An Epigraphic Guide To Hierapolis (Pamukkale) by Tullia Ritti has just been released by Ege Yayınları, İstanbul. The volume has 211 pages and contains 80 photographs and 2 maps. This is the third volume about Hierapolis published under the auspices of the Italian Archaeological Mission (www.misart.it) directed by Francesco D’Andria. Prof. Ritti has been an epigrapher at Hierapolis since 1974. The volume opens with a general introduction to epigraphy and to the history of Hierapolis. Then follows a discussion of 45 inscriptions chosen by Ritti. The Latin or Greek text with translation is first presented, followed by a commentary on the text, bibliography, and photograph. Two inscriptions are of particular interest to biblical scholars. The first (#4) is on a house tomb in the necropolis that is decorated with a menorah, lulav, and shofar. It identifies a sarcophagus belonging to a Jew named Marcus Aurelius Philoumenos Streneion. The second is a passage from Odes of Solomon 12:14 (Prayer of Manassus 1:14) written on plaster in a room near the theater. The inscription has been tentatively dated to the 6th century AD, but the purpose of the room is still under discussion. The volume finishes with a glossary and bibliography of inscriptions of Hierapolis for those interested in further study.

Ancient İzmit Nicomedia by Ayşe Çalık Ross was published this summer by Delta Publishing House, İstanbul. The volume has 144 pages and is richly illustrated with maps and photographs. The book is divided into four sections: I. Introduction, II. Sources on Nicomedia, III. Historical Periods, and IV. Archaeology in İzmit. Following the text is a list of ancient and modern sources as well as a list of documented earthquakes. Dr. Çalık Ross is an associate professor of archaeology at Kocaeli University in İzmit and has been involved in survey work of Nicomedia and its environs. Most biblical groups bypass Nicomedia thinking there is nothing to see in this former capital of the province of Bithynia. But Çalık Ross, in this introductory overview, clearly shows that a stop in modern İzmit is worth the time. Remains of the ancient theater and an early Christian basilica as well as the probable site of the Augustan imperial cult can be seen. The deadly earthquake of 1999 exposed additional remains believed to be a temple complex. Without this guide it would be very difficult for the visitor to find these remains scattered around the city.
The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has a national committee in Turkey. Its web site (http://www.icomos.org.tr) is now available in English and features thousands of books, journals, and magazines. The home page features the Bookseller’s Choices as well as recent releases. Registered surface shipping is included in the price for orders placed from anywhere outside of Turkey.

JOURNALS/ARTICLES

ArkeoAtlas is an annual archaeology publication produced by Atlas Magazine. Atlas is the premiere National Geographic-type publication in Turkey. Each monthly issue features an article on archaeology plus often includes wonderful maps or atlases as a bonus. To see a sample, check out its web site: http://www.kesfetmekicinbak.com/, which means “look to explore or discover.” Although the site is in Turkish, check out the “Arşiv” (Archive) on the left side and look under Arkeoloji for a sample of Atlas’s fabulous photography. The 2007 ArkeoAtlas is 170 pages long and is lavishly illustrated with photographs, charts, and maps. The primary focus of this issue is the Achaemenid Empire with eight articles by noted scholars covering the Persians in Asia Minor. Other articles deal with the Medes, Alexander, and the discovery of the Byzantine port at Kumkapı in Istanbul. But alas, everything is in Turkish except for a brief one-page English summary of some of the articles. For 8 Turkish lira the issue is still a wonderful visual experience for English-only readers.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has a national committee in Turkey. Its web site is: http://www.icomos.org.tr. Dr. Zeynep Ahunbay, a committee member and professor at Istanbul Technical University, gave an outstanding paper on the “Protection and Restoration of Ancient Theaters in Turkey” at the recent Hierapolis symposium. Dr. Ahunbay donated a copy of the ICOMOS publication Management and Preservation of Archaeological Sites to the AMRC library. Although published in 2002, this English publication still has much valuable information with chapters on sites such as Ephesus, Pergamum, and Side. It is richly illustrated with black & white pictures and charts. The chapter “Stadia of Anatolia” by Dr. Nevzat İlhan is a valuable overview of the 32 stadia still existing in Turkey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The American Research Institute in Turkey has announced its fellowships for advanced language study to be conducted in Istanbul on June 23–August 13, 2008. This course is for advanced students or scholars who have a high proficiency level in Turkish. For more information see http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ARIT. While you are at the web site, check out an institutional membership for your university, or become a friend of ARIT. I have been a financial supporter for years. Also, check out the latest ARIT newsletter, which is now being posted online.

Tutku Tours of İzmir is offering a Fam trip to Turkey for university professors on March 7-15, 2008. The itinerary will include İstanbul and biblical and classical sites in western Turkey. The trip’s purpose is to familiarize scholars with Turkey’s rich historical and cultural heritage. I will be lecturing the group for four days on the tour. The deadline for signing up is soon: December 22. For more information contact Levent Oral at info@tutkutours.com.
The destruction to Turkey’s archaeological treasures continues. This is perhaps the most common complaint of archaeologists at Turkey’s annual archaeology symposium. Christopher Roosevelt has documented well the problems related to the preservation of Lydian sites at Bintepe near Sardis (Journal of Field Archaeology 31.2 [2006] 185–98). In a recent article Kasim Mertek, the only mosaic restorer working for the Turkish Ministry of Culture, describes the plundering of the mosaics at Acmonia in recent years (http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=87757). I personally saw the evidence of such destruction during a recent visit to the so-called Sesostris Hittite relief (c. 13th century BC) at Karabel near Kemalpaşa. Compare the left photo taken in October 2006 with the one on the right taken a year later. Note that the bottom of the spear has been badly chipped. It appeared to me that a hammer had struck the relief. The rock chips and dust from this senseless destruction were still lying in the ledge below. The name TANER (perhaps the vandal?) was chiseled at the top of the rock. It seems that some type of covering must be used to protect this relief and others like it from future vandalism.

CONFERENCES

January 1, 2008 is the deadline to submit a proposal for presenting a paper at the international conference Paphlagonia and Pontus in Antiquity and Early Byzantine Period (7th c. BC – 7th c. AD) to be held in Izmir, May 31–June 4, 2008. The conference is being organized by Ergün Lafli of Izmir’s Dokuz Eylül University and Gocha Tsetskhladze of the University of Melbourne. Twenty-eight scholars, including myself, have already indicated their intent to present papers. The web site for the conference is still not working, so for more information contact the organizers directly: elafli@yahoo.ca

The Crisler Library in Ephesus (www.crislerlibraryephesos.com) is hosting a 10-day seminar for New Testament scholars. It will be held in Selçuk, Turkey, on June 19–28, 2008. Prof. Christine Thomas (UC Santa Barbara) is coordinating the event. About a dozen scholars will be chosen to participate. The seminar is designed for scholars interested in increasing their engagement with archaeology and material culture in their research and teaching. I look forward to participating in this unique seminar that features Christine as well as Steven Friesen (UT Austin), James Walters (Boston University), and Daniel Schowalter (Carthage College). The deadline for submitting an application has been extended to January 7. For more information on the seminar, contact Christine at thomas@religion.ucsb.edu.