

A RCHAEOLOGY AND THE
CITIES OF ASIA MINOR
IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Edited by Ortwin Dally and Christopher Ratté

Kelsey Museum Publication 6

Ann Arbor, Michigan 2011

1

Sardis in Late Antiquity

Marcus Rautman

Asia Minor has always been central to the study of classical urban culture, particularly during its long late antique twilight.¹ Understanding this transitional phase of ancient settled life has come a long way since the 19th century, when western travelers to Turkey began systematically recording inscriptions and standing walls. By the 1920s there existed enough of a documentary record for Victor Schultze to survey the historical topography of major Anatolian poleis in the first centuries A.D.² It was against this limited archaeological background that fifty years ago Ernst Kirsten summarized what then was known of the late classical city's institutional structure, reframing the study of Mediterranean urbanism during the eastern Middle Ages and stimulating a wave of fresh inquiry.³

By coincidence, 1958 was the same year that George M.A. Hanfmann began excavating at Sardis. Hanfmann's interest in the site grew out of his work with early Iron Age pottery from Tarsus, and with related material recovered at Sardis by Howard Crosby Butler in 1910–1914, mainly at the famous Artemis Temple and the nearby necropolis.⁴ Informed by this experience, Hanfmann targeted the early Lydian capital of Croesus and his predecessors as a primary objective. At the same time he recognized that Sardis was an important place throughout antiquity, with visible remains inescapably calling attention to its classical past. Exploring the city “through all phases of history” was from the beginning one of the expedition's stated aims.⁵

¹ The Michigan-D.A.I. symposium took place during the Sardis Expedition's 50th anniversary year, which prompted this review of the site's contribution to the field. I am grateful to the symposium organizers, Ortwin Dally and Christopher Ratté, for providing the occasion to discuss current work and learn from other participants in Ann Arbor. My thinking about Sardis in all its phases has benefited from years of collaboration with Crawford H. Greenewalt, Jr., and Nicholas D. Cahill, past and present field directors of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis.

Preliminary expedition reports have appeared in *AASOR*, *AJA*, *BASOR*, and *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*. Abbreviations are used for several fundamental works:

Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions* = W.H. Buckler and D.M. Robinson, *Sardis VII. Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (Leiden 1932).

Butler, *Sardis* = H.C. Butler, *Sardis I. The Excavations, Part 1. 1910–1914* (Leiden 1922).

Foss, *Sardis* = C. Foss, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis, Sardis M4* (Cambridge, MA 1976).

Hanfmann, *Sardis* = G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Pre-historic to Roman Times. Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, 1958–1975* (Cambridge, MA 1983).

Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey* = G.M.A. Hanfmann and J.C. Waldbaum, *A Survey of Sardis and the Major Monuments outside the Walls, Sardis R1* (Cambridge, MA 1975).

Love for Lydia = N.D. Cahill (ed.), *Love for Lydia: A Sardis Anniversary Volume presented to Crawford H. Greenewalt, Jr., Sardis R4* (Cambridge, MA 2008).

All illustrations ©Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/Harvard University.

² V. Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte und Landschaften 2. Kleinasien* (Gütersloh 1922–1926).

³ E. Kirsten, “Die byzantinische Stadt,” in *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress III* (Munich 1958) 1–48; G. Ostrogorsky, “Byzantine cities in the early Middle Ages,” *DOP* 13 (1959) 47–66; D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1969).

⁴ Butler, *Sardis*. For the site before Butler, see Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* (supra n. 2), 145–52; Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 1–2.

⁵ *BASOR* 154 (1959) 13; Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 139, relying mainly on the epigraphic record compiled by Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*.

The informal dispatches and letters that Hanfmann wrote from the field still make good reading.⁶ They anticipate in many ways the lively, often conjectural tone of online excavation blogs posted by field directors; as such they preserve a vivid narrative of discoveries made at Sardis from the archaic through medieval periods, but particularly, as it turned out, during Roman times—and this during the very years that late antiquity was gaining acceptance as a disciplinary field. The appearance of specialist reports over the following generation ensured that Sardis would occupy a prominent place in modern understanding of the period. The opening chapter of Clive Foss's 1976 book, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis*, gives a sweeping overview of the site from the third through sixth centuries that stands as a landmark synthesis of historical and material evidence in writing urban history. Drawing upon the results of nearly 20 years of excavation, his account remains one of the best-known studies of a late classical city in the eastern Mediterranean. This paper builds on these foundations by reviewing 30 years of further investigation and asking what they add to the story the site can tell.

Sardis's contribution to the archaeology of late antiquity rests mainly on excavations carried out in the northwest part of the urban site. The most significant achievements to date include the following: clearing and reconstructing part of the great Bath-Gymnasium Complex, and so tangibly illustrating the scale of Roman urbanism; identifying and displaying the synagogue, the largest such building known from antiquity; excavating a row of street-side residences or shops and inventorying their considerable contents; and publishing monographic studies of coins, glass, metals, and sculpture. Together with volumes on earlier occupation phases, these publications have made Sardis a key reference point in classical studies.⁷ Since 1976, work directed by Crawford H. Greenewalt, Jr., has brought attention to other parts of the site and its environs. This second phase of exploration has produced major discoveries about life in the archaic settlement, of Sardis during the Hellenistic period, and about the Roman city's extent and organization between the first and seventh centuries.⁸ Unsurprisingly, traces of late antiquity have been found to be nearly ubiquitous, appearing in abundance from the edge of the Hermus plain to the northern slopes of the acropolis, and along the rising valley of the Pactolus river as well (fig. 1). At the same time, it has been shown that natural landscape changes have left most early habitation levels deeply buried, beyond the reach of casual sampling and remote sensing, but preserved for future excavation.⁹

Sardis occupies a strategic location in the central valley of the Hermus river, the second longest watercourse draining the western Anatolian plateau to the Aegean sea.¹⁰ The situation must not have

⁶ G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Letters from Sardis* (Cambridge, MA 1972), covering the first 14 campaigns.

⁷ Final expedition reports dealing with Roman and later antiquity include G.E. Bates, *Byzantine Coins, Sardis M1* (Cambridge, MA 1971); Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*; G.M.A. Hanfmann and N.H. Ramage, *Sculpture from Sardis: The Finds through 1975, Sardis R2* (Cambridge, MA 1978); A. von Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass from Sardis, Sardis M6* (Cambridge, MA 1980); T.V. Buttrey, A. Johnston, K.M. MacKenzie, and M.L. Bates, *Greek, Roman, and Islamic Coins from Sardis, Sardis M7* (Cambridge, MA 1981); J.C. Waldbaum, *Metalwork from Sardis: The Finds through 1974, Sardis M8* (Cambridge, MA 1983); F.K. Yegül, *The Bath-Gymnasium Complex at Sardis, Sardis R3* (Cambridge, MA 1986); J.S. Crawford, *The Byzantine Shops at Sardis, Sardis M9* (Cambridge, MA 1990).

⁸ An illustrated overview of the site and its monuments is

assembled by C.H. Greenewalt, Jr., N.D. Cahill, P.T. Stinson, and F.K. Yegül, *The City of Sardis: Approaches in Graphic Recording* (Cambridge, MA 2003). For a summary of research focusing on the pre-Roman period, see C.H. Greenewalt, Jr., "Sardis," in W. Radt (ed.), *Stadtgrabungen und Stadtforschung im westlichen Kleinasien—Geplantes und Erreichtes, Byzas 3* (Istanbul 2006) 359–72.

⁹ W. Warfield, "Report on the geology of Sardis," in Butler, *Sardis*, 175–80; Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 54–55; G.W. Olson, "Landslides at Sardis in western Turkey," *Geological Society of America, Reviews in Engineering Geology* 3 (1977) 255–72; *BASOR* 245 (1982) 7–15. For remote sensing, see *BASOR* Suppl. 25 (1988) 55–92, at 62; *AJA* 102 (1998) 500–2; *AJA* 104 (2000) 679–80.

¹⁰ For the wider geographic setting, see C.H. Roosevelt, *The Archaeology of Lydia, from Gyges to Alexander* (Cambridge 2009) 33–58.

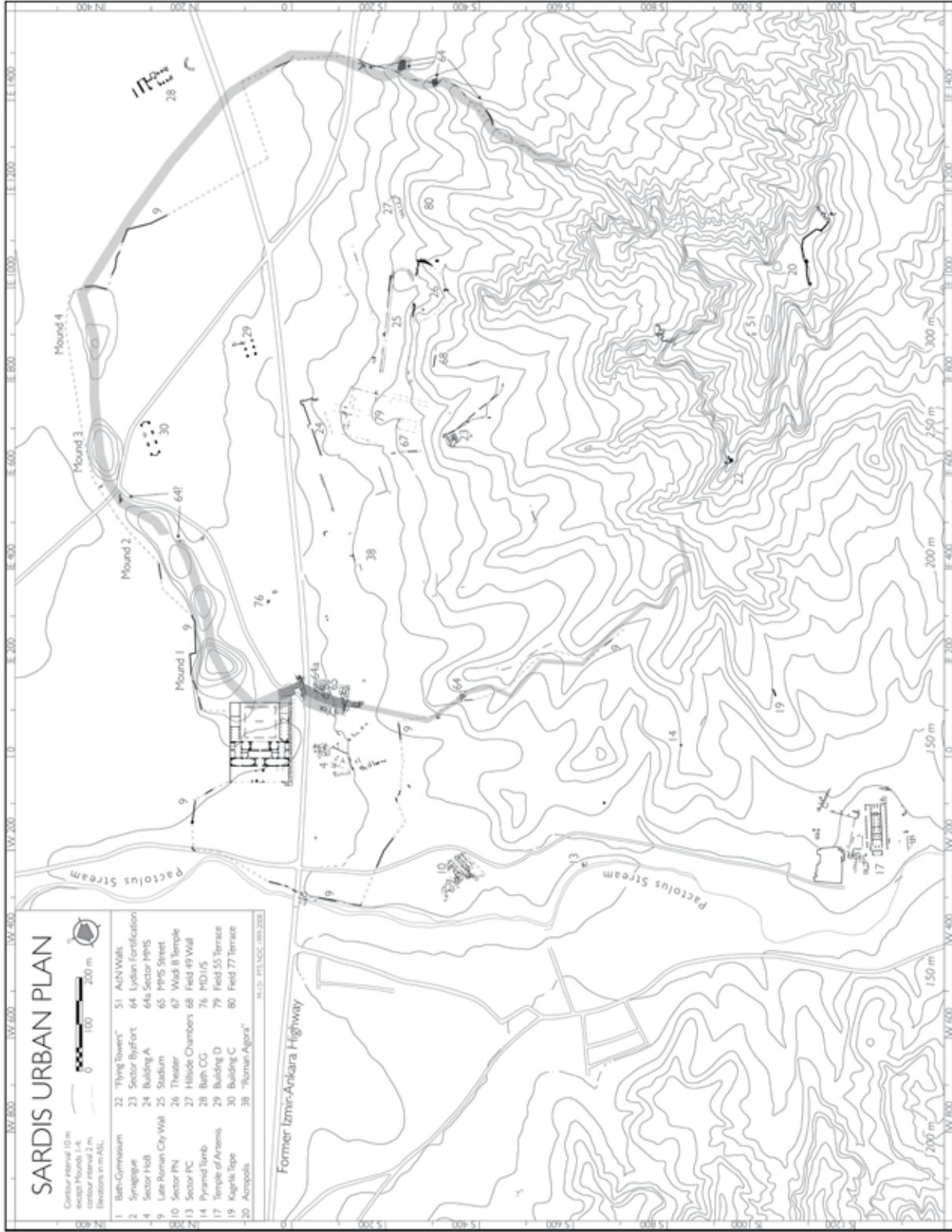


Fig. 1. Sardis, urban plan in late antiquity, with reconstructed circuit of Lydian fortification.



Fig. 2. Sardis, acropolis with theater, from the north.

been particularly convenient from the standpoint of Rome. Travel along the highway from Ephesus, Smyrna, or Pergamon could take up to three days to reach the center of inland Lydia, a geographically diverse territory stretching from the Ionian coast to the highlands of Phrygia. Much of the road ran through the broad, fertile plain of the Hermus valley, which was surrounded by mountains and dotted with the famous tumuli described by Herodotus. Tombs and mausolea of Hellenistic and Roman date appeared along the highway as the Roman traveler neared the city. Crossing the small but fabled Pactolus river, one arrived at Sardis itself (fig. 2).

This was one of the earliest, and surely among the best-known, urban centers of western Asia Minor, with nearly a millennium of occupation preceding late antiquity.¹¹ Traces of early settlement remain in shadow, but by the seventh to sixth centuries B.C. pockets of habitation had been established on the lower north-facing slopes of the acropolis and along the banks of the Pactolus. The most spectacular discovery of recent years has been the monumental fortification that surrounded the Lydian capital in the mid-sixth century B.C.: a massive structure of stone and mudbrick, some 20 m across at its base and rising more than 10 m high, that descended from the steep acropolis and pushed onto the plain. While most of archaic and Persian Sardis lies beneath deep layers of alluvium and landslide, it has become clear that terraces and buildings set up around this time shaped the terrain for generations to come. The framework of Hellenistic Sardis, either before or after Antiochus intervened in its affairs in 213 B.C., is less evident on the ground.¹² Of known urban monuments, only

¹¹ For the literary background, see J.G. Pedley, *Ancient Literary Sources, Sardis M2* (Cambridge, MA 1972).

¹² C.H. Greenewalt, Jr., "Sardis in the time of Xenophon," in P. Briant (ed.), *Dans les pas des Dix-Mille, Pallas* 43 (Aix 1995) 125–45; C. Ratté, "Reflections on the urban development of Hellenistic Sardis," in *Love for Lydia*, 125–33.

the theater in its earliest phase may plausibly date to this period. The sanctuary of Artemis, situated well apart from the city about 1 km up the Pactolus valley, was clearly an important place even if its appearance is unclear. Much that is known about Hellenistic Sardis takes the form of architectural or sculptural remains that were incorporated into later buildings, or pottery recovered from isolated houses and secondary fills laid down after the site's devastation by earthquake in A.D. 17.¹³

At this point the classical city begins to come into focus. A well-known passage in Tacitus (*Annals* 2.47) records the nocturnal earthquake that rocked western Asia and left Sardis critically damaged. Reconstruction is said to have begun immediately with the support of the imperial treasury under the supervision of a senate-appointed commissioner. Like massive relief operations of recent times, urban recovery must have progressed slowly and was never completed as planned.¹⁴ Clearing debris and restoring essential public services no doubt claimed the highest priority. A series of public commemorations attests imperial interest in the city and other parts of the province. A large statue base found in the western city honors the deified Tiberius as "founder of the city," and a municipal temple dedicated to him is known. Germanicus is similarly honored as "kaisara theon sebaston" in an enormous inscription set up by Caligula.¹⁵ An inscription of A.D. 53/54 commemorates the completion under Claudius of an aqueduct; the presence of standing piers, mortar-lined channels, and terracotta pipes in the surrounding hills and valleys makes clear that multiple sources were eventually needed to supply the city.¹⁶ Excavation regularly encounters thick layers of occupation debris of late Hellenistic and Augustan date, which were leveled to form broad shelves, sometimes 2–3 m deep, on the lower hillslopes and plain.¹⁷

Recent work has confirmed several key components of Sardis's first-century A.D. reconstruction near the center of the urban site. The combined efforts of topographic study, remote sensing, and selective excavation have sketched the outlines of three great public buildings on the north side of the acropolis: the theater, the stadium, and a temple that faced onto a vast terrace. The theater is the most easterly known monument of the upper city and likely stood atop the remains of a Hellenistic predecessor. The hillside preserves the unmistakable shape of the cavea, which may have accommodated 12,000–15,000 spectators, and both parados walls have long been visible to travelers through the area.¹⁸ Recent excavation on the theater's western slope has identified substantial parts of the eroded structure, including mortared foundations for seats and an intact section of the marble-paved diazoma. The lower cavea and orchestra are still filled by as much as 7 m of tumbled architectural debris, which includes fragments of the building's decoration and seats, some inscribed. Further

¹³ For recent assessment of excavated contexts, see S.I. Rotroff, *Hellenistic Pottery from Sardis, Sardis M13* (Cambridge, MA 2003) 11–15.

¹⁴ The slow pace of reconstruction may have been one reason why nine years later Sardis lost to Smyrna in competing to host the provincial temple honoring Tiberius (Tacitus, *Annals* 4.55–56).

¹⁵ For the Tiberius inscription, set up under Claudius and found at Sector MMS/N, see *BASOR* 29 (1983) 13, fig. 15; C. Foss, "Appendix: Inscriptions related to the complex," in Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (supra n. 7), 169 no. 1, fig. 32. Comparable language appears in an inscription seen at Turgutlu, about 30 km west of Sardis, and published in Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 57 no. 39. For the 2 m-long block honoring Germanicus, see *BASOR* 203 (1971) 14. All three

documents are discussed by P. Herrmann, "Sardeis zur Zeit der iulisch-claudischen Kaiser," in E. Schwertheim (ed.), *Forschungen in Lydien, Asia Minor Studien* 17 (Bonn 1995) 21–36, at 31–36. I have benefited from consulting Professor Herrmann's unfinished manuscript on the Sardis inscriptions.

¹⁶ Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 29 no. 10; E. Winter, *Staatliche Baupolitik und Baufürsorge in den römischen Provinzen des kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien, Asia Minor Studien* 20 (Bonn 1996) 180; Herrmann, "Sardeis" (supra n. 15), 31–35. Parts of the aqueduct were traced by Butler (*Sardis*, 35–36, map 1), and are still visible.

¹⁷ Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 141; *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 22.1 (2000) 416–17.

¹⁸ Butler, *Sardis*, 31; R.L. Vann, *The Unexcavated Buildings of Sardis, BAR-IS 538* (Oxford 1989) 47–58.



Fig. 3. Sardis, theater, east parados wall and excavation of stage building area.

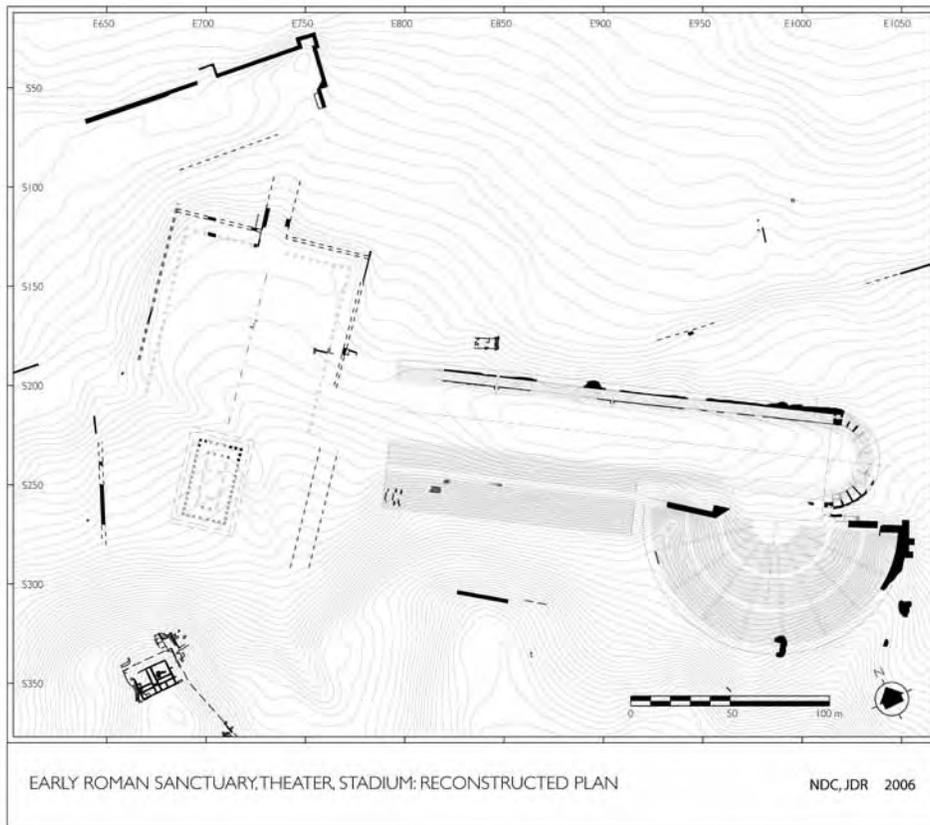


Fig. 4. Sardis, reconstructed plan of Roman temple complex, stadium, and theater.

work to the north of the orchestra indicates that many pieces of the freestanding stage building, two or three stories in height and richly decorated in an Asiatic Ionic or related style, lie close to where they originally stood (fig. 3).¹⁹

Planning and construction of the theater were closely coordinated with the adjacent stadium. The vaulted semicircular *sphendone* lies immediately to the north of the stage building. Long rows of seats were supported by the hillside and vaulted substructures, which stretched westward over a length of some 200 m. The stadium ends below a projecting acropolis spur known as Field 55. Excavation of several sondages on this flat area has established the outlines of a large artificial terrace with deep foundations. At the center of the north side, a 14 m-wide staircase supported by a quadrant vault rose 5 m to the level of an expansive platform, some 100 m wide and 2 ha in area, which apparently was bounded by a portico on columns. Situated on axis to the south, today in a ravine known as Wadi B, was a large Ionic or Corinthian temple, octastyle and pseudoperipteral in plan, with a 22 m-wide façade that would have dominated the precinct (fig. 4).²⁰ The massive amount of architectural debris that has been found along the terrace's eastern edge likely comes from the superstructure of temple and portico: large column bases, fluted shafts, historiated capitals, and finely finished blocks, many inscribed with personal names and formulaic texts honoring as "twice *neokoros*" this metropolis of Asia and all Lydia.²¹ The stratigraphy of terrace and temple foundations suggests that the precinct's development was a sustained effort that began around the middle of the first century A.D. and continued into the second century, a span that broadly applies to the stadium and theater as well. The planning, scale, and execution of all three structures indicate that this was a major initiative, comparable in many ways to the Tiberian-Claudian effort of an earlier generation. Throughout its prolonged construction, this civic showcase would have been a conspicuous feature of the city.²²

Most of Roman Sardis lay below the level of this vast complex, on the lower hillside and along the edge of the Hermus plain. Inscriptions mention the typical landmarks of urban life during the high empire: streets with public squares and fountains; an agora, archive, basilica, and odeum; multiple baths, confraternities, and temples.²³ None of these features can be securely located, but topography clearly favored the lower and more accessible parts of the site. The direction of projected growth can be inferred from a pair of large public baths: the western Bath-Gymnasium Complex and the eastern Bath CG. These roughly contemporary buildings stood 1400 m apart, along the main highway as it approached the city from both sides. Their peripheral siting suggests that city planners anticipated development far to the northwest and northeast, onto land that may still have

¹⁹ For excavation carried out since 2006, see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 29.3 (2007) 372–74, figs. 4–8; *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 30.4 (2008) 194, fig. 11.

²⁰ The temple's northeast corner was identified in 1981–1982; see C. Ratté, T.N. Howe, and C. Foss, "An early imperial pseudodipteral temple at Sardis," *AJA* 90 (1986) 45–68. Excavation in 2004–2005 established its breadth and northerly orientation; see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 27.2 (2005) 176, fig. 9. The possibility of *neokoros* status for the temple is considered by B. Burrell, *Neokoroi. Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (Leiden 2004) 100–3; and R.S. Ascough, "Greco-Roman religions in Sardis and Smyrna," in R.S. Ascough (ed.), *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna, Studies in Christianity and Judaism* 14 (Waterloo, ON 2005) 40–52, at 44.

²¹ Sardis received its second *neokoros* under the Anto-

nines; see Burrell, *Neokoroi* (supra n. 20), 103. The inscriptions from Field 55 are unpublished but employ similar language to Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 74–78 nos. 63–70. They may be later than the temple and not directly reflect its status, but certainly predate the area's destruction.

²² *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 28.2 (2006) 743–45, fig. 1; N.D. Cahill, "Mapping Sardis," in *Love for Lydia*, 111–24. Some work on the Wadi B temple may still have been underway when it was destroyed by an earthquake, apparently in the late second or early third century.

²³ Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, particularly the late second-century list of fountains, 37–40 no. 17. Vitruvius (2.8.9–10) and Pliny (*Natural History* 35.172) record that the *gerousia* still met in the remodeled mudbrick palace of Croesus, a dubious tradition that nevertheless suggests a prominent hillside location, similar to Pergamon.

been used for burials.²⁴ Excavation has established that these quintessential Roman buildings may have been begun in the second half of the first century A.D., but were still under construction in the early 200s.²⁵ As elsewhere, these massive vaulted structures were among the most essential of urban amenities and would have been among the first buildings seen by travelers coming from west and east.

The lower city occupies the plain between the two baths, its deeply buried remains imperfectly glimpsed by remote sensing.²⁶ Excavated structures and other visible features nevertheless attest the presence of a coherent urban grid that presumably was laid out around the mid-first century A.D. and developed over the following generations. One or two major thoroughfares spanning the lower site seem to have established the orientation of important cross streets and buildings.²⁷ The fact that second- and third-century levels have not often been found by excavation elsewhere suggests that most people lived in this little-explored central region. The historical record makes clear the city's status at the time. By the Antonine period, civic concerns reached up the Pactolus valley to the suburban Artemis Temple, whose Hellenistic cella was remodeled to serve as a center of the imperial cult. The Marble Court's dedication to the Severan family in A.D. 211 and the award of a third neokorate under Elagabalus document Sardis's growing urban distinction.²⁸

Many of these buildings of the high empire, powerfully built and of imposing scale, would stand for centuries to come, even as the city around them changed during late antiquity. An event of central importance was Diocletian's raising of Sardis to the rank of provincial capital, a decision that suggests the earthquakes and Gothic invasions of the later third century had not seriously affected the area.²⁹ The city's new status may have had little immediate impact on the lives of local inhabitants, but it ensured that Sardis would be among the places that benefited from the government's move to Constantinople and its growing interest in the Asian heartland. The newly organized province of Lydia included more than 20 cities scattered across the Hermus valley and its surrounding hill country.³⁰ Administering this expanse would have been the responsibility of a centrally appointed governor who occupied an official *praetorium*; the location of this ceremonial residence and political center is unknown, but its urban prominence is clear from other cities. Within a few years the state had also established a major factory for the production of armaments and shields, named in the *Register of Dignitaries* but unidentified on the ground, to supply troops throughout the diocese of Asia.³¹

²⁴ Late Hellenistic and Roman burials have been identified at the western Sector HoB and beyond the eastern city walls near Çaltılı; see Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 125 no. 146; Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 123–24; *BASOR* 26 (1990) 161–64.

²⁵ J.C. Waldbaum and G.M.A. Hanfmann, "The Roman Bath CG: Site, plan, and description," in Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 129–50; Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (supra n. 7), 9–16.

²⁶ For geophysical survey of the area, see *AJA* 102 (1998) 500–2; *AJA* 104 (2000) 679–80.

²⁷ Suggested by Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 30, fig. 10; and much refined by Cahill, "Mapping Sardis" (supra n. 22).

²⁸ Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*; for a descriptive overview, see Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 144–48. For the Artemis Temple's status as the city's second *neokoros* foundation, see Burrell, *Neokoroi* (supra n. 20), 103–10; for the third, 110–11.

²⁹ The localized effects of earthquakes and Goths are clear at Ephesus, but less evident at Aphrodisias; see S. Ladstätter

and A. Pülz, "Ephesus in the late Roman and early Byzantine period: Changes in its urban character from the third to the seventh century A.D.," in A.G. Poulter (ed.), *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond*, *ProcBritAc* 141 (London 2007) 391–433; compare C. Ratté, "New research on the urban development of Aphrodisias in late antiquity," in D. Parrish (ed.), *Urbanism in Western Asia Minor*, *JRA Suppl.* 45 (Portsmouth, RI 2001) 117–47, at 140–44.

³⁰ P. Herrmann, *Tituli Lydiae*, *TAM* 5 (Vienna 1981–1989); for the setting, see S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1993) 180–83; on the scarcity of sources, idem, "The cities of Asia Minor in the Age of Constantine," in S.N.C. Lieu and D. Montserrat (eds.), *Constantine. History, Historiography, and Legend* (London 1998) 52–73.

³¹ For *praetoria* and their functions, see L. Lavan, "The residences of late antique governors: A gazetteer," *Antiquité tardive* 7 (1999) 135–64, concerning Sardis, 147–48; idem, "The *praetoria* of civil governors in late antiquity," in L. Lavan (ed.), *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, *JRA*



Fig. 5. Sardis, view of western quarters with city wall and Bath-Gymnasium Complex, looking north.

Safeguarding while at the same time advertising these strategic assets necessitated the building of fortifications, and most of the city wall appears to date around this time. While much of the wall has eroded or been quarried away, surviving sections indicate an open circuit of about 4 km that capitalized on the site's topography. Originating on the westernmost spur of the acropolis, the wall projected 400–600 m onto the plain, proceeded along a series of low mounds eastward about 1 km, and returned along the most easterly ridge, just beyond the theater. One of the most informative discoveries of recent years has been to see how closely late Roman builders followed the course of the archaic mudbrick fortification, whose monumental remains have been documented in several locations (fig. 1).³² In some places mortared rubble foundations were built immediately next to the archaic structure, which would have been at least 800 years old by this time; elsewhere the two walls may have functioned together, with the later construction closing gaps in the eroding yet still imposing mudbrick defenses. The main departure from precedent is the late Roman wall's 400 m westward extension toward the Pactolus river. On the south side the wall was built atop a sloping mound of residential debris, substantially deposited in the aftermath of the Tiberian earthquake. To the north the builders went out of their way, perhaps scaling back earlier plans, to include the north flank of the western Bath-Gymnasium Complex in the circuit (fig. 5). Protecting this huge structure

Suppl. 42 (Portsmouth, RI 2001) 39–56. For arms production, see Foss, *Sardis*, 14–15; S. James, “The *fabricae*: State arms factories of the later Roman empire,” in J.C. Coulston (ed.), *Military Equipment and the Identity of Roman Soldiers. Proceedings of the Fourth Roman Military Equipment Conference*, BAR-IS 394 (Oxford 1988) 257–331.

³² *AJA* 104 (2000) 656–68; *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 22.1 (2000) 416–17. Compare supra n. 23 for the Roman view of

archaic mudbrick architecture at Sardis; and for the larger context, see F.K. Yegül, “Memory, metaphor, and meaning in the cities of Asia Minor,” in E. Fentress (ed.), *Romanization and the City. Creation, Transformations, and Failures*, *JRA* Suppl. 38 (Portsmouth, RI 2000) 133–53; and F. Rojas, *Empire of Memories: Anatolian Material Culture and the Imagined Past in Hellenistic and Roman Lydia* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley 2010).

must have been among the builders' primary objectives since a great deal of the enclosed terrain was undeveloped. Altogether the annexation increased the total area of the fortified archaic site by about 20 ha, or nearly 18 per cent.³³

Most of the wall takes the form of short sections of mortared rubble masonry, deeply founded and nearly 2 m thick, which stand as high as 6–8 m (fig. 6).³⁴ Design, materials, and construction methods vary considerably along its length. Sections covering level terrain generally are 5–10 m long and join at sharp angles. The fabric consists mainly of fieldstones set in mortar along with very little brick. Reused architectural blocks appear in foundations and lower courses in several places, particularly on the west side of the city. Four towers of rectangular and rounded plan are known, with variations in design and construction probably reflecting different dates. Nothing remains of the main portals that greeted travelers along the valley highway, although these likely resembled the gates once seen at Philadelphia (Alaşehir), 60 km to the east.³⁵ The smaller road from Hypaepa may have arrived at a narrow opening known as the Southwest Gate, or more plausibly entered the city through a larger portal nearby.

The late Roman city wall marks a turning point in the history of Sardis, yet its date has remained unsettled. From the later third century municipal authorities across the empire were encouraged by the state to build their own fortifications, a move that fundamentally changed the appearance and routines of many classical poleis.³⁶ Moments of military threat in western Asia Minor could favor a date for the Sardis wall in either the mid-third or late fourth century; building the imperial arms factory here more specifically implies that the location was considered secure by the time of Constantine.³⁷ It may be equally reasonable to view the wall in more than strategic terms, however, as part of



Fig. 6. Sardis, section of western city wall, looking north.

³³ The area south of the Bath-Gymnasium was used for burials through at least the second century; Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 123–24; *BASOR* 249 (1983) 15–20; *BASOR* Suppl. 26 (1990) 161–64. For estimates of area, see Greenewalt, “Sardis” (supra n. 8), 364 n. 18.

³⁴ Standing remains are described in D. van Zanten, R.S. Thomas, and G.M.A. Hanfmann, “The city wall,” in Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 35–52; see also C. Foss and D. Winfield, *Byzantine Fortifications: An Introduction* (Pretoria 1986) 127–28.

³⁵ A. Pralong, “Les remparts de Philadelphie,” in H. Ahrweiler (ed.), *Philadelphie et autres études, Byzantina Sorbonensia* 4 (Paris 1984) 101–26.

³⁶ For similar considerations at mid-fourth-century Aphrodisias, see P.D. De Staebler, “The city wall and the making of a late-antique provincial capital,” in C. Ratté and R.R.R. Smith (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers 4. New Research on the City and its Monuments*, *JRA* Suppl. 70 (Portsmouth, RI 2008) 284–319.

³⁷ Foss, *Sardis*, 3, 7; James, “*Fabricae*” (supra n. 31), 267; compare Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 143–44; also Mitchell, *Anatolia*, vol. 1 (supra n. 30), 234–36; J. Crow, “Fortifications and urbanism in late antiquity: Thessaloniki and other eastern cities,” in Lavan (ed.), *Recent Research* (supra n. 31), 89–105. This also suggests the fortifications encompassed enough open terrain to accommodate a major industrial facility.

an ongoing effort to project a new urban identity throughout antiquity. Construction of a number of vaulted *hypogaea* outside the western wall in the mid- to late fourth century reflects the interest of urban elites in burial close to town.³⁸ The wall's westward extension clearly encouraged the systematic development of the enclosed area in the early fifth century.³⁹ The few stratified deposits that can be associated with the Sardis city wall include finds dating through at least the third century, yet other sections received attention in the fourth century and later. In some places the late Roman wall seems to have replaced parts of the archaic fortification that had remained standing until then.⁴⁰ Certainly no surviving section of the city wall resembles the neatly banded brick and limestone masonry seen on the acropolis in the western portal known as the Flying Towers, nor the massive spoils-work of the fortified summit. The very different fabric, design, and objective of these high walls suggest the work of military engineers who were detailed to the site in later times, perhaps in the late seventh or eighth century, rather than an initiative of local authorities.⁴¹

Altogether the late Roman fortification encloses an area of nearly 130 ha, whose 50,000–100,000 inhabitants would have filled a substantial city by contemporary standards. Changing urban priorities appear clearly in the wall's relation to existing features, particularly the decision to incorporate the western Bath-Gymnasium Complex and its southern environs while excluding the eastern Bath CG. Parts of Bath CG were renovated in late antiquity, with some spaces partitioned and decorated with marble incrustation–style paintings, but how late public bathing continued here is unclear. By the fifth century the location had become remote; there are few signs of nearby habitation, and supplying water to the area would have been increasingly burdensome.⁴² By contrast, much of the Bath-Gymnasium Complex was conscientiously maintained by local patrons and government officials through the fifth and sixth centuries. Continuing public interest in the facility—its ostentatious Marble Court, the colonnaded palaestra onto which it faced, and the gatherings that took place here—coincides with the local quarter's development in the 400s.⁴³ Fifty years of excavation have documented how this activity extended to the construction of new streets, imposing public buildings, and elegant private houses. Equally important is the realization that not all parts of the city shared in this expansion.

The scale of development appears clearly in street building. The main thoroughfare of western Sardis was the so-called Marble Road, a broad colonnaded passage that stretched along the south side of the Bath-Gymnasium Complex. In its early form the Marble Road had no clear urban importance, but its reconstruction ca. A.D. 400, presumably as far as a major gate in the new city wall, would have created a grand concourse for travelers coming from the west. Excavation has documented a 20 m-wide paved

³⁸ For the painted tomb of Flavios Chrysanthios (Tomb 76.1), a high-ranking official in the arms factory, see *BASOR* 229 (1978) 61–64; *BASOR* 233 (1979) 4–8. Several other vaulted tombs have been found nearby, two relatively close to the city wall; see *infra* n. 87.

³⁹ The discovery of a late fourth-century burial in a painted *hypogaeum* (Tomb 79.1) east of the Pactolus might be taken to support a later date for the fortifications, but probably shows that the city wall's construction did not end traditional burial practices in this intra-mural yet still undeveloped area; see *BASOR* 239 (1983) 22–25. Another nearby *hypogaeum* (Tomb 07.1), also located within the walls, continued to be visited as late as the seventh century; see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 30.4 (2008) 193–94.

⁴⁰ For recent exploration of the upper western wall (Sec-

tor CW32), see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 22.1 (2000) 416, figs. 5–6; for the eastern wall (Sector CW6), *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 23.2 (2001) 228, figs. 3–4. Compare the multiple phases of Pergamon's fortifications, as documented by M. Klinkott, *Altertümer von Pergamon XVI. Die Stadtmauern. Teil 1. Die byzantinischen Befestigungsanlagen von Pergamon* (Berlin 2001) 8–33.

⁴¹ *BASOR* 203 (1971) 12, fig. 8; Foss, *Sardis*, 57–61; Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, fig. 24.

⁴² Waldbaum and Hanfmann, "Bath CG" (*supra* n. 25), 139, 163–65. At some point, perhaps still in late antiquity, the area was flooded and buried by alluvium.

⁴³ Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (*supra* n. 7), 49–51, fig. 124 for late graffiti suggesting the *boule* and *gerousia* met in the Marble Court.



Fig. 7. Sardis, Marble Road, north colonnade, and Byzantine Shops, looking east.

surface flanked by porticoes and a row of modest structures known as the Byzantine Shops (fig. 7). To the east the Marble Road met a broad paved plaza or square at Sector MMS/N, which was redeveloped about the same time. The south portico's oblique orientation here continues the northeasterly alignment of streets in central Sardis. Other passages from the north and south converged on this public expanse, which linked the Bath-Gymnasium Complex with the rest of the city. The renovation of both Marble Road and plaza underscores their increasing ceremonial and commercial roles in the life of the city.⁴⁴

Two roads to the south appear to be new creations of the period. One is an 18 m-wide colonnaded street running diagonally across the House of Bronzes sector (HoB) toward the Southwest Gate. A multi-pier structure built of marble spolia with a brick-arched superstructure marks its intersection with a second street in Sector MMS. This equally broad, sloping thoroughfare had a 10 m roadway flanked by porticoes supported by large piers and semi-finished columns. Construction of the MMS street was an ambitious project that entailed cutting a trough, 20 m wide and 3–4 m deep, through the area. Doing so required late Roman excavators to remove parts of existing houses as well as the buried remains of the archaic fortification, which they selectively incorporated into the new street wall (fig. 8). None of this new street seems to have been paved, however. Limited excavation of the roadway and both porticos has revealed only packed earth surfaces that rose gradually, from the time of construction ca. A.D. 400 through the sixth century. The apparent goal was to extend the line of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17–24; Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* (supra n. 7), 3–11. For the MMS/N plaza, see AASOR 53 (1995) 4–6. The Marble Road offered only incidental access to the Bath-Gymnasium, whose main entrance was directly from the plaza or a short colonnaded street leading from it. For monumental urban corridors, see G. Bejor, *Vie colonnate. Paesaggi urbani del mondo antico*, RdA Suppl. 22 (Rome 1999); D. Parrish, “The urban plan and its constituent ele-

ments,” in Parrish (ed.), *Urbanism* (supra n. 29), 9–41; and P. Ballet, N. Dieudonné-Glad, and C. Saliou (eds.), *La rue dans l'antiquité. Définition, aménagement, devenir* (Renes 2008); compare L. Lavan, “The political topography of the late antique city: Activity spaces in practice,” in L. Lavan and W. Bowden (eds.), *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology, Late Antique Archaeology 1* (Leiden 2003) 314–37, at 327–31.



Fig. 8. Sardis, MMS street, north colonnade, and remains of Lydian fortification, looking east.

a principal thoroughfare from central Sardis into the new western quarter. An inscription found at the intersection of the two streets identifies one of them as an *embolos* that ran from an unidentified tetrapylon to the *embolos* of Hypaepa, presumably meaning the colonnaded street that led in the direction of the Southwest Gate. An associated text preserves the language of civic euergetism by announcing that this considerable undertaking was carried out without public expense.⁴⁵

Official support is attested elsewhere at Sardis. The emperor Valens is said to have stayed at the site while on campaign ca. A.D. 365, and Arcadius is named by a monumental inscription datable to A.D. 398.⁴⁶ Several civic and provincial officials were involved with work at the Bath-Gymnasium Complex. Basiliskos, a governor of Lydia, relocated a gilded bronze sculpture of entwined snakes from a public fountain to a pool inside the bath. Severos Simplikios, vicar of the diocese of Asia, is credited on the architrave of the Marble Court with restoring the *aleipterion*, apparently meaning the entire complex.⁴⁷ The nearby MMS/N plaza was decorated by Flavios Archelaos, another *vicarius Asiae*, whose name and title were set in mosaic to greet visitors entering the quarter from the east.⁴⁸ A lengthy epigram

on the Marble Court podium recalls the restoration of this imposing space by Memnonios, *pater poleos*.⁴⁹ All this activity is difficult to date closely but shows that a continuing engagement with civic patronage ran through the fifth and sixth centuries.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ BASOR 177 (1965) 14–17; BASOR 199 (1970) 28–29. BASOR Suppl. 25 (1988) 18–20 clarifies the urban context for the inscriptions published by Foss, *Sardis*, 115 nos. 18–19. The project's expressly ambiguous sponsorship may reflect the incomplete state in which it was left.

⁴⁶ Zosimus 4.4–8; Ammianus Marcellinus 26.5.8–10.6; Foss, *Sardis*, 7–8. For the unpublished Arcadius inscription, see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 23.2 (2001) 229.

⁴⁷ Foss, *Sardis*, 113–15 nos. 15, 17; Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (supra n. 7), 12–14, 171 nos. 6–7. For the title (“*lamprotatou kometos protou bathmou*”) and other office holders, see D. Feissel, “*Vicaires et proconsuls d’Asie du IV^e au VI^e siècle*,” *Antiquité tardive* 6 (1998) 91–104, at 96–97.

⁴⁸ AASOR 52 (1994) 6–7, fig. 6; V. Scheibelreiter, *Stifterinschriften auf Mosaiken Westkleinasiens*, *Tyche* Suppl. 5 (Vienna 2006) 33–35. For the local context of the name, see

G. Petzl, *Tituli Lydiae. Philadelpheia et Ager Philadelphenus*, *TAM* 5.3 (Vienna 2007) 50.

⁴⁹ Foss, *Sardis*, 114 no. 16; Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (supra n. 7), 34, 171–72 no. 7. It has been suggested that the text was composed ca. A.D. 570 by the poet and historian Agathias in honor of his father; R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten 1. Die Westküste Kleinasiens von Knidos bis Ilion* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1998) 402 no. 04/03/04. However, the name is also known locally from a prominent donor of the synagogue; see J.H. Kroll, “The Greek inscriptions of the Sardis synagogue,” *HTR* 94 (2001) 5–127, at 40–41 no. 63.

⁵⁰ Coins and pottery date the Flavios Archelaos mosaic to the mid-fifth century. It is tempting to see an earlier drain complex excavated here, out of use by A.D. 400, as the source of Basiliskos’s serpent fountain, or at least broadly related to renewal of the city’s water supply at the time.

Some degree of official authorization is implicit in the closing of temples and the dismantling of abandoned public structures.⁵¹ The sanctuary of Artemis south of the city seems to have become a minor habitation center around this time. By the late fourth or early fifth century the temple no longer functioned, its cult having been abandoned or suppressed and its fabric neutralized by multiple incised crosses and other Christian graffiti.⁵² A small chapel known as Church M was built immediately next to the great structure ca. A.D. 400.⁵³ The temple at Wadi B had apparently collapsed by the early third century, leaving its superstructure and foundations to be thoroughly quarried and burnt for lime during late antiquity.⁵⁴ By the early fifth century parts of the Field 55 terrace were occupied by shops and houses, at least one with attractively painted walls.⁵⁵ Official concern would certainly have extended to the nearby stadium and theater, and these buildings may have continued in use a little longer. The considerable architectural debris encountered in the theater obscures the latest activity levels in the lower cavea and orchestra, but at the same time demonstrates that the structure was not entirely robbed for other purposes.⁵⁶

The construction of new temples in the form of churches is poorly attested at Sardis, and it remains uncertain whether deliberate steps were taken to Christianize its urban topography.⁵⁷ One would expect Sardis, an ancient see whose metropolitan status was recognized by the Council of Nicaea, to have had an episcopal basilica by the fourth century. Apart from the small Church M at the Artemis Temple, however, the only securely identified example is Church EA. This building was found along the road to Hypaepa, about 120 m outside the southwestern city wall in Sector PN. The peripheral location, on a low bluff overlooking the Pactolus river, apparently relates to earlier burials in the area, which the building may have served as either a martyrium or cemetery church. The 30 m-long plan includes a basilica with three aisles preceded by an atrium and eventually flanked by several chapels. The proposed foundation date in the later fourth century would make this one of the earliest known churches in Asia.⁵⁸ The nearby construction of a small bath and residence, beautifully furnished with mosaic floors, reflects the growth of this suburban quarter in the fifth century.⁵⁹

By contrast, urban churches at Sardis are nearly invisible, and this at a time when small towns and even villages across the empire were building multiple basilicas.⁶⁰ The most likely candidate for a church within the city is the unexcavated Building D, a large structure located near the center of the lower city (fig. 9). The unexcavated building is known almost entirely by its five massive piers,

⁵¹ J. Alchermes, "Spolia in Roman cities of the late empire: Legislative rationales and architectural reuse," *DOP* 48 (1994) 167–78; H.G. Saradi, *The Byzantine City in the Sixth Century. Literary Images and Historical Reality* (Athens 2006) 355–56.

⁵² For varied disposition of the cult images, see Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 193; *AJA* 104 (2000) 675–76. For Christian graffiti, see W.H. Buckler and D.M. Robinson, "Greek inscriptions from Sardes IV," *AJA* 18 (1914) 35–74, at 44 no. 12, fig. 5; idem, *Inscriptions*, 145–46 no. 184; compare mandates to purify pagan monuments by incising crosses on them (*Theodosian Code* 16.10, 25).

⁵³ For the date, Butler, *Sardis*, 113; Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 195.

⁵⁴ Ratté et al., "Temple" (supra n. 20), 67. Lime burning also took place on the terrace above the Wadi B temple, at Sector ByzFort, in the later sixth century; see *BASOR* Suppl. 25 (1988) 35–36.

⁵⁵ *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 28.2 (2006) 745, fig. 7; M. Rautman, "The aura of affluence: Domestic scenery in late

Roman Sardis," in *Love for Lydia*, 147–58, at 155, pl. 19.

⁵⁶ Much of the theater's quarrying is understood to have occurred in the early 20th century.

⁵⁷ See recently G. Brands and H.-G. Severin (eds.), *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung* (Wiesbaden 2003); Saradi, *Byzantine City* (supra n. 51), 385–439.

⁵⁸ For Church EA, see H. Buchwald, "Early Christian Basilica EA and Church E," in Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 196–204, and his forthcoming final report on these buildings.

⁵⁹ For the bath and residence at Sector PN, see *BASOR* 162 (1961) 24–29; *BASOR* 166 (1962) 15–19; *BASOR* 170 (1963) 18–23; *BASOR* 174 (1964) 20–24.

⁶⁰ A fragmentary cornice or lintel invoking the *episkopou theos* was recorded in the late 19th century; Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 149 no. 190. The block's large size (at least 0.90 by 0.405 m) and lettering suggest it came from the cathedral, *episkopeion*, or other substantial building of the fifth or sixth century.



Fig. 9. Sardis, Building D, northwest pier, looking north.

Complex (fig. 10). For a diaspora synagogue the scale is without parallel and the orientation to the west is unusual. These features, like the resemblance to Christian basilicas, reflect the special circumstances of the site and the progressive adaptation of standing remains to new purposes. In its main phase the synagogue consisted of a hall over 18 m wide. At the west end was a broad apse with three-tiered semicircular *synthronon*. Three doorways joined the main hall with a peristyle court to the east. Six pairs of piers, carefully built of reused marble blocks, supported a pitched roof spanning the 12 m-wide nave, a clear span greater than some nearby streets.⁶² Liturgical furnishings included a monumental table assembled of sculptural spolia and two aedicular shrines, presumably for storing the Torah. Several carved and inscribed menorahs found nearby clearly establish its intended use.⁶³

Both the main hall and forecourt of the synagogue were paved with mosaics. The hall features 21 mosaic panels consisting mainly of geometric ornament, with the image of a kantharos amid

which stand to a height of about 10 m. Two elliptical domes or domical vaults are thought to have spanned the 14 m interval between piers. A sixth-century construction date has been proposed on the basis of scale, vaulting forms, and the many architectural spoils built into its piers. An inscription naming the emperor Arcadius was found near one pier, which suggests that by this time at least one major foundation of the late fourth century had become available for reuse. Several of the pier blocks resemble Severan-period ornament seen in the Bath-Gymnasium Complex, whose Marble Court and palaestra were partially restored in the fifth century. The uneven assembly of large blocks contrasts with the careful selection and close fitting of spolia in other buildings, however, and makes possible a slightly later date as well.⁶¹

Viewed against this background, it is all the more striking that the most impressive known religious foundation of late Roman Sardis is a synagogue. This imposing structure consists of an 80 m-long hall with forecourt that was built into the south palaestra wing of the Bath-Gymnasium

⁶¹ Compare the masonry piers of the second- to third-century Building C, discussed in Vann, *Unexcavated Buildings* (supra n. 18), 23–39. For Building D, see Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 196; H. Buchwald, “Western Asia Minor as a generator of architectural forms: Provincial back-wash or dynamic center of production?” *JÖB* 34 (1984) 199–234, at 209–12. For a recent structural assessment, see N.D. Karydis, *Early Byzantine Vaulted Construction in Churches of the Western Coastal Plains and River Valleys of Asia Minor* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Bath 2010).

⁶² The form and chronology of the synagogue are laid out by A.R. Seager, “The building history of the Sardis synagogue,” *AJA* 76 (1972) 425–35; idem, “The building,” in Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 168–78. For a recent reconstruction, see Greenewalt et al., *City of Sardis* (supra n. 8), figs. 114–15 no. 40.

⁶³ Seager, “Building” (supra n. 62), 175–76; D.G. Mitten and A.F. Scorziello, “Reappropriating antiquity: Some spolia from the synagogue at Sardis,” in *Love for Lydia*, 135–46; M. Rautman, “Two menorahs from the synagogue at Sardis,” *Qadmoniyot* 43 (2010) 44–48 (in Hebrew).



Fig. 10. Sardis, synagogue, looking southeast.

graceful vines covering the floor of the apse. Other panels included the names of individual donors, of which 11 have been reconstructed from the surviving fragments. The lower walls of the hall were decorated with a particularly elaborate program of polychrome opus sectile (*skoutlosis*), and apparently mosaics as well. A similar combination of floor mosaics and wall revetment appeared in the forecourt. Inscribed revetment plaques found throughout the building record at least 70 additional donations that were made over the course of several generations.⁶⁴

The synagogue must have been one of the most imposing monuments of Sardis and it is unsurprising that its history is complex. For much of late antiquity it would have been a scene of constant construction, with multiple phases attested epigraphically and archaeologically. The building that stands today may have been begun in the later fourth century, although how much of it was completed then is unclear. It seems reasonable that piecemeal decoration of the substantial hall alone, with an interior area of about 1,000 m², would have extended into the fifth century, and alterations and repairs continued into the 500s. The floor and roof of such a large timber-covered structure would have required regular maintenance. The need for repairs would have been acute in the forecourt, which saw heavy traffic around its central fountain.⁶⁵

The recent proposal to date the synagogue to the sixth century emphasizes these later interventions apart from their larger setting.⁶⁶ The numismatic argument for a later date rests on the

⁶⁴ L. Robert, "Inscriptions de la synagogue," in idem, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes* 1 (Paris 1964) 37–57; Kroll, "Greek inscriptions" (supra n. 49); Scheibelreiter, *Stifterinschriften* (supra n. 48), 38–52. For the context of collective donations, see J.-P. Caillet, "Les dédicaces privées de pavements de mosaïques à la fin de l'antiquité. Occident européen et monde grec: données socio-économiques," in X. Barral i Altet (ed.),

Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age 2. Commande et travail (Paris 1987) 15–36.

⁶⁵ For a recent assessment of the forecourt, see M. Rautman, "Daniel at Sardis," *BASOR* 358 (2010) 29–42.

⁶⁶ J. Magness, "The date of the Sardis synagogue in light of the numismatic evidence," *AJA* 109 (2005) 443–75.

discovery of several post-A.D. 400 coins in the eastern part of the main hall and forecourt, but in contexts more plausibly associated with alterations and repairs than with initial construction. The absence of fifth- and sixth-century coins from the building's foundations cannot be attributed to a subsequent withdrawal of currency, since coins of this date are commonly found at Sardis. The bedding of the south portico mosaics at the MMS/N plaza, only a few meters to the southeast, included an uninterrupted series of fourth- to sixth-century coins. A deposit of nearly 700 nummi found in the MMS street portico is only the largest of several excavated hoards of fifth century date.⁶⁷ Pottery and lamps recovered from below the floor of the main hall appear consistently early, in contrast to the distinctive fifth- and sixth-century forms found above the floor and elsewhere.⁶⁸ Floor mosaics with related decorative patterns and borders turn up in public and domestic contexts across the site, and attest the continuity of local traditions over the span of centuries. As an integral part of the city's architectural and social fabric, the synagogue shared the fortunes of the urban quarter of which it formed an important part.

The synagogue forecourt had two principal entrances: one opening off a colonnade that continued north to the main palaestra gate, and a smaller one from the Marble Road to the south. These and other thoroughfares from east and south met in the MMS/N plaza. This marble-paved expanse clearly played a prominent role in the life of the city. A double portico on large columns dominated the south side. The inner walkway was covered by a brick vault and paved by successive mosaic floors, one installed by Flavios Archelaos in the mid-fifth century and the second by another patron in the later sixth century. Here also rectangular panels of varying sizes suggest the contributions of multiple sponsors. The involvement of the diocesan *vicarius* attests the importance of the plaza, and of the residential quarter that lay behind it.⁶⁹

Excavation at Sectors MMS and MMS/S has traced the long-term development of this neighborhood. For centuries the area was dominated by the elongated mound of the archaic fortification wall, whose buried remains extended the western ridge of the acropolis. Domestic remains of late Hellenistic and early Roman date have been located along the mound's top and east side, while the flat terrain farther west preserves scattered burials of about the same time. Construction of the new city wall made the area ripe for development, and this began ca. A.D. 400 by cutting the MMS street through the area. Municipal approval surely would have been needed for expropriation and development. At a time when urban patronage was increasingly dominated by government officials, the possibility that work was privately funded makes the undertaking all the more impressive.

Once street lines had been established, existing foundations and standing walls offered local property owners a starting point for developing new residences (fig. 11). The process of building and remodeling went on for more than a century. No less than the early houses described by Vitruvius, these late Roman structures expressed the social standing and interests of their occupants. Common concerns included providing courts or open spaces for light and air, maintaining a reliable water supply for personal use and public display, arranging adequate drainage for rain and wastewater, and shaping special rooms for reception and dining. Whatever their specific identify, the owners clearly aspired to the upper levels of local society.

⁶⁷ B. Burrell, "A hoard of minimi from Sardis and the currency of the fifth century C.E.," *RN* 163 (2007) 235–82; for the context, ead., "Small bronze hoards at late fifth century C.E. Sardis," in *Love for Lydia*, 159–69. For a hoard of 71 bronze coins, mostly of the late fifth century and concluding with nine issues of Zeno (A.D. 476–491), see *AASOR* 52 (1994) 24, fig. 26.

⁶⁸ M.L. Rautman, "Two late Roman wells at Sardis," *AASOR* 53 (1995) 37–84.

⁶⁹ *AASOR* 52 (1994) 3–7; Feissel, "Vicaires et proconsuls" (supra n. 47), 97; Scheibelreiter, *Stifterinschriften* (supra n. 48), 33–35 no. 5.

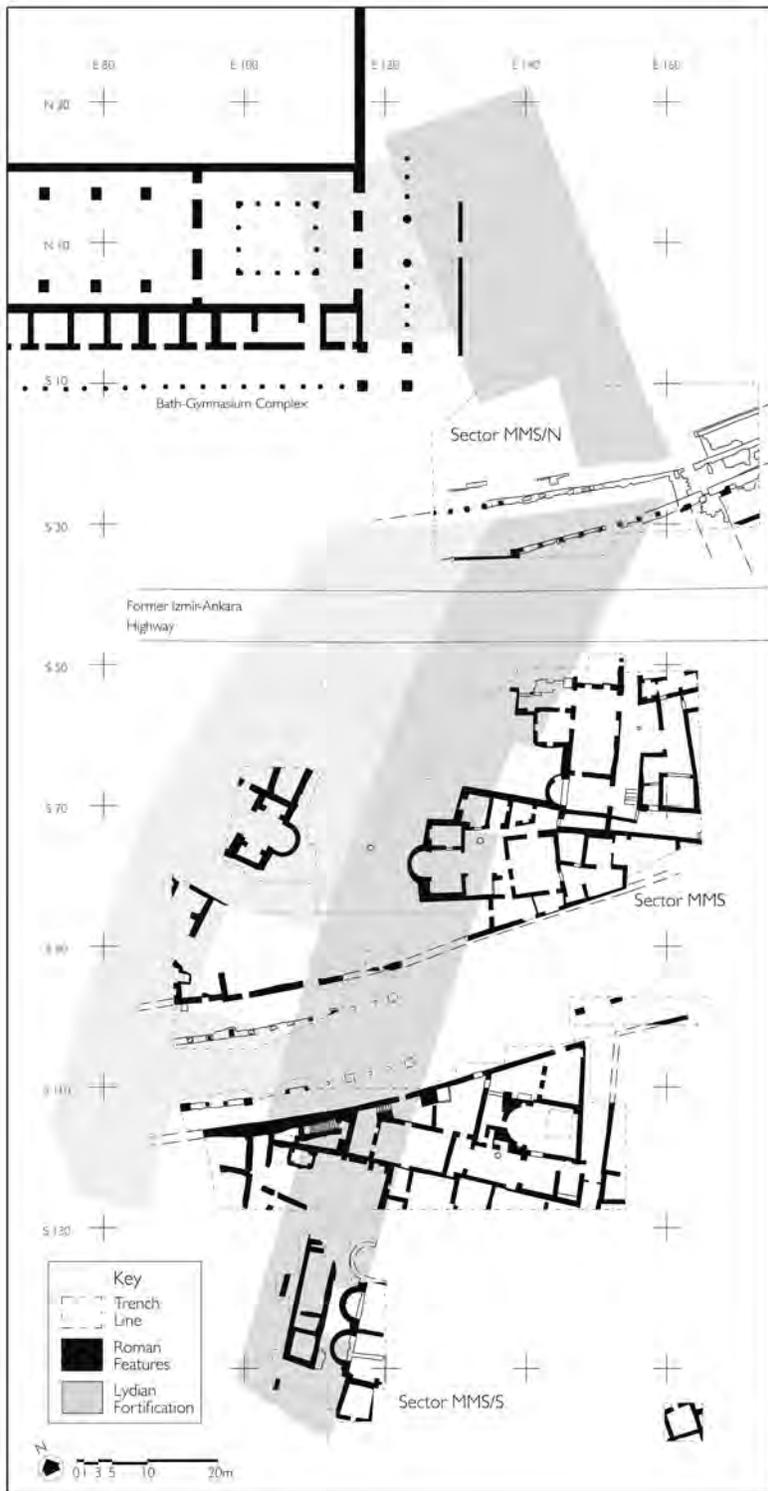


Fig. 11. Sardis, plan of Lydian fortification and late Roman features at Sectors MMS/N, MMS, and MMS/S.



Fig. 12. Sardis, west part of late Roman house at Sector MMS/S, looking north.

The area between the MMS/N plaza and MMS street was filled with interconnected rooms of different sizes. The irregular plans seen at Sector MMS result from the step-by-step combination of at least four living units into a single sprawling residence by around A.D. 500.⁷⁰ The more southerly part clearly preserves the lines of a fourth-century predecessor, which arranged small rooms around three or four sides of a peristyle court. After the street was laid out, this house was expanded by adding an apse to one of these rooms, presumably for dining, and building another reception space nearby. By contrast, the more northerly rooms looked toward the nearby plaza and welcomed visitors with greater ceremony. About 10 m behind the plaza's south portico a marble-paved corridor led to a small reception space resembling a daytime office. From here a short corridor reached an apsidal room that could have served equally for reception and dining. The room's well-preserved walls carried a complex program of painted architecture and *skoutlosis*, which reflects the widespread taste for marble decoration and brings the language of public assembly into the heart of the domus.⁷¹ At its greatest extent the complex comprised more than 30 separate spaces, including at least three open courts, six water basins or tanks, and two or more latrines.

A similar picture appears across the street to the south. An earlier peristyle house at Sector MMS/S was partially razed by street construction, but then reorganized as a grand fifth-century residence with more than a dozen rooms on three levels (fig. 12). The main entrances lay behind the street's south portico. One of these led to a broad vestibule that preceded an elaborately decorated apsidal hall. The room originally was paved in marble and had painted walls that included the implicitly Christian invocation, "hagios o theos."⁷² The floor of the apse was slightly raised and surfaced with

⁷⁰ For an overview, see M.L. Rautman, "A late Roman townhouse at Sardis," in Schwertheim (ed.), *Forschungen in Lydien* (supra n. 15), 49–66.

⁷¹ Rautman, "Aura" (supra n. 55), 147–53, pls. 15–17; compare L. Özgenel, "Public use and privacy in late antique

houses in Asia Minor: The architecture of spatial control," in L. Lavan, L. Özgenel, and A. Sarantis (eds.), *Housing in Late Antiquity. From Palaces to Shops, Late Antique Archaeology* 3.2 (Leiden 2007) 239–81.

⁷² *AJA* 104 (2000) 650, fig. 6. For similar formulae in

mosaic. Most strikingly, the apse wall and semidome were covered with painted stucco with incised geometric patterns.⁷³ Such measures effectively underscored the status of the owner, who could enter the apse from a back room when appearing before assembled guests. The discovery here of 21 stamped glass weights suggests that this was the home of a well-to-do businessman, or perhaps a municipal official of the early seventh century. Farther west, another entrance from the street opened onto the surviving part of the earlier peristyle court. The raised east and south porticos were supported by columns and piers, and a large water basin stood in the northwest corner. Surviving wall paintings include the figure of a waiting servant, which echoes the theme of expectant reception. Opening off the court was a long room with marble-paved floor, a raised platform paved in opus sectile and tiles, and painted incrustation-style walls. A marble sigma table, broken in places but complete, makes clear that the room was used for dining as late as the early seventh century. Smaller service spaces were independently accessible from street and alley.⁷⁴

These several houses, and others less extensively excavated, formed part of a relatively homogeneous and certainly prosperous quarter whose development reflects fundamental changes in the late antique city. All were reorganized or built anew in the first half of the fifth century along the lines of domestic fashion seen elsewhere in the Roman east. Open courts, colonnades, and water basins were key themes of household display. Rooms for reception, especially the newly popular apsidal halls, were emphasized by marble or mosaic floors and walls covered with ornate decoration, both real and illusory. Maintaining these scenes of daily elegance required constant renovation and updating, which can be traced in changing floor levels, circulation patterns, and decorative programs. Associated finds reflect the rising level of domestic consumption and specialized use of individual rooms. Several of these houses expanded over time as their owners annexed adjacent properties, and reached their greatest extent in the early sixth century.

The level of residential comfort noted at Sectors MMS and MMS/S may so far be exceptional for Sardis, but similar features appear elsewhere at the site. The so-called House of Bronzes in Sector HoB, discovered during the first season of excavation, occupies a flat, largely undeveloped area south of the Bath-Gymnasium Complex, about 100 m to the west. Contending with earlier burials and other features, the owner nevertheless was able to create two large rooms for reception or other special purposes in the fourth to sixth centuries.⁷⁵ Comparable if less well understood houses have been found on the higher parts of the site as well. Several unexplored multilevel units occupy the artificial terrace that overlooks the HoB area.⁷⁶ A fifth-century house found at Sector ByzFort had multiple rooms featuring mosaics, marble revetment, wall paintings, and a fine view of the Hermus valley.⁷⁷ At a slightly lower level, several houses were established in the fourth to fifth centuries on the Field 55 terrace, within sight of the Wadi B temple foundations. At least one of these buildings included a large rectangular room, carefully paved with tiles and decorated with incrustation-style paintings similar those at Sector MMS.⁷⁸

domestic contexts, see C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity: The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions*, revised second online edition (2004) <<http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/ala2004>>, ISBN 1 897747 17 9, VI.52, no. 134.

⁷³ Rautman, "Aura" (supra n. 55), 156, fig. 8.

⁷⁴ *AJA* 104 (2000) 645–55. The weights are discussed by M.M. Fulghum and F. Heintz, "A hoard of early Byzantine glass weights from Sardis," *AJN* 2nd Ser. 10 (1998) 105–20.

⁷⁵ *BASOR* 154 (1959) 22–27; *BASOR* 157 (1960) 22–28;

BASOR 170 (1963) 13; *BASOR* 249 (1983) 18, fig. 20. For the social standing of its occupants, see S. Ellis, "Middle class houses in late antiquity," in W. Bowden, A. Gutteridge, and C. Machado (eds.), *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity*, *Late Antique Archaeology* 3.1 (Leiden 2006) 413–37, at 422.

⁷⁶ *BASOR* 177 (1965) 14–17.

⁷⁷ *BASOR* Suppl. 25 (1988) 36, fig. 22.

⁷⁸ *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 28.2 (2006) 745, fig. 7; Rautman, "Aura" (supra n. 55), 155, pl. 19.



Fig. 13. Sardis, late Roman street and flanking buildings at Sector MD1/N, looking southeast.

Less ambitious residential units found across the site may better reflect how most people lived. Traces of hillside habitation on the east side of Sector ByzFort, overlooking Field 55, include small buildings flanking a 5 m-wide contour road. These structures were solidly built on multiple levels, variously paved, modestly furnished, and occupied mainly in the fifth century. One space was equipped with two large water tanks that seem better suited to light industry than routine household needs.⁷⁹ Similar structures have been found on the lower plain. A partially excavated building at Sector MD2 includes at least four rooms, one furnished with a large cement-lined vat, which were occupied in the fifth and sixth centuries. The nearby Sector MD1/N includes a long rectangular structure with a cellar-like space appropriate for commercial storage. Common to both buildings is the combination of small, usually tiled rooms and more utilitarian spaces, together with signs of household production or commerce.⁸⁰ This broad sampling of the urban site says little about the overall density of habitation, however. Some sectors are filled with small structures crowded along narrow alleys or roads (fig. 13). Other areas, particularly near lower sections of the city wall, served mainly as neighborhood dumps. Modest, multifunctional

structures of the fifth and sixth centuries have been found outside the city as well, along the banks of the Pactolus, around the Artemis Temple, and underneath the present excavation compound.⁸¹

The so-called Byzantine Shops preserve the most distinctly urban residential experience known so far at Sardis.⁸² This long row of unremarkable spaces lies along the south side of the Bath-Gymnasium Complex and synagogue, behind the Marble Road's north portico (see fig. 7). Whatever its earlier history, the area took its present form ca. A.D. 400. The prominent street-side location and uniform construction suggest that portico and shops were built as a coordinated undertaking, perhaps initiated by municipal authorities but modified by individual leaseholders or owners to suit specific needs.⁸³

⁷⁹ AASOR 52 (1994) 23–24.

⁸⁰ AJA 104 (2000) 669–71.

⁸¹ Hanfmann and Waldbaum, *Survey*, 57–62; BASOR 249 (1983) 25–26.

⁸² Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* (supra n. 7). The organization of units has been discussed recently by A. Harris, “Shops, retailing and the local economy in the early Byzantine world: The example of Sardis,” in K. Dark (ed.), *Secular Buildings and the Archaeology of Everyday Life in*

the Byzantine Empire (Oxford 2004) 82–122; K.E. Hammer and M. Murray, “Acquaintances, supporters, and competitors. Evidence of inter-connectedness and rivalry among the religious groups in Sardis,” in Ascough (ed.), *Religious Rivalries* (supra n. 20), 175–94; see also Ellis, “Middle class houses” (supra n. 75), 422–23.

⁸³ For contemporary building legislation see Brands and Severin (eds.), *Spätantike Stadt* (supra n. 57); Saradi, *Byzantine City* (supra n. 51).

The design lent itself to easy alteration: a massive shared back wall with drain and a series of sturdy weight-bearing piers, 5 m to the south, between which slender partitions could be added to shape multiple rooms with doors, windows, and niches. The colonnade's 3 m height allowed space for an upper loft that could be used for sleeping quarters or storage, while street-side rooms were well suited for retail and household industry.

The arrangements of private entrepreneurs must have been in constant, asynchronous flux, which makes it difficult to track changes over time. In its excavated state, the quarter essentially preserves a moment in the early seventh century when fire swept through the crowded, if only partially occupied buildings. At this time there were about 20 independent units, each comprising one to three rooms at street level and perhaps as much floor space above. The presence of service counters, benches, kitchen wares, and amphorae indicates that three of these units likely served for food preparation or service. Two or three others may have been used for dyeing cloth or assembling scraps of glass, metal, and other materials for reuse.⁸⁴ Apart from these specialized assemblages, most artifacts recovered from the sector resemble the coins, household wares, tools, and personal effects found in other domestic contexts. Stone mortars, shallow basins, storage vessels, makeshift latrines, hearths, and ovens are equally present in the nearby HoB and MMS houses. These similarities point to a broad convergence of habitation and production at the household level in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

Such glimpses of Sardis, assembled over the course of 50 years of excavation and study, make clear that the city's appearance changed in important ways during late antiquity. Some of its most prominent early monuments, like the Wadi B temple, stadium, and theater, stood on the terraced slopes of the acropolis. Whether these buildings were ever completed and how long they were maintained are open questions, but before the end of the fourth century the temple was gone and its abandoned precinct had been given over to housing. The stadium and theater, like places of mass entertainment elsewhere, were expensive to maintain and may not have functioned much later. Ideological motives may have contributed to the area's shift from civic showcase to private habitation, but if so, only indirectly. The landmark temple in Wadi B had apparently been destroyed much earlier by earthquake, possibly while the local bishop Melito was still alive. Other centers of traditional cult seem to have been similarly afflicted by natural catastrophe or passive neglect, prompting futile efforts at restoration in the mid-fourth century.⁸⁵ There is little sign of violent religious strife at Sardis in the days of the sophist Chrysanthios, teacher of the emperor Julian and high priest of Lydia, and his pupil Eunapios.⁸⁶ The traditional flowers, garlands, and peacocks found in painted *hypogaea* of the later fourth century appear equally in Christian and nonspecific tombs of the period

⁸⁴ For metals recycling and manufacture, see E. Giannichedda, "Metal production in late antiquity: From continuity of knowledge to changes in consumption," in L. Lavan, E. Zanini, and A. Sarantis (eds.), *Technology in Transition: A.D. 300–650, Late Antique Archaeology* 4 (Leiden 2006) 187–209, at 196.

⁸⁵ Traditional religion apparently fared better in rural Lydia; see Foss, *Sardis*, 28–29, 155 n. 73; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, vol. 2 (supra n. 30), 118–19; G. Petzl, "Ländliche Religiosität in Lydien," in Schwertheim (ed.), *Forschungen in Lydien* (supra n. 15), 37–48, at 46–48; M. Riel, "Society and economy of rural sanctuaries in Roman Lydia and Phrygia," *EpigAnat* 35 (2003) 7–101.

⁸⁶ The historical background is summarized by Foss, *Sardis*, 22–34.

⁸⁷ For the Christian "Painted Tomb," see Butler, *Sardis*, 174, 181–83, pls. IV–V. The tomb of Flavios Chrysanthios (Tomb 76.1) includes the common Christian formula "kyrie boethi"; *BASOR* 229 (1978) 61–64; *BASOR* 233 (1979) 4–8. For two nearby *hypogaea* (Tombs 79.2, 79.3) without Christian texts, see *BASOR* 249 (1983) 22–25. Two more vaulted tombs (Tombs 07.2, 07.3) with similar paintings have recently been identified closer to the city wall; see *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 30.4 (2008) 192–93, figs. 3–5. For a comprehensive survey of the painted tombs, see now V. Rousseau, *Late Roman Wall Painting at Sardis* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison 2010).



Fig. 14. Sardis, wall painting in Tomb 07.3.

(fig. 14).⁸⁷ Epigraphic and archaeological evidence for the local Jewish community, together with the monumental synagogue, attests the city's religious pluralism. More pragmatic reasons for relocating public life onto the urban plain were the area's seismic instability, the fortification of the lower city, and the changing priorities of civic leaders.⁸⁸

Monumentalized urban passages, refurbished public buildings, and expanded houses of local residents are unmistakable signs that Sardis saw some of its most prosperous years in late antiquity. The grandiose scale of official and private patronage appears in the elaboration of colonnaded streets and plazas, which were gaining importance as scenes of commercial as well as ceremonial life. The costly but selective maintenance of public buildings could be justified by assigning them new political roles, as may have been the case with the *boule* and *gerousia* meeting in the Marble Court of the Bath-Gymnasium.⁸⁹ The bustle of construction echoed in prolonged work at the synagogue and constant remodeling of the MMS houses and the Byzantine Shops. Inescapable in western Sardis but apparent across the site, this restless activity provides vivid background for the well-known builders' inscription that was set up in A.D. 459 to ensure the timely completion of contracted projects.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Olson, "Landslides" (supra n. 9); for the "early Byzantine tectonic paroxysm," see S. Stiros, "The AD 365 Crete earthquake and possible seismic clustering during the fourth and sixth centuries A.D. in the eastern Mediterranean: A review of historical and archaeological data," *Journal of Structural Geology* 23 (2001) 545–602. Compare the effects of third- and fourth-century earthquakes in the region noted by Ladstätter and Pülz, "Ephesus" (supra n. 29). For urban priorities in late antiquity, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford 2001); J.-M. Spieser, *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium* (Aldershot 2001); Saradi, *Byzantine City* (supra n. 51).

⁸⁹ For sixth-century graffiti from the Marble Court, see Yegül, *Bath-Gymnasium Complex* (supra n. 7), 49, fig. 124. The palaestra of the theater gymnasium at Ephesus may also have seen political activities about this time; see P. Scherrer and E. Trinkle, *Die Tetrakonos Agora in Ephesos. Grabungsergebnisse von archaischer bis in byzantinische Zeit—Ein Überblick. Befunde und Funde klassischer Zeit, Forschungen in Ephesos XIII 2* (Vienna 2006) 11.

⁹⁰ For the text, see Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 40–43 no. 18; M. Di Branco, "Lavoro e conflittualità in una città tardoantica. Una rilettura dell'epigrafe di Sardi CIG 3467," *Antiquité tardive* 8 (2000) 181–208. The text nostal-

Imperial interest tangibly benefited the city as an official base for administration and arms-making, but more importantly by stimulating traffic to and from this sub-regional economic hub.⁹¹ Like other nearby cities, Sardis was celebrated by contemporary writers for its fine textiles, and perhaps less credibly for its wines. Local workshops have been proposed for the manufacture of bronze vessels, iron tools, glass wares and windowpanes, polychrome jewelry, and carved bone implements.⁹² A long ceramic tradition continued in the massive output of bricks, roof tiles, and vessels for table use, transport, and storage. At the same time, the local ceramic environment illustrates the site's distance from the late empire's economic mainstream. The limited nature of interregional exchange appears in the scarcity of imported amphorae compared with local vessels, mainly single-handled transport jars, which are locally ubiquitous but infrequently found elsewhere. On the level of fine wares, the most widely distributed varieties of African Red Slip and Phocian Red Slip pottery appear in fifth- to sixth-century levels, along with imitations made of local clays. Specialized imported objects like lamps, *ampullae*, and *unguentaria* may also have inspired local versions that in some cases outlived their sources of inspiration.⁹³

The prosperity Sardis enjoyed in the later fourth to sixth centuries may be the result of local circumstances, but the far-reaching changes it saw around the turn of the seventh century are those seen among its neighbors as well. Many public spaces were poorly maintained if not abandoned altogether; houses were subdivided and put to new purposes; imported pottery decreased in variety and quantity; and the supply of currency dwindled.⁹⁴ These phenomena are plainly evident in western Sardis, where coins and pottery preserve a continuous occupation sequence down to the early 600s. The demise of the Byzantine Shops is especially stark: all inhabited units were hastily evacuated before fire swept through the quarter, an event that preserved their diverse contents along with a numismatic break at A.D. 616. Small clusters of coins of Constans II (A.D. 641–655) have been found in the area, mainly in the southern rooms of the Bath-Gymnasium Complex and scattered about the nearby Marble Road, but their scarcity elsewhere speaks to wider dislocations in local routines.⁹⁵ Clearly by the mid-seventh century Sardis had become a very different place.

Coming to terms with such signs of urban transformation is one of the central challenges posed by late antiquity.⁹⁶ At Sardis, as at many Mediterranean sites, the decision of early excavators to focus on

gically invokes the memory of the “most illustrious twice *neokoros* metropolis of the Sardians”; see Burrell, *Neokoroi* (supra n. 20), 113.

⁹¹ For highways and milestones attesting late third- and fourth-century repairs, see Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 90 no. 84; Foss, *Sardis*, 6–7, 150–51 nn. 13, 18; D.H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor*, Fasc. 2, *An Interim Catalogue of Milestones*, Par. 1, *British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monograph* 9 (Oxford 1988) 250–59; Petzl, *Tituli Lydiae* (supra n. 48), 111–13 nos. 1536–37.

⁹² For evidence of glassmaking, see von Saldern, *Ancient and Byzantine Glass* (supra n. 7), 1–2; for metalworking, M. Goodway and P. Vandiver, in Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* (supra n. 7), 129–34; Waldbaum, *Metalwork* (supra n. 7), 6–9; for gem-cutting, *BASOR* 249 (1983) 28–29. The remains of bone-cutting on a large scale were found in fifth-century levels near the Wadi B temple.

⁹³ Rautman, “Two late Roman wells” (supra n. 68), 79–81;

idem, “From mainstream to margin among the late Roman amphorae of Sardis,” in P. Monsieur and J. Poblome (eds.), *From Amphorae to Modelling the Late Roman Economy* (forthcoming).

⁹⁴ The evidence is highly varied with pockets of private stability appearing amid larger areas of public neglect. For ambiguities in perceiving the advent of regional “decline,” see M. Whittow, “Recent research on the late-antique city in Asia Minor: The second half of the 6th century revisited,” in Lavan (ed.), *Recent Research* (supra n. 31), 137–53, at 140–49.

⁹⁵ Bates, *Byzantine Coins* (supra n. 7), 1–3; Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* (supra n. 7), 2–3.

⁹⁶ For a recent review of perspectives on change, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, “Transformation and decline: Are the two really incompatible?” in J.-U. Krause and C. Witschel (eds.), *Die Stadt in der Spätantike–Niedergang oder Wandel?*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 190 (Stuttgart 2006) 463–83.



Fig. 15. Sardis, Sector MMS, apsidal structure with secondary installations, looking east.

while others were partitioned for commercial use.⁹⁸ Private houses underwent complex changes that saw individual spaces selectively maintained, subdivided, stripped, and put to new purposes. Hearths, ovens, vats, drains, and latrines were cut through or set atop marble or mosaic floors, sometimes in grand apsidal rooms (fig. 15).⁹⁹ Spaces once intended for ceremony and display were adapted as practical units for generating wealth, primarily at the level of households and other small

two or three major buildings emphasized those aspects of Roman settled life that were highly visible, but at the same time socially complex and politically precarious. The state of pottery studies in the 1960s, when large-scale excavation was underway, provided little framework for addressing questions of production, development, exchange, and use; as a result, coins had to serve as the main chronological guideposts, despite uncertainties about their minting and distribution. For these reasons, the destruction and abandonment of the Byzantine Shops ca. A.D. 616 suggested an irresistible link with the great historical narrative of that decade: the Sasanian incursions in Asia Minor and the heroic resistance of Heraclius. The appealing clarity of this story, with wealthy Sardis falling to an otherwise forgotten attack that year, is apparent from its widespread acceptance.⁹⁷

Recent work validates the broad outlines of this view while introducing some refinements. The city's increasing isolation during a tumultuous period is confirmed by the scarcity of imported pottery and seventh-century coins, and issues of Heraclius's later reign continue to be rare. Maintenance of public spaces and monuments appears inconsistent, with some street-side porticoes resurfaced with mosaics

⁹⁷ C. Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the end of antiquity," *EHR* 90 (1975) 721–43; idem, *Sardis*, 53–55. For reservations, see J. Russell, "The Persian invasions of Syria/Palestine and Asia Minor in the reign of Heraclius: Archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic evidence," in E. Kountoura-Galake (ed.), *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium (7th–9th c.)* (Athens 2001) 47–71. In the same sense that "late antiquity" came of age amid Cold War cultural studies, many of its precepts invite reevaluation through the multipolar lens of a globalized 21st century; compare B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford 2005) 176–83.

⁹⁸ The upper portico mosaic of the MMS/N plaza dates to

the mid- or late sixth century; *AASOR* 53 (1995) 5–6; Scheibelreiter, *Stifterinschriften* (supra n. 48), 35–36 no. 6. Portico encroachment is known at the MMS street, the Marble Road, and most clearly the colonnade in front of the synagogue; see *BASOR* 174 (1964) 46–47; Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* (supra n. 7), 7, figs. 126, 129; *BASOR* Suppl. 25 (1988) 20.

⁹⁹ *BASOR* Suppl. 25 (1988) 58–61; *AASOR* 51 (1993) 11; *AASOR* 53 (1995) 8–10; *AJA* 102 (1998) 481; *AJA* 104 (2000) 653–54. Such phenomena broadly correspond with the demise of the curial class, which saw urban elites move to rural estates, if not the imperial capital itself, and leave their townhouses empty or in the hands of urban workers. For a recent review see Saradi, *Byzantine City* (supra n. 51), 151–63.

social units.¹⁰⁰ Significant parts of the site seem to have been unoccupied by the later sixth century, while others were accumulating debris from unidentified sources. Future excavation may locate areas that survived or even flourished through the seventh century, perhaps as clustered dwellings within a substantially ruralized setting. Byzantine Sardis remained an administrative center and metropolitan capital, but by the eighth century these functions may not have extended far beyond the walled acropolis, which had been laboriously fortified with architectural spoils brought from the city below.¹⁰¹ Ongoing survey of the Sardis environs aims to clarify the process of urban change by identifying patterns of consolidation, continuity, or expansion in rural land use and settlement.¹⁰²

Every archaeological site has a story to tell, a story that is shaped by research design, methods, and happenstance. The last 50 years of exploration at Sardis have sketched the outlines of a great Roman city that was the administrative, economic, and cultural focus of an inland province. Imperial action benefited its development at two critical junctures: in the early first century A.D. when Tiberius acted to rebuild the polis, and in the late third century when Diocletian decided its political rank. The results of this external involvement can be seen everywhere, but it is the archaeological focus, largely fortuitous, on western Sardis that has brought particular attention to late antiquity and the expansion of one part of the city. Recent work suggests that this area may not be representative of the entire site, but benefited from its proximity to the Bath-Gymnasium Complex and the highway leading west. Construction of urban fortifications in the late third and early fourth century presented local elites and government officials with new opportunities for ceremonial, commercial, and residential development, which took the form of public buildings, colonnaded streets, and houses of pretense that reinforced their standing in late classical society. In the sixth century the city's increasing isolation from the political and economic mainstream, brought about by the centralization of government and accelerated by demographic, economic, environmental, and military crises, left residents to reassess traditional life-ways and their own place in a post-Roman world. The fundamental reasons for the demise of the classical city lay beyond the site and even its territory, in its changing relation with imperial power, and with other points in the urban heartland of Asia Minor.

¹⁰⁰ E. Zanini, "Artisans and traders in the early Byzantine city: Exploring the limits of archaeological evidence," in Bowden, Gutteridge, and Machado (eds.), *Social and Political Life* (supra n. 75), 373–411, at 398–403.

¹⁰¹ For the acropolis, apparently unoccupied through most of late antiquity, see *BASOR* 162 (1961) 33–34; *BASOR* 166 (1962) 37–39; *BASOR* 170 (1963) 32. Inscriptions built into the walls range in date from Claudius to the time of Justinian; see Buckler and Robinson, *Inscriptions*, 29 no. 10, 43 no. 19; Foss, *Sardis*, 57–60. The careful installation of many

inscribed blocks suggests a lingering interest in displaying the city's past.

¹⁰² Intensive long-term survey in the vicinity of Sardis and Bin Tepe is now being extended by systematic regional reconnaissance; see C.H. Roosevelt and C. Luke, "Central Lydia Archaeological Survey," *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* 24.2 (2007) 135–54; *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* 25.3 (2008) 305–26; *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* 26.2 (2009) 433–50; Roosevelt, *Archaeology of Lydia* (supra n. 10).