

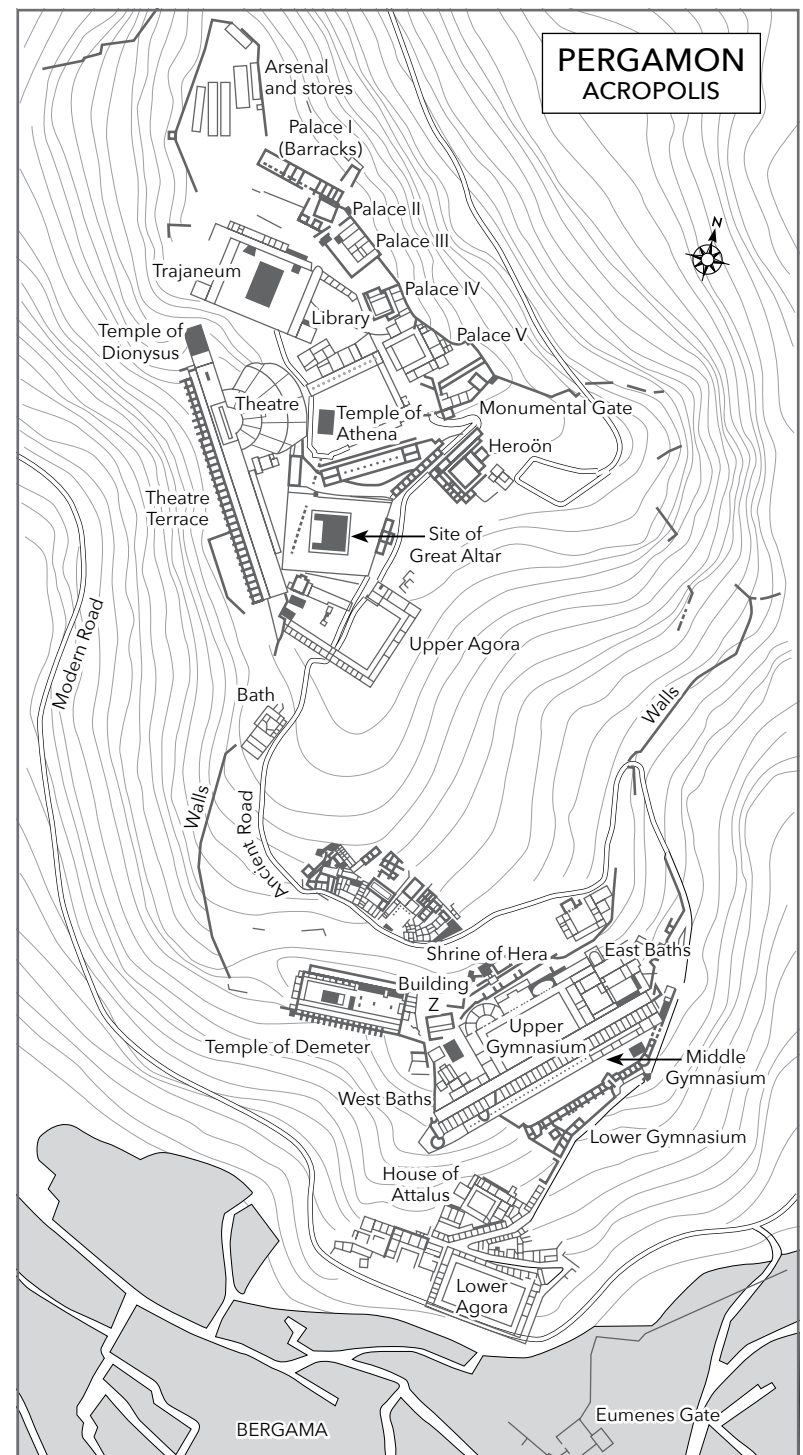
The Library

Access to the celebrated Pergamon Library was through the second floor of the north stoa—or so it was thought until recently, when new research cast serious doubts on the identification. There is no doubt that there was a substantial library in Pergamon, set up by Eumenes II or earlier by Attalus I. Ancient sources, Strabo (13,1,54) for example, enthused about it and maintained that with its 17,000 books and scrolls it rivalled Alexandria's. That was the basis for the identification by early excavators, though we have no knowledge of the physical appearance of the Alexandria Library. The Pergamene complex has four rooms with mosaic floors, all cut into the cliff. The one to the north is the largest and best preserved. It has been suggested that it could equally have been a ceremonial or banqueting hall. The three-metre statue of Athena that used to be on the podium facing the entrance would equally fit in that context. As for the statue bases of ancient writers here, they are not in their primary location. They could have come from anywhere. At present it is thought that the library might have been in the royal district, the *Basileia*, at the top of the acropolis. The ultimate fate of the precious books was rather ignominious. After being transported to Alexandria in Egypt, a gift of Anthony to Cleopatra, they were, according to the 12th-century writer Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi, fed to the furnaces of the city baths, on the order of the victorious Caliph Omar in the 7th century, on the grounds that books were incompatible with Islam as the whole truth was already encapsulated in the Qur'an.

The palaces (Basileia), Trajaneum and Arsenal

The *Basileia*, the location of various **rulers' palaces**, most of them peristyle houses with luxurious fittings of marble, painted plaster and mosaic (now under restoration), is further uphill. To the west the **Trajaneum**, a very ambitious project dedicated to the cult of Zeus and of the Roman emperors, stood on the highest point of the rock on a terrace measuring 60m by 70m, obliterating Hellenistic housing and supported by massive substructures covered with barrel vaults. The temple, a peripteros of six by nine, like the Temple of Athena but larger and on a marble podium, was in the Corinthian order with massive columns and was flanked by two colonnaded halls. In early Byzantine times the prevailing scarcity of metals prompted the removal of the metal clamps holding the foundation together, damaging the structure which was also mined for building material for the defensive walls and for marble to feed the kilns. This is a volcanic area and is short of limestone, indispensable for making mortar. Today a number of columns and architraves have been re-erected and the sight is quite impressive.

The area beyond, at the very top end of the acropolis, was never residential. Here the Hellenistic rulers had an **arsenal**, with stores of food and military supplies. Large ventilated structures for storing grain have been identified and, on the military side, the 3rd-century BC munitions depot containing 8,940 stone balls, some weighing over 500kg, to be used in a siege engine, shows that the garrison was well prepared. Water provisions, i.e. the cisterns containing enough water to withstand one year's siege at the time of Philetærus, were equally impressive. Later, water supply became an issue and was solved by proving the city with aqueducts tapping the water from



EPHESUS

Because of the distances, the heat and the crowds, Ephesus (*map B, 3*) and surrounding sites are not for the faint-hearted. Ephesus, a UNESCO World Heritage site, conveniently located within reasonable distance of a seaside holiday, attracts tourists in vast numbers. Do join them, but read up on the site before you go. A little advance preparation will help you to get the most out of your visit.

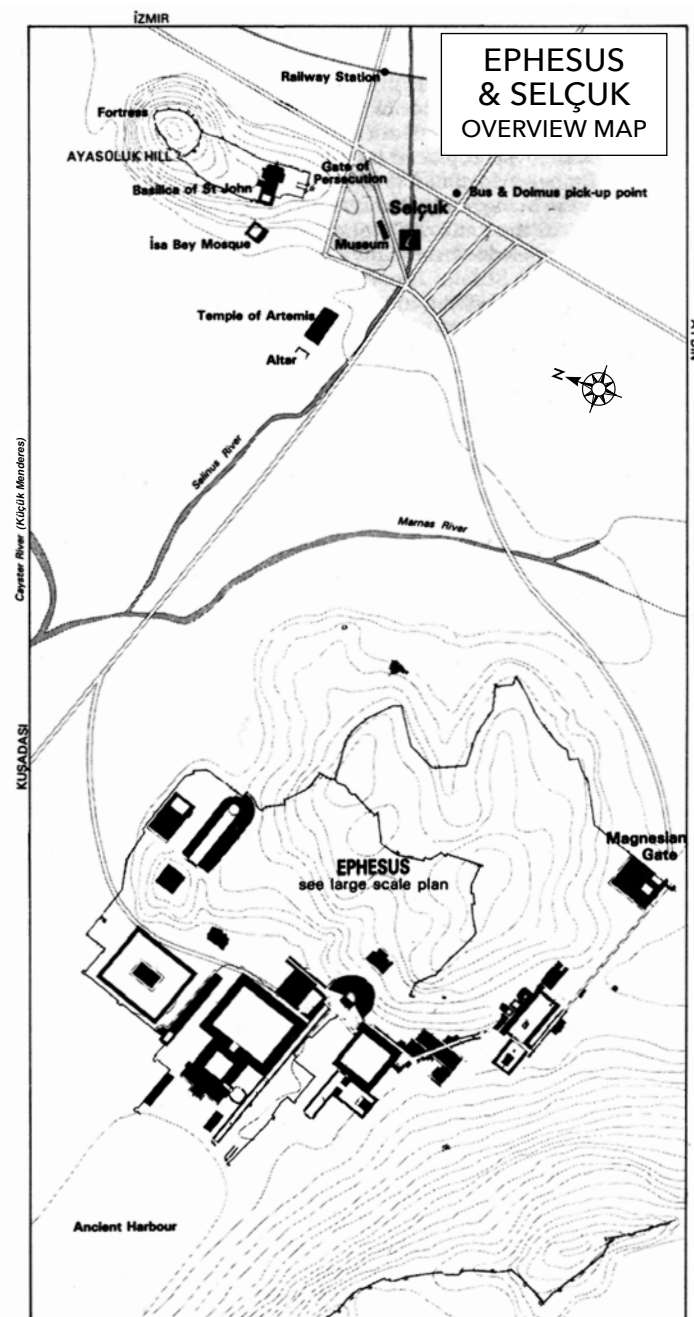
UNDERSTANDING EPHESUS

Understanding Ephesus is particularly challenging because of its environmental development. Nothing has stood still here in the last ten thousand or so years. This is a land of continuous change and it is fitting that one of the city's main philosophers, Heraclitus, made relentless change the basis of his theories ('*Panta rhei*', as he famously said; Everything is in flux). Just as you cannot dip your foot twice into the same river, so you cannot look at the landscape here and assume that it is set in stone and is immutable. Change has been ongoing here from the beginning of time, accelerating with man-made interventions, shaping human development, favouring it, hindering it until it came all crashing down. Ephesus today is a dead city, peopled at night with the ghosts of over 2,500 years of history and an indefinite, little known, period of prehistory.

Of late, archaeologists, geographers, geologists and geomorphologists have joined forces to understand how land and sea have interacted over the millennia, how rivers have contributed to the natural accretion of land, how land has been reclaimed by human action. The study of past environments is all-important in explaining why a monument or a feature is where it is, why settlement developed the way it did and why settlement eventually collapsed. This chapter deals first with the site as a whole from an environmental point of view; it is then followed by sections covering the individual sites (the Artemision, Ephesus, Ayasoluk, Selçuk and Belevi), their history and archaeology and what there is to see.

ENVIRONMENT AND PREHISTORY OF THE SITE

It is clear to anyone arriving by air or by road that Ephesus is not on the sea. Indeed, from the town, the sea is some 8km away. Presently the area is dominated by one river, the Küçük Menderes ('Little Meander'), the ancient Cayster, coming in from the northeast and meandering in its wide graben, edged on the south side by a rugged and rocky horst. The reason why you cannot follow the river all the way to the sea is the drainage and irrigation canal (the Yeni Menderes, 'New Meander') built in the last century. It takes the water



End your visit at the newly refurbished **Museum**, with well-labelled artefacts from Miletus and the surrounding region and some fine reconstruction drawings. Then look for the imposing ruin of the **Sacred Gate**, some 400m from the museum exit going south. It marked the point where the processional way to Didyma, starting further north, exited the town and headed south. The structure, originally dated to the 5th century BC, was restored in the early 2nd century AD.

DIDYMA

Linked with Miletus for at least part of its history, the site of Didyma (*map B, 5; open 8–7, shorter hours in winter; charge*), with the grandiose Temple of Apollo housing an oracle well-known in antiquity, lies a few kilometres to the south. Its memory was never lost; in 1446 Ciriaco de' Pizziccolli, better known as Cyriacus of Ancona, saw the temple still standing; when Richard Chandler visited in 1764, a quake had felled all but three columns. The Società dei Dilettanti began some excavations which were later continued by the Germans. At that point, the east end of the cella had been filled with rubble and a windmill was standing on it, at a higher level than the original roof.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF DIDYMA

Didyma is not a Greek name, so one must assume a local development to start with, later taken over by Apollo, in one of his many manifestations. Cult centres developing around springs are quite common; more so in this area, which is normally dry, brown and barren. Legend has it that the water came all the way from Mount Mycale, to the north beyond the delta, having travelled below the sea bed. The scientific explanation is more prosaic. Here the limestone to the north meets less permeable marl and the water comes to the surface. Over the centuries the spring proved troublesome, at times drying up, which was interpreted as a very bad omen, although the cleaning of the pipes proved sufficient to placate the divinity. As there is currently no water anywhere in the temple cella, we must assume that the spring has again ceased to function and that no one has cleaned the pipes; alternatively, it has been dislocated by one of the frequent earthquakes.

The earliest remains predate the first temple, which is Archaic in date. There is Mycenaean pottery but no architecture to go with it. Later, around the 8th century BC, a mud-brick structure measuring 10m by 9m on a rocky ridge, marking out the spring, harks back to practices known from distant Mesopotamia and Anatolia, suggesting a local Carian cult. The simple structure was surrounded in the late 7th century BC by a colonnaded portico.

In the second half of the 6th century BC, a proper temple (in the sense that the Greeks would have recognised) took the place of the mud-brick structure.

This denotes the arrival of a cult of Apollo, claiming the place for the worship of Apollo Didymeion. With it came the myth of Branchos, a youth beloved of Apollo and the ancestor of the Branchidae, a Milesian clan who administered the temple, which by now was an oracular site, until the Persians burnt it down in 493 BC. From the scant remains, archaeologists have reconstructed an 85m by 38m Archaic temple, a Ionic dipteros on a platform fronted by a deep pronaos. It was built in tufa with marble columns and capitals. In appearance, some of the columns are distinctly reminiscent of the Artemision in Ephesus, suggesting that Croesus contributed to their building. The cella was unroofed; it is possible the sky played a role in the process of divination. The temple had a small naiskos at the west end, where the bronze image of Apollo was kept. The victorious Persians removed it to Ekbatana, together with other portable temple artefacts such as the giant metal knuckle bone weighing 93kg, one of a pair, an ex-voto from Aristolochos and Thrason. The bronze of Apollo was later returned by the Seleucids, the knuckle bone was found in Susa in 1901 and is now in the Louvre. As for the Branchidae priests who had surrendered to the invader, they followed the Persians back home, fearful of the reaction of the Milesians, and were resettled in Sogdiana somewhere southeast of the Aral Sea. For over a century the spring dried up and the oracular function with it.

With the arrival of Alexander the Great the oracle revived (and predicted his victory at the Battle of Gaugamela). With the Persians on their knees and King Darius disposed of, Alexander hunted down the descendants of the Branchidae and exterminated them, a deed that pleased the Milesians greatly. The oracle was now restored to life and a new temple went up, the one we see today. It was built on a vast scale under the patronage of the Seleucids. Its administration was in the hand of prominent Milesian families (with occasionally hereditary posts). The chief priest (prophet) was in charge of organisation, of planning extravagant festivities and of interpreting the inchoate babbling of the prophetess in her trance. He then passed on the text to be put into verse and handed over to the postulant. We must assume that the prophet had a house close by, since inscribed elements of it were later used to build a church.

During the Roman era, Galatians and pirates proved worrisome but, on the whole, being part of the Roman province of Asia was good for Didyma, until the Goths struck in the mid-3rd century. The temple was fortified with a heavy wall and repaired: the holy water miraculously reappeared; a grateful inscription was set up in the pronaos. When Julian the Apostate visited on his way to fight the Persians, he found Christian chapels nearby to vent his anger on. The oracle wrongly predicted victory in his eastern enterprise, from which he never came back. A few years later, Emperor Theodosius banned any form of divination and with that the days of the Didymaion came to an end.

A 5th-century basilica, built with the spolia of the house of the prophet, went up inside the temple's inner court. It incorporated the Hellenistic naiskos in its west section but was destroyed in the next earthquake. A new, smaller church

