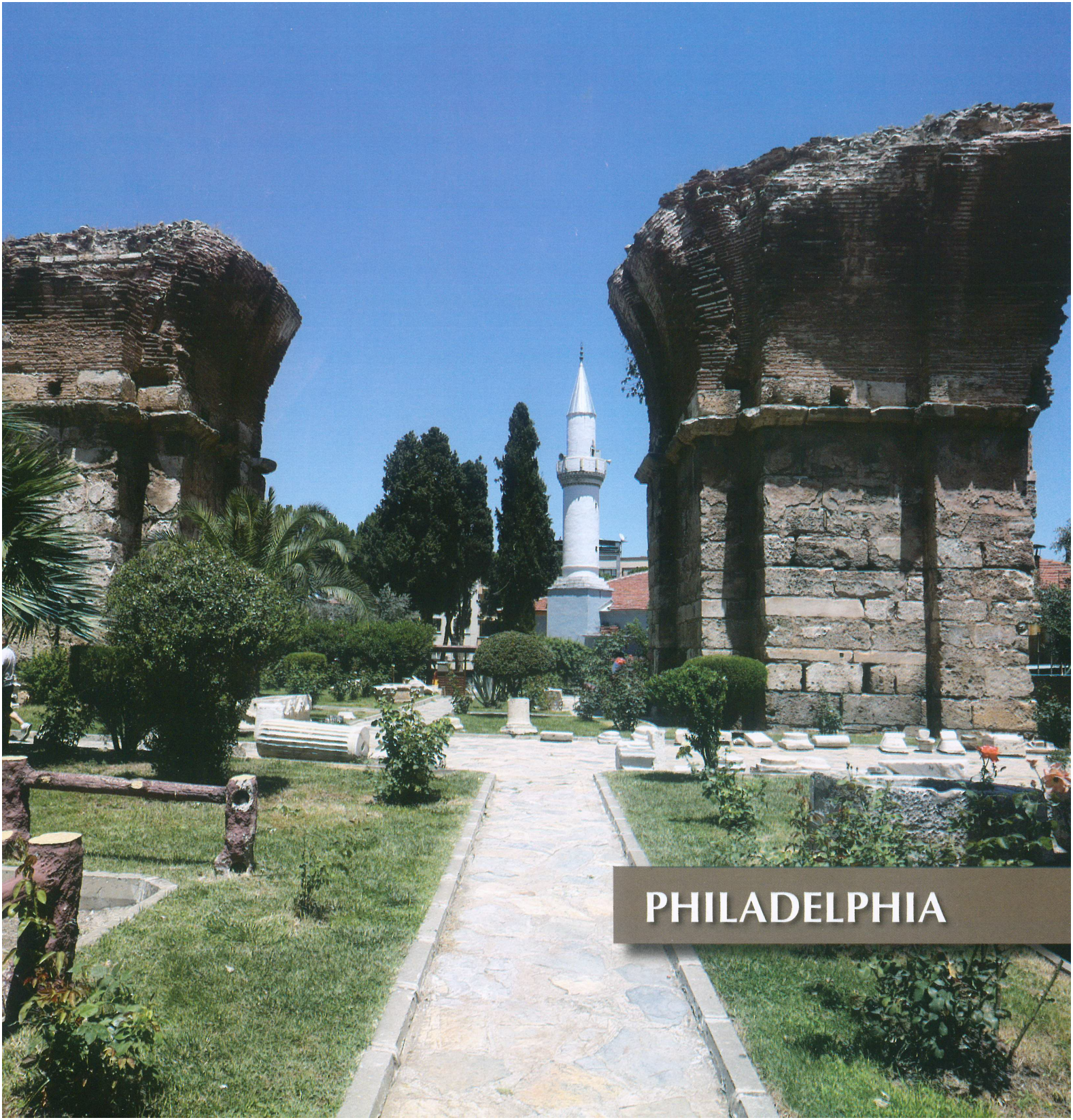
way just south of the gymnasium complex, in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, a tetrapylon, or four-sided monumental arch, and another colonnaded street were built. An excavated workshop in the HOB sector, the so-called House of Bronzes, shows evidence of textile industry and bleaching facilities. Set back about twenty meters from the highway, it had an inclined ramp paved with brick leading into the ground floor, which was decorated with colored marble. A storage area here contained many bronze vessels, censers (vessels for burning incense), and a shovel inscribed with a cross. This structure was used and maintained for three centuries up to the Persian sack.

A baptismal font.

Despite the rebuilding of the wall and restoration of the highway, Sardis never recovered from the calamity of AD 616. By the tenth century, this once large and flourishing metropolis had become a castle with a few houses, a chapel and cisterns at the acropolis, and settlements scattered like villages over the ancient site. Bath CG now lay half-buried in alluvium, and the ruins still exposed above ground had sprouted crude brick walls and furnaces. The beautiful Byzantine church in Pactolus North was built in the thirteenth century by the Lascarids, refugee emperors chased out of Constantinople by crusaders; and this period was the most prosperous for Lydia since the Persian sack. But by the end of this century Lydia was a Turkish sea, and the acropolis of Sardis was one of the few islands holding out. A Turcoman chieftain plundering the valley in the early fourteenth century reached an agreement with the citadel of Sardis, that he and his men would share the acropolis with the Christians and allow them to till their fields in the valley below; but this chieftain also reserved the right to plunder others in the vicinity.

Sardis remained the seat of the metropolitan of Lydia until 1369, but the titular bishops of Sardis rarely if ever left Constantinople. The transition from a Greek Christian to a Turkish Islamic culture is hardly visible in the archaeological record. Christians and Muslims lived in separate quarters, and the acropolis fortifications were maintained throughout the Seljuk period, as new bees swarmed to old hives. Coins of Turcoman chieftains have been found here, and this is the last evidence of habitation at the acropolis, abandoned since early Ottoman times.

The church of Saint John, Philadelphia. (Right)


PHILADELPHIA

Lying about fifty kilometers southeast of Sardis on the route taken by Xenophon and the Ten Thousand, the original Lydian name of the city was Calletebus. Hellenistic coins recovered here depict a Macedonian shield, and Macedonian soldiers may have been settled here in Alexander's time or soon after. The city entered the orbit of Pergamum early in the Hellenistic period; and the name Philadelphia commemorates the brotherly love between two Pergamene princes, Attalus II and Eumenes II. In the second century BC, Rome failed to turn Attalus against his brother Eumenes; yet Attalus left his kingdom to Rome upon his death.

The old Lydian tongue was still spoken here into the first century AD, when Greek finally squeezed it out. The city was twice renamed in the first century AD, after the emperor Tiberius and the wife of Vespasian, for their help in recovering from earthquakes. No synagogue has yet been found, but local inscriptions attest to the presence of a Jewish community here. In the beginning of the second century AD, Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, wrote to the Christians here, warning them against heresy and schism; and one curious line illustrates that the Christian and Jewish communities still had not completely differentiated. "It is better", he wrote, "to hear Christianity from the circumcised than Judaism from the uncircumcised." In other words, it was much worse for a Gentile to become a Jew than for a Jew to become a Christian. As bishop of Antioch, he would have been active in converting the Gentiles to Christianity. Soon after he was executed in Rome, several Christians from Philadelphia were executed alongside Polycarp in Smyrna.

Above the modern city of Alaşehir lies the old acropolis. At the northern end is the stadium, long ago stripped of its marble seats. Nestled among pine trees at the east end are the ruins of a theater built in the second or third century AD. Houses of crude masonry and cinderblock perch atop the old stones of the theater, and some ancient arches still stand. The region was famous for its grapes, and Philadelphia's coins often bore the image of Bacchus. The walls of Philadelphia were originally a triple fortification like that found in the great land wall of Constantinople. Throughout Alaşehir, fragments of the inner wall survive, and many dwellings are built against these

An inscription near the church.

The foundations of the church.

walls. The only Christian archaeological remains are the ruins of a basilica of the sixth or seventh century in the Beş Eylül district. Four squat brick stumps once supported the dome, and frescoes dating from the eleventh century, in very poor condition, can still be made out.

Subordinate to Ephesus and Smyrna in late antiquity, Philadelphia protested against having to pay for the maintenance of high priesthoods and festivals of other cities. Though Philadelphia had a priest of Rome and Augustus in the late first century BC, it wasn't until the third century that it was granted the honor

The church of Saint John

of being temple-warden of the imperial cult. In the sixth century, John the Lydian, a native of Philadelphia, wrote of the plunder of Lydia by John of Cappadocia, an imperial commander, and John Maxilloplumacius (pillow-jaw, as he was obese). Provincial officials were under pressure to extract as much tax as possible from the people, to pay for extravagant public works and Justinian's wars in the Mediterranean. Many peasants fled the land and turned to brigandage to survive; and the military governors sent out to quell the unrest often plundered the people further. John the Lydian says that "wild beasts and Cappadocians" plundered Philadelphia, sparing no "wife, maiden, or young boy".

Philadelphia emerged from the dark age stronger than Sardis, Pergamum, Smyrna, or Ephesus. It was the last Byzantine island in a Turkish sea. Withstanding two Turkish sieges in the early twelfth century, the commanders here wielded immense clout at Constantinople. Isaac II Angelus, a native of Philadelphia, was emperor in the late twelfth century; and two more members of this family also became emperor. In the early fourteenth century, Catalan mercenaries beat the Turks off a siege of Philadelphia. But in 1371 the emperor in Constantinople officially became an Ottoman vassal; and in 1390, his son, still bearing the empty title of emperor, marched with his overlord, the Ottoman sultan Beyazid, to subdue Philadelphia, the last Greek city in Asia Minor.

European travelers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reported that a portion of the city wall was composed, in the tradition of Timur, of human skulls and bones. The city had an estimated two dozen churches, most in ruin; and the bishop of Philadelphia spoke no Greek except what he had memorized in the liturgy.

Temple A. (Right


LAODICEA

About a hundred kilometers southeast of Philadelphia in the Lycus valley, Laodicea was an important junction between the coast and the interior plateau, where ancient Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia intersect. Winters in the Phrygian highlands are too cold for the olive tree to grow, and the Lycus is the point at which the olive stops growing. Once called Diospolis, the city was rebuilt and renamed in the mid-third century BC by Antiochus II in honor of his sister-wife. The city followed the usual trajectory from the Seleucids to Pergamum to Rome.

The northwest entrance into Laodicea is the Ephesus gate, and the southeast entrance is the Syria gate, showing the reach of the trade routes through here: from Ephesus up the Meander valley to the Lycus, then southeast through the Lycus to Iconium, and through the Cilician gates to Tarsus and Antioch. In addition to the transit trade, Laodicea had banks and a textile industry, which used the soft black wool of local sheep. There were guilds of fullers and cloak-makers, and a large colony of Jews lived here. Every year they sent gold to Jerusalem, and at least once, in 62 BC, the Roman governor confiscated the shipment.

The Syria Gate.

Syria Street.

No synagogue has yet been found on the site, but a column fragment uncovered in one of Laodicea's many fountains is inscribed with a menorah, a ram's horn, and a palm branch, attesting to a Hellenized Jewish community here. Cicero mentioned cashing drafts here, and at the end of the first century BC the city was one of the largest in Asia Minor. Yet despite its mercantile power and cosmopolitan air, Laodicea never became temple-warden of the imperial cult, on which Ephesus prided itself. In late antiquity, Laodicea endured the usual vicissitudes, as governors plundered their provinces. Euthalius of Laodicea, governor of Lydia at the end of the fourth century, taxed so excessively that he was fined fifteen pounds of gold, which he paid by further plunder.

Temple A.

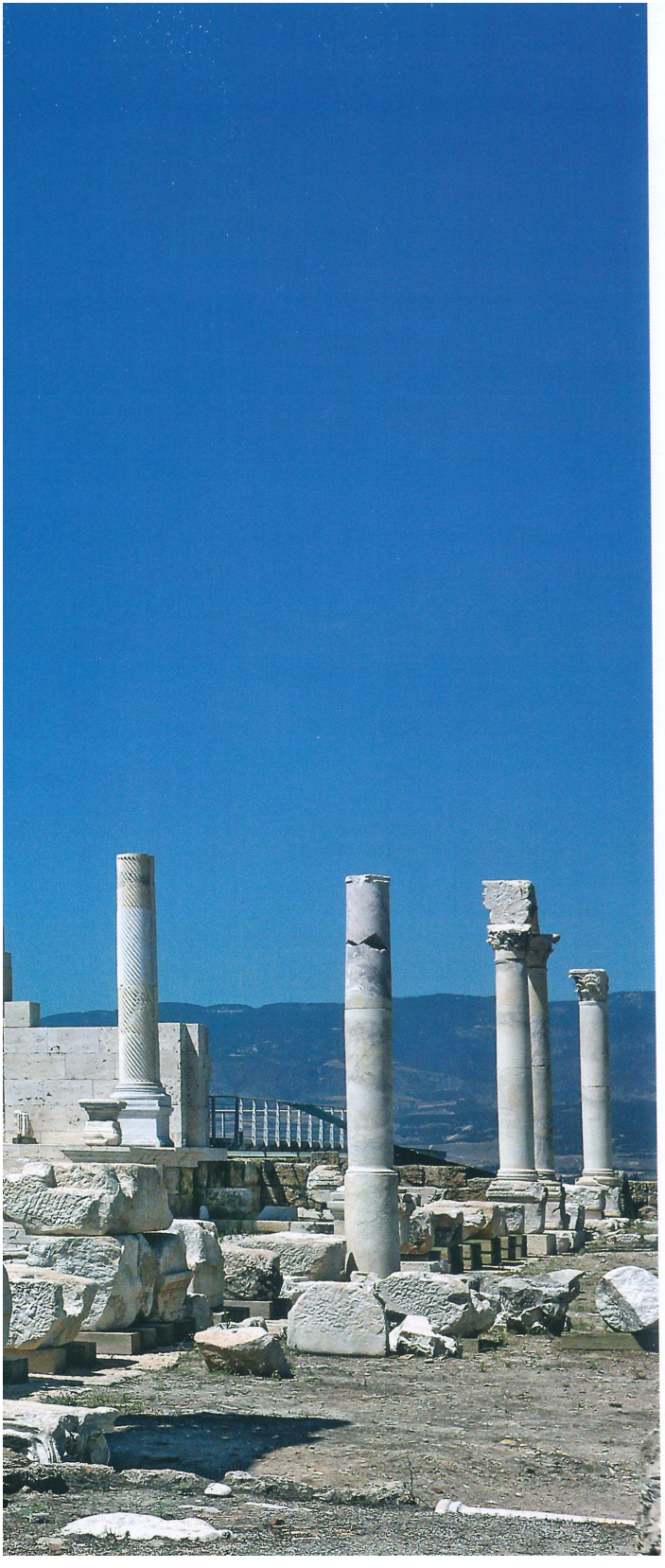
Just south of the modern entrance is the triple-arched Syria gate, built in the first century AD during the reign of Domitian. Approaching the ticket office and gift store, on the right are the east baths, built in the second century AD. One of its massive arches still stands. We enter the site through the East Byzantine fortifications, whose gate, towers, and walls were built in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD of blocks recycled from earlier Roman monuments. These fortifications lie well inside the original walls; between the first and fifth centuries, the city had shrunk.

Just north of the gate is a fountain, which allowed people to bathe prior to entering the city, a bulwark against plague. Through the East Byzantine gate is Syria street, flanked with colonnades which once had shops behind them. A sewage canal ran under the middle of this street. After three blocks, the travertine blocks of temple A lie on the right. Built in the second century AD and renovated a century later, it seems to have become an archive of the Christians here in the fourth century. A glass platform allows us to view its vaulted foundations. It was destroyed in the earthquake of AD 494.

Just behind this temple to the east is a water distribution center, built of recycled material after the earthquake of 494. A clay pipe supplied the water, which went through a pool before being pumped in four different directions. Immediately to the southeast is House A, really a series of structures around an inner courtyard with a pool and fountain. Frescoes dating from the third and fourth centuries AD indicate a dwelling, but numerous ceramic storage jars, balances and weights, and new brick flooring dating from the fifth and sixth centuries all indicate that the complex was turned into workshops, perhaps a wine production facility.

North towards the theater are the ruins of a church flanked by two fountains, the so-called Laodicea church. It seems to have had eleven apses, and the surviving columns likely supported arches. Fresco remains were found on the walls, and the floor had geometrical mosaics. Bordering on the theater to the south is a peristyle house, a complex around an inner courtyard that held a private church. This likely predates the other churches on site, as the earliest Christians worshiped in private homes. A martyred bishop of the second century AD had a Phrygian name, Sagaris.

The North Theater.



The Christians of Laodicea for centuries followed the teachings of Montanus, a native of Phrygia, who disdained the written word and emphasized the spontaneous nature of the Holy Spirit. He was inspired by the book of Revelation, which was not yet accepted by the orthodox church. Disciples of Montanus called this movement the New Prophecy, but the orthodox called it the Montanist heresy. A council of bishops met in Laodicea in AD 367 and pronounced against Montanism, likely an attempt to override local sentiment; for this movement returned to Phrygia and Lydia, in such strength that the Revelation was eventually admitted into the orthodox canon of Holy Scriptures.

The north theater was built in the second century AD and held twelve thousand people. It has holes for posts to support sun awnings, and in some of the seats, the names of associations and leading families are incised. Between the north and west theaters are the ruins of two temples and a church. The so-called North Church was built in the fifth century, using the nearby Corinthian temple as a quarry. South of this church are the so-called Sacred Area Porticos, a complex of temples and altars, now a wilderness of collapsed pillars and architraves. The west theater is older than the north one, built in Hellenistic times and holding eight thousand people.

The central agora.

The ruins of the water distribution terminal.

From the west theater we proceed back towards the central agora. Bordering on the agora to the north are a propylon, or monumental gateway, and two monumental fountains, Nymphaeum A and Caracalla's Nymphaeum; the latter was dedicated to the emperor to honor his visit here in the early third century. The propylon and Nymphaeum A were dedicated to the emperor Septimus Severus. Nymphaeum A is a rectangular pool originally surrounded on three sides by a two-story structure. The agora itself is lined on three sides by porticos, which gave access to rows of shops. South of the agora are the central baths. It contained two changing rooms and pools of cold, tepid, and hot water.

West and north of the central baths is Ephesus Street, terminating in Ephesus gate, which was dedicated to Domitian and had a triple arch flanked by towers. A portico dating from the late Hellenistic period is bounded by a monumental passageway on the west side and Nymphaeum B on the east, and seems to have been a pedestrian area. Two churches lie to the north, a cruciform basilica and the so-called northwest church. Another fountain and the west agora lie between the monumental passage and the Ephesus gate. The ruins are a desolate and wide area littered with marble and the tops of masonry walls. Ruined in an earthquake of AD 494 and then pillaged in the Persian invasion of the early seventh century, the site was used as a quarry for centuries afterward.

The baths-gymnasium complex.

Next to Nymphaeum B is a well-preserved latrine, and guilds of fullers collected urine and washed clothes with it. The alkaline compounds in urine break down dirt; and collecting urine for this purpose was so common that the emperor Vespasian taxed it. From here we head south to the stadium and the south baths-gymnasium complex. A bouleuterion, or senate house, lies just north of the south agora. Much of the stone has been plundered, but the ring of seats is about thirty-five meters in diameter. Built during the reign of Hadrian, it had a capacity of five or six hundred people, and was likely used as an odeion as well.

South of this agora are another water distribution terminal and a bath-gymnasium complex, and beyond these is the stadium, one of the largest in Asia Minor, holding up to twenty-five thousand people. In addition to games and races, gladiator combat was also

held here. The South Baths and Gymnasium are well preserved, and four heavy arches still stand. Judging by the architrave friezes, the complex was built in the second century AD, and had hot, cold, and tepid baths. Ceramic pipes can still be seen in the South Baths and the Water Distribution Terminal I; the pipes are choked with lime deposits, and the water tower is a gnarled jumble of rock, terracotta, and mineral deposits. Unlike the other cities of the region, Laodicea was completely dependent on an external water supply, and water was piped not from Hierapolis, whose white cliffs are visible across the valley to the north, but from the south.

The Turks called these ruins Eskihisar (Old Castle). In the fourteenth century the Arab traveler Ibn Batuta passed through here, noting the beautiful Greek slave girls, the gardens and markets, and the springs of nearby Hierapolis. A European traveler of the eighteenth century reported that the Greeks in this region spoke only Turkish.

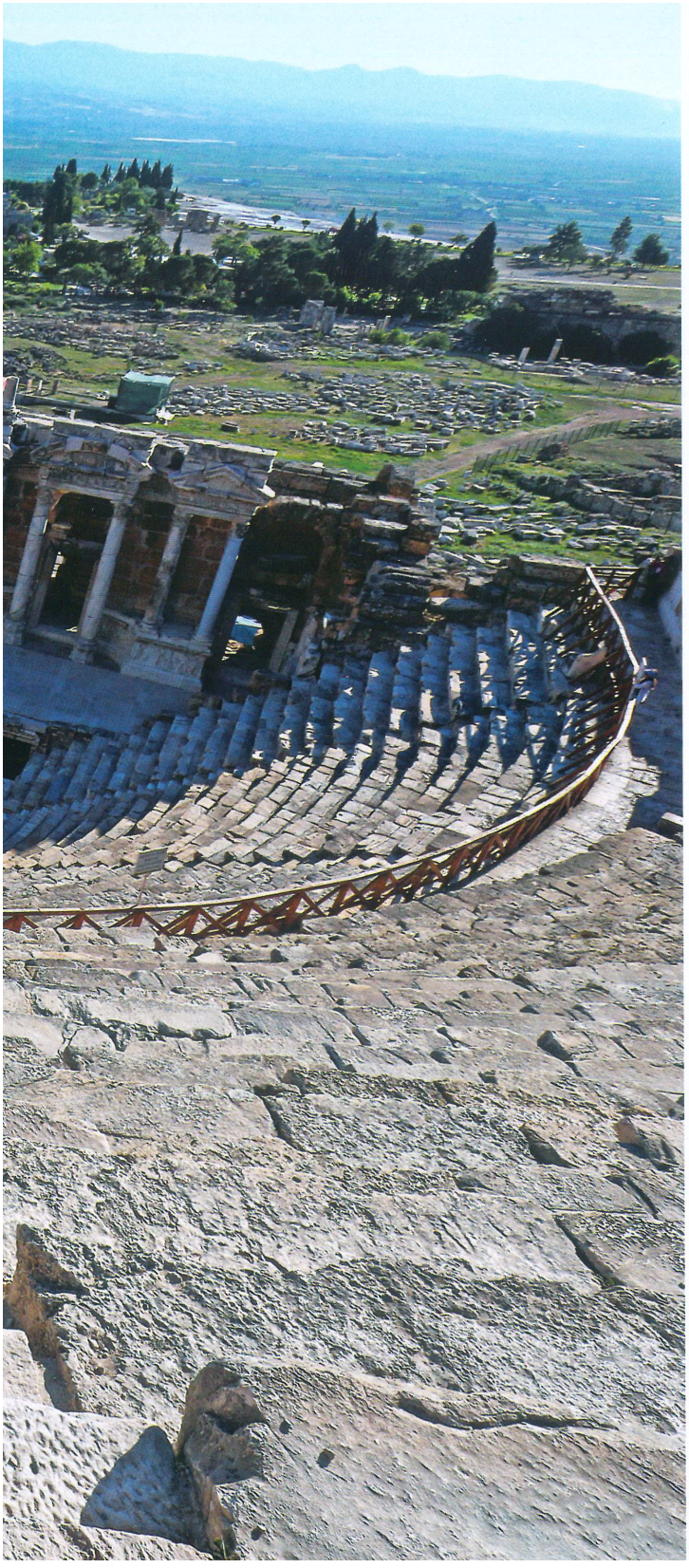
Leaving Laodicea, north through the Lycus valley lie the white cliffs of Hierapolis, or Pammukkale (Cotton Castle). In sunlight, the limestone is blinding white, its undulating lines giving the appearance of frozen river rapids. Tourists flock here for the pools and resorts, and this is by far the most crowded site on our itinerary. Entering from the main highway, we walk past a gated swimming area, and shoes must be removed to walk up the hill through a series of shallow pools to the archaeological site. In the high season, crowds make for slow progress.

Past the medieval castle at the top are the ruins of Hierapolis, which may have begun as a village that grew up around a temple to Cybele. In the early second century BC, Eumenes II of Pergamum had allied with Rome to defeat the Seleucids; and Eumenes brought much of the spoils of his victory here, greatly enriching Hierapolis. A Jewish colony existed here, and the Talmud contains the bitter and enigmatic comment, "The wines and baths of Phrygia have separated the ten tribes of Israel." Perhaps these pleasures helped along the process of Hellenization.

Very little survives from Hellenistic times, and almost all these ruins were built in the imperial Roman era. Wealthy through late antiquity, the city was the residence of the emperor Valens in the late fourth century; but through the vicissitudes of invasion and earthquake, the ruined and deserted city was eventually buried under a thick layer of limestone.

Just inside the city lie the Central Baths, built in the second century AD, which have been converted into

The limestone formations of Hierapolis (Pammukale).



The theater.

an archaeological museum. A beautiful space with massive arched ceilings, it now houses statuary and sarcophagi from this and nearby sites. A black basalt statue of a sitting man from the seventh century BC attests to the Greek merchant colony in Egypt. The statue is missing its head, but has an inscription in Greek: "Amphimeos's son Pedon brought me from Egypt and gave me as a votive: Psammetichos, king of Egypt, gave him a city for his virtue and a golden diadem for his bravery."

Fine friezes found in the theater are on display here. A relief of horses pulling a chariot is reminiscent of the Elgin marbles. Others depict Hades kidnapping Persephone, and griffins or lions pulling a cart in a procession with satyrs and centaurs, celebrating the Feast of Dionysus, also known as Bacchus. A late arrival to Greek mythology, he was the Lydian and Phrygian god of wine. In another relief, Nike, goddess of victory, crowns the emperor Septimus Severus. No other emperor was depicted in the theater, so it must have been built during his reign in the late second or early third century AD. It held over ten thousand people, and gives a magnificent view of the ruins and the Lycus valley.

From the baths towards the theater lies the U-shaped Temple Nymphaeum. Niches in its upper story once held busts of gods and goddesses. It was apparently

built within the precinct of the Temple of Apollo. Inscriptions found in this temple are now in the archaeological museum, but little remains on the site. The back of the temple was built into the hill, and it was surrounded on three sides by columns. The Roman temple recycled the blocks of the Hellenistic one. Next to this is the Plutonium, a cult shrine to Hades, the lord of the underworld. This is apparently the oldest sanctuary in the city, located over a subterranean chamber filled with deadly fumes. The priests sold small animals to pilgrims, who tied ropes to these animals, threw them into the cave, and pulled them out dead. The priests then descended into the cave, presumably holding their breath. This oracle was by all accounts extremely profitable.

On the hillside north and east of the theater is the Martyrium of Philip. Many churches were built here in late antiquity, but this octagonal shrine is the most important. It was built outside the walls in the fourth or fifth century, but in the mid-sixth century it was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt. Later a small chapel was built into its west side; and by the tenth century the site shows evidence of crude dwellings and lime-kilns. Other churches here show a similar trajectory.

Christian tradition holds that the apostle Philip was martyred here around AD 80, but confusion persists about who Philip of Hierapolis was. The ecclesiastical historian Eusebius quotes a report that he was Philip the Evangelist, a later disciple who belonged to the Jewish community here and had four prophetic daughters. Later Christian tradition made no distinction between the apostle and the evangelist.

The Martyrium of Saint Philip.

The Frontinus Gate.

Epictetus of Hierapolis, a Stoic philosopher of the first century AD, at one point spoke of Jews when he meant Christians, illustrating the overlap between these communities at the time. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the early second century, condemned the gospels and preferred "the living and abiding voice" of oral tradition. He warned against the worship of angels, and his teaching followed Revelation, which said, "When John fell down before the angel to worship him, the latter forbade it, saying, 'I am thy fellow servant...worship God'." Criticized by Eusebius and orthodox Christians for his heretical views, Papias strongly influenced Montanus and the movement later known as Montanism.

A sarcophagus outside the North Byzantine Gate.

We proceed down to the agora, one of the largest in the ancient world. Like other cities in the region, Hierapolis had guilds of purple-dyers, mentioned in inscriptions here as a source of wealth. At the northwest corner of the agora lies the Frontinus Gate, dedicated to the Roman proconsul of Asia in the late first century AD. Triple-arched and with a bilingual inscription in Greek and Latin, it was built before the agora. Near this gate is a tomb complex, several of whose pieces are now in the museum here, including a sarcophagus of a priestess of Isis and another engraved with a sphinx, both from the second century AD. Near the southwest corner of the agora is the fourth-century North Byzantine Gate, whose position is evidence that the city shrank between the first and fourth centuries.

North of the agora is a baths complex of the third century AD. Located outside the walls, these baths protected against epidemics. Massive arches fifteen meters in diameter still stand, and in the sixth century this structure became a church. North of here is a large necropolis, whose tombs date from the second and third centuries AD. Jewish and Gentile tombs shared the same area, which would have been inconceivable for more traditional Jews. One tomb has a menorah and a ram's horn, a motif found also in Laodicea. In an inscription found on another tomb, the dead man gives money to two guilds to place wreaths on his tomb at different festivals – to the purple-dyers at Passover, and to the carpet-weavers at Pentecost. Many Christians of Asia Minor celebrated Easter on the Passover at this time, and perhaps this dead man was among them. This inscription is a fascinating illustration of the ferment of Greek and Jewish culture, and of its product, Christianity.

An ancient pool of Hierapolis.

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