Welcome to the Spring issue (2010.9) of the Asia Minor Report! The AMR seeks to inform scholars and students of early Judaism and Christianity in Asia Minor about recent historical and archaeological activities in Turkey. Please circulate this newsletter to colleagues and friends who might also be interested in these subjects. The Asia Minor Report is a publication of the Asia Minor Research Center and edited by its director, Dr. Mark Wilson. His contact information is: markwilson@sevenchurches.org.

BOOKS

The Tay Project released a 2008 preliminary report on the *Archaeological Destruction in Turkey* ([http://tayproject.org/dosyabizmareng.html](http://tayproject.org/dosyabizmareng.html)). The report focuses on the Marmara region during the Byzantine period and is based on fieldwork done during April–September 2008. The 55 page report published in English was sponsored by the Istanbul Research Institute, Ege Publishing, and Graphis Matbaa. Because of unbridled growth in Istanbul, especially housing development and road construction, historical remains are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Despite antiquities laws to the contrary, there is little monitoring or enforcement to stop this destruction. Of 466 structures surveyed, 377 were subject to destruction. A 9-page chart describes each building and the kind of destruction it has experienced. The volume concludes with 24 pages of selected visual documentation of destruction. Needless to say, it is discouraging to see how Turkey’s impressive cultural heritage is being lost to the bulldozer and to concrete. Presently UNESCO is threatening to remove Istanbul from its list of World Heritage Sites and relegating it to its endangered heritage list because of such issues outlined in the report. This is ironic since Istanbul in 2010 is being recognized as a European Capital of Culture. The report also mentions that “the most significant problem we encountered during our fieldworks in 2008 is that museums are made indifferent and un-reactive to the problems in their regions with their lack of equipment, trained staff, and information” (p. 12). The report then mentions the Holy Spring of Böcek, which is under the responsibility of the Iznik Museum and has been “closed for a long time due to lack of equipment and staff, it was not possible to enter and document the interior parts.” This same frustration was experienced in March 2009 when this editor was in Iznik with a student group and hoped to visit the Böcek Spring (Ayazma). In secondary use in the baptistery is a stone with a menorah and Greek inscription with the only citation of Psalm 135 (136): 25 in antiquity. (See S. Fine and L.V. Rutgers, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 3 [1996] 1–10.) However, the key could not be located so we had to photograph the stone through the gate (see photo). This year a helpful archaeologist at the museum did locate the key and was able to give us access to the baptistery in order to photograph the menorah and the inscription. For this our group was very grateful!
Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom edited by Jacob Munk Højte is a 2009 publication of the Aarhus University Press. It is #9 in the series called Black Sea Studies. I was fortunate to pick up a copy in Anaheim from David Brown Books at the APA/AIA annual meeting in January. While doing some web research I found the web site (in English) of The Danish National Research Foundation’s Centre for Black Sea Studies (http://www.pontos.dk/). On its publication page I was surprised to find eleven of its volumes in the Black Sea Studies series available in downloadable PDF files. Of particular interest for biblical scholars is the edited volume of studies in BBS 5, Rome and the Black Sea Region: Domination, Romanisation, Resistance and BBS 7, Urban Life and Local Politics in Roman Bithynia: The Small World of Dion Chrysostomos by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen. The latter volume has excellent discussions of the cities of Nicomedia and Nicea, which provide important information on the social and political background of the early Christian communities in northern Anatolia addressed in 1 Peter 1:1. The Centre for Black Sea Studies is to be commended for making these excellent studies available online to scholars, researchers, and students.

Zeugma Mosaics: A Corpus by Mehmet Önal (Istanbul: A Turizm Yayinuslari, 2010) 128 pp, over 100 color pictures, hardback, English. This oversize book comprises all of the mosaics which have been excavated at Zeugma, except for a few very fragmentary panels. Most of these panels are now on display in the Gaziantep Museum, where Önal works as an archaeologist. (The Danae mosaic was left in situ because the villa is located above the water level.) Önal was one of the scholars who worked nonstop to salvage the mosaics before the waters of the Birecik Dam inundated the site in 1999. The objective of the book was to present the Zeugma collection as a whole so that scholars could better evaluate the artistic elements of the mosaics such as decorative scheme, iconography, and comparative features with other mosaics. All of the approximately 50 mosaics date from the 2–3 C AD. Although the book is expensive, the detail and color of the plates are excellent. A map of the site with the locations of these finds would have been a helpful addition. With its collection from Zeugma, the Gaziantep Museum is clearly in the forefront to claim itself as the premier mosaic museum in Turkey. The museum in Antakya, despite its fine collection, is sorely in need of an update.

Assos, Living in the Rocks by Nurettin Arslan and Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2010) 180 pp, paperback, English and Turkish Editions. This volume is the latest of the archaeological guides from Homer Books. Arslan, a professor at Çanakkale’s Onsekiz Mart (March 18) University, now leads the excavations at Assos. A guide written by the previous excavator, Ümit Serdaroğlu (now deceased), is also still in print but only in the Turkish edition. The Homer guide follows the format of others in its series. After a brief survey of nearby sites such as Alexandria Troas, the authors discuss the history of Assos. They next survey the archaeological remains. Excellent drawings, photographs, and site plans accompany the discussions. The necropolis and port are covered in separate chapters. The volume ends with a look at Byzantine and Ottoman remains in the area of the Behram village. The Assos excavation has its own web page: www.assosbehramkale.com. The apostle Paul visited Assos near the end of his third journey, walking there from Troas before continuing to Mytilene (Acts 20:13-14).
The Lydians and their World edited by Nicholas Cahill (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010) 583 pp, softback, Turkish and English. This volume serves as an accompanying publication for a Lydian exhibition sponsored by Yapı Kredi and held at Vedat Nedim Tör Museum in Istanbul from February 19-June 2, 2010. This outstanding exhibition was free to the public, and this editor viewed it twice. The volume, edited by the present director of the Sardis excavation, consists of 20 essays written by noted scholars of Lydia and Sardis. The final section serves as the catalogue for the 232 pieces in the exhibition. A nice feature of the catalogue is the mention where each piece is discussed in the volume. Sardis’ former director, Crawford Greenewalt, provides the book’s introduction. Each essay, covering subjects such as coins, jewelry, cosmetics, language, and pottery, is richly illustrated with color photographs, drawings, and site plans. Footnotes and a bibliography conclude each essay. The editorial work to lay out this volume bilingually must have been formidable. Nevertheless, some better proofreading of the English text was needed. Turkish spellings of İyonya and Kroisos intrude occasionally. One set of footnotes seems to be missing. Also, for a volume of this size, weight, and cost a hardback binding would have been preferable because it is very cumbersome in its present form. Nevertheless, the editor, contributors, and publisher should be congratulated for this marvelous volume.

JOURNALS/ARTICLES

Issue XIII/2010 of Adalya published by AKMED in Antalya has just been released (www.akmed.org.tr). The issue consists of 19 articles written in German and French with the majority in English and Turkish. Black & white photographs and drawings accompany each article. Articles featuring biblical sites include Inci Delemen’s “A Bust of Antinous from Perge” (183-94) and Celal Şimşek and Barış Yener’s find in Laodicea of “An Ivory Relief of Saint Thecla” (321-34). Paul Kessener answers the question concerning how the Romans cut all the marble used in construction in a fascinating article called “Stone Sawing Machines of Roman and Early Byzantine Times in the Anatolian Mediterranean” (283-303). Perhaps the most important article in the volume is the first publication about the synagogue in Andriake found in 2009. “A Unique Discovery in Lycia: The Ancient Synagogue at Andriake, Port of Myra” (335-66) is a joint effort of its excavators: Nevşat Çevik, Özgü Çömezoğlu, Hüseyin Sami Öztürk, and İnci Türkoğlu. The find was an unexpected one as it is the first synagogue to be found in Lycia. The structure was located northwest of the Hadrian granary in the public center near the harbor. The identification is unmistakable as the site yielded a complete menorah plaque with inscription plus another partial plaque and a fragment of a third. The article systematically reviews the architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions from the synagogue. Based on comparisons with other synagogues the excavators suggest a date in the 5th century AD. The synagogue in Andriake is now the third one found in Turkey, besides those at Sardis and Priene. Unmentioned in literary sources, the Jewish community at Andriake certainly was a vital one and its presence expands our knowledge of Jews in Asia Minor. The menorah plaque (left) is now on display in the Antalya Museum.