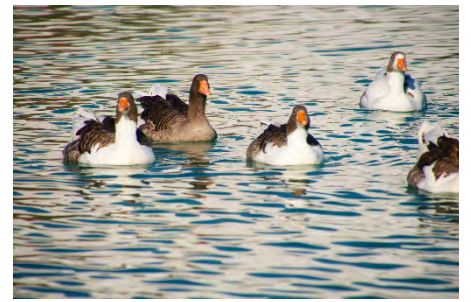


Day 7 Friday Nov 6 Pamukkale



We drove through the country side, past farms and fields of vegetables and then we saw it. A large mountain of snow. Snow in Turkey? No, it wasn't snow. It was the travertine mountain of Pamukkale. Pamukkale is 8860 feet long, 1970 feet wide and 525 feet high. It can be seen from miles away, looking like a mountain covered in snow.

We stopped first at the bottom. There were families everywhere. Duck were swimming in the lake. And we could look up at the mountain. I was still itching to get up there. But it still was not time.



We walked up the mountain first to see Hierapolis. That is a separate blog. I was anxious to get to the travertine pools so we went to get changed.

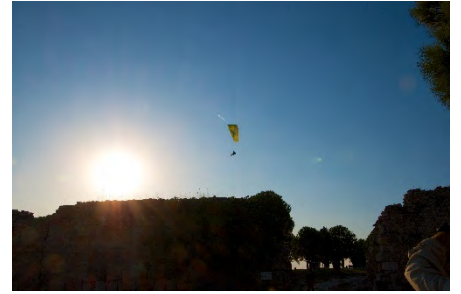
Changed, you ask? Yes, we went to the very modern changing rooms surrounding a man-made thermal pool. Tourism has been a major industry here due to the thermal baths, with people coming here to bathe for thousands of years. As recently as the mid-20th century, hotels were built over the ruins of Hierapolis, causing considerable damage. An approach road was built from the valley over the terraces, and motor bikes were allowed to go up and down the slopes. But then the world came to its senses. The area was declared a World



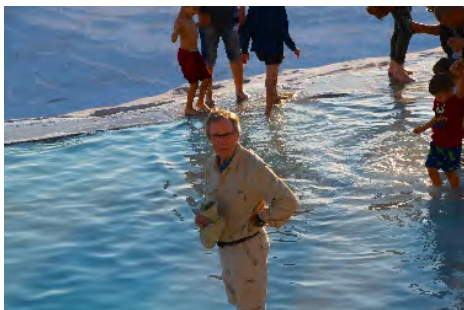
Heritage Site, the hotels were demolished and the road removed and replaced with artificial pools. But we were not interested in those. We wanted to visit the “white castle.”

So what is Pamukkale? Pamukkale is a city which contains hot springs and spectacular white travertine terraces which were formed when the hot spring water flowed down the mountain leaving white calcium carbonate limestone behind. The layers of white calcium carbonate built up on the steps of the plateau and earned the name of the Pamukkale, which in Turkish means “cotton castle.”

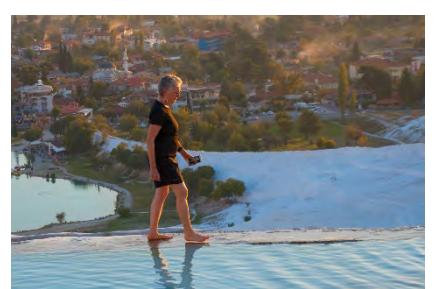
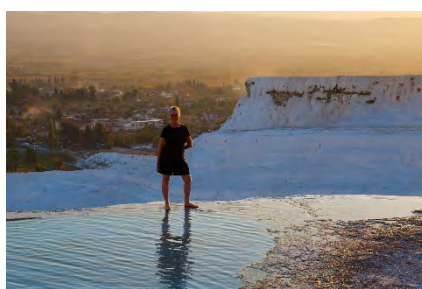
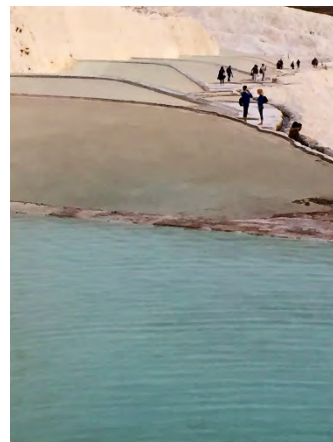
We changed into shorts and sandals as wearing shoes in the water is prohibited in order to protect the deposits and we planned on walking through the pools. And so we then made our way down to the natural pools. But first we walked over to the other side to be able to look back at the view of the cascading pools. You can't imagine the beauty of the deep turquoise water against the white walls. And wait, there is more.



It was finally time. We took off our shoes, handed the camera, jackets, shoes, backpacks to Mutlu (of course I kept my phone camera but Mutlu had fun taking pictures with my big camera) and began to wade in. Several surprises. The water was rather cool. I expected warm thermal water. Second, it hurt to walk on the limestone. Not cotton-like at all! Third, it was slippery. Andy and I slowly made our way in. Andy found the going too tough, so he waded back out. But I kept going. I waded through one pool and thought I would stop. But then decided to wade to the next one. And the next one.





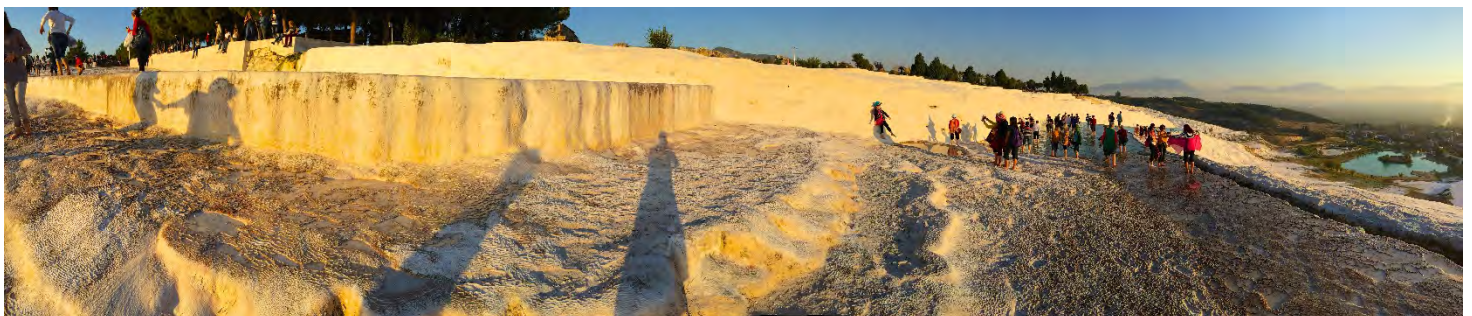
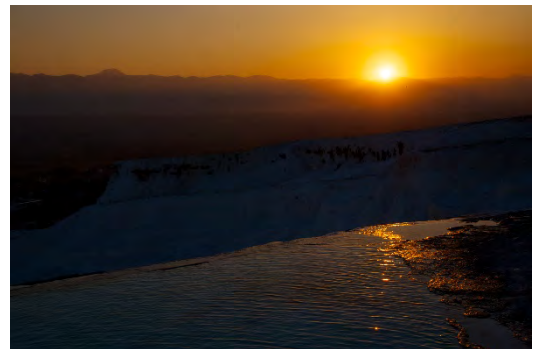
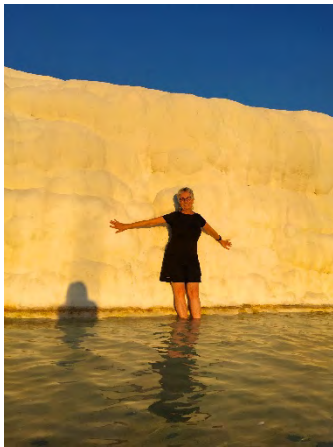






At one point I looked up and saw a bride and groom having their pictures taken. The Muslim wedding dresses are stunning (we saw lots of brides on this trip), even though they stay very covered, or maybe because they stay very covered. It was a beautiful look.

The sun was beginning to set. The water was a beautiful blue, and slowly it began to change colors as did the sky. I just stood there watching, with my back against the travertine wall. The shadows got long. It was calming. It was gorgeous. It was nature at its best. It was G-d at his best.







Finally I just had to leave. With the sun setting, the air began to get cold again. Shoes back on. Long pants back on.

That night we had dinner in our hotel and then visited the thermal baths there. Now those were hot!

