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978-1-108-08065-1 - Discoveries at Ephesus: Including the Site and Remains of the Great Temple of Diana

John Turtle Wood

Excerpt

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PART I.

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CHAPTER I.

City of Ephesus—Temple of Artemis—City Port—Port Panormus—City Wall—Rock-cut Steps—Ancient Houses—Views from Mount Prion—Quicksilver—The Goddess Artemis—The Arts of Greece—Alexander—Antigonus—Lysimachus—Antiochus and the Seleucidæ—The Eumenidæ—Embankment of River—Botago—Roman Conquest of Ephesus—Antony and Cleopatra—Augustus—Ephesus under the Romans—Antoninus Pius—Christian Churches—The Goths—Rock-cut Church—Decline of Ephesus—The Turks build Ayasalouk—Knights of St. John—Tamerlane—Desertion of Ephesus and Ayasalouk—Present Occupation—Tobacco—Beauty of Ephesus.

THE ancient city of Ephesus was situated on the river Cayster, which falls into the Bay of Scala Nova, on the western coast of Asia Minor.

City of
Ephesus.

Of the origin and foundation of Ephesus we have no historical record. Stories were told which ascribed the settlement of the place to Androklos, the son of the Athenian king, Codrus, while other legends spoke of the Egyptian Sesostris as having carried his conquests into the Ephesian territory.

With other Ionian cities of Asia Minor, Ephesus fell into the hands of Cræsus, the last of the kings of Lydia, and, on the overthrow of Cræsus by Cyrus, it passed under the heavier yoke of the Persian despot. Although

from that time, during a period of at least five centuries, to the conquest by the Romans, the city underwent great changes of fortune, it never lost its grandeur and importance.

Temple of
Artemis.

The Temple of Artemis (Diana), whose splendour has almost become proverbial, tended chiefly to make Ephesus the most attractive and notable of all the cities of Asia Minor.

Its magnificent harbour was filled with Greek and Phenician merchantmen, and multitudes flocked from all parts to profit by its commerce, and to worship at the shrine of its tutelary goddess.

City Port.

The City Port was fully four miles from the sea, which has not, as has been supposed, receded far, if at all, from the ancient sea-bord. This fact is proved by the extensive remains of the massive stone embankment on the north bank of the river Cayster, which I succeeded in tracing, without difficulty, to a distance within 400 yards of the present sea-bord.

At the point where the river, changing its eastward course, turns abruptly to the north, a canal was cut, leading direct to the City Port, which was snugly ensconced behind the rocky hill near the western extremity of Mount Prion. The form of the Port is clearly defined by the tall bullrushes which now cover nearly the whole area, leaving only a small patch of water on the south side, near the centre, which is always clear and fresh, being probably supplied by one of the numerous springs which abound at Ephesus. The bullrushes grow to the height of fifteen feet, and a beautiful yellow iris marks the

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EPHESUS FROM AYASALOUK.
GREAT MOSQUE AND SITE OF TEMPLE IN THE FOREGROUND

MA. V. HANNAERT. 1874

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VIEW OF EPHEBUS AND AYASALOUK.

M. N. HANNAH ART. LITH.

THE CITY WALLS.

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boundary of the port during a certain season of the year. Wild fowl have here a safe refuge from the sportsman.

At the distance of little more than a mile from the sea, there was, I believe, another port, which, like the City Port, was an oblong with the corners cut off. If there ever was a Port Panormus at Ephesus, it must have been this haven, through which the river now runs obliquely from one end to the other, and which is remarkably well sheltered. But the Port Panormus mentioned by Strabo, and mistaken by some for a port at Ephesus, was, I believe, situated between Neapolis and Pygela, and was, therefore, a few miles south of Ephesus.

Port
Panormus.

The city of Ephesus was built chiefly upon the slopes of two mountains, Prion and Coressus. The City Wall, which is said to have been built by Lysimachus, can even now be traced for nearly its whole length, as in its tortuous windings it follows the lofty and irregular ridge of Mount Prion, which bounds the city on the south side, and thence runs down westward to within a few yards of the mountain stream which falls into the Cayster near the canal. Then crossing the extremity of Mount Prion, and, returning eastward, it encloses the ancient fort, commonly, but erroneously, called St. Paul's Prison. From this point, dipping down the precipitous side of the rocky steep on which the fort stands, it runs to the edge of the canal near the City Port, and here was the gate through which the city was entered from the sea.

City Wall.

The wall is again to be seen on the north side of the port, at the eastern extremity, being continued northward for a considerable distance ; then again turning east-

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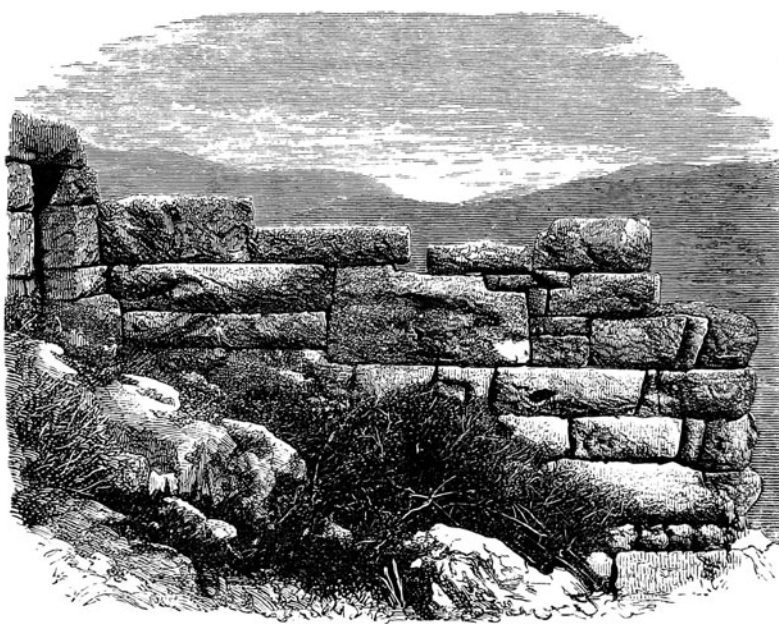
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ward towards the Coressian gate, and skirting the mountain called Coressus, at some distance up the side, till it reaches the Magnesian gates, from which it makes a circuit enclosing the large mound between these gates and Mount Prion. The remains of three other city gates, making in all six in number, may be seen distinctly in the



Tower and Sally-Port

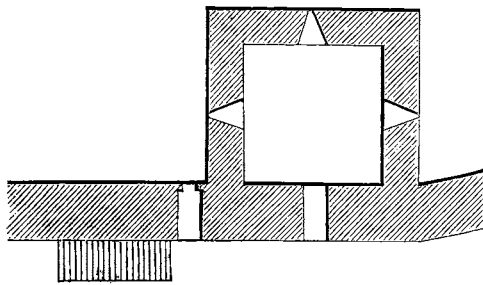
mounds which mark their sites. One of them is near the western extremity of Mount Prion, and nearly opposite the fort called St. Paul's Prison ; a second is in the plain on the north side of the city, and is not far from the Serapion, and a third is on Mount Coressus, where a path crosses it from east to west. No ruins of buildings remain

CIRCUIT OF THE WALLS.

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on the eastern slope of Mount Coressus; but there appears to have been a large cemetery here, consisting chiefly of rock-cut tombs, some bearing short inscriptions, which are now much weather-worn and almost illegible.

At the highest point of Mount Prion, 1,300 feet above the sea, a large area has been cleared and levelled. Here, I suppose, were the quarters for the garrison needed for the defence of the wall on this side of the city. I here found several large cisterns sunk in the rock, while at the eastern extremity of the mountain I came across the



Plan of Wall, with Tower, Steps, and Sally Port

remains of a large earthenware water-pipe at a high level.

The City Wall, 10 feet 6 inches in thickness, and measuring 36,000 feet in length, encloses an area equal to about 1,027 acres. It is fortified by massive loop-holed towers from 35 to 40 feet square, averaging about 100 feet apart, near to many of which are the remains of the stone steps which led up to the top of the walls and towers. These steps are 6 feet wide, and are slightly raised at the outer end, to serve the purpose of a balustrade. In

Rock-cut
steps.

suitable places, where the ground was favourable, were small sally-ports about 4 feet wide.

Near the eastern extremity of Mount Prion, where the wall is abruptly terminated by a precipice, may be seen some rock-cut steps, leading up to the walls, which must have been used by the soldiery more than 2,000 years ago.

Ancient
houses.

Not a few substructures of the houses of ancient Ephesus still remain in terrace above terrace upon the northern slope of Mount Prion. These were doubtless delightfully cool during the summer, but cold in winter.

View from
Mount
Prion.

The summit of Mount Prion commands a very beautiful and extensive view. The river Cayster, winding like a white ribbon through the plain, forms in its course numerous small peninsulæ. The Selenusian lakes; the village and castle on the hill at Ayasalouk; the bay of Scala Nova (the ancient Neapolis); the mountainous island of Samos, and the still more mountainous coast beyond; the snow-capped Tmolus to the north, and the ruined city, mapped out at the feet of the spectator; these, with countless other objects of interest, seen through the lustrous atmosphere of Asia Minor, make up a panorama of exquisite beauty. Ancient Ephesus is now completely deserted; but enough remains of the public buildings to convey to the visitor some idea of the former splendour and magnificence of the city. Vitruvius describes the Cilbian fields of Ephesus as yielding vermilion and quicksilver, but the situation of these mines is not known in the present day.

Quick-
silver.

The traditional birthplace of the goddess Artemis