



TURKEY THROUGH THE EYES OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS

10th anniversary of cooperation between Trnava University and Turkish universities

**TRNAVSKÁ UNIVERZITA V TRNAVE
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EDITED BY: Dr. phil. Erik Hrnčiarik

REVIEWERS: Doc. PhDr. Marie Dufková, CSc. (NM Praha)
Doc. PhDr. Iva Ondřejová, CSc. (UK Praha)
Univ. Doz. Dr. Ulrike Muss (Universität Wien)
PhDr. Natálie Venclová, DrSc. (AU Praha)

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COVER: Frontpage: Theatre of Phaselis (Foto Erik Hrnčiarik).

Backpage: Library of Celsus in Ephesus (Foto Erik Hrnčiarik).

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STRATONIKEIA

Bilal Sögüt

Keywords: *Stratonikeia, Idrias, Atriya, Karia, Eskihisar.*

Abstract: *Stratonikeia, a city in the interior of Karia region, is located at Eskihisar village, in the Yatağan administrative district of the Muğla province. Stratonikeia is that rare site where there are structures ranging from ancient times to Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods. Thus, a visitor has the opportunity to see many structures from different periods spanning three thousand years. After 281 BC the Seleukid King Antiokhos I changed the name of the city to Stratonikeia, after the name of his former stepmother and later wife. However, the city was settled before the Hellenistic period, and Stratonikeia was one of the major settlements in the region at that time. Fortifications and some other structures were constructed in the Archaic and Classical periods. Early fortification walls were built in the Leleg type. In particular, in the period of the Hekatomnids in the 4th century BC, both upper and lower cities were surrounded by fortification walls. The preserved parts of the ancient city include a gymnasium, a theatre, two Roman bath complexes, three temples, agorae, two fountains, two monumental portals, a council house (bouleuterion), Augustus-Imperial temple, northern city gate and fountain, colonnaded street and monument, water structure, necropolis of the city, church of Michael and Christ. Relations with other contemporary states and civilizations became the reason for long-term settlement in the city in different parts of history. Even today, someone can easily see the evidence of the immortal city of Stratonikeia. Near the city walls, a Turkish bath dated to the 15th century AD, the Mosque of Şaban Ağa that was built four centuries later, the Village Cafe (Kahve), and the stores, bakers and butcher shops of Eskihisar Village are still suitable to visit. In the square of the village (Köy Meydanı), an old oak tree salutes the visitors.*

Stratonikeia is located on the borders of the village of Eskihisar, seven kilometres west of the Yatağan County in the province of Muğla in Turkey. The site is on the road from Yatağan to Milas.

Stratonikeia is also situated at the crossroads of main routes that connect western, central and southern Anatolia with each other. Set west of the fertile Yatağan plains, the ancient city lies on Kadikule hill.

Stratonikeia, important ways passed through in, is one of the most important city-states in inner Karia. There was a settlement in the same place or near of it. As mentioned through the ages, this ancient settlement is the city of eternal loves.

Stratonikeia excavations and restorations have been conducted since 2008 on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Pamukkale University under the directorship of Prof. Dr. Bilal Sögüt.

Excavations and surveys at Stratonikeia show that the city was inhabited continuously from the Late Bronze Age to the present day. The name of the settlement was, in turn, Atriya in the Hittite Period, Khrysaoris and Idrias in Classical

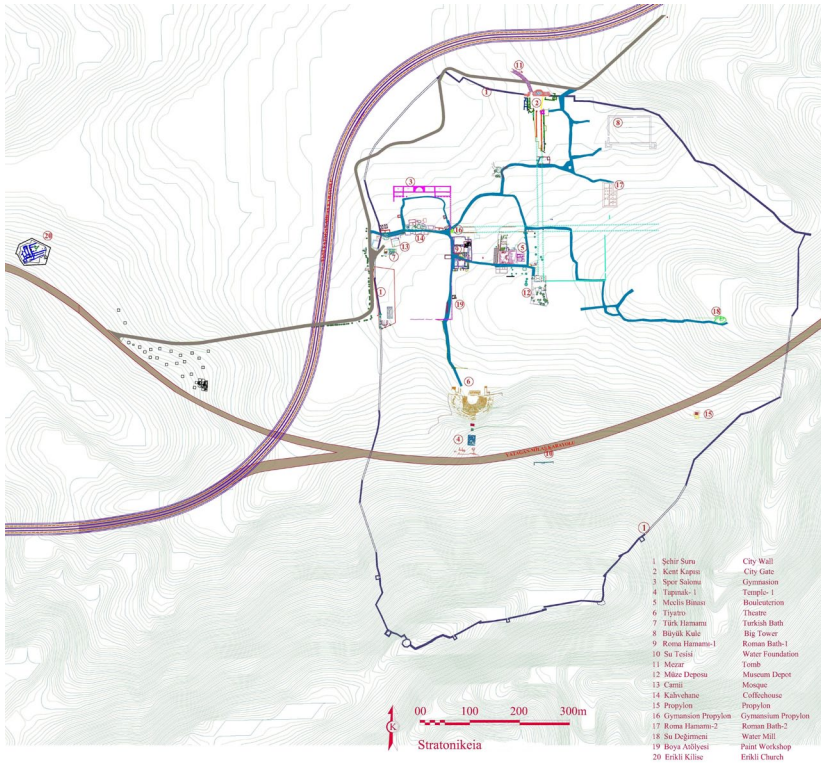


Fig. 1 Stratonikeia – city plan.



Fig. 2 Stratonikeia – Gymnasium and Eskihisar Village.



Fig. 3 Stratonikeia – Bouleuterion and Ağa Houses.

Period, Stratonikeia in the Hellenistic Period and finally Eskihisar. Throughout its history Stratonikeia suffered from many earthquakes and was rebuilt numerous times.

Ancient writers Herodotus (v, 118), Strabon (xiv, ii, 25), Pausanias (5, 21, 10) and Stephanus of Byzantium (Ethnica 696) mention a settlement here named Khrysaoris or Idrias. After 281 B.C. the Seleucid King Antiochus I changed the name of the city to Stratonikeia after the name of his former stepmother and later wife. Stratonikeia and the surrounding region changed hands among Seleucids, Ptolemies, Macedonians, Rhodians and Romans. The region later became part of the Roman Republic (then Empire) in 130/129 B.C. The city kept its importance in the Roman Imperial Period and developed continuously. It benefited greatly from the constructions carried out during the Early Imperial Period and especially the 2nd century A.D. In the Byzantine Era, Stratonikeia like other cities in the region was dependent on Aphrodisias.

It is known that with the Anatolian conquest by Turkic tribes, the Emirates extended as far as southwestern Anatolia. Stratonikeia continued to be settled in period of the Emirates in the 14-15th centuries and afterwards. Many Ağas (landowners) were present at the village in the late Ottoman Period. Although Eskihisar village has moved to a new area, today 5 families still remain in the historic village houses within territories of the ancient city. The borders of Stratonikeia are known thanks to the fortification walls and its size can



Fig. 4 Stratonikeia – Theater and Augustus-Imperial Temple.

easily be determined. However, within the city only certain structures have been excavated. Therefore, our knowledge of the number of the structures on the city plan is limited. Based on the excavated structures and the street system, it is likely that the city was built on a grid plan.

The preserved parts of the ancient city include fortification walls, a gymnasium, theatre, two Roman bath complexes, three temples, agorae, two fountains, two monumental portals, a council house (bouleuterion), an Augustus-Imperial temple, the northern city gate and a fountain, a colonnaded street and monument, a water structure, the necropolis of the city, the church of Michael and Christ, the village square complex, the Beylics (Emirates) period bath (Selçuk bath–14-15th centuries A.D.), Şaban Ağa mosque, and an Ottoman fountain (19. century), Ağa Houses (Abdullah and Hadi Eskişar House–1876, Mehmet Eskişar House–1909, Hasan Şar House–1940), and stone-paved roads from the Ottoman period.

The most important income of the city was commerce, thanks to its location on the crossroads of major trade routes. Marble, grain and livestock commerce were provided an important income to the city.

Stratonikeia is one of the places where one can see buildings from the ancient period as well as the Ottoman and Turkish Republican Periods. Everybody see Hellenistic and Ottoman buildings facing each other on two sides of the Ottoman Road. Thus, a visitor has the opportunity to see many structures belonging to different periods and to walk on the stone-paved roads from the Ottoman period.



Fig. 5 Stratonikeia – Augustus-Imperial Temple.



Fig. 6 Stratonikeia – Monumental Fountain (Restitution 3D).



Fig. 7 Stratonikeia – Colonnaded Street.

There are a lot of historical buildings from different date.

The gymnasium, a large structure built near the northern wall to the south-west of the northern city gate, has a rectangular plan facing north-south. The north side, the narrow façade is 105 m wide. The total length of the building is estimated to be 267 m. Hence it is the largest known gymnasium in antiquity. The archaeological and epigraphic finds indicate that the gymnasium was built in the 2nd quarter of the 2nd century B.C. and during the Augustan and Antonine periods new arrangements and reconstruction were made.

The Bouleuterion, located at the center of the city, faces east-west and has a rectangular plan. On its western side, measuring 24.95x29.80 m, are semicircular seating steps and on the area to its east is the courtyard. On the interior façade of the north anta wall are Greek inscriptions, and on the exterior are Latin. One of inscriptions in Greek is about the calendar which is made by Menippos, dates from the beginning of the first century B.C. The calendar carries names and day numbers of 12 mounts with the date of the year, 1505, which demonstrates the foundation of the city itself. The Latin inscriptions show that in the Roman period goods sold in Stratonikeia and their prices in 301 A.D. were regulated. Hence, the sales in the city remained under control and inflation was prevented. Based on the architectural elements and decoration, the building must date from second half of the 1st century B.C.

The theater is built on a natural slope of the Kadikule Hill in the southern part of the city. The Greco-Roman type theater, faces north-south. It is one of the structures known to date from the Hellenistic period. Built on a natural slope, it is of Greek type with two diazomas and its cavea faces north. In the Roman imperial period, the Hellenistic theater was modified with additions and changes. In particular during the reign of Augustus and the following period the building experienced great changes. In this period the Hellenistic stage building was demolished and in its place a three-tiered scaena frons was built. Based on its present day remains, it must have seated approximately 12 000 people.

The Augustus-Imperial temple is situated on an upper terrace south of the theater and gives the impression of being conceived together with the theater. The peripteral temple is of Ionic order. It is built on a three-stepped lower structure. It faces north-south and its entrance is on the north, in the direction of the theater. The temple's euthynteria is 14.79x20.79 m. and its stylobate measures 12.55x18.54 m.

The Colonnaded Street has been restored since 2009. The colonnaded street, 8,70 m wide, begins from the south mid section of the open area in front of the northern city gate and continues towards the city center. In front of the gate there is a 42 m wide open space surrounded by 8 monumental Corinthian columns and shops on the west. This is where people who entered the city and those who came from the city to use the fountain gathered. A monument of an unidentified important figure of the city was found at the beginning of the colonnaded street. In the arrangements of the city gate and the street that were completed in the mid-2nd century A.D. and later, care has been taken to preserve the monument as it is. The area around the gate and the street collapsed during an earthquake and in the Byzantine period using architectural



Fig. 8 Stratonikeia – Şaban Ağa Mosque.



Fig. 9 Stratonikeia – Village Square Overview (Illustration).

elements from the city, new buildings and the colonnaded street were built in 4-5th centuries A.D.

The Beylics (Emirates) bath known as the “Seljuk bath” is in the village square immediately to the south of the Şaban Ağa mosque. Its walls are still standing, however except for a vaulted segment, the roof has completely been destroyed and some of the rooms’ walls have also partly and completely collapsed. It faces east-west and was built of stone rubble and in some places pieces of brick inserted among the rubble. The date of the building cannot be determined since no inscriptions have been found. However, the coins and ceramic sherds found during the clean up date from the 14th to 15th centuries A.D.

The Şaban Ağa mosque is located on the western part of the village square immediately north of the Seljuk Bath. It is named after its builder. According to its inscription, it was rebuilt in 1876. Having been repaired several times, it stands complete today. It is presumed that it was built on the place where Tabakhane mosque/Sulu mosque, which was mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, existed. On an engraving of Hilair (1776-1782), a domed mosque with a single balcony minaret is depicted.

The village square complex was very well planned in Ottoman period. There are 1 Turkish bath, 1 mosque, 10 coffeehouses, 5 butchers, 2 bakeries, 2 tailor's shops, approximately 20 shops, 1 fountain and 5 plane-trees in the village square. Although some of the buildings have been destroyed, the city with its streets can easily be seen. The coffeehouses face each other and the square and the various shops are arranged side by side. The monumental plane-trees enhance the beauty of the square. The stone paved roads and the sidewalks of the Ottoman period seen in the village square and in front of the shops are well preserved.

What is the difference of Stratonikeia and the surrounding area?

In Stratonikeia and the surrounding area, history goes back to more than 8.000 years ago, is one of the precious settlements of our country with its unique history and natural beauties.

Lagina, a sacred place for pagans identified with Hekate, Panamara a sacred place of the first age, pictures on the rock from protohistoric ages, geopark containing the oldest rocks and monumental plane tree older than 800 years at Bozüyük witness the history in this region.

Lagina, approximately 9 km. north of Stratonikeia is very well known. Lagina and Stratonikeia were linked to each other by a sacred way. During the festivals of key transport of Hekate, the key was taken from Lagina to the bouleuterion in Stratonikeia and back to temple of Hekate in Lagina. The festivals were begun in sanctuary of Hekate in Lagina after this ceremony.

Osman Hamdi Bey is a very important person for archeological excavations. He, the first Turkish museum specialist, painter and archaeologist had started Lagina excavations. His residence in Turgut town is standing as a witness of 19th century.

All the civic, religious, common, and individual structures seen at ancient sites in Turkey are represented in Stratonikeia. The buildings of Stratonikeia (gymnasion, theatre, bath complexes, council house (bouleuterion), temples, northern city gate and fountain, village square complex, Şaban Ağa mosque,



Fig. 10 Stratonikeia – Road of the Ottoman Period and Ağa House.

and Ağa houses) are much more monumental. The structures of Stratonikeia have special importance because of their monumental scale and elegant ornamentation.

Stratonikeia is not only important in antiquity but also in Seljuk and Ottoman Periods. Structures of all periods are standing and challenging time. There is no other place where one can see monumental buildings from the ancient period as well as the Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods. A visitor has the opportunity to see many structures belonging to different periods in Stratonikeia. No other ancient city like Stratonikeia exists, where one can see the ancient ruins by walking on stone paved Ottoman streets and sidewalks.

When you are walking on the roads of Stratonikeia you will feel yourself in the time tunnel and never forget what you live. It is known that Stratonikeia has been the city of eternal love and gladiators through the ages.

Prof. Dr. Bilal SÖĞÜT
Pamukkale Üniversitesi,
Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi,
Arkeoloji Bölümü
TR-200 20 Denizli
bsogut@pamukkale.edu.tr

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Fig. 11 Stratonikeia – Grave Stele.



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