

Turkey: 1,550-year-old church's base ground unearthed



A 1550-year-old former Byzantine church's base ground in an ancient city in southwestern Turkey was unearthed as part of excavation efforts.

The church's base ground, which was unearthed as part of excavation efforts in Stratonikeia ancient city in Mugla province, is being renovated with colored marbles found during excavation work.

Having been added to the UNESCO World Heritage Temporary List in 2015, the ancient city of Stratonikeia — located in Mugla — was home to many civilizations.

Excavation work in Stratonikeia, one of the largest marble cities of the world, continues.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Bilal Sogut, the head of the Stratonikeia excavations, said that the ancient city — also known as the city of gladiators — maintained its importance in the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Monteshe, Ottoman, and Turkish periods.

Sogut said the excavation team reached the church which was built after an

earthquake in 365 AD. He added the church remained to the first quarter of the 7th century; later, the area was used as a cemetery.

He said that they carried out most of the excavations in the area called West Street of the city, adding, "Here, a church was built on the colonnaded street. Later, when the church was destroyed, the area was turned into a cemetery in the Byzantine period, in the 7th century AD."

He underlined that the team is working on the field where both tombs and the church were located, noting, "Currently, we are restoring the floor coverings of the church."

Sogut said that the stones found in the excavations are handed over to "stone hospital", where they are being restored.

"Here, we exhibit both the floor of the church and several Byzantine tombs which were built by the materials from the church's floor," he added.

He also noted that at least four different marble colors were used for the church's floor, adding that they have located 62 tombs in the area so far.

*Writing by Burak Dag in Ankara

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