



## Classical Turkey

Greeks and Romans in Anatolia

**25 April–4 May 2025 (ML 669)**

10 days • £4,340

Lecturer: Professor Lloyd  
Llewellyn-Jones

The most prosperous region of the ancient Mediterranean world.

The finest collection of Hellenistic and Roman city ruins to be found anywhere.

Includes all the major sites, many of which are off the beaten track or difficult to get to.

Scenically varied and spectacular: coast, mountain and plain.

The coastal strip of western Anatolia contains many of the most brilliant expressions of the Ancient World. It was the meeting place of two worlds, a maritime one of commerce, inter-cultural contact and innovative ideas and an inland realm of agricultural wealth and imperial power. The legendary Midas, whose hand turned everything to gold, was King of Phrygia in inland Anatolia. Hittites, Assyrians, Persians and, following the conquests of Alexander the Great, Macedonian Greeks were successive ruling civilisations in these regions.

But long before Alexander, in the centuries following the end of the Bronze Age from c. 1100 BC onwards, Greeks settled along the coast, Aeolians in the north, Ionians further down and Dorians yet further south. They founded cities all along the Aegean and Mediterranean seaboard and penetrated the river valleys. Most of the local peoples in these areas absorbed and adopted Greek culture.

The new civic form of the polis – a self-governing city with contiguous territory for food production and a harbour for trading – was perfectly suited to this region. Cities took off from the seventh century BC in parallel with those of the Greek mainland. The greatest advance in human thought – the attempt to explain the natural world according to laws based on scientific observation – took place in these cities. The key early philosophers, Thales, Anaximenes and Anaximander, were all based in the Ionian city of Miletus, as was the father of urban planning, Hippodamus.

Roman city-building was a continuation of Greek, eased by the way local communities worked within the Roman empire. Their leaders and plutocrats adorned their cities with monuments, tapping into the supreme architectural and sculptural traditions of



*Miletus, steel engraving c. 1860.*

the region. Most of what remains today is of Hellenistic and Roman origin, though there is much also from the Byzantine era; from the fourth century AD cities reconfigured themselves in a Christian guise.

With a falling away of maritime commerce, however, and severe disruption in the wake of Arab incursions in the seventh century AD, the ancient cities toppled into decline. Even the greatest of them, such as Ephesus or Sardis, became little more than villages or were abandoned altogether. Only a few, notably Izmir and Antalya, revived in the economic world of the Middle Ages and later. Two millennia after Alexander, the Ottoman Turks arrived to create an empire that lasted for five centuries until the birth of modern Turkey.

This tour presents the finest group of Hellenistic and Roman city ruins to be found anywhere. They are set against the backdrop of a beguiling landscape, one that unfurls as the tour progresses.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 11.30am (Turkish Airlines) from London Gatwick to Izmir, via Istanbul. First of three nights in Izmir.

**Day 2: Pergamon.** Under the Hellenistic Attalid dynasty, Pergamon became the most powerful city-state in Asia Minor, rivalling Athens and Alexandria as a centre of culture. On a steep-sided hill are remains of Attalid palaces, a Temple of Dionysus, an Altar of Zeus (most of which is now in Berlin), theatre, library, and Temple of Athena. The Asclepion and 'Temple of Serapis' (Red Fort) lie on flat ground below.

**Day 3: Sardis, Izmir.** Drive inland to Sardis, capital of the Kingdom of Lydia, whose last independent ruler was the fabulously wealthy Croesus (560–546 BC); it later became an important Roman city. See the impressive remains of the Temple of Artemis, the reconstructed 'Marble Court', gymnasium and the 3rd-century AD synagogue, the largest in the ancient world. Free time in Izmir (Smyrna in Greek). Overnight Izmir.

**Day 4: Ephesus.** Drive via the Temple of Apollo at Claros to Ephesus, the Roman capital of the province of Asia. The most popular pilgrimage destination in the Greco-Roman world, the city was also key to the development of Christianity. Ruined by harbour sedimentation and finally sacked in the 7th century, Ephesus is the most extensively excavated site of the ancient world,

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continued

and probably the one with the greatest range of standing remains. Among the more striking buildings are the Library of Celsus and the theatre, scene of the protest against St Paul described in the New Testament. First of three nights in Kuşadası.

**Day 5: Priene, Didyma, Miletus.** On a hillside above the Maeander plain, Priene was ill-suited for Roman commerce so the remains date largely from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. It exhibits one of the earliest of grid street layouts; the Temple of Athena Polias at the summit was designed by the architect Pythius. Didyma, with an oracle which for a time rivalled that at Delphi, has impressive remains of the colossal Hellenistic Temple of Apollo. Miletus has a massive, well-preserved Roman theatre and baths.

**Day 6: Kuşadası, Selçuk, Ephesus.** There is some free time in Kuşadası, a thriving and in parts picturesque coastal town. In the afternoon return to Selçuk to see the restored Basilica of St John at the top of Ayasuluk Hill, the Isa Bey mosque at the foot and then to spend more time at the site of ancient Ephesus. The domestic dwellings with their floor mosaics and frescoed walls are particularly interesting.

**Day 7: Aphrodisias.** Drive into the interior of Anatolia. One of the most beautiful classical sites in Turkey, Aphrodisias was the centre of a Roman cult of Aphrodite, whose temple survives. An important school for the production of high-quality and widely exported sculpture, there are many fine examples in the museum. Among the architectural remains is the largest and most complete stadium to have survived from the ancient world. Drive to Antalya for the first of three nights there.

**Day 8: Antalya.** Founded by (and named after) Attalus II of Pergamum, Antalya was the principal port in Pamphylia in ancient and Byzantine times. The morning is spent exploring the old town with its restored Ottoman period houses, followed by a free afternoon.

**Day 9: Perge, Aspendos, Antalya.** Colonised by the Greeks after the Trojan War, Perge has substantial Hellenistic and Roman gates and colonnaded streets. While the Roman aqueduct at Aspendos is the best-preserved in Asia Minor, the theatre is most complete in the whole of the Roman world. Afternoon visit to the archaeological museum in Antalya, one of the country's finest, with exhibits from prehistory to Ottoman.

**Day 10.** Fly from Antalya to London Gatwick, via Istanbul, arriving at c. 4.15pm.

## Lecturer

**Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones.** Chair in Ancient History at Cardiff University and Director of the Ancient Iran Program for the British Institute of Persian Studies. He has spent extensive time in Iran, and is a specialist in the histories and cultures of ancient Iran, the Near East and the Classical World. He has often appeared on the BBC, Channel 4, in *The Times* and other media outlets. His books include *Creating a Hellenistic World*, *Ctesias' History of Persia: Tales of the Orient* and *Designs on the Past: How Hollywood Created the Ancient World*. A new book, *The Persians*, will be published by Wildfire in 2022.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £4,340 or £3,960 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,870 or £4,490 without flights.

**Included:** air travel (economy class) on scheduled Turkish Airlines flights London Gatwick to Istanbul; Istanbul to Izmir; Antalya to Istanbul; Istanbul to London Gatwick; private coach for all other journeys; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 8 lunches and 8 dinners, including wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums and sites, etc., visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff and drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides.

**Visas:** Visas required for most foreign nationals, and not included in the tour price. You will need to apply online in advance.

**Accommodation. Hilton Double Tree, Izmir** (doubletree3.hilton.com): modern 4-star hotel with spa, Turkish bath and rooftop pool, near the old town. **Yedi Bilgeler Hotel, Kuşadası-Selçuk** (www.yedibilgeler.com): a country hotel and winery, set among its own vineyards and olive groves. **Ruin Adalia Hotel, Antalya** (ruinadalia.com.tr): Five converted Ottoman houses form this new hotel on the site of archaeological excavations. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

**How strenuous?** The tour covers long distances by coach, and on some days there are several hours of driving. There are two hotel changes. There is a lot of walking over the very rough terrain of partially excavated archaeological sites. Some visits require an uphill walk to reach the site. Agility and stamina are essential. Average distance by coach per day: 80 miles.

**Group size:** 10 to 22 participants.

**Combining tours:** It is possible to combine this tour with *Istanbul Revealed, 4–11 May 2025*. We are happy to advise on linking accommodation and transport.