



¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,
‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the
Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are
neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then,
because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit
you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become
wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are
wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— ¹⁸ I counsel you to
buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;
and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of
your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye
salve, that you may see.

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and
repent.

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opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with
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throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His
throne.

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the
churches.” ’ ”

(Revelation 3:14-22)

LAODICEA

Secular Proof of Biblical Accuracy?

- ⦿ Does secular evidence support or reject a portion of the Biblical account in the book of Revelation 3:14-22?
- ⦿ Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 quote seven letters dictated by Jesus to churches in the Roman Province of Asia (modern Turkey).
- ⦿ The seventh letter is addressed to the "angel of the church of the Laodiceans" in 1st Century AD Laodicea. (Revelation 3:14-22)

3

Over the next hour we'll examine this passage in light of what science tells us today of ancient Laodicea to determine whether secular evidence supports or rejects this Biblical account from the book of Revelation.

- Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 quote seven letters to churches in the Roman Province of Asia.
- The seventh is addressed to the "angel of the church of the Laodiceans" in 1st Century AD Laodicea.

Looking **back** to the past

- “Laodicea was one of the richest cities in Asia.” (Ramsay 39)
- It became part of the kingdom of Pergamon and came under Rome rule in 133 BC. (Fant 232)
- Laodicea was mentioned by Cicero, Eusebius, Josephus, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Polybius, Stephanus, Strabo, Suetonius, Tacitus, and other ancient writers. (Ramsay 37)



Fig. 2.
Cup from Laodicea
c 125-75 BC
(Walters)

Looking **back** to the past

- “Laodicea (Law-od-ik-e-a in Greek) was one of the richest cities in Asia.”
- It became part of the kingdom of Pergamon and came under Rome rule in 133 BC.
- Many ancient writers mentioned this rich and powerful city.

- Laodicea was finally destroyed and abandoned after a devastating earthquake in the reign of Byzantine Emperor Flavius Phocas Augustus (r. AD 602-610). (Wilson 247)

Fig. 3. "Laodicea lies largely unexcavated, a frequent victim of earthquakes." (McRay 246)



Laodicea was finally destroyed and abandoned after a devastating earthquake in the reign of Byzantine Emperor Flavius Phocas Augustus (r. AD 602-610).

- ◉ Evidence confirms existence at Laodicea from 5,500 BC until an earthquake during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Flavius Phocas Augustus (r. 602-610 AD). (Wilson 247)
- ◉ Exploratory excavations in 1961-63 and 1992 and large-scale excavations by Pamukkale University since 2003 have revealed more than 3,050 artifacts, coins and inscriptions. (Richardson)



- Evidence confirms human habitation at Laodicea from at least 5,500 BC until an earthquake during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Flavius Phocas Augustus (r. 602-610 AD). Exploratory excavations in 1961-63 and 1992 and large-scale excavations by Pamukkale University since 2003 have revealed thousands of artifacts, coins and inscriptions.

Looking ahead to the future

- Serious excavation and reconstruction of Laodicea began in 2003. (HDN05)
- The site is now a hive of activity with university teams. (HDN09)
- Excavation was to be completed by 2015. (HDN11)
It is now expected to be ongoing.
- Leaders expect Laodicea to become “another Ephesus” attracting 2 million visitors a year. (HDN01)



Looking ahead to the future

- Serious excavation and reconstruction of Laodicea only began in 2003.
- The site is now a hive of activity.
- Excavation was scheduled to be completed by 2015. Due to its great success and the wealth of the finds, current plans are to continue without an end date.
- Civic leaders expect Laodicea to become “another Ephesus” attracting 2 million visitors a year.

Key Questions To Answer

- What can be gleaned about biblical accuracy from what is now known of the city?
- How well does the biblical account of Laodicea stack up to modern knowledge from ancient documents, modern scholarship, archaeological evidence, and personal observations?
- How accurate are the facts, metaphors, and prophecy mentioned in the Laodicean letter?



8

KEY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

[CLICK] What can be gleaned about biblical accuracy from what is now known of the city?

[CLICK] How well does the biblical account stack up to modern knowledge from ancient documents, modern scholarship, archaeological evidence, and personal observation?

[CLICK] How accurate are the facts, metaphors, and prophecy mentioned in the Laodicean letter?

To answer these three key questions, eighteen specific hypotheses will be tested.

Points to prove (hypotheses)

1. Laodicea in the Lycus Valley was an affluent city in the 1st Century AD.
2. Laodicea had a significant Jewish population.
3. Laodicea became a major Christian center.
4. Revelation 3:14-22 is consistent with historical and archaeological evidence (covered in Points 5-18).

9

The first three hypotheses are historical in nature. Does the evidence prove that:

[CLICK] Laodicea in the Lycus Valley was an affluent city in the 1st Century AD.

[CLICK] Laodicea had a significant Jewish population.

[CLICK] Laodicea became a major Christian center.

[CLICK] The remaining hypotheses use historical and archaeological evidence to assess ten specific spiritual references to determine if the content of Revelation 3:14-22 is consistent with the historical and archaeological evidence.

Points to prove (cont.)

	<u>Verse</u>
5. And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans	⦿ 3:14a
6. the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;	⦿ 3:14b
7. You are neither cold nor hot	⦿ 3:15-16
8. “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”	⦿ 3:17a
9. and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor,	⦿ 3:17b

10

[CLICK] ¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

[CLICK] ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

[CLICK] ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

[CLICK] ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’

[CLICK] —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor,

Points to prove (cont.)

	<u>Verse</u>
10. and blind,	⦿ 3:17c
11. and naked -	⦿ 3:17d
12. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;	⦿ 3:18a
13. and white garments, that you may be clothed, ...	⦿ 3:18b
14. and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.	⦿ 3:18c

11

[CLICK] And blind,

[CLICK] and naked—

[CLICK] ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;

[CLICK] and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

[CLICK] and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Points to prove (cont.)

Verse

15. Therefore be zealous and repent. ⦿ 3:19b

16. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.... ⦿ 3:19b

Fig. 4. Doorway
along East Street,
Laodicea. (Sarlin)



17. To him who overcomes ⦿ 3:21a

18. He who has an ear, let him hear... ⦿ 3:22a

12

[CLICK] ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

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[CLICK] ²²“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Personal Observations

- ⦿ The presenter visited biblical sites in Greece and Turkey in September and October 2012.
- ⦿ Photographs, maps and artwork are the work of the presenter (Sarlin) unless otherwise noted.

Fig. 5. Guide entering Laodicea through the East Byzantine Gate onto the 900 meter long Syria Street.



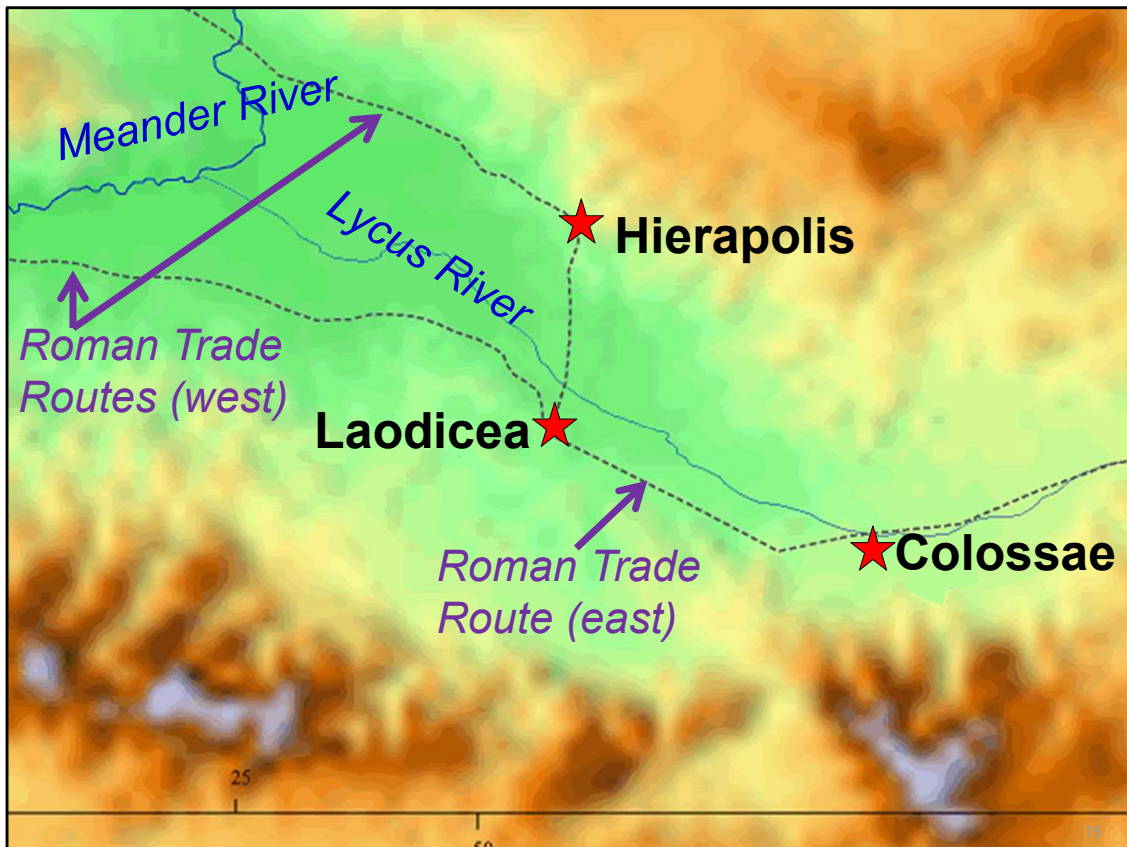
PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

[CLICK] The presenter visited biblical sites in Greece and Turkey in September and October of 2012.

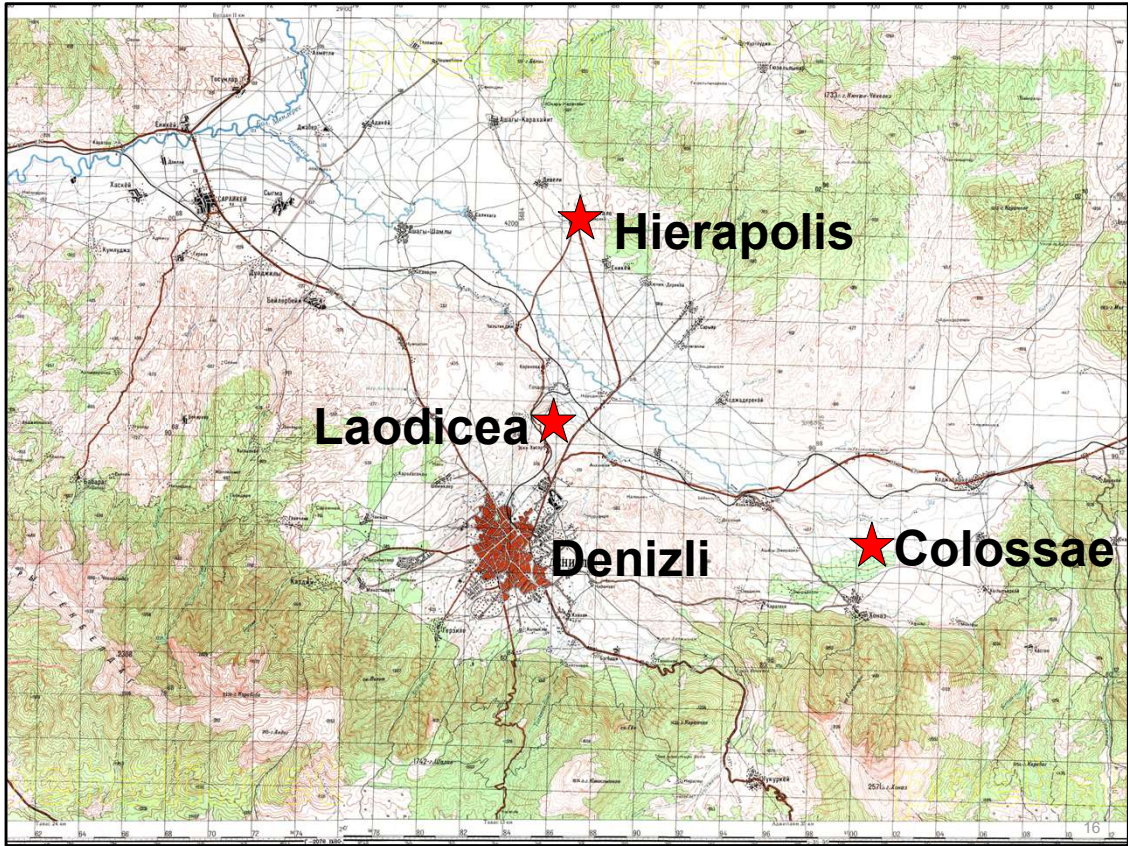
[CLICK] Photographs, maps and artwork are the work of the presenter except as noted.



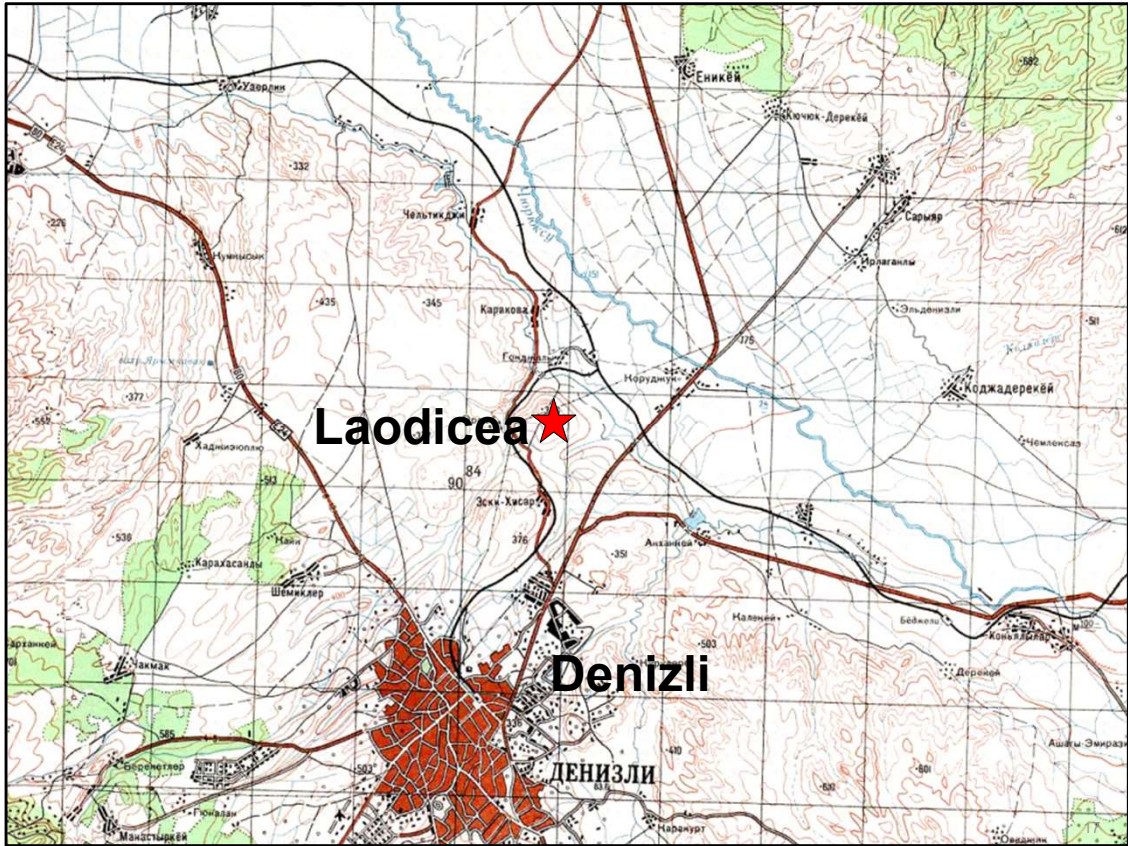
Laodicea was a city in the Roman province of Asia, now western Turkey



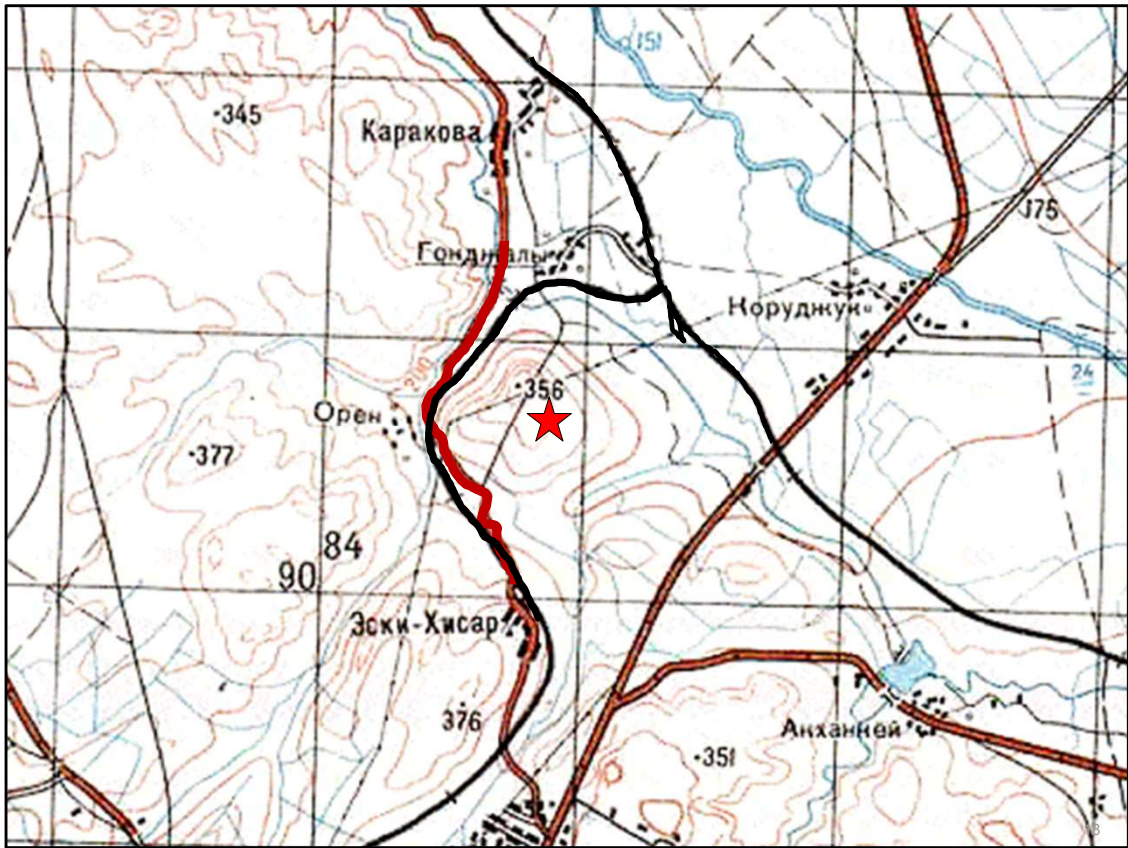
It lay in the Lycus River Valley along the main Roman east-west commercial trade route between Europe and the Far East...



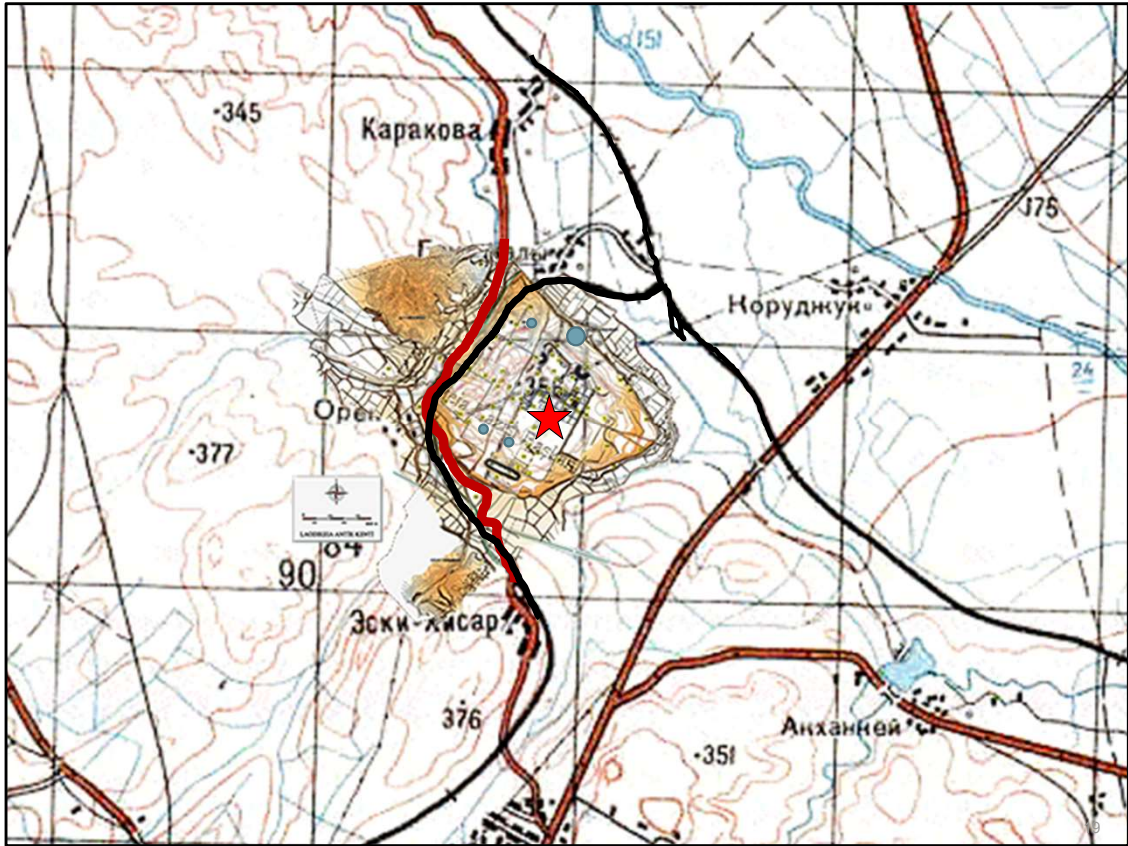
... near the present Turkish city of Denizli as shown on this detailed map.



We now zoom in . . .



... to Hill 356 ...



. . . where the ruins of the city now lay.

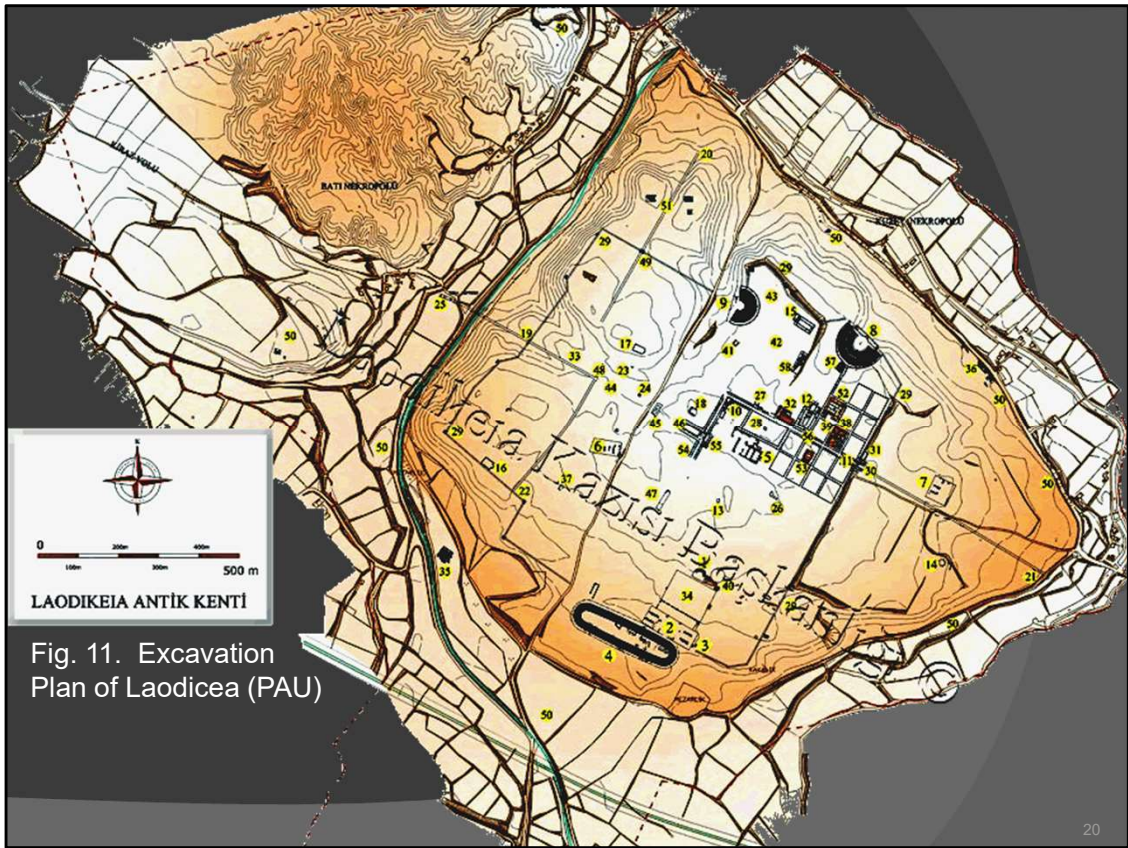


Fig. 11. Excavation Plan of Laodicea (PAU)

At its height in the second and third centuries A.D., the major settlement covered some five square kilometers, over 1,250 acres. Its wealth derived from its location controlling a major trade route between the Aegean Sea and upland Anatolia, the production and export of fine quality wool, and the presence nearby of an important shrine to the moon god Men and its associated healing center, which drew in many pilgrims.

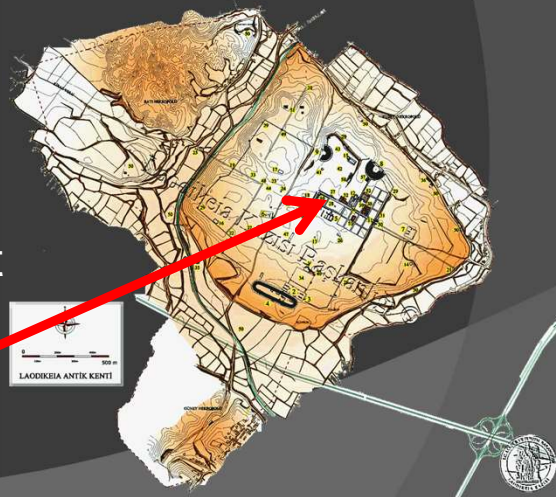


This photograph shows the how Laodicea looked in 2012 at the time I visited it. Significant work has been done in the ten years since.

Ancient Laodicea

- The Hippodamian grid plan that Laodicea was built upon was designed for a city of 50,000 people. (Aristotle)

Land is divided into three zones (sacred, public and private), with broad, straight streets at right angles around a central park or agora.



Ancient Laodicea was built on a Hippodamian grid plan designed for a city of 50,000 people.

Land was divided into three zones (sacred, public and private), with broad, straight streets at right angles around a central park or agora.



The result was a planned and well-organized self-contained and self-sufficient city with all the amenities of Roman civilization at its height. By the 1st century BC this prosperous community was one of the most important and flourishing commercial cities of Asia Minor. Rome designated it a free city and appointed it the chief city of a Roman conventus, which comprised twenty-four cities besides itself; so it was the capital of the southern district of Phrygia, complete with a district court of justice where Cicero himself had orated and practiced law. In fact, Laodicea had but one minor problem.

One “Minor” Problem

- Located for defensive (and hygienic) purposes on a small hill back from the River Lycus, Laodicea lacked an internal supply of fresh water.
 - a. Hellenistic and Roman engineers had access to water from two rivers and two springs.
 - b. All had a high mineral content although, ancient geographer Strabo noted, “The water is drinkable.”
 - c. The main source of water was the Baspinar Spring 6 miles south in the current city of Denizli.
 - d. Water hardness caused rapid calcium build-up. The water was so hard that Strabo said that it “changed to stone.” (Strabo 187)

24

Located for defensive (and hygienic) purposes on a small hill back from the River Lycus, Laodicea lacked an internal supply of fresh water.

- Located on the long spur of a hill between the narrow valleys of the small rivers Asopus to the west and Caprus [to the east](#), which discharge their waters into the Lycus, Hellenistic and Roman engineers had access to water from the two rivers and two nearby springs.
- All had a high mineral content although, as ancient geographer Strabo noted, “The water is drinkable.”
- Ultimately, the main source of water was the Baspinar Spring 6 miles south in the current city of Denizli.
- Water hardness caused rapid calcium build-up. The water was so hard that Strabo said that it “changed to stone.”



A sophisticated network of aqueducts, channels, pipes, reservoirs, and fountains supplied the city's needs. Water was an essential resource that enabled the city to thrive, and Laodicea had a very strict "water law" that provided heavy penalties against those who polluted the water, damaged the water channels or reopened the sealed water pipes. This marble block, unearthed in 2015, is engraved with strict rules that governed the city water system in 114 AD.

A portion of the water rules inscribed in marble by Governor Aulus Vicirius Matrialis in 114 AD reads:

THOSE WHO DIVIDE THE WATER FOR HIS PERSONAL USE SHOULD PAY 5,000 DENARIUS TO THE EMPIRE TREASURY. IT IS FORBIDDEN TO USE THE CITY WATER FOR FREE OR GRANT IT TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. THOSE WHO BUY THE WATER CANNOT VIOLATE THE VESPASIAN EDICT. THOSE WHO DAMAGE WATER PIPES SHOULD PAY 5,000 DENARIUS. PROTECTIVE ROOFS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE WATER DEPOTS AND WATER PIPES IN THE CITY. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE WILL APPOINT TWO CITIZENS AS CURATORS EVERY YEAR TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE WATER RESOURCE. NOBODY WHO HAS FARMS CLOSE TO THE WATER CHANNELS CAN USE THIS WATER FOR AGRICULTURE.

Fines for pollution, damaging water channels or breaking open sealed water pipes were 12,500 denarius, about AUD 32,000.

A portion of the water rules inscribed in marble by Governor Aulus Vicirius Matrialis reads:

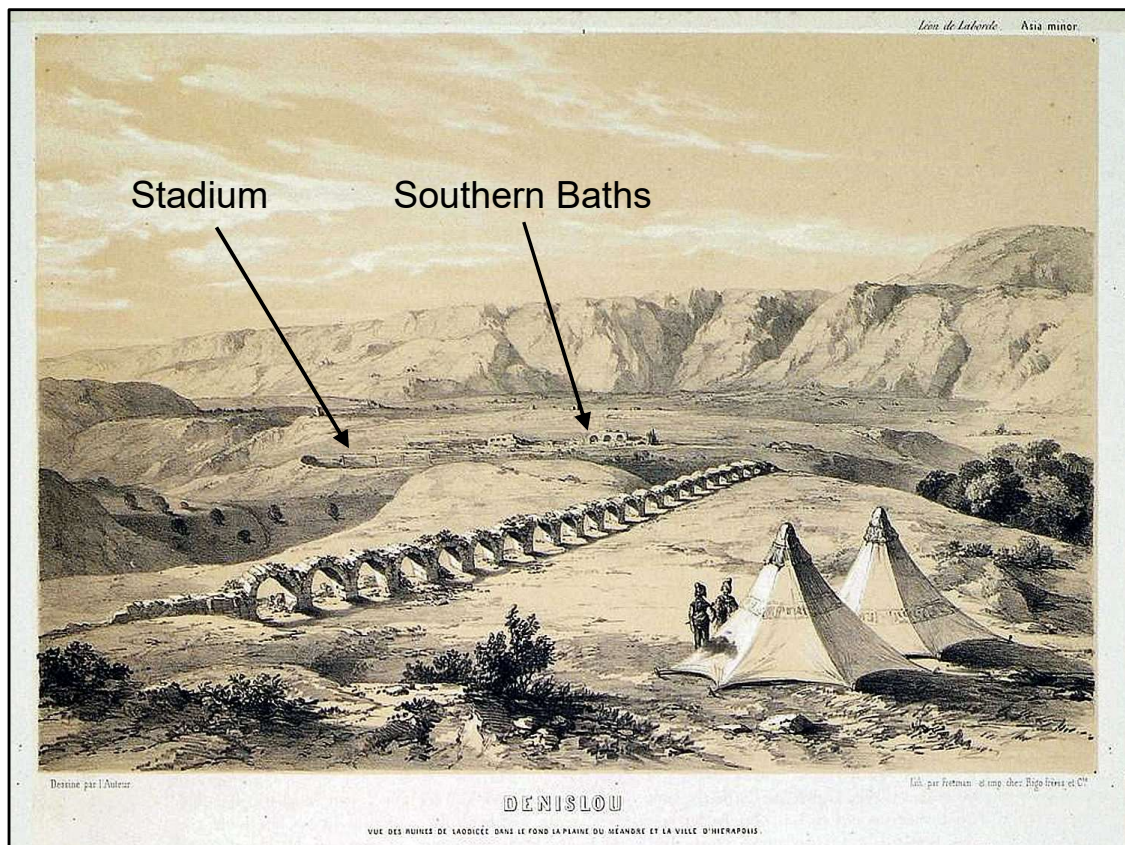
Fines for pollution, damaging water channels or breaking open sealed water pipes were 12,500 denarius, about A\$ 32,000.

Plumbing

- The Romans made pipes of stone bored to the diameter required for gravity flow, using concrete to connect and seal the pipes.
- Engineers invented access hatches to allow pipe cleaning. (McRay 248)
- Clay piping was also made locally.

Fig. 14 Calcium (Sarlin); Fig. 15 Aqueduct (Rasmussen); Fig. 16 Domestic pipe (Sarlin)

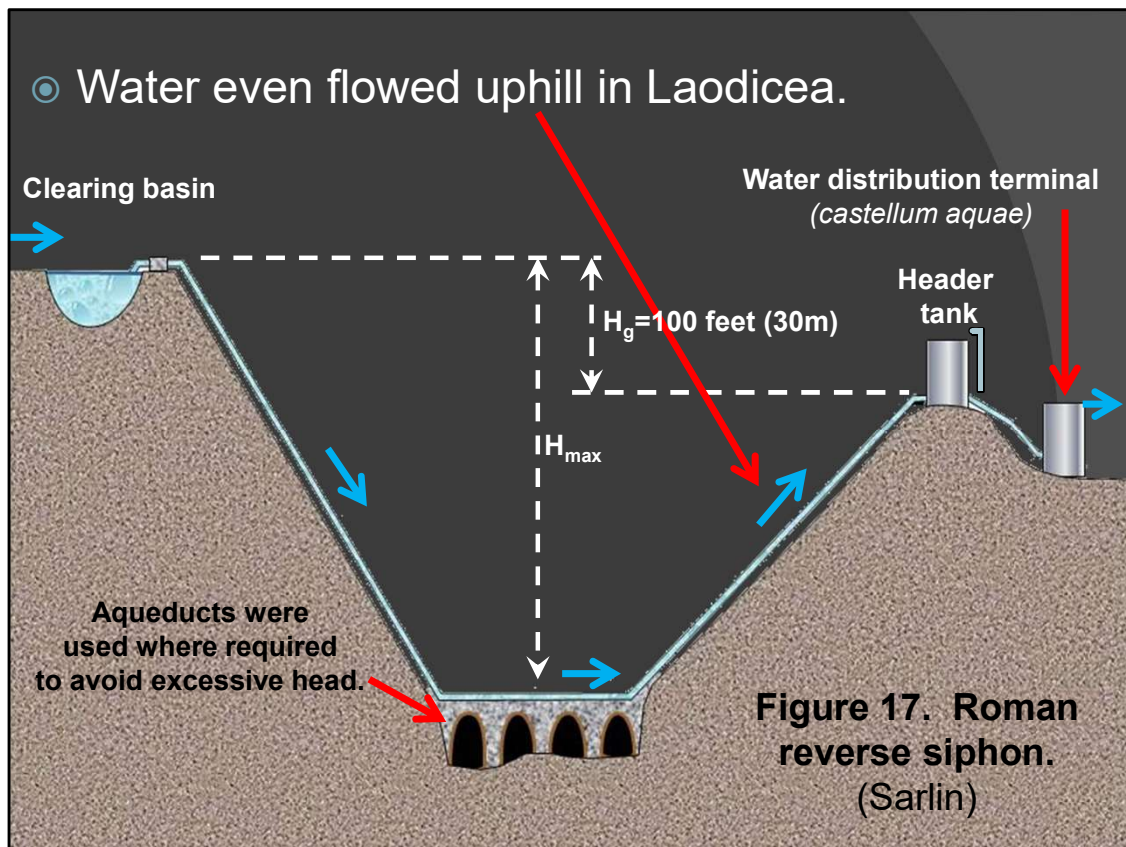




Regular aqueducts were built from the Baspinar Spring 6 miles (9 kilometres) away. The spring was at a height of 443 meters, 87 meters higher than Laodicea. In 1838, a French artist drew this view of the terminus of the aqueduct outside Laodicea where the piping drops down into a deep valley. In the middle background remains of Laodicea's stadium and the Southern baths can be seen.

The tents in the foreground are Zeibek warriors, irregular militia and guerrilla fighters who lived in the Aegean Region of the Ottoman Empire from late 17th to early 20th centuries.

LABORDE, Léon Emmanuel Simon Joseph. Voyage de l'Asie Mineure par Alexandre de Laborde, Becker, Hall, et L. de Laborde, rédigé et publié par Léon de Laborde, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1838.



Unusually, to cross the valley to the south of Laodicea, instead of the usual open channel carried above the level of the city on lofty arches as was the usual practice of the Romans, an inverted siphon was employed consisting of a double pressurised pipeline, descending into the valley and back up to the city. The low arches supporting the siphon commence near the summit of a low hill to the south where the header tank was located, and thence continue to the first terminal distribution tank (*castellum aquae*) at the edge of the hill of the city, whose remains are visible to the east of the stadium and South Baths complex.

- Settling ponds and tanks slowed current to allow impurities to settle out.
- Water entered at the bottom and left at the top, where multiple pipes distributed water throughout Laodicea.

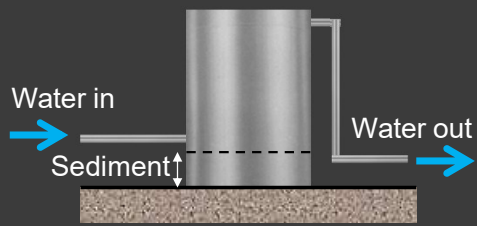
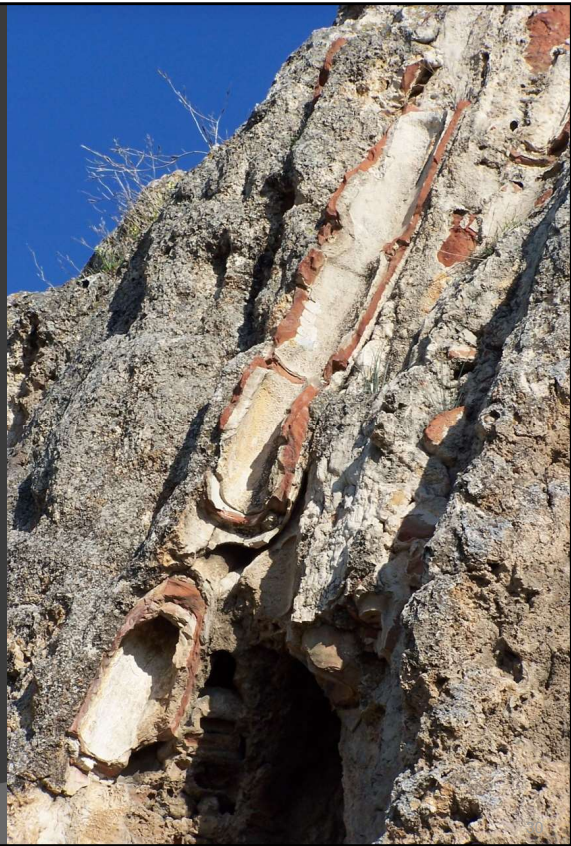
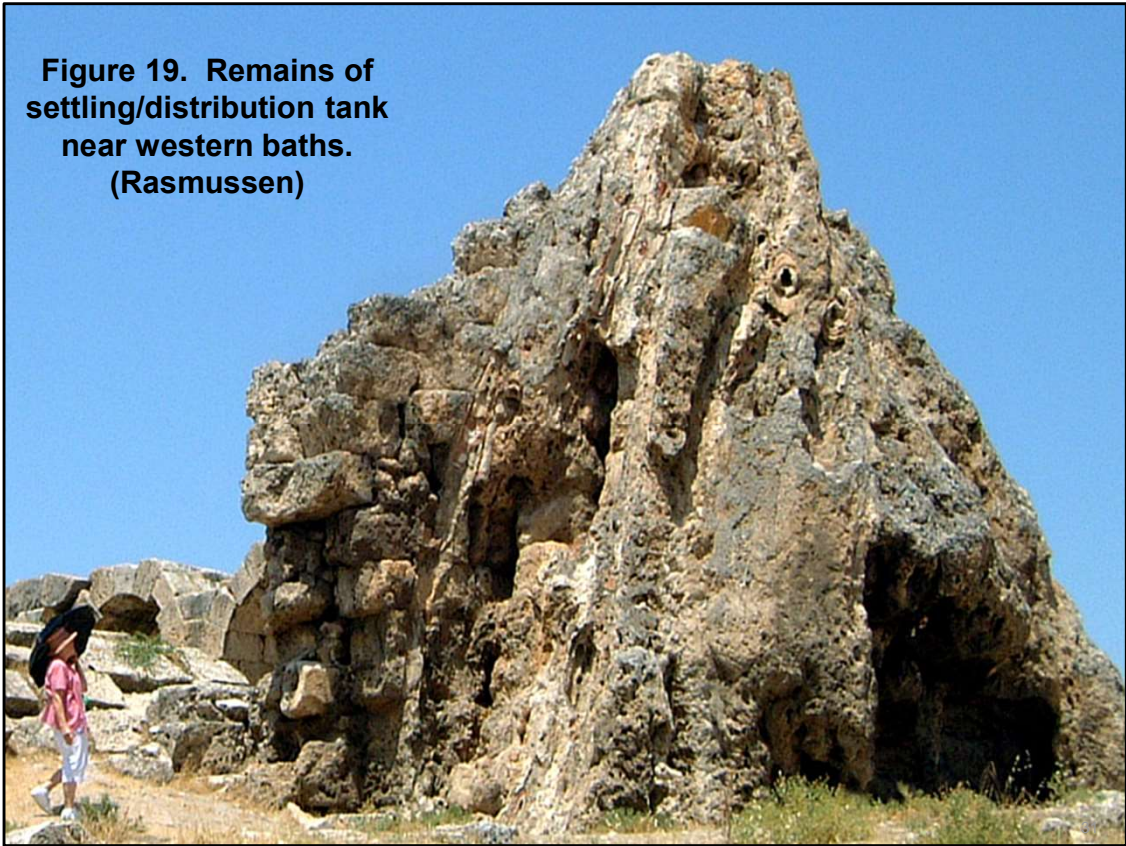


Figure 18. Corroded and calcified remains of settling/distribution tank.



**Figure 19. Remains of
settling/distribution tank
near western baths.
(Rasmussen)**



The water was heavily charged with calcium and the piping and tanks are covered with a thick encrustation inside and out where leaks occurred at later times.



Antique underground pipelines, part of urban water distribution system in Laodicea.

Remains of antique underground pipelines, part of urban water transportation system in Laodicea, ancient city near Denizli, Turkey. Construction protected by thick glass for safety



Here is some in situ distribution piping in the 4th Century AD Laodicea Cathedral.

Fig. 22. Wealthy suburban living in East Street complex (PAU)



- ◎ The wealthy had running water and water filters in their homes.

Fig. 20. Plumbing



Fig. 21. Home water filters





The water filter was excavated from this inner city apartment.



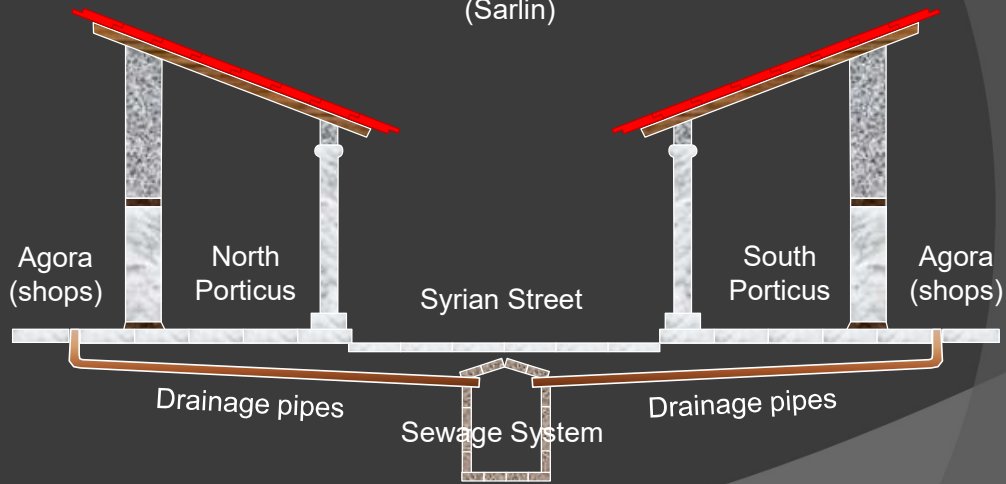
Aerial view of Laodicea in 2012, from the main Syria Gate down the ancient double colonnaded street to the Forum at the end passing through about a third of the ancient city's width. Most of the main streets in Laodicea's Hippodamian grid plan are still unexcavated, but the city would have covered pretty much everything you see here up to the distant foothills.



Syrian Street was double-collonaded along its length, and was lined with covered shops. As with most Roman cities, the city benefitted from many engineering innovations. For example, Syria Street and the shops had excellent drainage, just one of the feats of Roman engineering genius in wealthy Laodicea.

● Laodicea featured underground sewage.

Fig. 23. Sketch of drainage system (Sarlin)



39

Laodicea featured underground sewage.

○ Laodicea featured underground sewage.

Fig. 23. Sketch of drainage system (Sarlin)

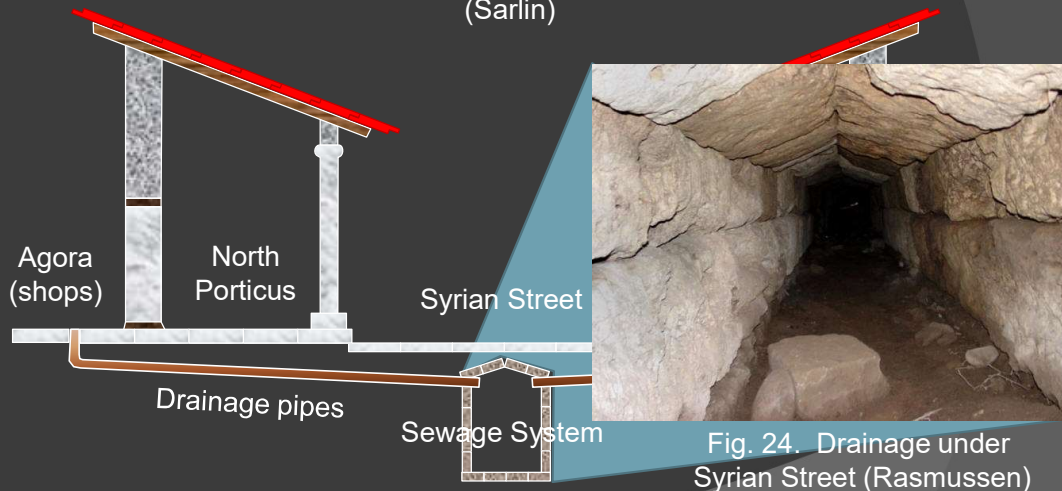
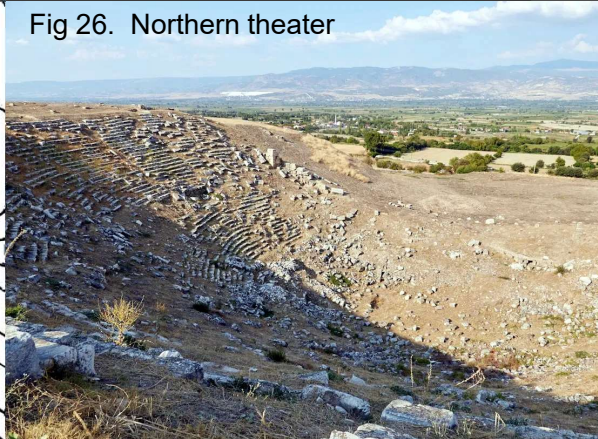
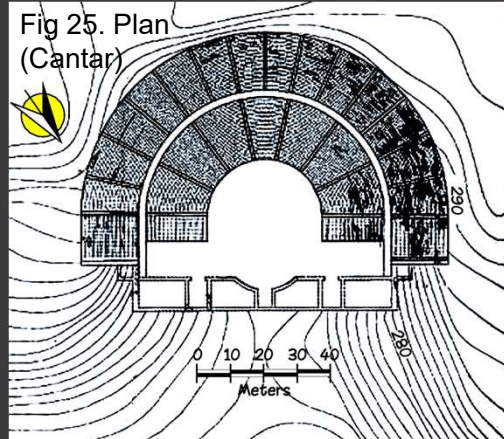


Fig. 24 shows the drainage tunnel under Syrian Street.

- The main 12,000 seat northern theater faces Hierapolis. The Romans built it of marble.
- Names of civic associations and wealthy families are carved into the seats.



The main 12,000 seat northern theater had names of civic associations and families carved into the seats. After Laodicea was abandoned following the 7th century earthquake, the stadium became a convenient source of building materials.

- Varied events were staged against this magnificent structure.

Scaense frons (permanent backdrop)

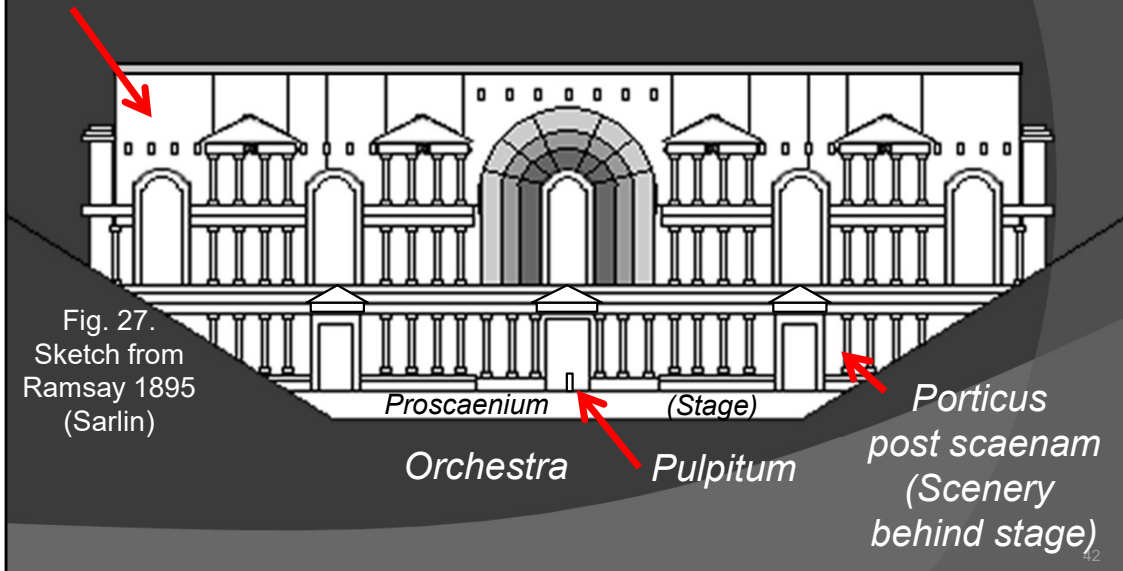


Fig. 27.
Sketch from
Ramsay 1895
(Sarlin)

Varied events were staged against this magnificent backdrop. The theater even hosted water shows.

- Laodicea also included a second large theatre in the west, capable of holding some 8,000 seats.
- It dates back over 2,200 years to Hellenistic times.



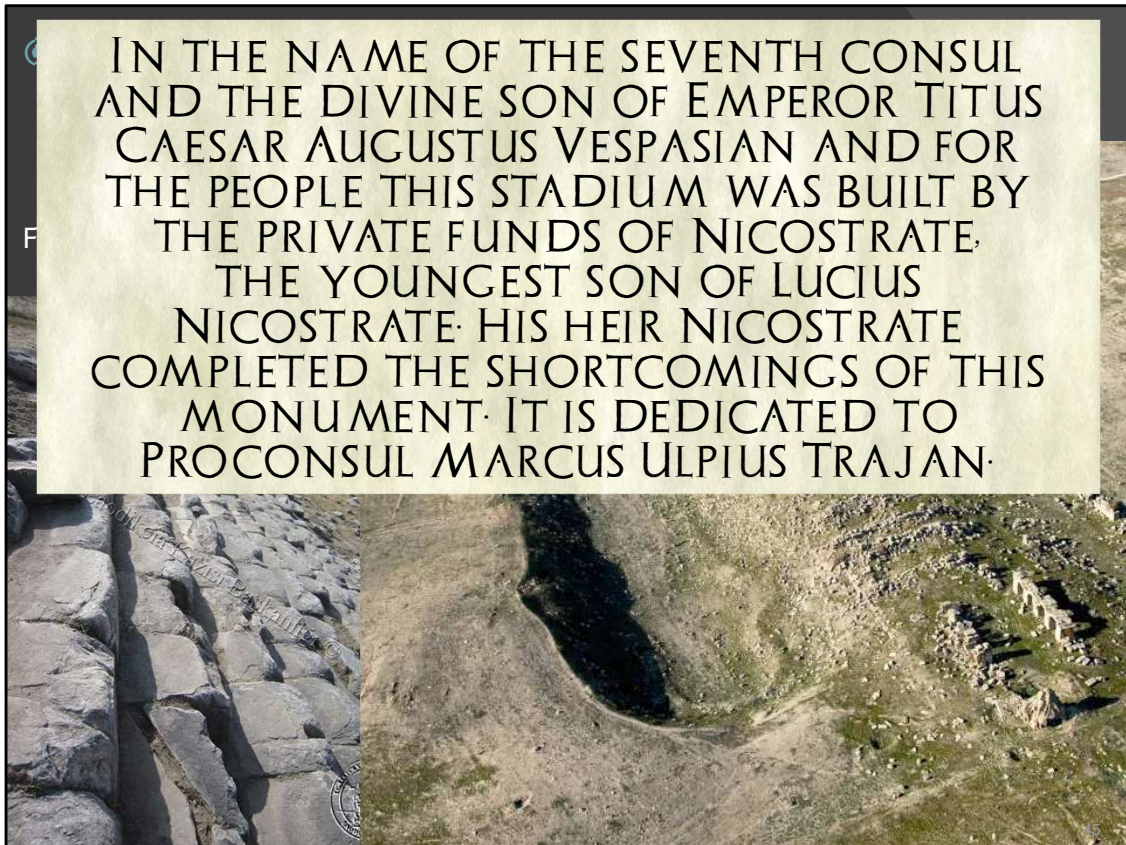
Fig 29. Western theater

Laodicea also included a second large theatre in the west, capable of holding some 8,000 seats.

[CLICK] It dates back over 2,200 years to Hellenistic times, and has been under reconstruction for the past 15 years.



Reconstruction of the Hellenistic western theatre was completed just three months ago. It will soon be ready to once again hold events.



In AD 79, a wealthy citizen named Nicostrate funded the 25-30,000 seat stadium, one of the largest in Asia Minor. Built on a natural slope in an east-west direction, it is 285 meters long and 70 meters wide. The amphitheatre had a sphendone (semi circle) on each end. Seating was divided into 34 sections divided by stairways, with 22 rows of seats in each section. Here the most important athletic contests of the region were held. The adjacent bath-gymnasium complex was ideal for training. The largest gate of the stadium had an inscription:

[CLICK] "In the name of the seventh consul and the divine son of Emperor Titus Caesar Augustus Vespasian and for the people this stadium was built by the private funds of Nicostrate, the youngest son of Lucius Nicostrate. His heir Nicostrate completed the shortcomings of this monument. It is dedicated to Proconsul Marcus Ulpius Trajan."
(Cantar)

- The stadium was also used a convention center for trade meetings that involved people and merchants from different parts of the realm. (Şimşek)



The Roman stadium was used a convention center for trade meetings that involved people and merchants from different parts of the realm, which Head Archaeologist Professor Celal Şimşek notes, made Laodicea “... an entity similar to the European Union...”

- The city had four bath/gymnasium complexes.

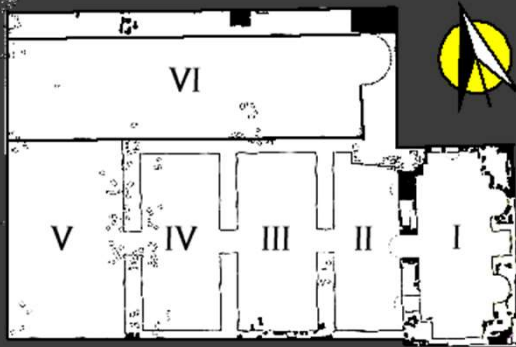


Fig. 32. Plan of Southern Baths (Simsek)



Fig. 33. Southern Baths

The city had four major public bath/gymnasium complexes. The southern baths were adjacent to the stadium.

- The 50,000 ft² central baths were converted to a church around the 4th Century. (Fant 237)



Fig. 34. Central Baths (Vincent)

The 50,000 ft² central baths were converted to a church around the 4th Century AD.

ANCIENT LAODICEA

- One of many memorial fountains (nymphaeum).

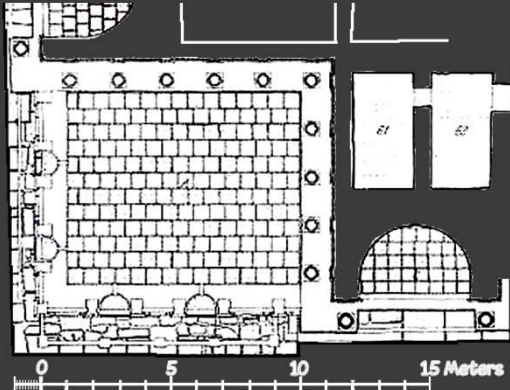


Fig. 35. Plan of Caracalla Nymphaeum (Simsek)



Fig. 36. Caracalla Nymphaeum (Cantar)

Ancient Laodicea was graced with many monumental fountains, including this one dedicated to Emperor Caracalla (kara-kalla).

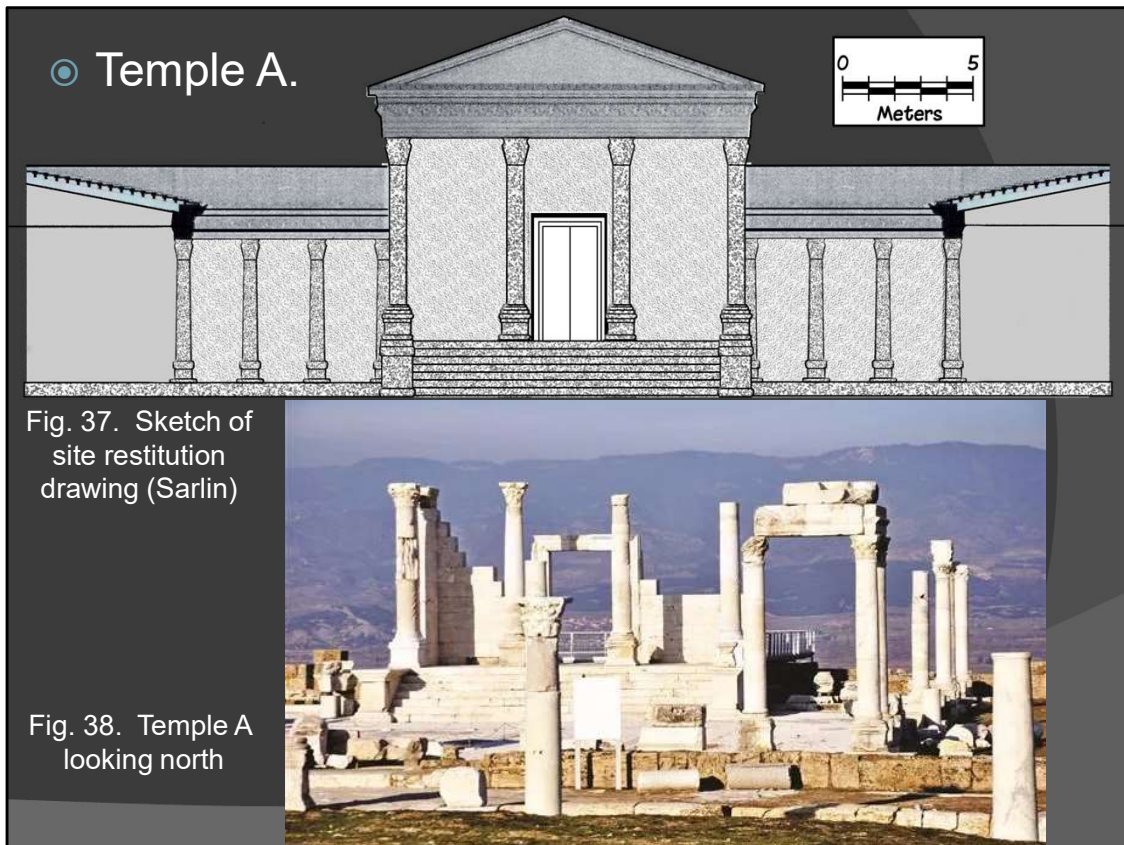


These are the ruins of a huge monumental nymphaeum dedicated to Emperor Septimius Severus, [\[CLICK\]](#) which would have looked like this in the day. Beneath its rubble, archaeologists made an amazing find.

The Emperor Trajan

- In March 2019, an amazing discovery was announced at Laodicea, this 3 metre high grandiose statue of Emperor Trajan (r 98-117) in front of a cowering bound enemy soldier.
- Conclusively dated to 113 AD, this 1,909 year old statue, one of the most unique of its kind in terms of its size and intricacy, was found in 356 pieces, all stuck together.
- The statue commemorates Trajan's gift of 300,000 denarii (nearly A\$ 1 million) to construct an improved water transport and distribution system for Laodicea.





Pre-Christian Laodicea had many pagan temples, but few have been found. Probably the most intriguing remains are rather prosaically known today as Temple A, on the north side of Syria Street. Some 19 columns of this temple and its sanctuary area have been re-erected, giving some idea of the vast scale of this place of worship.

Temple A is partially reconstructed. It would have contained a statue of a deity in ancient times.

If you enter through the well-preserved doorway leading into the temple ...

Temple A.

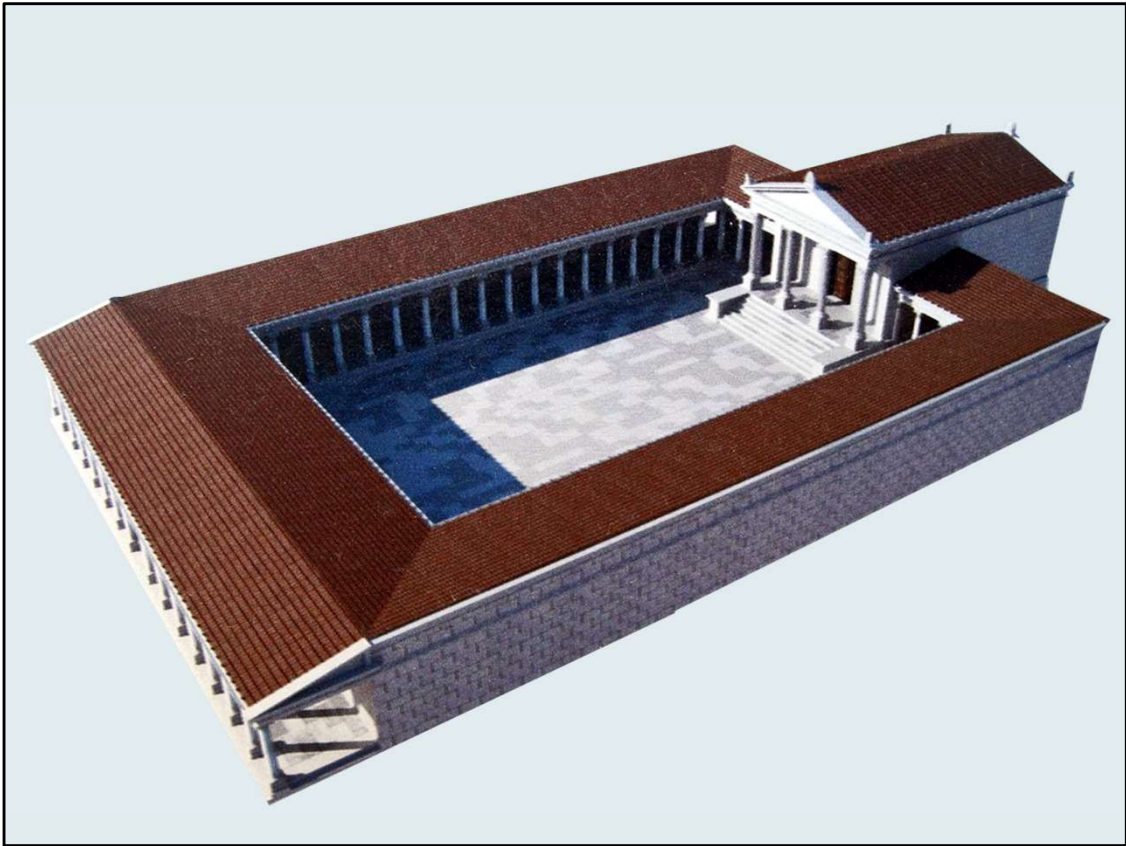
Fig. 39.
Stepping through
the door of
Temple A.



Fig. 40.
Looking through
the tempered glass
roof of Temple A's
arched vault below.

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... you find yourself rather alarmingly standing on tempered glass set in a steel canopy covering the arched vault below, still littered with finely carved marble statuary.



The wealth of its inhabitants enabled them to indulge a taste for the arts, as evident by Temple A with its large courtyard. **[CLICK]** The temple would have looked like this in its day.

This may give you some idea of the grand scale of Laodicea's architecture.



Although inhabited for 1000's of years, *Diospolis* ('The City of Zeus'), was not an important urban centre until the 3rd century BC, when Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucid dynasty constructed buildings and renamed it for his wife Laodice.

By 2nd century BC, Laodicea was a thriving metropolis administered by the Kingdom of Pergamon, which passed under Roman control in 133 AD.

Laodicea was situated along the major road connecting Rome with the East, and was known as a commercial Roman free city attuned to large money transactions and an extensive trade in black wool.

Although inhabited for 1000's of years by Hittites and Phrygians, *Diospolis* ('The City of Zeus'), was not an important urban centre until the 3rd century BC, when Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucid dynasty constructed buildings and renamed it for his wife Laodice.

By 2nd century BC, Laodicea was a thriving metropolis administered by the Kingdom of Pergamon, which passed under Roman control in 133 AD.

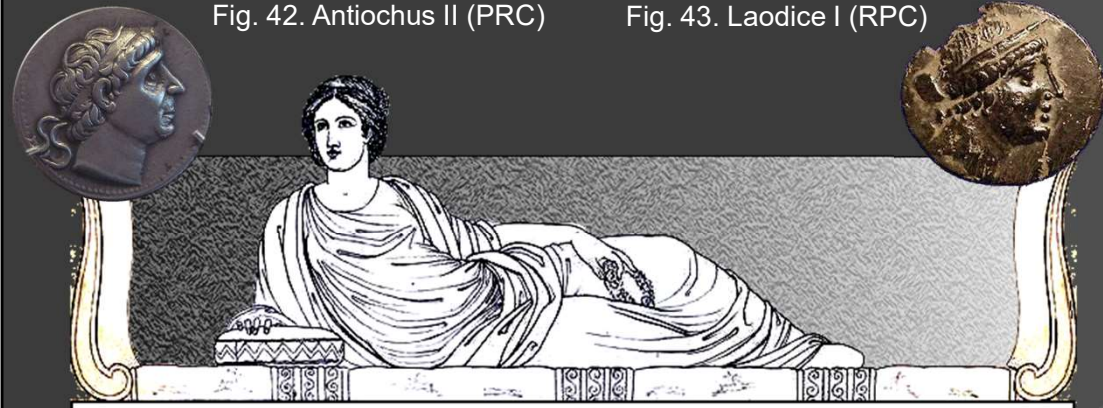
Laodicea was situated along the major road connecting Rome with the East, and was known as a commercial Roman free city attuned to large money transactions and an extensive trade in black wool.

- Seleucid emperor Antiochus II founded Laodicea around 260 BC and named it for his wife Laodice.

(Wilson 245)

Fig. 42. Antiochus II (PRC)

Fig. 43. Laodice I (RPC)



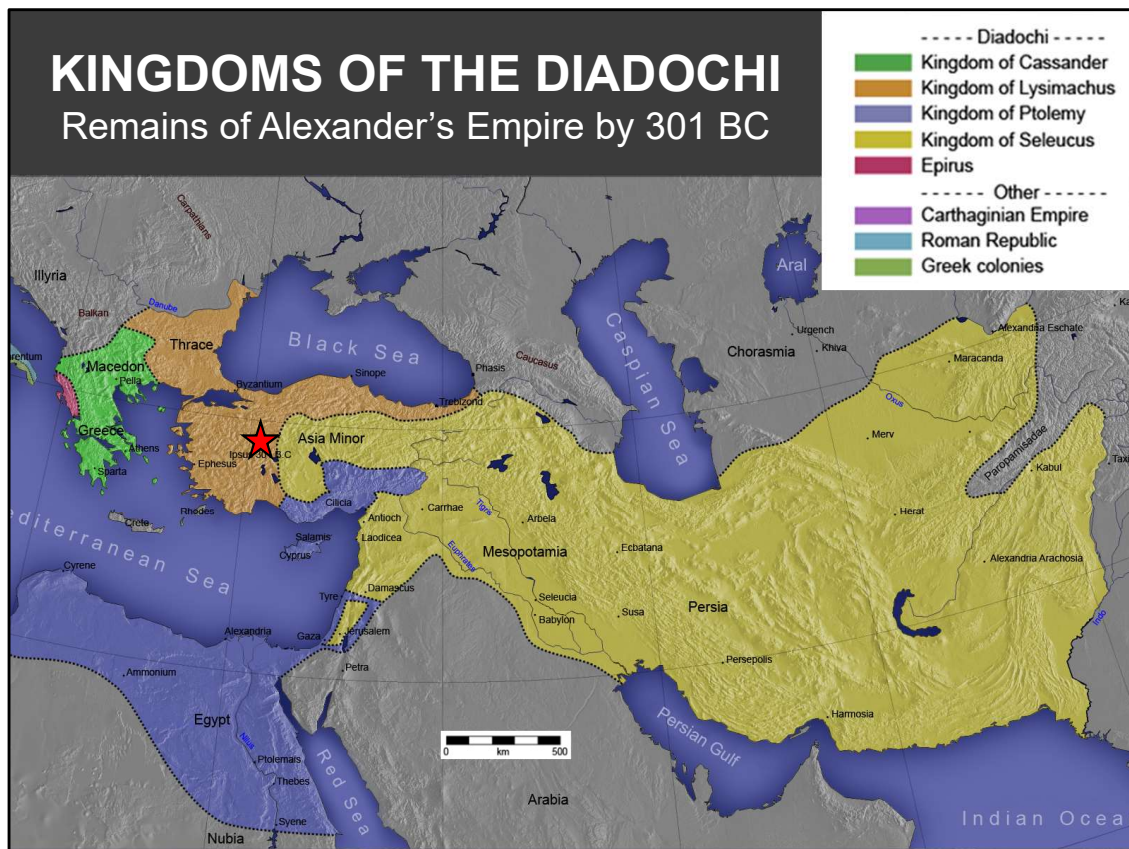
“And at the end of *some* years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in *those* times.” (Daniel 11:6)

Seleucid emperor Antiochus II founded Laodicea around 260 BC and named it for his wife Laodice (lay-aw-dih-see). Laodicea ad Lycum (Laodicea on the Lycus) was one of five cities that he named for her.

Interestingly, Daniel 11:6, written some three centuries before, states:

[CLICK] “And at the end of *some* years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in *those* times.”

Unpacking Daniel 11:6 would take longer than we have, but I’ll summarise it as it directly affects Syrian king Antiochus II (the king of the north) and Laodice, as well as the Berenice, daughter of Egyptian Pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the king of the south.



When Alexander the Great died without a successor in 323 BC, his kingdom was split between his generals Ptolemy in Egypt, Cassander in Greece and Macedonia, Seleucus in Syria and Mesopotamia, and Antigones in Thrace and Asia Minor. Lysimachus replaced Antigones after the Battle of Ipsus **[CLICK]** in 301 BC. We now advance 40 years when an elderly Lysimachus was still on the throne of Thrace and Asia Minor, but Egypt was ruled by Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the Seleucid Empire, also called Syria, was ruled by king Antiochus II Theos, a forceful personality who held the sprawling Seleucid realm intact during his lifetime.



Figure 41. From "Roman lady on a couch" by Baxter

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Syrian king Antiochus II and his wife Laodice I had a son **[CLICK]** Seleucus Callinicus. Syria was fighting the 15 year-long Second Syrian War with Egypt, then under **[CLICK]** Ptolemy II Philadelphus. To forge an alliance between Egypt and Asia Minor, Lysimachus had married Ptolemy II's sister Arsinoe II and in turn Ptolemy II married Lysimachus' daughter **[CLICK]** Arsinoe I, with whom he had a daughter **[CLICK]** Berenice. But when Lysimachus died in battle, Ptolemy II banished his wife **[CLICK]** Arsinoe I. Ptolemy II then married his sister **[CLICK]** Arsinoe II, the widow of Lysimachus. This was a bit on the nose, even to the Greeks of that day.



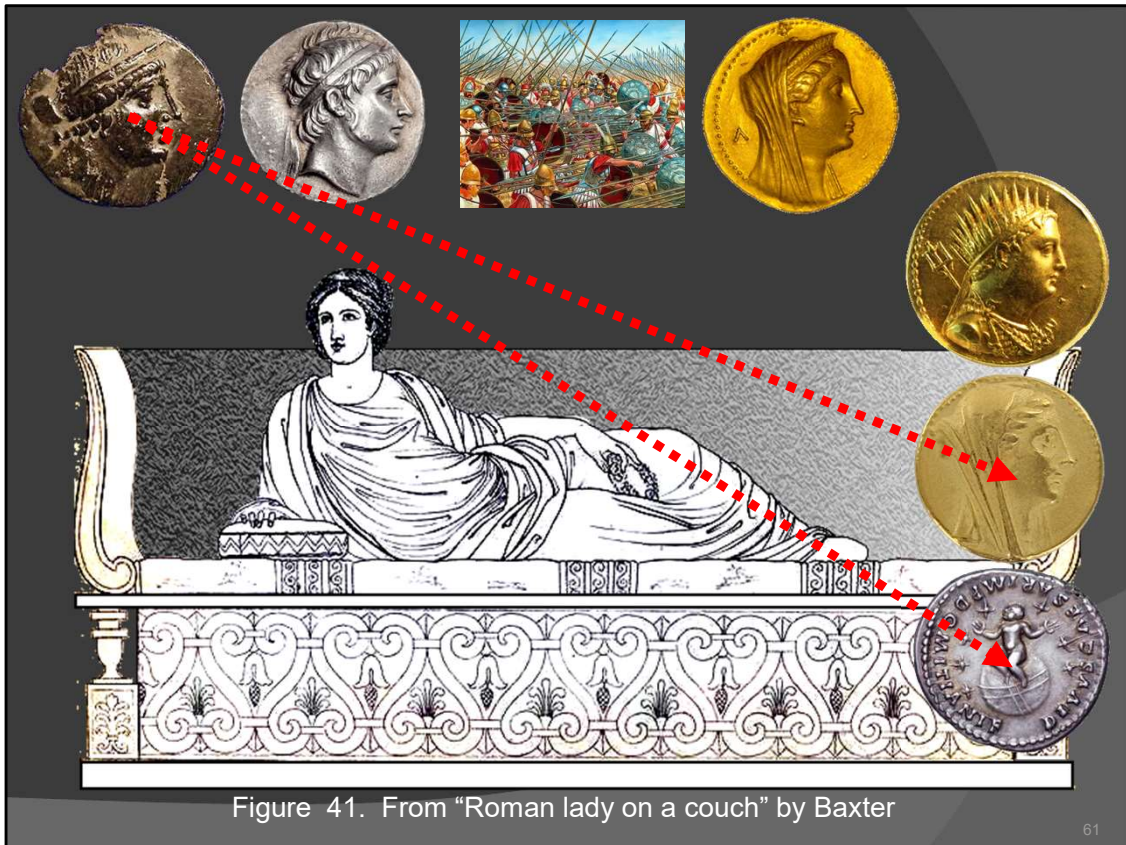
Figure 41. From "Roman lady on a couch" by Baxter

59

The war ended under terms of a peace treaty in 248 BC, **[CLICK]** when Antiochus II agreed to marry **[CLICK]** Berenice. But first **[CLICK]** Laodice I was "put away" and her children, including the heir apparent, declared illegitimate. Berenice bore Antiochus a **[CLICK]** son, but then Ptolemy II Philadelphus **[CLICK]** died.



Berenice fled with her infant son to the sacred grove of Daphne **[CLICK]** as Antiochus hastened to recall **Laodice** and her children **[CLICK]**. Whether out of mistrust or caution, or simply for revenge, Laodice poisoned Antiochus **[CLICK]** and artfully concealed his death until her son **[CLICK]** Seleucus Callistus was on the throne of Syria.



Laodice then ordered the deaths of Berenice and her baby. **[CLICK]** Ancient authors note that Laodice had many other victims as well, so many that the people of Syria revolted. In the meantime, Berenice’s brother **[CLICK]** Ptolemy III Euergetes had assumed the throne in Egypt. To avenge his sister Berenice, Ptolemy III successfully invaded the Seleucid Empire **[CLICK]** in the five-year long Third Syrian War.

Anyway, you get the drift.

So that’s some background about the lovely Laodice I for whom Laodicea on the Lycus is named. So what happened to Laodice I? We don’t know for sure. Appian reported that Ptolemy III captured her and put her to death, while Plutarch had her survive the Third Syrian War and continue her shenanigans by having her sons battle each other for supremacy in the War of Brothers that erupted after the end of the Third Syrian War. But Empire itself was weakened and gradually decayed to a small buffer state.

The affluence of Laodicea

- Antiochus II founded Laodicea over an earlier settlement “Diospolis” (city of Zeus). (Pliny 352)
- “Laodiceia was one of the richest cities of Asia.” Its position made it a natural centre of banking and financial transactions. (Ramsay 39)
- Cicero attests that Laodicea, a city within his jurisdiction, was a major center of financial and banking operations. (Cicero 1912, 373)
- “[Laodicea] was a city of merchants, bankers, and gold refiners.” (Missler 93)

62

Laodicia’s ruins demonstrate its affluence. What made it so wealthy?

- Laodicea was founded over an earlier settlement “Diospolis” (city of Zeus). Pagan worship was big business.
- “Laodiceia was one of the richest cities of Asia.” Its central position astride the Roman Empire’s main East/West road made it a natural trading centre.
- Cicero attests that Laodicea, a city within his jurisdiction, was a major center of financial and banking operations.
- “It was also a city of gold refiners.”

- A fine glossy black wool, soft in texture, grew on Laodicean sheep; and the manufacture of fine cloth, carpets and garments, was the chief occupation of the city. (Ramsay 40)



Fig. 44.
Stock
photo

Laodicean sheep grew a fine glossy black wool, soft in texture; and the manufacture of fine cloth, carpets and garments, was the chief occupation of the city.

Wool is a natural insulator. The many travelers heading east would soon face the harsh extremes of desert, where Laodicea's famous garments and blankets would provide them with warmth during the bitterly cold desert nights, yet readily breathing and providing shade from the blistering daytime sun and heat. Supply could not keep pace with demand, providing locals with a prosperous industry.

○ It still is!



Fig. 45.
Presenter visiting local textile factory



Fig. 46.
Expert weaver at work

64

It still is today. 187 Denizli companies manufacture cotton towels and bathrobes alone, with nearly 1,000 local textile manufacturers. 90% of the product is exported worldwide in a multi-billion-dollar trade.

- ◎ Many Laodicean residents were wealthy.
 - A certain Hiero left a legacy of 2,000 talents (A\$ 6,120,000,000 as of 10 Feb 2022) to the city and paid for many dedicatory works. (Davis 224)
 - The Zenon family lived in Laodicea while some of its members were reigning as kings in Pontus, Thrace, Armenia, and Cilicia. (Smith 434, 1318-9)
 - The 25,000-30,000 seat stadium dedicated it to Vespasian in AD 79, was built with the private funds of a citizen named Nicostrate. (Wilson 252)

65

- Many Laodicean residents became wealthy, and wealth attracts wealth.
- Hiero left a legacy of 2,000 talents to the city, that's over 6 billion Australian dollars today, and paid for many dedicatory works.
- Members of Laodicea's Zenon family reigned as kings in Pontus, Thrace, Armenia, and Cilicia.
- A private citizen built the 30,000 seat stadium, possibly the largest in Asia.

- Laodicea was famous as a medical center.
 - Themison of Laodicea, founder of the Methodic school of medicine, was the first physician to use leeches. (Smith 1024)
 - Zenon's medical formulae are famously quoted by Galen. (Smith 1319) Other local physicians included Theudas (Smith 1103), Antiochus (Smith 195), Zeuxis (Smith 1325) and Alexander Philalethes (Smith 345).
 - Laodicea's coinage featured local physicians.



Laodicea was world famous as a medical center.

- Themison of Laodicea, Asclepiades' most distinguished student and founder of the Methodic school of medicine, was the first physician to use leeches.
- Zenon's medical formulae are famously quoted by Galen. Other local physicians included Theudas, Antiochus, Zeuxis and Alexander Philalethes.
- Among other noted physicians, Zeuxis and Alexander Philalethes (phil-ah-leth-ess) were honored on city coinage.

- Laodicea's medical school at Men-Carus specialised in ear and eye ailments. Oculist Demosthenes wrote "Diseases of the Eyes", still used in the Middle Ages. (Smith 991)

- Its famous medicines included an eye ointment made from the spice nard and Phrygian powder used for the eyes. (Hastings)

Figure 48. A Laodicean eye inscription (King)



In 1974, a shipwreck from 140–130 B.C. was first discovered in 1974 in 18 meters of water a few hundred meters away from the ancient port of Populonia off the coast of Tuscany, north of Rome in Italy. When excavated in 1990, the Pozzino shipwreck was found to contain a vast collection of trade goods from around the Mediterranean. The small ship was about 60 feet long and 10 feet wide. It was packed with valuable cargo: Syrian glass bowls found still in stacks, pottery from Pergamon, wine amphorae from Rhodes, lamps from Ephesus, coins, lead vessels and other consumer goods and, as seen here, medicines.

- Cargo included a sealed pyxis with six tablets.
- Per Strabo (12.8.20), Laodicea had a medical school where a famous ophthalmologist practiced and eye-lotions including “Phrygian powder” originated. (Hastings)

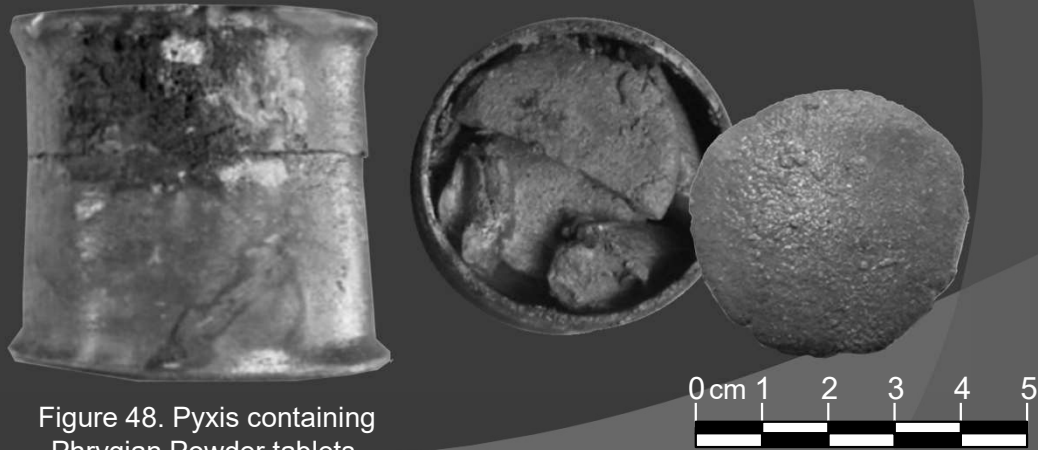


Figure 48. Pyxis containing Phrygian Powder tablets.

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The most interesting find in the preserved cargo from Asia Minor was this sealed tin can, or pyxis. It contained six disc-shaped tablets stacked on top of each other like Mentos. The *pyxis* had remained watertight and the tablets, individually wrapped in badly decayed fabric, were still intact. DNA analysis of the tablets published in 2010 showed a complex compound with a variety of plant matter plus zinc used for medicinal purposes.

Scientists from the Universities of Pisa and Florence have now identified the tablets as collyrium, or eyewash, derived from a Greek word meaning “small round loaves.” They would have been ground and mixed with holy water and the resulting unguent applied to the ailing eye. Ancient medical texts identify this as consistent with Laodicea’s “Phrygian Powder”.



◎ Laodicea was a noted gold and silver refining centre.

Laodicea was also a noted ancient gold and silver refining centre. So important was the lucrative market of Laodicea that Rome declared it a "Free City", meaning that it could operate its markets and economy freely, using its own minted coinage, and with minimal taxation, regulation or intervention from Rome.

○ Many coins were minted at ΛΑΟΔΙΚΕΩΝ.



Figure 49. Typical Laodicean coinage (RPC2)

These are a few of the Laodicean coins still in existence. The characteristic red-gold coin of Laodicea became widely recognized and accepted in Asia Minor and beyond due to its fixed and constant gold content.

Laodicea's Jewish Colony

- The Seleucid empire resettled 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon in the region in 240 BC.
(Josephus 397)
- In 62 BC, Roman proconsul Flaccus confiscated 20 pounds of gold (>A\$800,000) bound to Jerusalem to pay the half- shekel temple tax.
(Cicero 1977, 324)

"TWENTY POUNDS WEIGHT OR A LITTLE MORE WERE SEIZED AT LAODICEA, BY LUCIUS PEDUCAEUS, WHO IS HERE IN COURT, ONE OF OUR JUDGES."

72

Laodicea had a large and affluent Jewish community:

- The Seleucid Empire resettled some 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon to Lydia and Phrygia in 240 BC.
- In 62 BC, Roman proconsul Flaccus confiscated "20 pounds weight or a little more" of gold worth over A\$800,000 today bound to Jerusalem to pay the half- shekel temple tax. This equates to 7,500 to 9,000 half shekels, the annual Temple tax for each Jewish male, indicating a large Jewish population.

- Josephus records a 47 BC letter to Caius Rubilius from Laodicean magistrates confirming Jews in Laodicea could practice their religion freely. (Josephus 473)

"THE MAGISTRATES OF THE LAODICEANS TO CAIUS RUBILIUS, SEND GREETING. SOPATER, THE AMBASSADOR OF HYRCANUS THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE JEWS, HAS DELIVERED US AN EPISTLE FROM YOU WHEREIN THEY DESIRE THAT THE JEWS MAY BE ALLOWED TO OBSERVE THEIR SABBATHS, AND OTHER SACRED RITES, ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF THEIR FATHERS."

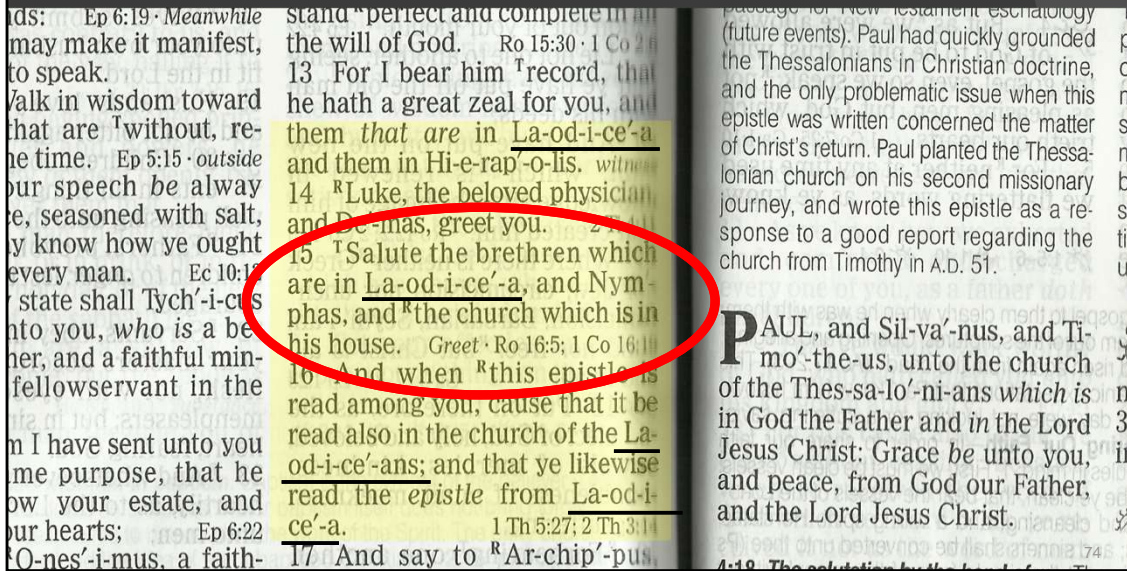
73

A 47 BC letter to Caius Rubilius from Laodicean magistrates confirms Jews in Laodicea can practice their religion freely, an indication of their status, wealth and power.

Christian Laodicea

- Paul's Colossian epistle mentions a church in Laodicea that met in the house of Nymphas.

(Colossians 4:15)



- The large Jewish population made Laodicea a fertile mission field for early Christianity, but is there evidence that Christianity took hold?
- Paul's Colossian epistle mentions a church in Laodicea that met in the house of Nymphas. (Colossians 4:15)

Interestingly, the Greek name is *Nympha*, a female name indicating possibly that the leader of that Laodicean house church was a woman. However, many English bibles today use the male name *Nymphas*, because of the prejudices of the Middle Ages translators. Notably, *Nymphas* means "bridegroom" in Greek, while *Nympha* means "bride" or "nymph-like."

The New Testament also mentions other women who hosted Christian gatherings:

- Mary, the mother of John Mark in Jerusalem ([Acts 12:12](#))
- Lydia, a merchant living in Philippi ([Acts 16:40](#))
- Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus ([1 Corinthians 16:19](#))
- Philemon and Apphia in Colossae ([Philemon 1:2](#))

- Acts 2:9 notes that Jewish people from Asia Minor visited Jerusalem during *Shavuot* (Pentecost) in AD 32.
- Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae are the Lycus Valley cities mentioned in Paul's letters to the Colossians and Philemon.
- Recent excavations at Laodicea reveal numerous examples of Christian iconography (graffiti).

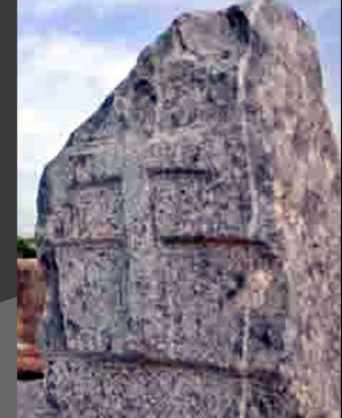


Figure 50 (top). Cross etched over Menorah.
Figure 51 (right). Cross carved on stone.

- Acts 2:9 notes that Jewish people from Asia Minor visited Jerusalem during Pentecost in AD 32.
- Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae are the Lycus Valley cities mentioned in Paul's letters to the Colossians and Philemon.
- Beyond biblical references, excavations at Laodicea and Hierapolis reveal ancient Christian graffiti.

- Excavations at Laodicea have uncovered remains of five early Christian churches.



Excavations at Laodicea have uncovered remains of five early Christian churches.

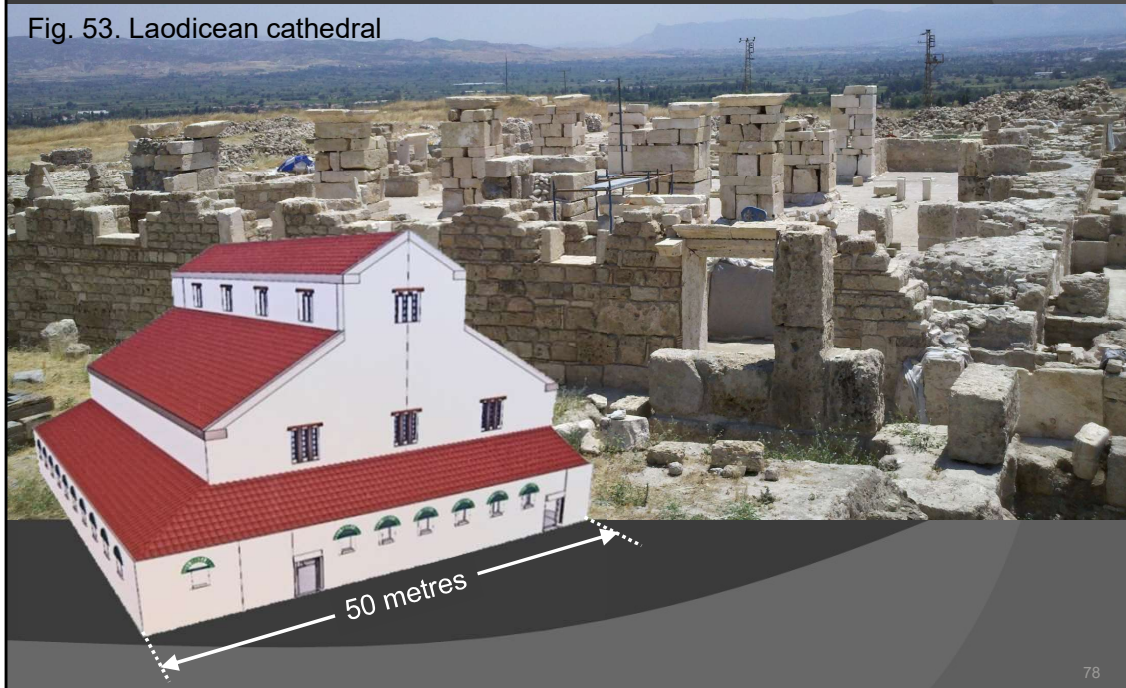
- One 1st Century worship centre was possibly secretly constructed in a large 20 room house.



Excavations in late 2020 near the northern theatre unearthed a large sprawling 20 room, 2,000 square meter house built around a colonnaded courtyard that contains what archaeologists believe may have been a large room secretly converted in the 1st century AD to a Christian worship center. The house contained two separate architectural halls for men and women in the house. The chief archaeologist noted, “The hall in the west was organized for men and the one in the east for women and a place of worship was made here in east hall.” He also stated that very rich marble coverings have been found on the walls of the eastern hall converted to a worship center, as well as sacred items used by the first Christians.

🕒 In 2010, archaeologists discovered a 2,000m² cathedral dated to AD 313-320. (Vel)

Fig. 53. Laodicean cathedral



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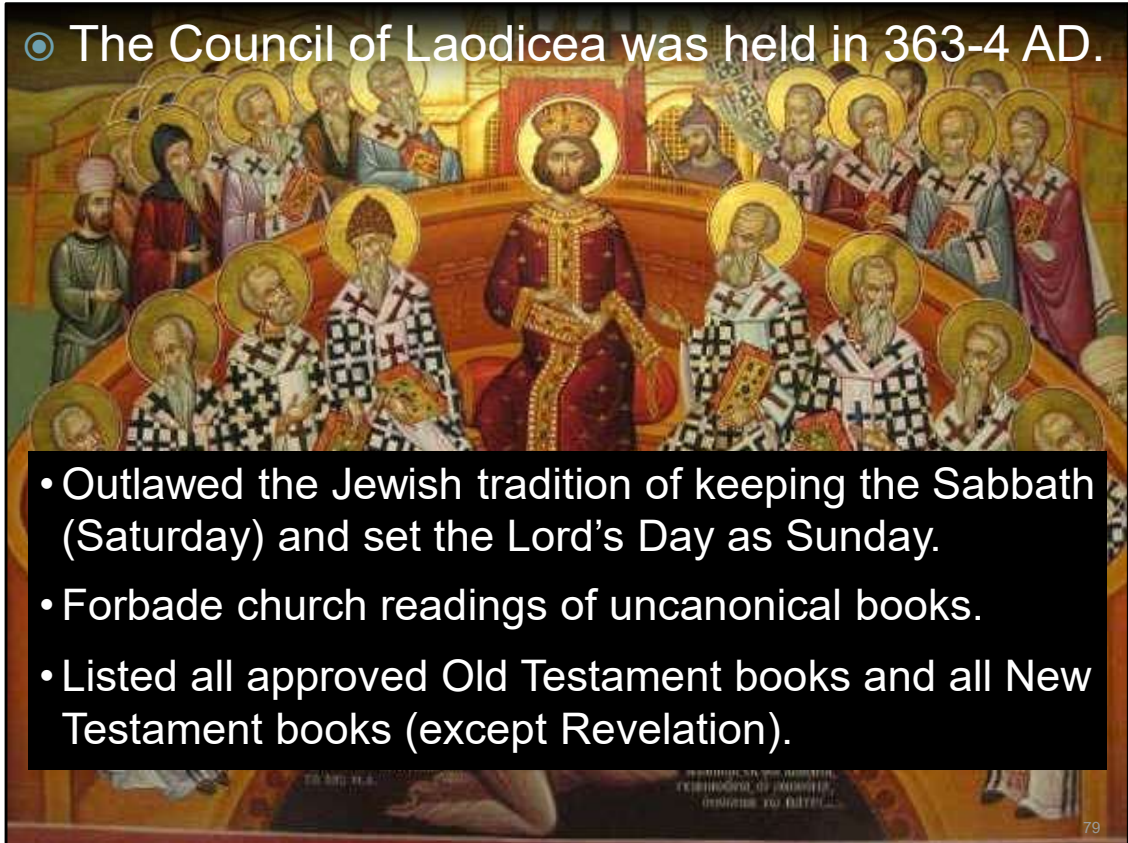
First spotted underground on a radar scan, Laodicea has a massive cathedral constructed between 313 and 320 A.D., immediately after the Edict of Milan or 313 AD, by which Emperor Constantine I of Rome legalized Christianity. This is the 7th oldest Christian church discovered.

It was supported by 10 towering pillars on a floor area of 2,000 square meters, or 21,500 square feet, covered with flawlessly preserved mosaic floors and with a walk-in baptismal fountain for mass christenings.

[CLICK]

This is an archaeologist's sketch of this early Christian cathedral.

○ The Council of Laodicea was held in 363-4 AD.

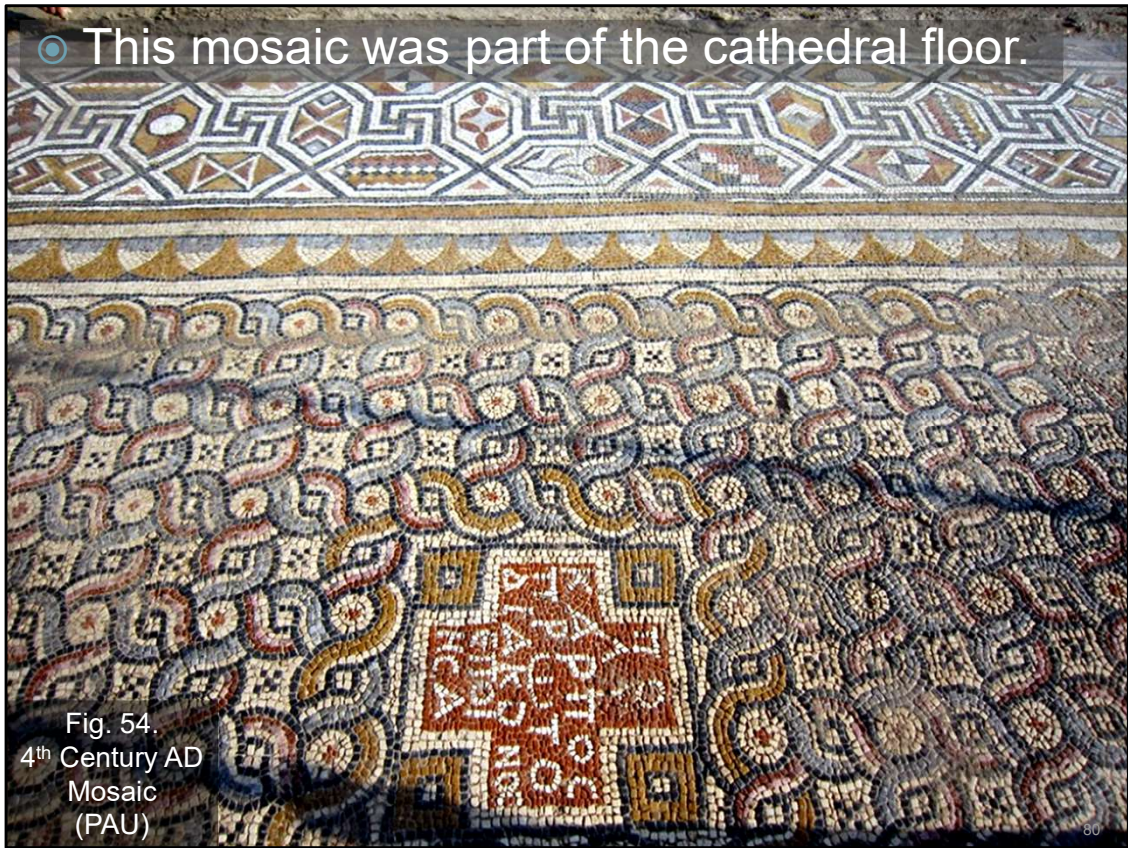


- Outlawed the Jewish tradition of keeping the Sabbath (Saturday) and set the Lord's Day as Sunday.
- Forbade church readings of uncanonical books.
- Listed all approved Old Testament books and all New Testament books (except Revelation).

The cathedral hosted the Council of Laodicea from 363–4, soon after the last non-Christian Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate died at the Battle of Samarra against the Persian Empire. Two years earlier, Julian had started a religious reform to restore Hellenistic paganism as the State Religion and drive Christians from the upper classes. To spite Christians, he authorized and funded Jews to rebuild an extravagant Temple in Jerusalem, but shortly before the Council of Laodicea began, a major earthquake destroyed the site, and rendered further work unsafe. Several canons are significant: **[CLICK]** The 29th Canon specified work on the Sabbath (Saturday) and worship and rest on Sunday.

[CLICK] The 59th Canon forbade readings in church of uncanonical books. Demonized 2nd book of Enoch.

[CLICK] The 60th Canon listed all approved OT and NT books in the Bible (except Revelation); which was added by Athanasius within two years later.



This mosaic was part of the cathedral floor.

○ A walk through baptistry facilitated mass baptisms.



Fig. 55.
Fourth century
baptistry.
(PAU)

The cathedral was opened to visitors in 2013 after the floor mosaics were restored. It featured a walk-through baptistry that facilitated mass baptisms.



Here is a photo from inside the nave looking toward the apse where the altar would be.

- Documented Christian events in Laodicea after the 1st Century, include (but are not limited to):
 - Laodicea became a bishopric see that oversaw churches in the region (Eusebius 143, 179),
 - the Paschal controversy in AD 164 (Eusebius 142),
 - the martyrdom of bishop Sagaris in AD 166 (Eusebius 143, 179),
 - the Council of Laodicea met in AD 367. (Schaff and Wace)



The Laodicea Cathedral

Documented Christian events in Laodicea after the 1st Century, include (but are not limited to):

- Laodicea became a bishopric see that oversaw all churches in the region,
- the Paschal controversy in AD 164, the Asian churches observed the Jewish Passover while Rome celebrated Easter on the Sunday following first Full Moon following the vernal equinox, stating that Paul and Peter had decreed Easter (and observed, per Irenaeus since 115-125 AD.)
- the martyrdom of bishop Sagaris in AD 166. Bishop Sagaris was a **Quartodeciman** who observed the Passover on 14 Nisan as written in the Scriptures and as passed down by the Apostle John. He did not worship Easter Sunday.
- the Council of Laodicea met here in AD 367.

The Laodicean church not only survived, it thrived as the headquarters of Christianity in southern Phrygia.