

The Christian Remains of the Seven Churches of the Apocalypse

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Some months ago, I revisited the island of Patmos and the sites of the seven churches to which letters are addressed in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation. What follows is a report on such Christian remains as have survived and an indication of the various traditions which have grown up at the eight locations, where, as at so many other places in the Orthodox and Latin world, piety has sought tangible localization.

I set out from Piraeus and sailed to the island of Patmos, off the Turkish coast, which had gained its significance because of the enforced exile of God's servant John (Rev. 1:1, 9) and from the acceptance of the Revelation in the NT canon. From the tiny port of Skala, financial and tourist center of Patmos, the road ascends to the 11th century Greek Orthodox monastery of St. John the Theologian. Half way to this mighty fortress monastery, I stopped at the Monastery of the Apocalypse, which enshrines the "Grotto of the Revelation." Throughout the centuries pilgrims have come to this site to receive blessings. When Pitton de Tournefort visited Patmos in 1702, the grotto was a poor hermitage administered by the bishop of Samos. The abbot presented de Tournefort with pieces of rock from the grotto, assuring him that they could expel evil spirits and cure diseases. Nowadays, hundreds of western tourists visit the grotto daily, especially during the summer, and are shown those traditional features which are related in one way or another with the vision of John. Chiseled out of the rock is a small couch where John is said to have rested his head, and to the right is a hand-hold cut in the rock which supported the seer as he knelt for prayer. On the rocky bookstand to the right of the hand-hold, tradition has it that Prochorus, John's disciple and amanuensis and one of the deacons of the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:5), wrote down the Revelation (as well as the Fourth Gospel), at this teacher's dictation. The grotto's ceiling is cleft from north to south; local tradition says the split occurred when John heard God's voice saying "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 1:8).

Another climb of fifteen minutes brought me to the village of Chora, built around the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, which claims one of the largest collections of relics of the apostolic church. Included are fragments of the skulls of the apostle Thomas and Antipas of Pergamum (Rev. 2:13), as well as parts from Titus, Timothy and Philip. In the new museum, the monks have on exhibit the sad remains of their 6th-century purple parchment Codex 67 of the Gospel of Mark, of which other parts are in the

libraries of Vienna, Leningrad, London, the Vatican and Athens. Scenes from the apocryphal *Acts of John and His Travels and Miracles* adorn the walls of the exonarthex of the monastery's catholicon. As an example, one depicts the contest of faith between John and the Patmian magician Kynops (Fig. 5). Before a great multitude of Patmians, Kynops challenged John with a display of his magical powers. Finally, he cast himself into the sea, expecting to reappear. John, however, extending his arms in the form of a cross, exclaimed "O Thou, who didst grant to Moses by this similitude to overthrow Amalek [Exod. 17:8-13], O Lord Jesus Christ, bring down Kynops to the deep of the sea; let him never behold the sun, nor converse with living



Fig. 5. St. John sends Kynops into the deep. Seventeenth-century wall-painting in the Monastery of St. John on Patmos. All photographs by the author.

men." As John spoke, the sea roared and the water formed a whirlpool where Kynops went down. In the port of Skala, the fishermen pointed out to me a submerged rock some 900 feet from the dock, marked by a white buoy, which they believe to be petrified Kynops. Also in Skala, just beyond the Patmias Hotel, is a sizeable rock, surrounded by a fence, marked as "the relic of the baptismal font of St. John, 96 A.D."

The panoramic view from the roof of the Monastery of St. John is overwhelming. In the northwest appears the level line of the island of Icaria, further north are the peaks of Samos and the promontory of Mycale, to the southeast is the island of Leros beyond which rise the five summits of Kalymnos. To the southwest lies the island of Amorgos and the distant

volcanic island of Santorini, or Thera. This was the view which, with frequent alterations during sunshine and storm, must have impressed John. I found myself wondering whether this scene might not be reflected in the imagery of such visions as "the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place" (Rev. 6:14) or "every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found" (Rev. 16:20).

Ephesus

Whereas in the first century ships sailed regularly from Port Coressos in Ephesus to the Aegean islands, today it is more difficult to combine a journey to Patmos with a visit to the sites of the seven churches, because the Turkish mainland can only be reached via the Greek islands of Cos and Rhodes in the south and Samos and Chios to the north. I sailed to Pythagoreion on Samos, from where skiffs shuttle back and forth to Kushadasi, the former Scala Nuova, ten miles west of the ruins of ancient Ephesus.

Ephesus is famous for a number of reasons. It is important to the classicists and historians as one of the ancient cities of Ionia and as the capital of the Roman province of Asia. New Testament students associate the city with Paul, John and Timothy, and some claim that Mary, Jesus' mother, and Mary Magdalene spent their last days there. Ephesus, where the first of the seven churches addressed by John was located, remains the most impressive of all sites in Asia Minor. By the 2nd century B.C., its fame had increased so much that Antipater of Sidon counted the Ephesian Artemision as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, together with the Pyramids in Egypt, the Hanging Gardens of Semiramis in Babylon, the Statue of Zeus in Olympia, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Pharos of Alexandria.

The beginnings of Christianity in this city are shrouded in mystery. Whether we accept Ireneus' statement that Paul founded the church there or the tradition that John the Evangelist settled here with Mary, the mother of Jesus, certainly Christianity had reached the city of Diana-Artemis by the middle of the first century. During his first brief visit to Ephesus, Paul "argued with the Jews" in the local synagogue (Acts 18:19-21). Although the existence of a synagogue is mentioned by Josephus and by Luke, we lack archaeological indication of its location. Probably it was on the northern outskirts of the city near the harbor, because of the need for water for ritual purposes. Josephus informs us of the decision of the people of Halicarnassus to "suffer the Jews to observe their laws and sabbaths and build synagogues, as was their custom, by the sea." Indeed, many of the synagogues which have been excavated, those of Delos, Aegina, Priene and Miletus, were either close to the sea or near a river. One archaeological clue is a *menorah* carved into the steps leading to the 2nd-century Library of Celsus; the only other artifacts pointing toward a Jewish community during the Roman period are several terra-cotta lamps displaying the menorah, and a unique glass show-

ing the menorah flanked by the *shofar* and *lulab*. The lamps and the glass were found in the "Cemetery of the Seven Sleepers."

Three years after his first visit, Paul returned to preach at the Ephesian synagogue (Acts 19:8-9); after three months, however, he was evicted, though he was later able to use the hall of Tyrannus, possibly himself a rhetorician. The Western family of New Testament texts has a plus at the end of verse 9 to the effect that Paul taught from the 5th to the 10th hour, that is, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., during the heat of the day — which might suggest that Paul had the use of the hall during the time when Tyrannus rested. Paul's teaching led to the founding of congregations throughout the Roman province of Asia,

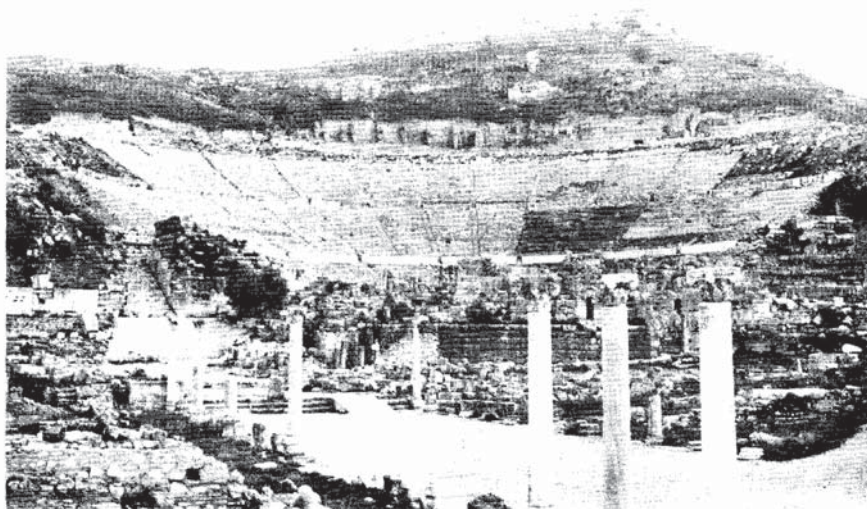


Fig. 6. The first-century theater at Ephesus, site of the silversmiths' riot of Acts 19.

since "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10), who were attracted to the famous Temple of Artemis, "she whom all Asia and the world worship" (Acts 19:27).

Luke makes no mention of Paul's being imprisoned in Ephesus, but Paul repeatedly refers to his sufferings — see especially I Cor. 15:32 and II Cor. 1:8,9. The apocryphal *Acts of Paul* elaborates upon his imprisonment in Ephesus, reporting that Eubola and Artemilla, wives of notable Ephesians, visited him in prison by night, requesting to be baptized by him. A local Ephesian tradition identifies the large square tower near the ancient Port Coressos as the prison of Paul. The tower is on the western end of Mt. Coressos and was part of the defense wall built by Lysimachus in the 3rd century B.C. We do not know when the tradition began, but the Western

travelers of the 17th century, Thomas Smith, George Wheler, Jacques Spon and Cornelis van Bruyn, all refer to this building as "the Prison of the Apostle Paul."

I strolled along Marble Street, passing the large theater which silently commemorates the silversmiths' riot of Acts 19:23-20:1 (Fig. 6). At the end of Marble Street, I turned into Curetes Street; here, just thirty paces below the small Temple of Hadrian, lying flat behind the upright row of columns, is a statute base erected by the guild of silversmiths, to which Demetrius apparently belonged.

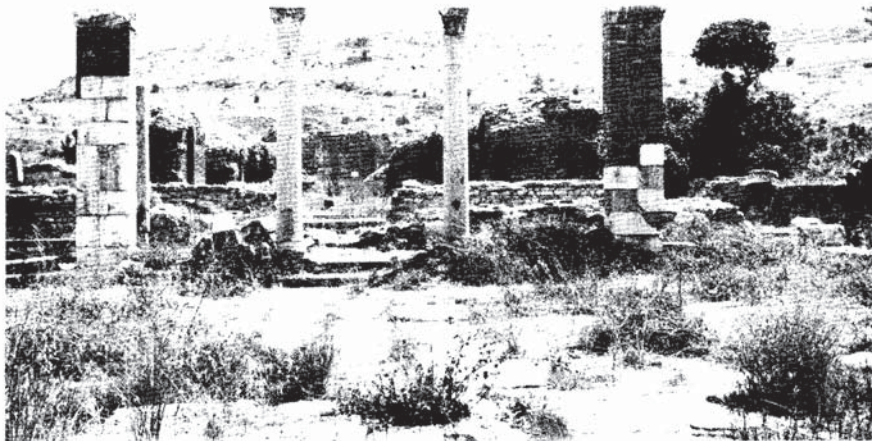


Fig. 7. Ruins of the Church of the Holy Virgin in Ephesus, site of the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 A.D.

In Seljuk, three miles from Ephesus, I visited the ruins of the Basilica of St. John situated on a hilltop overlooking the few ruins of the Artemis Temple. Already in the 2nd century, a small church enclosed the traditional tomb of John — but it remains an open question *which* John is supposed to be buried there. Papias, the 2nd century bishop of Hierapolis, according to Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* III.39, "asserts there were two of the same name in Asia, that there were also two tombs in Ephesus, and that both are called John's even to this day; which is particularly necessary to observe." In the 4th century this tomb was enlarged into the so-called Theodosian basilica. By the 6th century, the two Johns had clearly merged into one person, when Justinian demolished the former building and built in its stead "the greatest and most magnificent church of early Christendom." It was 300 feet long and 130 feet wide, with six large domes covering the center aisle and

five small domes covering the narthex. In 1106, the Russian abbot Daniel visited the tomb of John and related that a holy dust, which was gathered by believers as a cure for diseases, arose from the tomb on the anniversary of John's death. When the crypt was excavated in 1928, no relics of John were found. On the capitals of the columns one can still see the monograms of Justinian and of his wife Theodora.

In the beginning of the 14th century, when Ephesus was occupied by the Turks, most of the valuable vessels of this church were pillaged. The basilica was probably destroyed in 1402 by Tamerlane, since graffiti of 1341 and 1387 inscribed by pilgrims testify to its existence at least that late.

The following day I returned to ancient Ephesus to visit the ruins of the Church of the Holy Virgin, once a 2nd century Roman grain or money exchange (Fig. 7). During the 4th century the building was converted into a church, making it probably the first cathedral dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Here, on June 22, 431, the Third Ecumenical Council brought together 159 bishops; among other acts, they bestowed upon Mary the title of "Godbearer" (Theotokos).

Today few visitors go out of their way to walk along the wide aisles of this imposing early church. The octagonal baptistry, north of the atrium, is one of the best preserved from the early Christian period. In 1930, a plaque was discovered in the narthex on which the 6th-century bishop Hypatius had confirmed this church as the site of the Council. On July 26, 1967, Pope Paul VI offered prayer in the ruins of this sanctuary.

Later in the day, I drove to the summit of Bulbul Dagh near Ephesus to visit the traditional "house of the Virgin." The tradition of the sojourn of Mary in Ephesus is based on the assumption that John — assumed to be the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 19:26-27) — took Mary to his own home, which some believe to have been at Ephesus. Already in the 4th century, tradition prevailed that Mary spent her last days in Ephesus; this follows from the observation by Epiphanius of Salamis (315-402) that the scriptures are silent about her sojourn in Asia (implying that some claimed she *was* there). Several Syrian Jacobite theologians from the 9th through the 13th centuries accepted the tradition, which, until the 19th century, local Christians of Kirkindje near Ephesus affirmed by their annual pilgrimage to her "house" — now called the house of the All-Holy — on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption. In 1821 and 1822, Catherine Emmerich, a German Augustinian nun who had never visited Ephesus, experienced visions in which she described Mary's sojourn and her home in Ephesus. These accounts, transcribed by Clemens M. Brentano, referred to "her dwelling on a hill to the left of the road from Jerusalem some three and a half hours from Ephesus . . . Mary's house was the only one built of stone . . ." Seventy years later, Eugene Poulin of the Lazarist College in Smyrna went to Bulbul Dagh to verify the visionary account. He found the ruins of an ancient house which

had been transformed into a chapel. Some of the ruins of the house can, indeed, be assigned to the early Christian era. Where once pilgrims from all over the world assembled to offer their devotion to Diana-Artemis, the cult of the goddess was replaced by the veneration of Mary the Godbearer.

Smyrna

About an hour and a half by bus separates Ephesus from Izmir, biblical Smyrna. According to the Greek *Menologion* (the document developed by the Church which contains the lives of the various saints, arranged in calendrical order to be read on their respective feast days), Apelles "who is approved in Christ" (Romans 16:10) served as the first bishop of the Smyranean church; others accord this honor to Ariston, who was succeeded by Strateas, a son of Lois (II Tim. 1:5) and an uncle of Timothy. Strateas was followed by Boucolus, who so tradition tells us, had accepted the faith from



Fig. 8. Marble fragment from an early Christian church in Smyrna, found in the Hellenistic agora area.

John. The apocryphal *Acts of John* refer to John's return to Smyrna following his exile to Patmos. His letter to the Smyrneans is the most laudatory as he is in full sympathy with this church (Rev. 2:8-11).

Despite the tragic catastrophe of 1922 at the end of the Hellenic-Turkish war, when the city was set afire and the Orthodox Christian population was either massacred or expelled, John is still remembered in modern Izmir in the 19th century Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. John, where foreign Catholics and Protestants worship every Sunday. This church, adorned with many 19th century paintings of the three great Smyranean fathers, Polycarp, Irenaeus and Ignatius, was granted by Pope Pius IX the honor of being a Minor Basilica, enriched with the same indulgences as those of St. John

Lateran in Rome. Moreover, the Anglican Church of St. John at Alsancak, built in 1898 on the site of the former chapel of the Levant Company, provides regular Sunday services.

I spent the larger part of a morning in the Hellenistic-Roman agora of ancient Smyrna searching for Christian ruins. The results were disappointing: except for a few small remnants of a Byzantine church (Fig. 8), no substantial archaeological remains testify to the church which was to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Throughout the Middle Ages, pilgrims came to the site of Polycarp's martyrdom and of his tomb. At the tomb, venerated by Christians and Muslims alike, an ecumenical service was still conducted as late as 1952; today, its location is no longer known.

Pergamum

Izmir possesses the most formidable "Otobüs Garajı" in western Turkey. Here I purchased a six lira (40 cents) ticket for Bergama, the town at the foot of the ancient Attalid capital of Pergamum. In the first century, Pergamum, with its famous temples of Zeus, Dionysus and Athena, was the principal center of the imperial cult in Asia. Here were the temples of Augustus and the goddess Roma with their cult statues to which everyone had to pay homage. Confrontation between the young Christian church and the state was inevitable. We do not know when Christianity found its way to Pergamum. According to the *Apostolic Constitutions* — the 4th century collection of legislative and liturgical traditions compiled by "Pseudo-Clement" — the "beloved Gaius," whom John the Elder addressed in his third letter (III John), was the first bishop of Pergamum. Gaius was followed by Antipas, who died a martyr.

Prior to 1922, the Christians maintained four churches in Pergamum, those of Theodore, John the Theologian, Antipas and Paraskeve, but today the only evidence of its apostolic significance is found among the scattered remains from the Byzantine period. Archaeological work began in the 19th century with Carl Humann's discovery of the high reliefs of the altar of Zeus incorporated into the Byzantine walls. Altogether, four churches were excavated. The best-known, the so-called Red Basilica, was built on the ruins of the large Serapis Temple (Fig. 9). Tradition has connected this church with John. Destroyed by the Arabs in 716-717, it was later rebuilt. Another church with two aisles was excavated by W. Dörpfeld in the courtyard of the lower agora, but no remains of this church are visible today. Still another, about forty-five feet long and sixteen feet wide, was built during the 6th century on the side of the Temple of Athena on the acropolis. A few marble fragments of this church may still be seen in place. Ruins of the fourth church were found on the terrace of the Pergamene theater, but no traces now remain.

Thyatira

In Bergama I inquired about a bus to Akhisar, the Ottoman name for biblical Thyatira. Blank stares! Eventually I learned the word "Axari," as

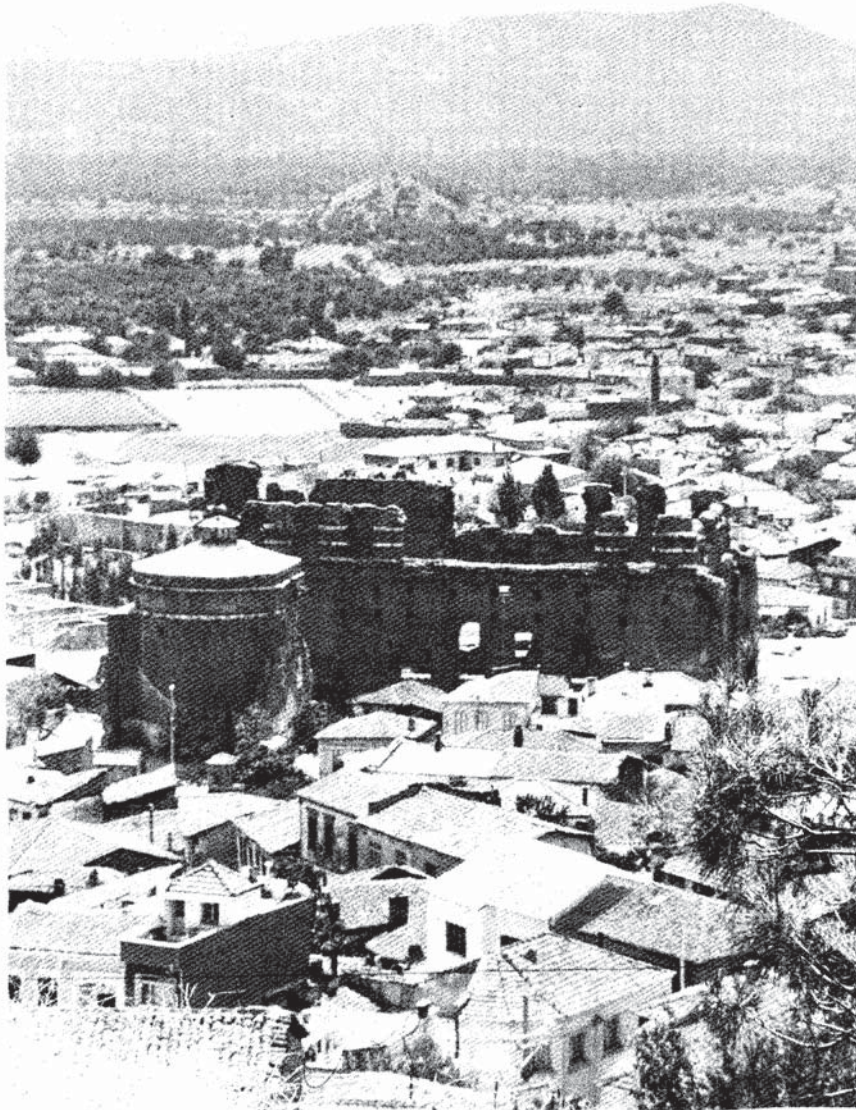


Fig. 9. The Church of St. John in Bergama, built on the site of the Temple of Serapis.

the Greeks called Akhisar. A few minutes later, the overcrowded minibus set out, crossing the Caicus River — now the Bakir — , and reaching Soma, the classical Germa with its Byzantine fortress. A bus change, again “Axari,” and into an even more crowded vehicle. I sat next to a well-dressed gentleman who turned out to be a religious dignitary of Akhisar, and he became my guide.

The first Thyatiran Christian, though she was a resident of Philippi in Macedonia, "was a woman named Lydia . . . a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God" (Acts 16:14). Lydia was not the only representative of her trade in Philippi; in 1872, Professor Mertzides found there a text on a fragment of white marble: "The city honors from among the purple-dyers an outstanding citizen, Antiochus, son of Lykus, a native of Thyatira, as a benefactor." About the foundation of the church at Thyatira we know almost nothing. We must assume that by the second half of the first century a Christian community existed, for the threat of internal dissension and schism mentioned in John's letter (Rev. 2:20-23) presupposes some formal organization and some history.

Today Akhisar is a thriving Turkish town of 48,000 inhabitants. Only a few traces of its vanished Christian community can be seen. The 19th century Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas has been made into a movie theater. In the inner court of the Grand Mosque, just to the east of the building, I saw the foundations of a large apse of an early Byzantine church; my guide assured me it was the Church of St. Basil the Great. After removing my shoes, I stepped into the mosque and noticed several Byzantine alabaster columns which may belong to the 10th century. According to another local tradition, the Sheikh Issa Mosque was built on the site of a Church of St. John. In the outer court of this mosque are two Corinthian capitals which may have belonged to the church.

Before the First World War, remains of churches, primarily consisting of slabs of marble with cross designs, were stored in the courtyard of the cathedral. Today, a few marble fragments from early Byzantine churches of Thyatira are exhibited in the archaeological museum in Manisa (Fig. 10). Recent excavations at Tepe Mezari in the center of Akhisar, which have unearthed a section of 2nd century A.D. Roman road and a part of a stoa, as well as a 6th century administrative(?) building, may throw additional light on the early Christian heritage of the city.

There has been no Christian community in Akhisar since 1922. The abandoned apostolic sees in Asia Minor are occasionally bestowed as titular sees upon the members of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, it is the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Great Britain who carries the title of Metropolitan of Thyatira.

Sardis

Since there were no direct buses from Akhisar to the ruins of Sardis, I took the opportunity to stop at Manisa, ancient Magnesia-ad-Sipylum, to visit the exceptionally fine archaeological and ethnological collections. The modern village of Sartmustafa, a sad survival of the former capital of the Lydian kingdom, is situated on the main highway from Manisa to Ankara.

The church in Sardis must have been established in the middle of the first century or toward the latter part of that century. According to the

Menologion, Clement, one of the Seventy and a disciple of Paul (Philippians 4:3), was the first bishop of Sardis. In many ways, the story of the young fellowship proved to be parallel to the life of the city; as Sardis under Croesus had flourished and then decayed, so the church there flourished and then decayed. John admonishes the Sardian Christians that they are alive and yet dead. In this respect, Sardis was the opposite of Smyrna, which was dead and yet thrived!



Fig. 10. Fragment of an altar-screen of a Byzantine church at Thyatira, now in the Manisa Archaeological Museum.

Although some of Sardis' ruins had been studied in the 19th century, no systematic investigation had been undertaken before the arrival of the Princeton University expedition in 1910. In 1912 excavations near the north-eastern corner of the Temple of Artemis brought to light a small church, "Church M," built when the ground level around the temple had risen some five feet above the temple platform. The church is nearly square with a narrow projecting apse. A hoard of coins discovered just outside the north doorway indicates that the church was in use in the beginning of the 5th century.

Immediately behind the apse is a second apse whose width almost equals that of the church. A primitive altar, found in place, is one of the earliest Christian altars known; it stands in the center of the first apse.

About 300 feet south of the village of Sartmustafa, near the road leading to the Temple of Artemis, George Hanfmann and the Harvard-Cornell-ASOR expedition have recently discovered a 4th century three-aisled basilica, designated "Church E." This church has a second apse built east of the principal one. Returning to the Manisa-Ankara highway, some 700 feet east of Sartmustafa, I saw the restored entrance hall and adjacent buildings of the famous Sardis gymnasium, and almost next to it the Sardis synagogue with its enormous rectangular hall oriented east-west and ending in a broad apse.

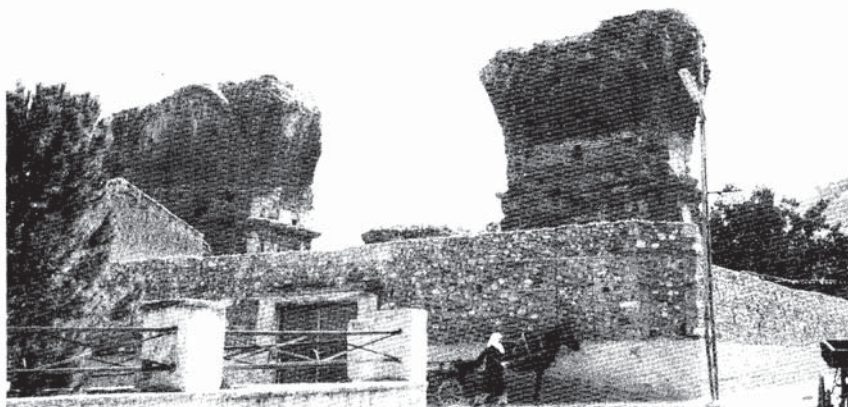


Fig. 11. Ruins of the Church of St. John in Philadelphia.

(Readers of the *BA* should consult D.G. Mitten's article about Sardis in volume 29 [1966], pp. 38-68.) Built in the 2nd century, the synagogue was destroyed by the Persian raid under Chosroes II in 615. I wondered whether this splendid synagogue was built on the site of an older one in which the early Christians of Sardis might have met.

Philadelphia

From Sartmustafa, I hitch-hiked to Salihli and on to Alashehir, the Philadelphia of Attalus II of Pergamum, situated at the foot of the Tmolous mountains. Again, we know almost nothing about the beginnings of the Christian church in Philadelphia. One tradition maintains that Paul appointed Lucius his kinsman (Romans 16:21) as bishop of Philadelphia, but, according to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the city's first bishop was a man named Demetrius, who had been appointed by John. Two churches are

singled out by John for their faithfulness, Smyrna and Philadelphia. Both were poor and weak, both had suffered tribulation, and yet both were full of life and vigor.

Walking through the narrow lanes of Alashehir I was reminded that this city was the last Byzantine outpost in Asia Minor, before it fell to Bayazid in 1390. In the middle of the 14th century the metropolitan of Philadelphia could still sign the synodal decrees with the impressive title "Metropolitan of Philadelphia, Hypertimus and Exarch of all Lydia and Universal Judge of the Romans."

Prior to the events of 1922, the Greek community in Alashehir maintained no fewer than five churches. Today there are no Christians there, although the Turkish population is aware of the biblical and historical role of the city. Almost in the center of the city are the ruins of the Christian basilica, built of red brick. Here and there one can identify the remains of wall-paintings, perhaps of the 11th century, which once adorned the whole sanctuary. The citizens refer to these ruins, opposite the Bayazid I Mosque, as the Church of St. John (Fig. 11).

Laodicea

Aware that there is no public transportation connecting Alashehir with Laodicea, the last of John's seven churches, I took a bus as far as Sarigol and was fortunate enough to get a ride across the high mountain range of Boz Dagh to Saraykoy and on to Denizli. From Denizli I took the bus to Pamukkale ("Cotton Tower"), the site of ancient Hierapolis with its tepid waters, which offers a magnificent view over the Lykus valley with its ruins of Laodicea. As I swam in the crystal clear, lukewarm waters of the Hierapolis springs, I thought of John's characterization of the church at Laodicea as lukewarm, neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:15-16).

The church in Laodicea was founded by Epaphras of nearby Colossae, who shared the care of the young community with Nympha, in whose house the congregation assembled (Col. 4:12-13, 15). Goodspeed suggested that Paul addressed Philemon to the church in Laodicea; note the appearance of Archippus in Philemon, verse 2, perhaps the same Archippus whom Paul advised "see that you fulfill the ministry which you have received in the Lord" (Col. 4:17). Presumably, he was no longer head of the community at Laodicea when John addressed his letter to this church. According to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Archippus was succeeded by a certain Nymphas as bishop of Laodicea.

The present site of Laodicea was inhabited until the latter part of the 12th century, when the citizens relocated at modern Denizli. The ancient site was repeatedly visited from the 17th century onwards. When Thomas Smith (1671) passed through the ruins, he described it as "inhabited by wolves, jackals and foxes." A century later, Richard Chandler (1764) was almost killed by robbers between Denizli and the ruins of Laodicea. Travelers in the

19th century report "no wretched outcast dwells in the midst of it, it has long been abandoned to the owl and the fox;" indeed, "nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea."

The ruins lie on a flat-topped hill between the villages of Eskihisar and Goncale. Some traces of the old city wall remain. At the south end of the plateau is the amphitheater or stadium, dedicated by a wealthy citizen to the emperor Vespasian. The large building east of the stadium is a gymnasium dedicated to Hadrian. In the center of the city was a monumental fountain, built in the 3rd century during the reign of Caracalla. Sites have been proposed for the locations of two early churches, one near the so-called Syrian Gate, the other north of the fountain. During the 1961-63 excavations of the fountain by archaeologists of Laval University, Canada, several marble slabs with cross designs, so characteristic of the Byzantine era, were found.

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The traveler to Patmos and to the cities of the seven churches of Revelation 2-3 can catch many a glimpse of early Christianity enshrined in the ruins and fragments, but enshrined also in the persistent traditions. Several impressions stand out. For one thing, there is much yet to be found out archaeologically which will illumine the early church in Asia Minor. Under prevailing conditions, some traditions are fading, even about old locations of traditional sites. Even at Ephesus and Sardis, the most thoroughly explored and excavated of the sites, only a fraction of what can be learned has come to light. For another thing, tradition about John of the Revelation has become quite mixed with tradition about John of the Fourth Gospel; but the mixture is not complete, if we take into account Eusebius' report about Papias, which I noted in the section on Seljuk near Ephesus. Finally, I can only say that to this traveler, anyway, exploration of the sites and their settings sharpens the language of Revelation, as we seek to envision these struggling congregations standing amidst alien culture and alien ways of life, and to make John's letters relevant to our own day.

Suggestions for Further Reading

William Barklay, *Letters to the Seven Churches* (1957), S.W.H. Bird, *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor* (1956), E. le Camus, *Voyage aux Sept Eglises de l'Apocalypse* (1896), Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor or an Account of a Tour Made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti* (1775), Vernon P. Flynn, *The Seven Churches Today* (1963), John Fuller, *A Narrative of a Tour through Some Parts of the Turkish Empire* (1830), A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (1937), P. Lucas, *Voyage Fait par l'Ordre du Roi* (1714), Lysimachos Oeconomos, *The Tragedy of the Christian Near East* (1923), Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East* (1743-45), Earl of Sandwich, *A Voyage Performed by the Late Earl of Sandwich in the Years 1738 and 1739* (1799), Gotthilf von Schubert, *Reise in das Morgenland in den Jahren 1836 und 1837* (1840), M. Tournefort, *A Voyage into the Levant* (1718), John Turner, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant* (1820), J. Aegidius Van Egmont and John Heyman, *Travels through Part of Europe, Asia Minor, Etc.* (1759).