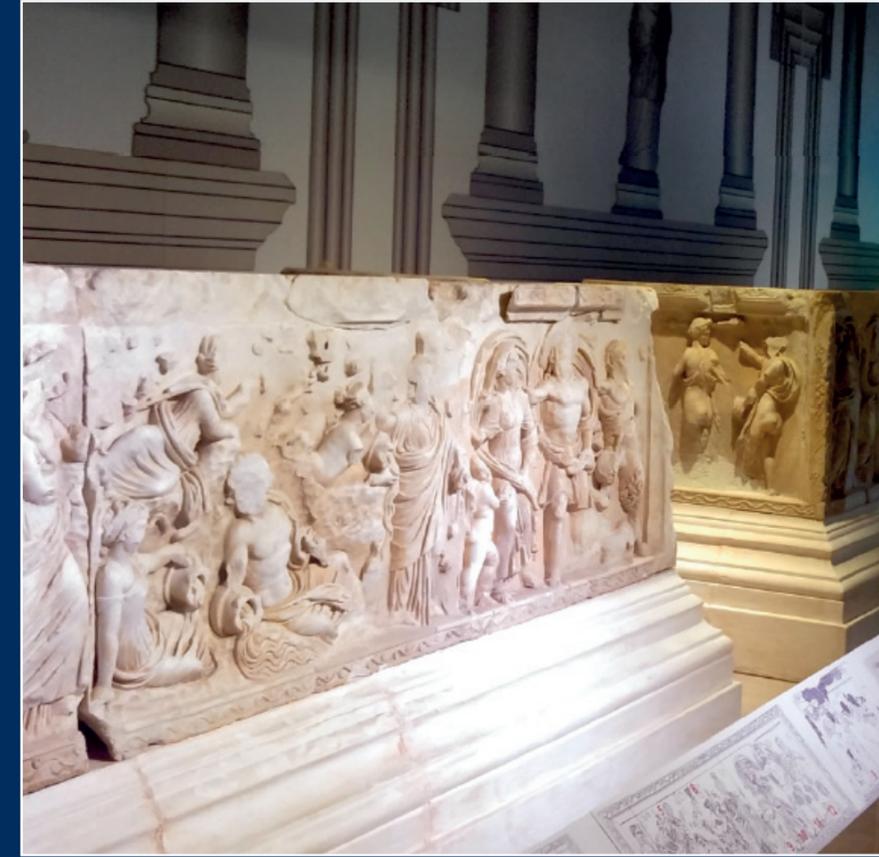




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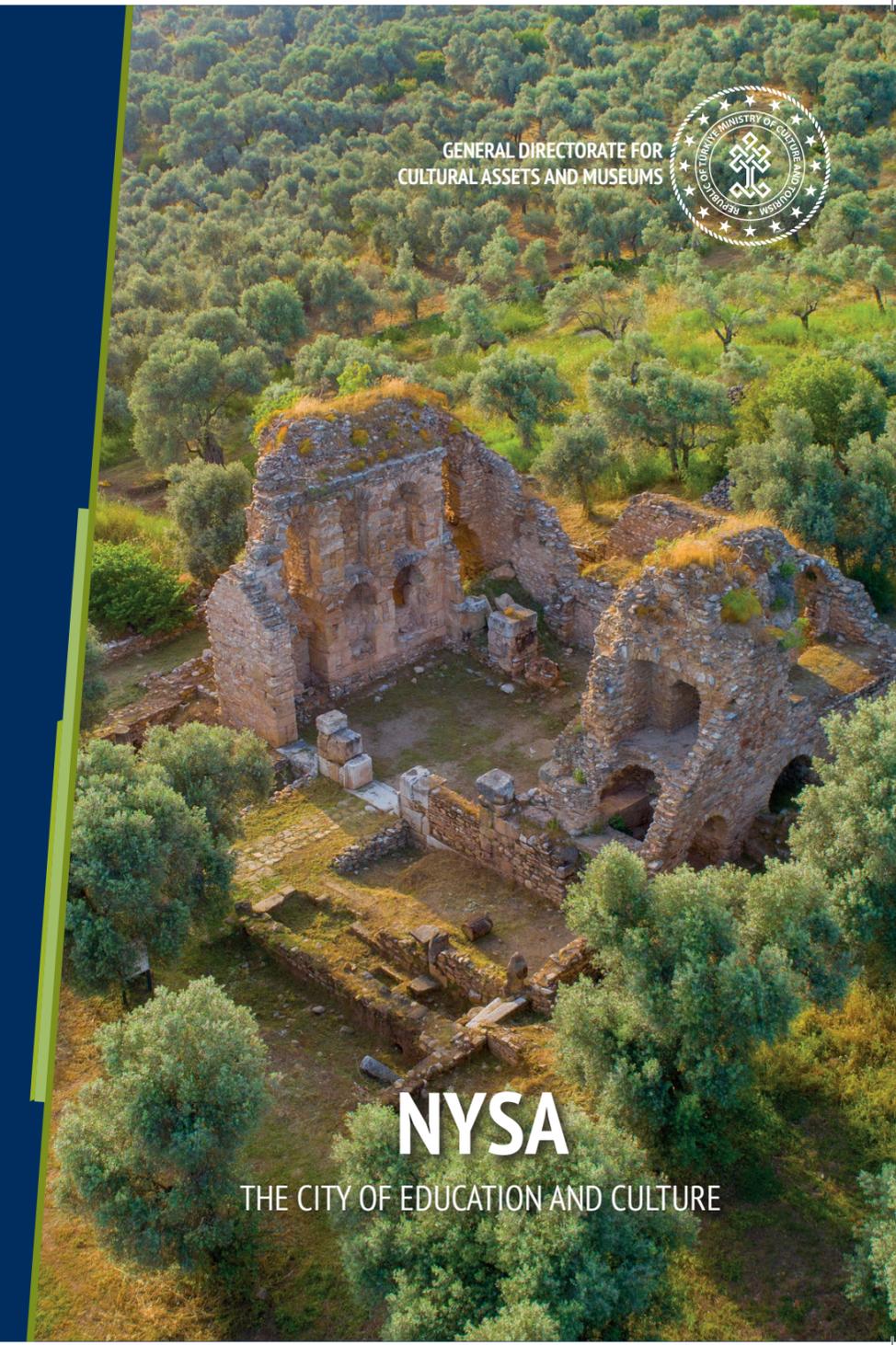
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Wonder of Roman Architecture and Engineering, Nysa



Nysa, situated in the fertile basin of Maiandros / Büyük Menderes River on the main trade route, is described as "situated near the Mesogis (Aydın, Cevizlidağ), resting for the most part against the mountain. It is, as it were, a double city, for a sort kind of torrent watercourse divides it into two parts and forms a valley..." in the Geography (The Geography of Strabo, Vol. 3, 43) of Strabo, who studied in Nysa for some time. The ancient city of Nysa presents to its visitors the finest examples of Roman architecture and engineering with its buildings built in the valley in harmony with the topography, especially the stadium, the tunnel and the three bridges. One of the buildings is the Gymnasium, where the young men were educated and the other is the library, one of the best-preserved examples in Anatolia.

The buildings of the Hellenistic period, which belong to the founding period of the city, remained below the Roman and Byzantine architecture which predominated in the city. Among the buildings mentioned by Strabo, the Gymnasium, the Theater and the Stadion on the west side and the Agora and the Gerontikon (Council House of the Elders) on the east side are probably the original buildings of the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman Period.

Another building on the west side of the city, built around 130 CE, served as a library, meeting hall, and courtroom. Public use of the library, which was restored in the late 4th or early 5th century CE, ended completely in the 6th century. In the 900s the interior was converted into a chapel and the southern part of the library was used as a cemetery.



The City of Dionysus

The Theatre, one of the best preserved structures in the City of Dionysus, Nysa. It has a cavea (seating section) thought to have been built in the Late Hellenistic Period (1st century BC) and extending the a semicircle form by 12 degrees. The stage building of the building and the scaenae frons (multi-story columned architecture in front of the stage building) were probably built between 120-140 CE in two stories independent of the cavea. The Hadrian Period stage building, destroyed by the earthquake of 178 CE, was rebuilt as a three-story building in 180-200 CE. Nysa Theatre, like other Anatolian theatres of antiquity, has the features of Anatolian-Roman theatres. The high podiums supporting the multi-story façade architecture (scaenae frons) in front of the stage building are decorated with reliefs, as in the theatres of Perge (Aksu), Side and Hierapolis (Pamukkale). Podium friezes depicting the marriage of Pluto and Kore (Theogamia) and the life of Dionysus, the god of wine, were excavated in situ in the scaenae frons. The podium friezes, which depict many important figures from mythology, also cite the geographical location of the city.

Agora, Gymnasium, Stadion

Gymnasium, built in the middle of the 2nd century AD on the west side of the city, served as a place for athletic activities as well as for teaching.

The Agora on the east side of the city is a large marketplace with an area of 113.5 m in the east-west direction and 130 m in the north-south direction. This building, which has porticoes on four sides, is dated to the Late Hellenistic Period, especially because of the architectural features of the Eastern Stoa.

The Agora is surrounded by stoas in the Ionian style with double rows of columns to the north and east and in Doric order with single columns to the south and west. As Strabo has already mentioned, the Stadion reflects the outstanding features of Roman architecture. It has an impressive infrastructure as it was built in harmony with the topography. The rows of seats and infrastructure in the northwest corner of the partially preserved building are clearly visible on both sides of the valley.

In mythology, Hermes commissioned the nymphs of Mount Nysa to raise the child Dionysus on behalf of Zeus. The people of Nysa carved sections of the life of Dionysus, the god of Nysa, into the podium friezes of the stage building of the theatre they built. The friezes of the theatre are exhibited in Aydın Archaeology Museum.

