the 2nd century BC Pergamon's king Eumenes II consecrated the complex to Athena, bringer of victory. On the side of the courtyard, the balustrades between the upper-storey columns were decorated with reliefs of weapons; a few of the originals are mounted on the wall next to the gate. Depictions of trophies such as these were typical features of ancient victory monuments. Behind the palace's Hephaistion Mosaic in the centre of the hall stands a colossal Hellenistic copy of the Athena Parthenos from the Acropolis in Athens that was found in Pergamon's Athena sanctuary.

To the left of the gate is a corner column with Corinthian capitals from the entrance to the courtyard of the Miletus town hall (*bouleuterion*). Capitals like these, decorated with a calyx of acanthus leaves, would become very popular in later Roman architecture. In the opposite corner a portion of the *bouleuterion* has been reconstructed. The

Ionic capital from the Temple of Athena in Priene

View of the north-east corner with structures from Magnesia and Pergamon

4th–2nd centuries BC

Entablature of the Temple of Artemis in Magnesia on the Maeander

2nd century BC

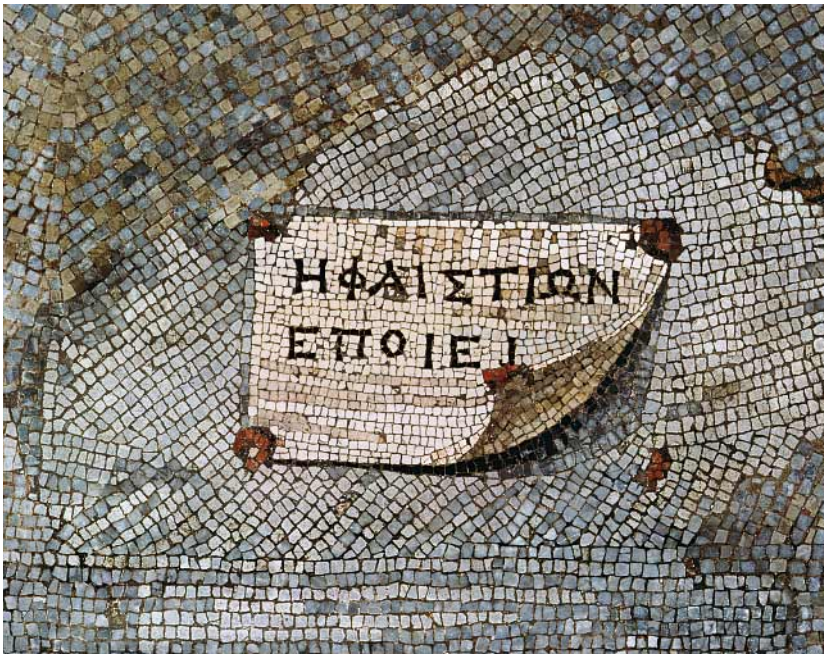
half column order of the upper floor with windows and relief shields is particularly notable. The structure illustrates how the highly experimental Hellenistic architects integrated traditional forms into new kinds of structures.

The hall's long walls feature sections of two famous large temple structures in their full original height. The Temple of Athena from Priene, begun in the 4th century BC, is considered a classic example of Ionic architecture in Asia Minor. According to the Roman architect Vitruvius, it was the work of Pytheus, who also designed the tomb of the Carian ruler Mausolus in Halikarnassus – one of the ancient Seven Wonders of the World. Typical of this Ionic order are columns with multipart bases and volute capitals and a narrow entablature with ornamental moulding. The opposite pair of columns come from the Temple of Artemis in Magnesia, a key example of

Garland frieze from the parapet of the rear hall of the Temple of Artemis in Magnesia on the Maeander

1st century BC

COLLECTION OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES



Hellenistic architecture from around 200 BC. Vitruvius attributes it to the architect Hermogenes of Alabanda, who also composed a theoretical treatise about this temple. The structure featured a wide peristasis and deeply carved decoration that was especially effective in sunlight. *VK*

View of the south wall with the two-storey entrance gate from the Athena sanctuary in Pergamon
2nd century BC

Hephaistion Mosaic from Pergamon's Palace V
2nd century BC
Detail with artist's signature

West front of the Pergamon Altar

View from the portico above the central stair onto the north projection with the sea gods of the Gigantomachy frieze

The Pergamon Altar

The Great Altar of Pergamon, excavated in the 19th century and partially reconstructed in its original size in the Pergamon Museum opened in 1930, is one of the most famous monuments on Berlin's Museum Island. Because of the special importance of this unique ensemble from the Hellenistic period, the architect Alfred Messel planned the museum's main hall around it, and the museum itself ultimately came to be known simply as the Pergamon Museum, although it housed other important works of art and collections from the beginning.

The ancient fortress of Pergamon lies in the north-west coastal region of Asia Minor opposite the island of Lesbos. Its acropolis, 330 metres high, commands the fertile plain of the Caicus River (Bakırçay). At its foot lies the modern Turkish city of Bergama. The landscape is part of the eastern Aegean range of folded mountains lying to the west of the Anatolian highlands. Dark volcanic rocks dominate the landscape and the traditional architecture. In antiquity the populace lived from agriculture, just as it does today. Human settlements from as far back as the Bronze Age have been discovered in the region.

Gigantomachy frieze (east side)

Zeus flings a thunderbolt at the Giant Porphyrion

Pergamon first took on political significance under the successors of Alexander the Great. King Lysimachus (360–281 BC), who ruled Thrace and Mysia, assigned a follower named Philetaerus as commander of the city to guard his large treasure there. Philetaerus rebelled against his master and established his own rule. By means of shrewd diplomacy and successful military campaigns, and with the assistance of Rome, he and his successors – known as the Attalids after his father, Attalus – managed to establish an important empire in western Asia Minor. After defeating a band of marauding Celts, Attalus I (241–197 BC) adopted the title of king. Under his sons Eumenes II (197–159 BC) and Attalus II (159–138 BC) Pergamon became a splendid royal residence. The most important monument in this redesigned city, visible

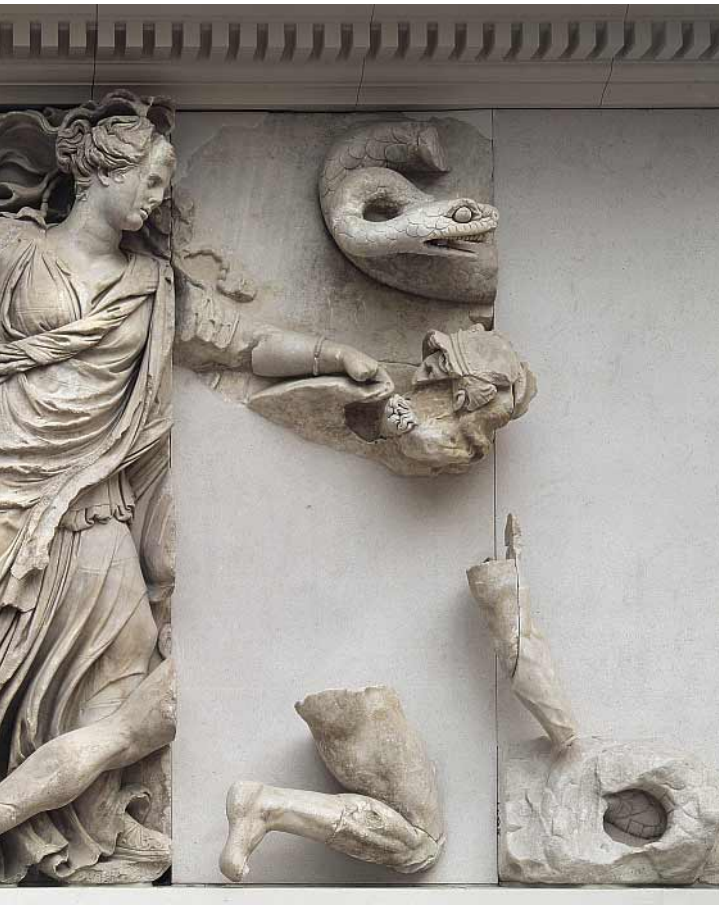
from afar, was the Pergamon Altar, built on a terrace of the acropolis under Eumenes II around 170 BC.

In early Byzantine times the altar, along with other ancient buildings, was demolished and their materials incorporated into a massive fortification wall. The wall was presumably built in response to Arab incursions in the 7th and 8th centuries. Scholarly excavations were undertaken in the second half of the nineteenth century, by which time the early Byzantine walls were being dismantled by lime burners for their fragments of ancient marble. Carl Humann, a German engineer employed by the Turkish government as supervisor of road-building projects, visited Bergama in 1864. He managed to stop the lime burning on the acropolis and convinced the Berlin museums to initiate excav-

Gigantomachy frieze (east side)
Athena subdues the Giant Alcyoneus

ations at the site. In the course of three campaigns (1878–1886) the altar and other important structures were excavated. By contract, the finds were to be divided with the Turkish government, and as a result the fragments of the altar frieze found their way to Berlin, where over a period of years scholars and restorers fitted them together again.

The altar, nearly square (36.8 x 34.2 m), stood atop a base surrounded by a frieze 113 metres long and 2.3 metres high. Above this stood a portico whose back wall enclosed a courtyard containing the actual altar. The courtyard wall was faced on the inside with an additional, smaller frieze picturing the Telephus myth. Atop the stone roofs of the colonnades stood so-called acroteria – statues of deities grouped together with flanking



quadrigas, griffins, centaurs and tritons. Some of these are displayed in the hall. The altar's base frieze with its large number of figures in almost fully three-dimensional relief represents the Gigantomachy, the struggle between the Olympian gods and the Giants, the rebellious sons of Gaia, the personification of Earth. According to ancient Greek myth, the Giants hoped to plunge the divine order into chaos, and the Olympian gods managed to prevent them only with the help of the mortal hero Heracles. In terms of artistry, the Gigantomachy frieze is the most important part of the altar structure. The turmoil of battle is impressively evoked in overlapping, richly varied sculptures of pairs of combatants, the menace of the Giants emphasised by their serpentine legs and animal attributes.

Gigantomachy frieze (north side)

A goddess of fate flings a vessel with a serpent at her opponent