

The Logos of the disciple Jesus loved.

Ephesus

It is hard to imagine today but the Roman province of Asia, a part of modern Turkey, what we might call Western Anatolia, was one of the richest, most civilised, most urbanised, and most intellectually alive provinces of the entire empire. By the first century AD, Ephesus was its capital and Ephesus was a great and thriving city, a centre for trade, religion and culture. Being on the edge of the Aegean Sea and with routes inland it was the link between the West and the land of Anatolia, and even further east to Persia and beyond. In addition to merchants and seaman, it was a major centre for pilgrims who travelled to worship at the various temples and in particular at the Artemision, one of the seven wonders of the Ancient world, the Temple of Artemis. According to modern statistical methods, its average residential population would have been 71,587, about the same as Pergamum and slightly less than Athens.¹

Going back to the time before the arrival of the Greeks, this region had been inhabited by a people called the Arzawa by their eastern neighbours, the Hittites. The Arzawa Lands were not governed under one stable structured political entity. Five Arzawa states have been identified: the Kingdom of Arzawa itself, Mira-Kuwaliya, Seha River Land, Hapalla and Wilusa.² Cohesion within these regions may not have been very strong either. For example, the archaeological record for the city of Beycesultan, built on a tributary of the Maeander River and one of the largest settlements in western Anatolia, shows no signs of attachment to any other populations.³ However, at one point in the mid-fourteenth century BC, the Arzawa came together under Tarhundaradu as a substantial force in opposition to the Hittites. As demonstrated by the Armana Letters (EA 31 and EA 32) they were even honoured with entertaining diplomatic relations with Amenhotep III (1400-1353 BC), Pharaoh of Egypt.⁴

The capital of the Kingdom of Arzawa has been recognised as Apasa, a city on the shore of the Aegean Sea near the mouth of the River Cayster. There is a consensus that this was the original site of the Greek colony which became Ephesus.⁵ The importance of Apasa is displayed when it appears in the Hittite records when their king Mursili II decides to crush the Arzawa **opposition** by attacking Apasa with military support from

¹ John Hanson and Scott Ortman, 'A Systematic Method for Estimating the Populations of Greek and Roman Settlements', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 30 (2017): 319.

² Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 55.

³ Naoíse Mac Sweeney, 'Hittites and Arzawans: A View from Western Anatolia', *Anatolian Studies*, no. 60 (2010): 22.

⁴ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Society of Biblical Lit, 2009), 274; William Moran, *The Armana Letters* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 101–3.

⁵ J. D. Hawkins, 'Tarkasnawa King of Mira "Tarkondemos", Boğazköy Sealings and Karabel', *Anatolian Studies* 48 (1998): 7, 22.

his brother Sarri-Kusuh, who had travelled with his troops all the way from Carchemish on the banks of the Euphrates over a thousand kilometres away.

Strabo (c.64 BC - c. 24 AD) writes of a people called the Carians living in Ephesus at the time when the Ionian Greeks were arriving in the region.⁶ Pausanias describes some of the locals as “Leleges, a branch of the Carians” but states that they were mostly Lydians inhabiting an upper city. Then there were other peoples including Amazon women, who lived around a sanctuary devoted to an Anatolian mother-goddess.⁷

Strabo writes that the Ionians drove out the local peoples identifying Androclus, son of the Athenian king, Codrus (reigned c. 1089 – c.1068 BC), as the leader of those colonists who around 1000 BC settled in the place that would now be called Ephesus.⁸ Pausanias confirms Androclus as the Ionian leader but provides more detail about the conflict. He says that the Greeks expelled the Leleges and the Lydians who inhabited the upper settlement but made peace with those people who lived around the sanctuary by the sea exchanging oaths of friendship. The settlement by the shore with a freshwater spring nearby appears to have been a place of worship dedicated to an Asiatic mother goddess, which Pausanias claims was founded by two of the local inhabitants called Coresus and Ephesus. The Greeks added their worship of Artemis until, eventually, a process of assimilation led to the identification of a single goddess.⁹ This became the Sanctuary of Artemis otherwise known as the Artemision, whereas the Greek polis was built on a hill to the north-east.¹⁰

A temple was built and relations between the Ionians and Lydians became cordial. So by the time of wealthy Croesus (reign c. 585-c.546), King of Lydia,¹¹ many Lydians were living in Ephesus. Kings of Lydia had married their children with those of the rulers of Ephesus and Croesus was the uncle of Pindar, the tyrant of Ephesus. The ambition and wealth of Croesus led to him demanding sovereignty over Ephesus to which according to Herodotus the response of the Ephesians was to tie the polis to the temple by cables and thus claim the sanctuary of the goddess. Thus, the city of Ephesus was consecrated to the goddess Artemis. Croesus spared the city and using his massive wealth funded the rebuilding the temple. Paying less attention to the Greek historians and interpreting the archaeological findings, Dr Kevin Leloux of the University of Liège suggests that the

⁶ Strabo, *Geography*, trans. H. C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, III (George Bell & Sons, 1903), sec. 14.1.3, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0239>.

⁷ W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Omerod, trans., *Pausanias. Description of Greece*, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1918), sec. 7.2.7-8.

⁸ John Kraft et al., ‘The Geographies of Ancient Ephesus and the Artemision in Anatolia’, *Geoarchaeology* 22 (January 2007): 123, <https://doi.org/10.1002/gea.20151>.

⁹ Anton Bammer, ‘Recent Excavations at the Altar of Artemis in Ephesus’, *Archaeology* 27, no. 3 (1974): 204.

¹⁰ Kevin Leloux, ‘The Campaign Of Croesus Against Ephesus: Historical & Archaeological Considerations’, *Polemos: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research on War and Peace* 21, no. 2 (2018): 49.

¹¹ Croesus ruled over Western Anatolia with his capital at Sardis on the river Pactolus, a tributary of the Hermus which flowed into the Aegean Sea near Smyrna.

city had already been consecrated before the conflict and that the temple was already in the process of reconstruction. Nevertheless, Croesus would have contributed several elements to the reconstruction.¹²

Lydia was a wealthy and powerful empire but its hegemony over Ephesus and other Ionian cities did not last because Croesus took the fatal decision of attacking the growing Persian Empire of Cyrus II. Having lavished treasures on both the Delphic Oracle, the mouthpiece of Apollo, and on the sanctuary of Amphiaras, he expected favourable prophecies. Both returned the same message to Croesus which indeed did sound positive, “that if he should send an army against the Persians, he would destroy a great empire”.¹³ Unfortunately for Croesus, that “great empire” was Lydia and he was defeated by Cyrus II, who would become “the Great”, at the battle of

This was a glorious temple but it was eventually burnt down on a summer day in 356 BC, which also happened to be the day on which Alexander, son of Philip of Macedonia, was born.¹⁴ Strabo insists that in spite of an offer by Alexander, who had since become Great, and a calumny that they had used Persian treasure, it was the citizens of Ephesus who had financed the new temple of Artemis themselves through their own gifts and through the sale of the pillars from the previous temple.¹⁵ This glorious temple measured 118 m x 51 m surrounded by forty-two pillars 19 m in height supporting the roof with eight of them in front.

John's life

Eusebius Book III

Chapter 26 of Book II refers to “the calamity which came upon the whole Jewish nation” and the massacre of Jews in Syria, which took place in AD 70. Thus begins Book III

Chapter 1

Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus.

¹² Leloux, ‘The Campaign Of Croesus Against Ephesus: Historical & Archaeological Considerations’, 59.

¹³ Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. A. D. Godley (Harvard University Press, 1920), sec. 1.53.3.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, VII, Loeb Classical Library Edition (Harvard University Press, 1919), sec. 17.3.5.

¹⁵ Strabo, *Geography*, sec. 14.1.22.

John thus arrived in Asia (Western Anatolia) around 70 AD.

Chapter 20

Nerva began his reign as emperor on 18 September 96. According to Eusebius, the Roman Senate repealed Domitian's acts of banishment.

11. It was at this time that the apostle John returned from his banishment in the island and took up his abode at Ephesus, according to an ancient Christian tradition.

Chapter 21

Trajan succeeded Nerva on 28 January 98.

2. Clement ruled the church in Rome following Linus and Anencletus

Chapter 23

1. At that time the apostle and evangelist John, the one whom Jesus loved, was still living in Asia, and governing the churches of that region, having returned after the death of Domitian from his exile on the island.

2. And that he was still alive at that time may be established by the testimony of two witnesses. They should be trustworthy who have maintained the orthodoxy of the Church; and such indeed were Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria.

Chapter 24

Eusebius states that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and that when the other Gospels had been finished John was asked to write his own Gospel to cover the period of Jesus's ministry before the imprisonment of John. Omitting the genealogy of Jesus by the flesh, which had been included by Matthew and Luke, John "began with the doctrine of his divinity, which had, as it were, been reserved for him, as their superior, by the divine Spirit."

Greek precedents

Heraclitus: logos the rational principle

Stoics: the divine creator

Philo: God in the cosmos

John in Ephesus

Published the Gospel

The New Testament reveals the apostle John's growing maturity: from young Galilean fisherman, one of the sons of thunder, to apostle and writer of some of the most sophisticated books of the Bible. It would be marvellous to trace his life from after the resurrection until his final days in Ephesus.

Polycarp one of John's disciples.

Irenaeus of Lyon was insisting on the authoritative transfer of the Gospel message through the apostles after the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In a letter to Florinus, he re

Irenaeus of Lyon is our main source for the fact that the apostle John published his Gospel in Ephesus. His immense work in five volumes written in Greek was called Against Heresies

Having mentioned the origins of the Synoptic Gospels, that

Church Fathers

Justin Martyr appeals to the Greeks to explain Christianity

Tertullian uses and promotes the logos-verbum translation from Vetus Latina versions of the Bible turning his back on Greek philosophy stating: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"