

# Magnesia on the Meander

## Magnesia ad Maeandrum

AYDIN - GERMENCİK - ORTAKLAR - TEKİNKÖY



## Magnesia ad Maeandrum

from 1984  
to Present

The city of Magnesia was built around 400 BC on the slopes of Mount Thorax (Gümüşdağ) and by the banks of the Lethaios River (Gümüşçay).

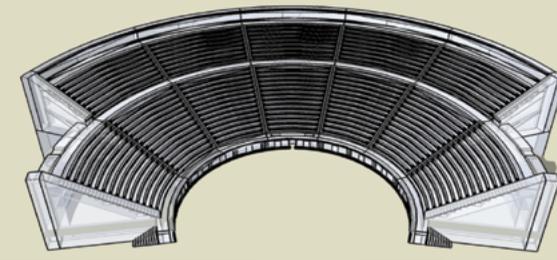
The original location of Magnesia is unknown.

The city, with a diameter of 1.5 km, was surrounded by city walls and inhabited until 12th century AD. The first excavations were carried out by Charles Texier in 1840's and Carl Humann between 1890 and 1893.

Since 1984 the excavations have been directed by

Prof. Dr. Orhan Bingöl.

The form of the “theatron” differs from other ancient theaters because its entrance is situated in the middle of the podium and the prohedra on the sides (10). Due to these features, the monument has been identified generically as a “theatron,” or “a place for the audience”, but its actual function is not known. Interestingly enough, the structure was apparently never completed. The construction process is still visible in its foundation (at the rear, in sequence from right to left) and in the still unfinished marble blocks. If it had been completed, it would be a construction with 7 segments, 2 diazomas (platforms) with a capacity of about 4700 people. It is assumed that its construction was terminated due to a landslide during its construction. The excavations started in 1984 and continued until 2003.



Theatron (10), this aerial view (above) and reconstruction (below) were derived from a 3D laser scan. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, drawing (3D).

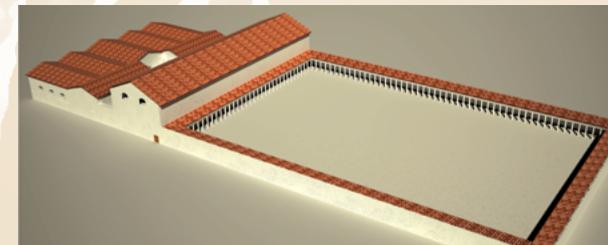
The damage caused by earthquakes, the invading flora, water inundation and other natural setbacks have taken its toll on Stadium (12). However, despite all the damage caused by nature and by the intrusions of earlier inhabitants in search of lime, the stadium of Magnesia remains the best preserved and structurally the most interesting stadium not only in Asia Minor but also in the world. The structure portrays a strong architectural language with its start

building, its monumental sphendone (the semi-circular part of the stadium) comprising four levels of galleries, and its lavish colonnade which seems to span the lower gallery. In addition to these captivating structural features, with its remarkable 129 in situ reliefs located on the arena podium and its additional topos inscriptions positioned on 27 kerkis –five of which are available for close inspection- the stadium can be considered an ancient archive, an open air museum. The length of the race track of the Stadium is 189m, while the Stadium itself could hold about 30,000 spectators. Inscriptions tell us that the stadium remained in use until the 3rd century AD.



Stadium (12), General view and examples from the podium's reliefs of Stadium.

The City Gymnasium (14) was so named in modern time to prevent confusion with the other gymnasium (Lethaios Gymnasium) and to further emphasize its location within the city. The gymnasium is the tallest surviving ruin at Magnesia. It stands more or less at the centre of the site. The gymnasium is divided into three main sections - the baths, apodyteria and palaestra.



City Gymnasium (14), General View, Reconstruction. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, Drawing (3D): Kutay Karabağ, Rendering: Mert Ulutaş.



VISITING HOURS OF MAGNESIA  
Summer 08:30 - 19:00  
Winter 08:00 - 17:00

1. The SANCTUARY of ARTEMIS **1A.** The TEMPLE of ARTEMIS
- 1B.** The ALTAR of ARTEMIS **1C.** AREA of SACRIFICE **1D.** SACRED SPRING **1E.** PROCESSIONAL AREA **1F.** The PORTICOS **1G.** PUBLIC TOILETS (LATRINE) **1H.** LIBRARY **1I.** The MONUMENT of the TRACIAN KINGS **1J** The EXEDRAS and the SOUTH PODIUMS **2.** MARKET PLACE- AGORA **2A.** CEREMONY GATE (PROPYLON) **2B.** AGORA SQUARE **2C.** STOAS **2D.** TEMPLE of ZEUS (UNDERGROUND) **3.** THE BYZANTINE WALLS **4.** MARKET BASILICA **5.** ODEION **6.** HYPOCAUST BUILDING
- 7.** THEATRE **8.** TEMPLE of ATHENA **9.** TUMULUS **10.** THEATRON **11.** CITY WALL **12.** STADIUM **13.** CITY GYMNASIUM **14.** ROMAN TEMPLE
- 15.** OTHER TEMPLES **16.** ROMAN-BYZANTINE STRUCTURES **16.** ÇERKEZ MUSA MOSQUE **17.** LETHAIOS GYMNASION **18.** THE NECROPOLEIS

**Contact:** Prof. Dr. Orhan Bingöl, The Director of the Excavations of Magnesia  
**e-mail:** orhanbingol@superonline.com

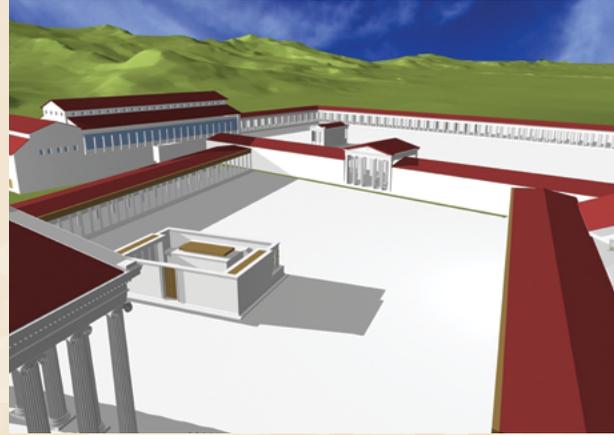
**Magnesia Official Website:** [www.magnesia.org](http://www.magnesia.org)

**Book:** Orhan Bingöl, *Magnesia on the Meander: Magnesia Ad Maeandrum: The City of Artemis with the White Eyebrows*, Homer Kitabevi, 2006, İstanbul.

The archaeological excavations of Magnesia on the Meander are executed with financial supports by Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, logistical supports by Batı Söke AŞ.

Thanks to Unemat Olsar, Akarbulut for its contribution

Those who visit Magnesia, which is divided in half by the Ortaklar-Söke road, enter the site through the service structures situated next to the ruins of the temple of Artemis. The ruins of the temple of Artemis



Sanctuary of Artemis (1), Reconstruction. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, Drawing (3D): Kutay Karabağ, Rendering: Mert Ulutaş.

(1A) are centrally located in the eastern half of the area. To the west of the temple there is the Altar of Artemis (1B), the Area of Sacrifice (1C) and the Processional Area (1E). It is surrounded by stoas (1F) on three sides. To the north and south, there are some rooms behind the long stoas.



The temple and altar of Artemis (1A-1B), reconstruction. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, Drawing (3D), Rendering: Kutay Karabağ. The triangular pediment with window spaces of Artemis temple which can be seen in reconstruction drawing was re-erected with its own architectural members in the position of ancient time near the entrance to the site.

One of these rooms was discovered at the northwest corner of the sanctuary of Artemis during the excavation season of 2006. It was most likely a library (1H).



The Sanctuary of Artemis, Library (1H) Reconstruction. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, Drawing (3D), Rendering: Mert Ulutaş. Library has been covered with protective roof because of its opus sectile decorations on the wall and floor.

The other room was discovered behind the north stoas of the sanctuary seem to have later been turned into a public toilet (1G). The toilet was composed of two rooms. The front room with a pool is entered through the gate to the north. The room with the toilet could be entered through the gate to the west. The public toilet, which has two fountains, two rows of toilet seats, fresh running water channels at the base of the seating for cleaning up after using the latrine, and a sewage system underneath the seats, could accommodate 30-32 people at once.



Latrine, Public Toilet (1G). Inner view. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, Drawing (2D-3D): Hakan Anay, Rendering: Mert Ulutaş. The Latrine has been covered with protective roof because of its opus sectile decoration on the wall.

The sanctuary is linked to the Agora (2) by the monumental gate (2A) (Propylon). There are exedras and monumental podiums of statues on the southern side of the Propylon (1J). At the other side, north, there is a monument on which group of bronze statues stand belongs to Thracian Kings (1I).



Ceremony Gate (Propylon) (2A), East Façade with doors between columns. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, reconstruction: Görkem Kökdemir, Drawing: Elif kökdemir (2D), Kutay Karabağ (3D), Rendering: Mert Ulutaş.

The Basilica which connects to the agora with a 90 degree angle has three naves and two-storey. It has an apse at its eastern end and was used as a covered market area. The Basilica has been dated to Roman Period.



Market Basilica (4). General view. Archives of Magnesia Excavations, reconstruction: Hakan Öztaner, drawing: Elif Erdem-Öztaner (2D), Kutay Karabağ (3D), Rendering: Mert Ulutaş.

Excavations were carried out at intervals beginning in 1989 and were finished in 2010. The pillars' capitals depict the sea-monster Scylla, from the Homeric epic, the Odyssey. The capital of the southern and northern pillars are preserved in the Aydın Archaeology Museum. The capital which stands on the southern pillar now is a plaster imitation.



Market Basilica (4), The Scylla Capital of the southern pillar (It is now exhibited in the Museum of Archaeology in Aydın).