

Day 7 Friday Nov 6 Hierapolis

The road to Pamukkale and Hierapolis



In the last diary, I mentioned the wonderful lunch. But I neglected to mention the dessert. It was a tahini pancake. And it was fabulous! I was going to share, but ended up eating way too much of it myself.

But the day was not over yet. It was time to head to Pamukkale. I think I mentioned earlier that I had never heard of Pamukkale until my kids, Sarah and Jeremy visited a few years ago. As soon as I saw their pictures, I knew I had to see it for myself.

Hierapolis

We were on our way to Pamukkale, but what I did not realize is that right next door to Pamukkale is the ancient Greco-Roman and Byzantine city of Hierapolis, founded in the 2nd century BCE. It is believed that the name Hierapolis, meaning Holy or Sacred City, comes from the name Hiera, the wife of one of the kings of Pergamum. And we were going to see Hierapolis, while we still had the light of day. It is the thermal springs that made this a popular spa in Hellenistic times. There are still mineral rich pools in the ruins. The Sacred Pool is still there, littered with marble columns from the Roman Temple of Apollo. Almost all the ruins here date back to the Imperial Roman period. At one end is the largest ancient cemetery, Necropolis, in Anatolia with about 1200 graves. More about this later.

As with all old Roman cities, there is a large theater from the 2nd century in Roman style with many reliefs depicting scenes of the Emperor and from the life of the god, Dionysus.

There was also a very large Jewish population here. At the same time that Antiochus invited Jews to Sardis, many Jewish families also came to Lydia and to here. It is believed that in 62 BCE the Jewish population may have been as large as 50,000.

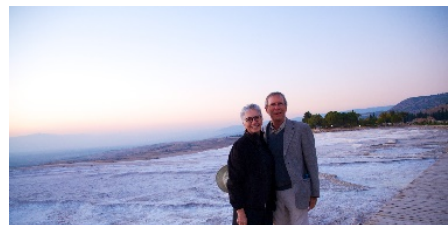
We walked up the mountain to see the theater and then back down through the different temples. The view was beautiful, looking out over the valley.





Mutlu suggested we go see the cemetery, but I was anxious to get to the pools. That is a separate blog called Pamukkale. When we finished wading around the pools, the sun was setting.

Mutlu suggested that while it was still dusk, perhaps we wanted to walk to the cemetery after all? Never one to turn down an adventure in a foreign land, we said sure. He was anxious to take us so we began the (long) walk there. The sun continued to set to our left throwing wonderful light onto the ruins.





But it was a long walk, and by the time we got to the cemetery, it was dark. That did not stop Mutlu. He was determined to show us something he felt was special. So he took out his phone flashlight and climbed about until he found it. And what was it? A sarcophagus with a Magen David (Jewish star) on it. Yes, there were lots of Jews here at one time.



And then we had to make the long walk back. It seemed like we were the only ones left in the park. We walked and we walked and we walked and then we walked some more, all to the light of the flashlight.