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Clinging to Tradition. Urban and Monumental Continuity in 6th-Century Asia Minor

Discussions on the decline or transformation of the city in Asia Minor at the end of Antiquity abound since the publications of Clive Foss. There apparently is a growing consensus that the second half of the 6th century is one of urban recession foregoing the less prosperous and less well understood 7th and 8th centuries. The cause most often cited is the bubonic plague in 541/542[1]. By contrast, opinions on what occurred during the second half of the 5th and the first half of the 6th century are still quite diverse and often contrasting. Very often, the picture painted of these decades is bleak. To name but one example, David Potter in his concluding article in the 2011-volume »Archaeology and the cities of Asia Minor«, stated that there was a »dichotomy between evident urban decline of Asia Minor and the seeming prosperity of the regions beyond the Anatolian plateau from the 5th to seventh centuries«[2]. A little further he refers to a consistent pattern of urban life »with the city plan remaining intact into the middle of the 5th century. After that the city appears to have entered into a period of rapid decline«[3]. In this particular case, these statements are all the more remarkable, since several of the other articles in the book seemingly contradict them. That is, they often imply continued prosperity until at least the start of and often into the 6th century. However, in reality, none of them actually lays out the evidence.

This is true for most archaeological overviews of Late Antiquity: the second half of the 5th and even more so the first half of the 6th century are only implicitly present. It is the period between the prosperous Theodosian period and the End of Antiquity[4]. Outside of Constantinople, there is not much evidence of new construction or large renovation works securely dated to these decades in Asia Minor, with the exception of churches that is[5]. And this apparent absence of activity seems to have fuelled the recurrent negative view of a city in decline, a decline that then assumingly continued for more than 150 years, speeding up around the mid-6th century. Rather than presenting a comprehensive overview of archaeological remains dating to the pertinent decades, in this paper I will investigate why they are still so scanty, stressing that this is for a large part due to predisposition in modern research. I will argue that the monumentality of cities as well as the ideological adherence to urban living in Asia Minor did not falter before the middle of the 6th century. Until that time, and probably even thereafter, urban populations maintained their physical surroundings to their best ability, trying to compromise between diminished financial resources and the unbroken willingness to invest in urban infrastructure and monuments that are very Roman in concept. I will take Sagalassos, a medium-sized town in the Southwest Taurus mountains, as a case-study because it is a prime example of large-scale investments in the monumental cityscape in the first half of the 6th century, where the detail of dating is high. Signs of decline multiplied rapidly from around the middle of the 6th century onwards[6]. Thereafter, I will focus on two traditional components of the Roman city that were obviously given at lot of attention at Sagalassos into the 6th century, bath buildings and colonnaded streets. I will examine the nature and quality of the evidence at our disposal. It is essential to establish whether or not the situation encountered at Sagalassos is exemplary for what was occurring at other towns of Anatolia or whether this provincial town was exceptional in its development.

1 Liebeschuetz, City 408-410. 415. – Little, Plague for an overview of the evidence. – Stathakopoulos, Famine for an overview of epidemics, among which the Plague, in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period and the consequences for social life. – Brandes, Cities 32 f. and Brandes/Haldon, Towns 141-150 occupy an intermediate stance. In their opinion the plague may have reduced urban population and there may have been a ruralisation of sites as early as the mid-6th c., but they maintain that some cities in Asia Minor continued to flourish until at least the 620s. Conversely, the appearance of the cities had, according to them, already declined from the late 5th c. onwards, Haldon, Idea 4. – Brandes, Cities 37. – Whittow, Asia Minor for an overview of archaeological evidence in the second half of the 6th c.

2 Potter, Cities 251 f. Generally, the cities beyond the Taurus mountains are considered to have prospered into the early 7th c. See, for instance, Walmsley, Syria. The Near East is also the focus of Holum's chapter on cities in the Age of Justinian (Holum, Classical).

3 Potter, Cities 253. – Niewöhner, Anatolia presents a similar chronological overview of the city in Asia Minor in the 5th and 6th c.

4 The preceding Theodosian period has recently received more attention. See, amongst others García-Gasco/González Sánchez/Hernández de la Fuente, Theodosian. – Jacobs, Theodosian. – Jacobs, Production. – The notable exception is Saradi, Byzantine City, a sweeping overview of the 6th century. However, the very wide geographical scope of the work, the way the archaeological evidence is arranged, and the sometimes low level of detail makes a chronologically precise reconstruction of the development of separate regions difficult.

5 Jacobs, Maintenance 650-652 for an overview of activities in a number of cities in Asia Minor.

6 For an overview of activities after the middle of the 6th c., see Jacobs, Early Byzantium 171-191.

In: Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan (Hrsg.), Veränderungen von Stadtbild und urbaner Lebenswelt in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit. Assos im Spiegel städtischer Zentren Westkleinasiens. Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident 23 (Mainz 2021). DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.964.c12842

New building, maintenance and prosperity

The prosperity of a certain region or time period is generally expressed in the amount of expenditure, foremost in the form of new building. For instance, the prosperity of the reign of Hadrian was expressed by a sustained building boom in Rome as well as in the provinces[7]. Or, more pertinent to the period under scrutiny here, because Justinian is intimately connected to some of the most iconic buildings of the Early Byzantine period including the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, a final building boom is implicitly assumed under his reign. The emperor's activities in Asia Minor were indeed mostly concentrated in Constantinople. Here he (re) constructed a senate house, a forum, a seaside promenade, a bath complex, a vast cistern, six hospices, and four palaces, as well as 32 churches in addition to Hagia Sophia[8]. The other locations where Justinianic activities could be attested were the eastern frontier zone – Pontos, Lazica and Armenia[9] – and Ephesus, the diocesan capital and an important pilgrimage location, where under his reign the Church of St. John was rebuilt on a magnificent scale, copying the form of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople[10].

However, how wise is it to focus on new construction when evaluating the prosperity of a time period? The condition that existing buildings or streets were in is as important. This aspect of urban monumentality is often neglected or deemed to be of only secondary importance, and yet, already in the 3rd century, when the building fabric of most cities in Asia Minor was saturated, renovations and maintenance had become vital aspects of urbanism[11].

Most monuments underwent decorative, structural and technical alterations of variable importance during their lifespan. Identifying and dating such later changes is of course extremely difficult. Because of the nature of the interventions, they can seldom be connected to stratigraphic deposition of sediments and can often only be dated relatively, sometimes stylistically, or not at all. Such interventions were often humble in character as well, which may explain why they are rarely mentioned in publications. Finally, many activities, such as day-to-day maintenance of bath buildings or passive preservation of statuary left no material traces at all. In view of this, a possible way to pinpoint the end of monumentality is to rely on the absence of evidence for destruction or collapse. This may at times prove to be an incorrect approach as well, but the theoretical exercise produces a very different perception of the city in the 5th and 6th century and, I believe, a valid alternative to that painted above.

Secondly, when determining the overall monumentality at the end of antiquity, the appearance of a monument or urban space is prevalent. Its exact function is of less importance. In this perspective, churches are as important for urban monumentality as theatres had been. Furthermore, even when a building or urban space was deserted, it could still be hidden behind a well-maintained or newly erected façade, *temenos* wall or portico[12]. In such cases, the overall monumentality of the city can be considered to have been left intact.

Sagalassos in the first half of the 6th century

Sagalassos was located in the ancient region of Pisidia, in the western Taurus Mountains. Its material record suggests that it developed in much the same way as other cities in Asia Minor. By the early 3rd century, it had been endowed with the full array of urban amenities. The urban centre was entirely built-up and construction of further public buildings no longer took place[13]. Nevertheless, the urban fabric was continuously maintained, and when necessary, renovated. Especially the late 4th and early 6th century witnessed many large-scale renovations and renewed investments in both private and public buildings[14]. Presumably in the course of the 5th century, the grandest entertainment buildings, such as the stadium and the theatre, and also the bouleuterion, went out of use, whereby the extra-urban monuments were probably left to decay – but, again, there is no datable evidence pertaining to abandonment and, for instance, theatres are known to have survived in other cities of Asia Minor throughout the 5th and into the 6th century, though mainly in the provincial capitals[15].

7 Opper, Hadrian for a concise but intricate overview of Hadrian's reign and activities.

8 Mitchell, History 339.

9 Both Anastasius and Justinian established or refortified strongholds such as Petra in Lazica, Theodosiopolis in western Armenia, Martyropolis in highland Armenia, and further endowed these settlements with sizeable churches (Mitchell, History 339).

10 The Church of the Apostles was described by Prok., de aed. 1.4.9-17. The replacement of the first church by Justinian, and its resemblance to the former were mentioned in 5.1.4-6: »This church, which was small and in a ruined condition because of its great age, the Emperor Justinian tore down to the ground and replaced by a church so large and beautiful, that, to speak briefly, it resembles very closely in all respects, and is a rival to, the shrine which he dedicated to all the Apostles in the imperial city, which I have described above«. See also Plommer, Church 119. – Krautheimer, Architecture 106. – Thiel, Johanneskirche 102.

11 Mitchell, Romanization for regional differences. – Waelkens, Romanization 358. – Benefactions in the 3rd century were mainly focused on the organisation of games, Nollé, Münzen 258. – Waelkens, Romanization 358.

12 The most famous example is the Basilica Aemilia in Rome, where the dilapidation after the sack of Rome in 410 was hidden behind a restored show façade, Kalas, Forum 112-114.

13 Waelkens et al., Late Antique 209-211.

14 Waelkens et al., Late Antique 217-221. – Jacobs/Waelkens, Street for a complete overview of interventions.

15 Some theatres were abandoned long before the 6th c., especially in smaller towns. For instance, the theatre of Aizanoi (*Phrygia Secunda*) may have been abandoned already before the middle of the 4th c. (Rheidt, Anatolien 243), that of Priene was spoliated in the 5th c. (von Gerkan, Theater 25). At Hierapolis, capital of *Phrygia Secunda*, part of the scene building collapsed in the course of the 5th, or maybe the early 6th c. and was not rebuilt thereafter (D'Andria, Hierapolis 181). Provincial capitals, however, again often had functional theatres far into the 6th c. Evidence for continuity in this region includes inscriptions and structural changes, but also graffiti, updates of statuary in the theatre façade, and Christian interventions to the structure (Jacobs, Sixth-century 197 f. 211 f.).

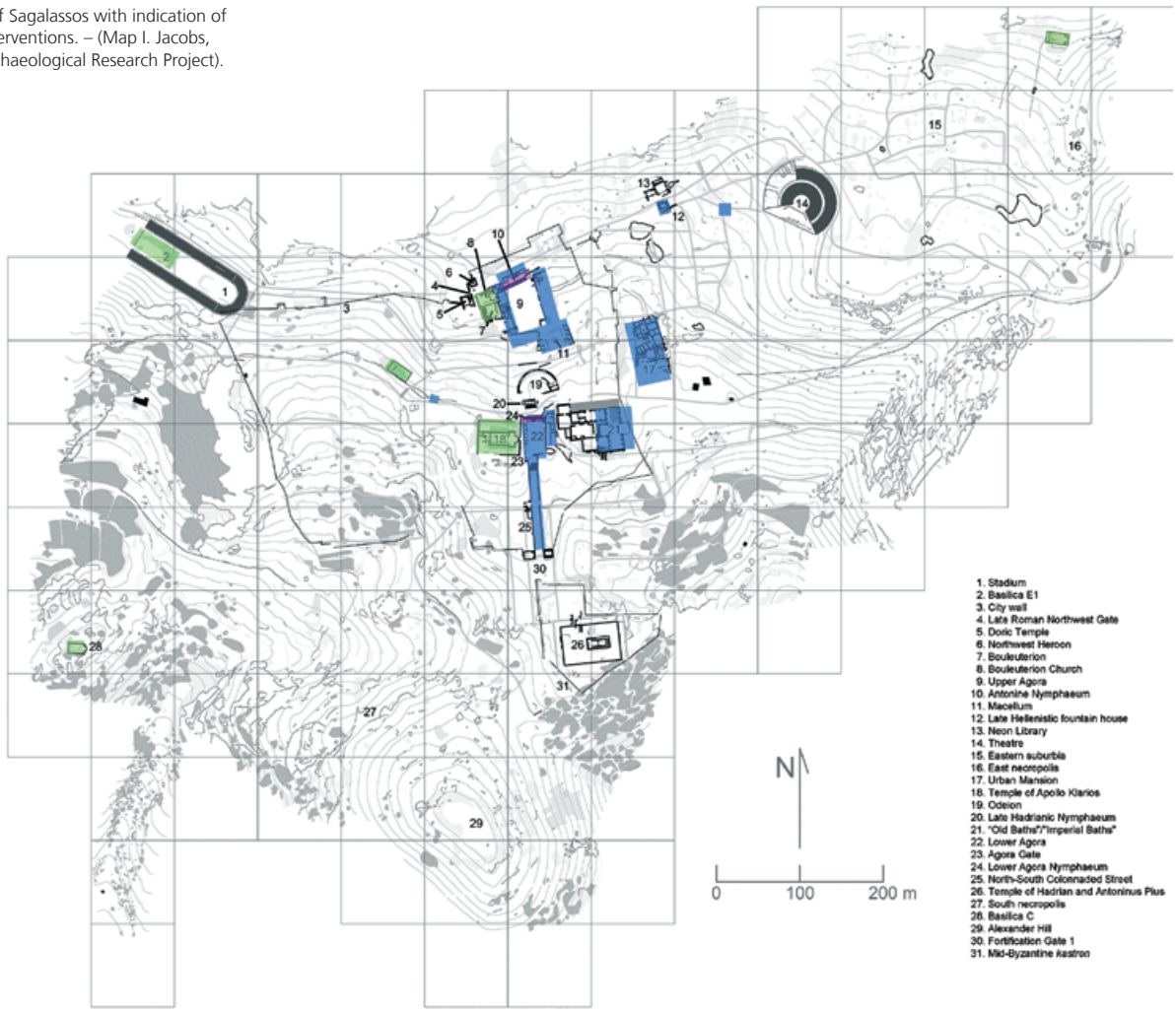

Fig. 1 Plan of Sagalassos with indication of 6th-century interventions. – (Map I. Jacobs, Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project).

The second half of the 5th century is not well represented in the archaeological record of Sagalassos. At the Imperial Baths, a wooden, amphitheatre-shaped auditorium installed in the course of the 5th century in the eastern arm of its largest hall, an old *frigidarium* of 60 m long, was again dismantled by the end of the century. Thereafter the space served as a kitchen for the dining hall established in the main space of the frigidarium[16]. The evidence again multiplies in the first half of the 6th century though. The town was hit by an earthquake around the year 500, necessitating repairs and renovations[17]. **Figure 1** gives an overview of all buildings and infrastructure known to have been created or restored in the 6th century. Quite a few of these are churches, but, in addition, the town's bath complex, monumental fountains and street network were restored with a considerable sense of monumentality as well[18]. Only the renovation of the two nymphaea on the Upper and Lower Agora of the town is supported by contextual evidence alone[19], whereas most interventions could be identified and dated directly, with stratified evidence. Thus the dining hall in the large frigidarium of the Imperial Baths was redecorated with a new black-and-white mosaic floor (**fig. 2**). Ceramics underneath it could be dated to the second half and the end of the 5th century[20]. At the time it was laid out, the hall was still decorated with six monumental statues of the Flavian dynasty. The bathing rooms still possessed at least part of their statuary decoration as well[21]. Ceramic and coin finds confirmed that usage of the rooms continued into the early 7th century. Some other public

16 Waelkens/Sagalassos Team, Jaarboek 2013, 25.

17 For the earthquake, see Sintubin et al., Sagalassos 6-15. – Similox-Tohon et al., Fault 81. 91.

18 Due to space constraints, churches will not be discussed in this article. The churches at Sagalassos were, however, either built or renovated in the late 5th, early 6th c. For instance, the courtyard of the old Bouleuterion was converted into a Christian basilica, whereas the former council hall was converted into an open-air atrium, with the rows of seats left largely untouched. Soundings executed in 2015 suggest that this conversion dates to the first half of the 6th c. and not to the first half of the 5th c. as previously assumed (personal comm. M. Waelkens).

19 The fountains and their 6th-c. statuary decoration are discussed in more detail in Jacobs, Statuary.

20 Waelkens et al., Report 2006, 435-437. – Waelkens et al., Report 2008, 270. – Waelkens/Sagalassos Team, Jaarboek 2011, 104 f. It is possible that a new marble decoration formed part of the original renovation plans, but it was certainly not brought to completion (cf. infra).

21 Jacobs/Stirling, Re-using 116 f.

Fig. 2 The 6th-century black-and-white mosaics in Frigidarium I of the Imperial Baths at Sagalassos, detail. – (Photo B. Vandermeulen, Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project).

buildings such as the Macellum remained in use[22], whereas construction works in the Odeion were initiated, but they were halted before they could be completed[23].

The civic spaces with the greatest visibility, the urban squares and colonnaded streets, were all renovated. The porticoes of the two agoras were re-erected and subdivided into several small units, some of them with representational porches in front of their entrance[24]. The colonnades of the east-west colonnaded street were repaired and a new pavement was installed[25]. The most extensive building project taking place in the second quarter of the 6th century was the renovation of the city's main traffic axis, the 10 m wide north-south colonnaded street[26]. The colonnades were reconstructed with a mixture of old Corinthian columns placed on a variety of bases as well as brick-and-tuff pillars, all carrying arches. A new colonnade floor was begun and the shops behind the colonnade were in all likelihood also reconstructed. In addition, part of the street pavement was replaced and the monumental staircase leading up from the street to the Lower Agora was completely re-laid several meters to the south of its predecessor, implying that the length of the Lower Agora was augmented in this period.

Furthermore, the 6th-century renovations taking place in the town centre included repairs to or even additions of decorative monuments, mostly fountains. Moreover, classical statuary and reliefs were still relocated and remained an integral part of all these building operations. Thus the original gateway surmounting the monumental staircase between

22 For the Macellum, see Richard/Waelkens, Macellum. – Waelkens et al., Report 2010, 245-247. – Waelkens/Sagalassos Team, Jaarboek 2013, 141 f.

23 The *aediculae* of the stage building were almost completely stripped. Two columns had been laid down in front of the stage building; another five identical columns were placed on top of each other in orderly piles inside a corridor to the east of the stage. In order to prevent them from moving, a fieldstone had been placed underneath the piles. Thereafter, especially in its corridors and in smaller quantities in the stage area itself, butchery refuse was discarded throughout most of the 6th and possibly even the 7th c. (Waelkens et al., Internal Report 2005, 85; 2006, 75; Report 2005, 326).

24 The west portico Lower Agora was subdivided into several shops selling food stuffs (Waelkens et al., Sagalassos 368; Jacobs, Encroachment 211). – For a porch installed on the Lower Agora, see Lavan, Polis 336-338 figs 14.1-2. – Lavan, Sagalassos 303-305 fig. 4a. – The encroachment phases of the Upper Agora are summarised in Jacobs, Economic.

25 Martens, Streets 348.

26 The 6th-c. renovation phase of the street is discussed in detail in Jacobs/Waelkens, Street.

Fig. 3 The 6th-century fountain behind the NW gate of the city. – (Photo B. Vandermeulen, Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project).

the colonnaded street and the Lower Agora had collapsed, but the columns and entablature pieces that had remained intact were collected and used to construct a new, somewhat unclassical L-shaped monument with only three columns. A statuary base carrying a dedication to the emperor Julian, partially in Latin partially in Greek, was placed just in front of this columnar monument[27]. A street fountain was added in between the agora staircase and the first crossroads. More importantly, this street section became the location of a new statuary display comprising at least eight small-scale statues. An Apollo, a Hygieia or Tyche, and Hygieia with Hypnos were mounted on top of statue brackets belonging to three neighbouring brick-and-tuff piers about halfway between the agora staircase and the first crossroads. In addition, an unknown, even smaller statuette may have been mounted on top of a small console near the agora staircase. Along the western border of the street, a statuette of Hygieia, an Aphrodite and the central figure of the Three Graces were found next to a much smaller statuette on a smaller console near the agora staircase[28]. Likewise, the town's nymphaea on the north sides of both the Upper and the Lower Agora were redecorated with new assemblies of statues. At the Upper Agora, eight were retrieved in various states of preservation during excavations. The nymphaeum was in all likelihood explicitly Christianised by this time. This was achieved by writing a Christian inscription in red paint on the archivolt of the central niche and inserting into its decoration small slabs adorned with crosses[29]. An additional, smaller decorative fountain was created in front of the west portico of the Upper Agora as late as the mid-6th century[30]. A more closed fountain house was installed behind the NW gate into the city. In this case, the luxury of the interior contrasted strongly with the structure's unobtrusive exterior (**fig. 3**)[31]. By contrast, the so-called »Doric fountain«, which was located outside the city centre, ceased to function as a public fountain and was converted into a basic water collection point, from where water was distributed to unknown locations further down slope[32].

In particular the interventions to the north-south colonnaded street and the town's agoras confirm that impressive scenery for public events, for processions, for the reception of magistrates and so on was apparently still required in a town such as Sagalassos far into the 6th century. Its constructors obviously went through a lot of trouble in creating such prestigious urban spaces, using inventive solutions when necessary and including statuary to finish the total picture. Despite the not so very classical appearance of the end result, the inhabitants of the 6th-century city were consciously treading in the footsteps of their Roman predecessors by investing in architectural status symbols of the Roman Imperial period.

27 Mägele, Skulpturen no. B56.
28 This statuary collection, its origins, reconstruction and meaning is discussed in detail in Jacobs/Stirling, Re-using.
29 Jacobs/Waelkens, Christianisierung.
30 Jacobs/Richard, Fountains 12 f. – Jacobs, Maintenance 241 f.
31 Jacobs/Richard, Fountains 22 f. with further references.
32 Jacobs/Richard, Fountains 56 f. with further references.

Asia Minor in the first half of the 6th century

The urban components of Sagalassos that were affected most by the renovations of the 6th century – the bath building, fountains, the water network, main streets and public squares – were identical to those given attention in other, earlier large-scale renovation campaigns, for instance that took place in late 4th/early 5th-century Ephesus[33]. But does this situation find parallels elsewhere in Asia Minor in the 6th century?

It is staggering to realise how little we know about the continued use of large monuments or urban infrastructure in many cities in the 5th and 6th century. Stratigraphic evidence occurs only very rarely, in a few cases a stylistic dating of architectural decoration has been possible, there is some related epigraphic evidence and, in some cases, the continued dedications of statuary indicates the continued importance of certain locations. I will shortly discuss two urban components: bath buildings and colonnaded streets.

Bath Buildings

In his 2010 overview article of bathing culture at Ephesus, Steskal incorporates a table summarizing the knowledge on their continued occupation[34]. Nine bathing complexes are known, three of which probably were private and will not be considered here. One complex, the Scholastikia baths, was definitely still in use and even repaired in the first half of the 6th century, whereas the Vedius Gymnasium had ceased to function and was partially robbed of its decoration already by the end of the 5th century. In the first half of the 6th century, it was damaged by fire and the terrain thereafter reused as a residential quarter[35]. For the other four bath complexes it remains unknown what happened to them in the 5th and 6th centuries. A few hypotheses can be formed though.

Even though bath buildings were expensive to maintain, there are but a few bath buildings in Asia Minor that could be proven to have gone out of use completely and left in ruins by the start of the 6th century. The Vedius Gymnasium is one of them. Not coincidentally, it was the city's largest and most imposing bath-gymnasium complex, and, more importantly, it was located outside the city centre. Elsewhere in Asia Minor, the bath-gymnasium complex at Aizanoi was plundered intensively for its building materials as early as 400[36]. A second bath building in the same city was, by means of small interventions, changed into a church in the middle of the 6th century, but its structure survived[37]. Presumably its function was continued in a smaller bath elsewhere in the town. This scenario occurred at Anemurium. Here, a huge bath-gymnasium complex was constructed in the mid-3rd century. The building was never entirely finished and a very slow dismantlement had already begun around the mid-4th century[38]. This dismantlement does not necessarily point to the impoverished state of the city, but rather to the brash foolishness of such a complex in the first place. Indeed, bathing functions could easily have been exercised in smaller buildings, two of which were still added at Anemurium in the 5th century[39]. Smaller baths generally survived much longer[40]. As discussed above, at Sagalassos part of the rooms of this large complex had lost their bathing function by the 6th century but they were still used for other purposes. Even though the quality of our information for most bath-gymnasium complexes is not detailed enough to say anything with certainty, it is probable that such large buildings elsewhere, including those at Ephesus, were rationalised in similar ways. In the process, part of the rooms and certainly some of the heated sections were abandoned and frigidaria were converted into meeting places or spaces for relaxation[41].

In ideal circumstances, the dates of later renovations or interventions are attested by epigraphic evidence. Without clear chronological indicators though, late antique inscriptions are difficult to assign a date. For instance, the renovation of the smaller Scholastikia baths at Ephesus in the first half of the 6th century was eternalised in words[42], but dating proposals still range between the end of the 4th and the first half of the 6th century – the latter being more convincing because of contextual evidence[43]. The continued use of the bath-gymnasium complex at Sardis is suggested both by the addition of graffiti in the course of the 6th century and by smaller architectural changes to the internal lay-out of the building[44].

A more promising venue to discern continued usage of baths is the careful study of their statuary collection[45]. At the Scholastikia baths, late portraits testify to its continued use as well[46]. Likewise, the Baths near the State Market at Ephesus may have still been in use in the early 6th century, since this is suggested by a bust of late 5th, early 6th century date, which, sadly enough, was integrated as building material in a much later wall on the site[47]. The Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias are the best preserved and documented example of continuity of

33 Ladstätter/Pülz, Ephesus 398-405.
34 Steskal, Badewesen 587 table 1.
35 Steskal, Badewesen 581f. – Auinger, Bath Buildings 71-76.
36 Rheidt, Anatolien 243.
37 Naumann, Aizanoi 301-340 for a detailed description of the separate building phases. – Niewöhner, Aizanoi 75.
38 Williams, Anemurium.
39 Russell, Inscriptions 9-49 no. 7. – Russel, Anemourion 221.
40 Berger, Bad. – Yegül, Baths 314-338. – Nielsen, Thermae 115-117. – Saradi, City 325-343 for features and regional distribution of Late Antique and Early Byzantine baths.
41 Yegül, Baths 313. 329.
42 IvE II 453.
43 Steskal, Badewesen 583. – The earlier date is proposed, amongst others by Foss, Ephesus 60. – Auinger/Aurenhammer, Skulptur 687. – Auinger, Bath Buildings 70.
44 Yegül, Sardis 51.
45 The most exemplary study is that of Auinger, Bath Buildings for the bath buildings at Ephesus.
46 Auinger/Aurenhammer, Skulptur 669. 688 fig. 22.
47 Steskal, Badewesen 582.

the civic tradition of dedicating statuary in a bath context[48]. The steady accretion and adaptation of statuary did not end here until ca. 600. Such dedications of course also implicitly indicate continued usage of the building. Indeed, several other Roman bath buildings in Asia Minor demonstrate continued use and kept their statuary decoration, albeit with additions, removals, rearrangements or other alterations, often intended to adjust them to the sensitivities of the Christian age, into the 7th century. For instance, the group of muses and the Apollo discovered in the Faustina Baths at Miletus were probably brought to the so-called Hall of the Muses in the second half of the 4th century. As late as the first half of the 6th century, this hall was altered and repaired, while the statues remained in place[49]. In the frigidarium of the Baths an archaic statue of a lion was discovered with a cross added on to its back, whereas a statuary group of Dionysos and a satyr had their genitals carved away[50]. Even though such later interventions are particularly difficult to date, Troels Kristensen and Lea Stirling have recently suggested that the practice of inscribing crosses indeed belongs to the 5th and 6th century. Their argument is based on the fact that the large majority of cross-marked statues were found in bath buildings in the East, where bathing continued through the 6th century, whereas the phenomenon was fairly rare in the western provinces, where public bathing often ended before the 5th century. In addition, of the five examples of cross-marked statues from the West, four came from areas that were reconquered under Justinian, suggesting that such »updating« was an eastern practice, as was already argued above, and that it was still a feasible procedure at that time of Justinian[51]. The mutilation of genitals may have started earlier, as it is more recurrent in the West as well[52]. These alterations in any case ensured that baths in Asia Minor kept their statuary decoration, often into the early 7th century, when all usage of the buildings stopped.

Colonnaded streets

Colonnaded streets are supposedly the best known urban components and certainly those most vital for the monumentality of the city as a whole[53]. But as is the case with bath buildings, interventions that occurred after the laying or relaying of a street have not often been noted, published or dated. In the current state of research, most large-scale renovations to public infrastructure have been assigned to the late fourth or the early 5th century[54]. The renovation of the Marble Street at Ephesus in the third quarter of the 5th century has always been considered one of the latest examples[55]. Sadly enough, many of these dates have been established on epigraphic evidence alone. It is not very common to establish a detailed chronology for the evolution of colonnaded streets or public plazas through excavations or even small-scale soundings underneath pavement slabs. Yet, soundings underneath and next to the pavement of the Tetrapylon Street at Aphrodisias undertaken in 2019 suggest that the final pavement was laid only around the year 500 and not a hundred years earlier as had always been assumed[56]. Evidence related to the collapse of colonnades or back walls often offers the only solid *terminus ante quem* for the abandonment and dilapidation of streets. Most indications for their maintenance are circumstantial.

Negative evidence for the end of monumentality in colonnaded streets is quite limited and may all belong to the later part of the 6th century. At Aizanoi, the collapse of the street is not precisely dated, but placed somewhere in the course of the 6th century. Judging by the soil that had accumulated on top of the street surface, the street had by then already been neglected for a while[57]. At Sardis, the back wall of the north colonnade of the street in sector MMS collapsed, but only around the mid-6th century[58].

Most colonnaded streets seemingly fared well. The example of the Tetrapylon Street in Aphrodisias has already been mentioned. At other streets, additions and alterations have been dated internally. Thus, the Kuretes portico was only added to the Embolos at Ephesus in the early 6th century[59]. The addition of a tetrastylon on the Arkadiane during the reign of Justinian as well can hardly have taken place if the street was no longer representative[60]. Since the upper portico mosaic of the MMS/N plaza at Sardis dates to the 6th century, we can assume that this area was still in good condition until that time[61]. Coin finds underneath the last floor of a shop alongside the late antique colonnaded street at Aizanoi implied that the last refurbishment of the shops took place after the late 5th century, suggesting the street was still maintained at least at the beginning of the period, even though it may have collapsed a few decades later[62].

In some cases, alterations were indeed accompanied by inscriptions, which again often prove difficult to date precisely.

48 Smith, Baths.
49 Schneider, Musengruppe 47-54. Their find locations again indicate that they remained on display until the entire building went out of use in the first quarter of the 7th c., Niewöhner, Milet 186-189.
50 Agelidis et al., Katalog 198f. no. 20.
51 Kristensen/Stirling, Afterlives.
52 Stirling, Homes for examples.
53 These has been convincingly argued by Bauer, Stadt; more recently by Dey, Afterlife.
54 For an overview, see Jacobs, Theodosian table 3 with references. Examples include a new colonnaded street at Aizanoi, the repaving of the Tetrapylon Street at Aphrodisias, of the Embolos, the Arkadiane and, no doubt, also other colonnaded streets at Ephesus, as well as of the Marble Road at Sardis, among others.
55 IvE IV 1304. – LSA-611 [laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/database/detail.php?record=611] (A. Sokolicek/U. Gehn) with further references.
56 Jacobs, Tetrapylon.
57 Rheidt, Aizanoi 712.
58 Greenewalt/Cahill/Rautman, Sardis 18-20.
59 Karwiese et al., Ephesos 9.
60 Jobst, Säulenmonument, – Russo, Scultura 36f.
61 Greenewalt/Ratté/Rautman, Sardis 5. – Greenewalt/Rautman, Sardis 475-478.
62 Rheidt, Aizanoi 712.

Fig. 4 »Street B« at Side seen from its eastern extremity. – (Photo I. Jacobs).

Sections of the main colonnaded street of Side were still provided with new mosaics and individual donors were donating columns into the 6th century[63]. The west and south porticoes of the South Agora of Aphrodisias were renovated as late as the 6th century as well. A collection of 19 acclamations clarifies that the first was the work of a certain Albinus, calling him the »founder of the portico«[64]. The south portico was presumably restored with funds from multiple benefactors[65]. Acclamations to the emperor in these urban settings imply an ongoing concern of the city for its position within the wider Empire. At Hierapolis acclamations were painted onto pillars of the main street. They have been tentatively dated to 535, when the town was elevated to *metropolis* of Phrygia Pacatiana, and may have been the physical expression of an official ceremony, possibly an *adventus*[66]. Acclamations addressed to Phocas and Heraclius were carved on the columns of the Embolos and Marble Street into the 7th century[67], which may also be the date of the latest painted inscriptions applied onto columns of the Tetrapylon Street at Aphrodisias[68].

As in bath buildings, a careful study of the statues found in colonnaded streets could help to push the research forwards. Late additions of statuary in any case suggest that streets remained representational spaces into the 6th century. This is true for streets such as the Embolos and the Marble Street at Ephesus[69], and civic squares such as the Tetrastoon at Aphrodisias[70].

Finally, an example of how context can suggest continued monumentality: I would like to argue that the second colonnaded street of Side, of which not even the construction has been dated properly, was still very well maintained into the 6th century. Its present-day appearance suggests that it had undergone wide-ranging renovations in Late Antiquity. The pavement contains reused inscriptions, and a variety of columns and column pedestals indicates later refurbishments, whereas the presence of column pedestals in the western section of the street, as opposed to the Attic-Ionic bases in the eastern section, might be intended to stress the entrance of the episcopal complex (**fig. 4**). Furthermore, some 30 m in

63 Nollé, Side nos 156. 162-164a.
64 InsAph2007, 4.21.1. – Roueché, Asia Minor 583.
65 InsAph2007, 4.19.
66 Miranda, Acclamazioni.
67 Feissel, Epigraphie. – Roueché, Ceremonial.
68 Jacobs, Tetrapylon.
69 Auinger, Kuretenstraße. – See n. 55 for the bust of Eutropius and the Marble Street.
70 Smith, Honorific statuary. – Smith, Baths 218-220 fig. 42.

Fig. 5 Keystone with chrismon discovered in »Street B« at Side. – (Photo I. Jacobs).

front of this entrance, a keystone with a chrismon was found just east of the base of an unidentified monument (**fig. 5**). This street became the approach to the episcopal complex from the city centre and maybe as late as the second half of the 6th century, and for this reason alone it can be expected to have been kept in good order, as it would become an integral part of a processional route, next to its day-to-day functioning.

Discussion

At Sagalassos the material record of the first half of the 6th century demonstrates that its inhabitants were still numerous and wealthy enough to undertake extensive renovations. At present, there are few other cities in Asia Minor where 6th-century renovations were so widespread or, more correctly, are recognised to have been so widespread. The reasons that there were so many interventions in 6th-century Sagalassos are very likely of a local nature. First, the town produced its own variant of Roman tableware in the local potters' quarter behind the theatre. Consequently, there is an abundance of well-datable pottery finds present in every excavated context[71]. More importantly for this particular time period, as mentioned above the town was severely damaged by an earthquake around the year 500. The inhabitants were not necessarily wealthier or more willing to invest in public infrastructure and architecture than those of other towns, the necessity may have been greater. It is very possible that elsewhere monuments and streets could make do with much less invasive interventions, which are therefore also much harder to trace. The rebuilding of the town after the earthquake closely adhered to planning principles of the classical age, even though the materials and execution had changed somewhat. That this was not the only choice is made evident by the contrasting example of Assos, where the late 5th , early 6th-century rebuilding followed an entirely different approach[72].

Outside of Asia Minor, there are more cities where 6th-century interventions in classical tradition are recognisable. Skythopolis and Caesarea, the provincial capitals of the two Palestine provinces, for instance, develop in much the same way. Reconstructing their cityscape in the 6th century is made easier mainly because interventions in these parts of the Mediterranean were often highlighted by inscriptions[73]. Asia Minor does not have a very strong epigraphic record after the 4th century. Positive evidence for continued monumentality in the form of inscriptions is limited to just a few sites, Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and to a smaller extent Sardis and Side. The dedication of new honorific statues is likewise largely limited to Ephesus and Aphrodisias. The material record of Sagalassos warns us that older statues were also still being moved around in the 6th century, but such actions of relocation are extremely hard to even identify, as are many of the later interventions in the urban fabric.

71 The pottery research and establishment of a chronology are the ongoing work of Jeroen Poblome (Poblome, Chronology. – Poblome, Sagalassos).

72 See Böhlendorf-Arslan in this volume.

73 An overview of the development of Skythopolis can be found in Tsafrir/Foerster, Scythopolis. – For Caesarea, see Holum, Classical.

The resulting array of evidence of course does not unite to tell a single story for Asia Minor in the 6th century. In some towns, such as Aizanoi, the impression of the 6th century is indeed rather bleak. However, there are enough indications present, though they are very spread, to render it probable that many cities were still taking care to preserve the monumentality of their surroundings as late as the first half of the 6th century and that they were not living among the ruins of the past, as the situation is so often described. This may be the case not only in provincial capitals such as Ephesus or Aphrodisias or Sardis, but apparently also in smaller towns such as Sagalassos. At the least, the presence of these indications in combination with the many difficulties related to the identification and dating of late antique changes should warn us to be cautious in interpreting the absence of clearly identified and dated 6th-century interventions as unambiguous signs of decline.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Özet

An der Tradition festhalten. Städtische und monumentale Kontinuität im Kleinasien des 6. Jahrhunderts

In diesem Artikel werden städtische Interventionen in Kleinasien überprüft, die sicher in das 6. Jahrhundert datiert wurden. Ich untersuche, warum sie immer noch so spärlich sind, und betone, dass dies hauptsächlich darauf zurückzuführen ist, dass moderne Forscher dem monumentalen Neubauten übermäßige Aufmerksamkeit schenken. Es ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass wir noch sehr wenig über die fortgesetzte Nutzung großer Monumente oder der städtischen Infrastruktur in vielen Städten im 5. und 6. Jahrhundert wissen, eine Situation, die sich nur langsam ändert.

Wenn wir alle kleinen Eingriffe, Reparaturen und sogar die tägliche Wartung berücksichtigen (können), ergibt sich eine andere Einschätzung des Zeitraums. Basierend auf der Fallstudie Sagalassos (Pisidien) und dem anschließenden Vergleich mit anderen größeren Städten in Kleinasien, argumentiere ich, dass die Städte in diesem Teil der Welt noch in der ersten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts darauf bedacht waren, die Monumentalität ihrer Umgebung zu bewahren.

Clinging to Tradition. Urban and Monumental Continuity in 6th-Century Asia Minor

In this article I review urban interventions in western Asia Minor that have been securely dated to the 6th century. I investigate why they are still so scanty, stressing that this is mostly due to modern researchers giving inordinate attention to monumental new building. I point out that we still know very little about the continued use of these large monuments or urban infrastructure in many cities in the 5th and 6th century, a situation that is only slowly changing.

When we (are able to) take all small-scale interventions, repairs and even day-to-day maintenance into account, a different appreciation of the period imposes itself. Based on the case-study of Sagalassos (Pisidia) and a subsequent comparison with larger cities in western Asia Minor, I argue that in this part of the world cities were still taking care to preserve the monumentality of their surroundings as late as the first half of the 6th century.

Geleneğe Bağlı Kalmak. Altıncı Yüzyıl Küçük Asya'sında Kentsel ve Anıtsal Süreklilik

Bu makalede, Küçük Asya'nın batısında altıncı yüzyıla tarihlenen kentsel müdahaleleri gözden geçirmekteyim. Neden hala bu kadar yetersiz olduklarını araştırırken, bu durumun büyük ölçüde anıtsal yeni yapılara olağanüstü bir biçimde ilgi gösteren modern araştırmacılardan kaynaklandığını vurgulamaktayım. Yavaş yavaş değişen bir durum olmakla birlikte, beşinci ve altıncı yüzyılda pek çok kentte bulunan bu büyük anıtların veya kentsel altyapının aralıksız kullanımı hakkında hala çok az şey bildiğimize dikkat çekmekteyim. Küçük ölçekli tüm müdahaleleri, onarımları ve hatta gün gün bakımını hesaba kattığımızda (katabildiğimizde), dönemin farklı idrak edilmesi durumu söz konusudur. Sagalassos'un (Pisidia) örneği incelemede temel alınarak ve devamında Küçük Asya'nın batısında bulunan daha geniş kentlerle karşılaştırılmasına dayanarak, dünyanın bu kısmındaki kentlerin hala altıncı yüzyılın ilk yarısının son zamanlarına kadar çevrelerindeki anıtsallığını korumaya özen gösterdiğini öne sürmekteyim.