ABOUT LOGIN REGISTER VIDEOS CONTACT TOURS MEMBERSHIP





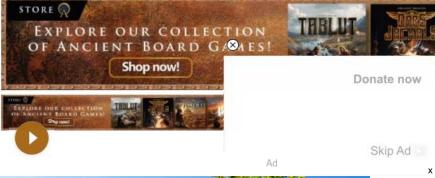
UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERIES OF THE PAST

All Search across 12,000+ articles

NEWS ORIGINS HISTORY ARTIFACTS MYTHS PLACES UNEXPLAINED

SHOP story & Archaeology Science & Space Evolution & Human Origins Mysterious

nome / news / History & Archaeology / Digging Into The Hidden Chambers of Oldest Christian Church In The World





UPDATED 25 OCTOBER, 2022 - 14:58 ASHLEY COWIE

Digging Into The Hidden Chambers of Oldest Christian Church In The World

READ LATER

PRINT

Show audio player

Archaeologists in Turkey have excavated the "world's first church." Within late Roman-era chambers they discovered smashed clay offering vessels which once held holy water.

The team of Turkish archaeologists was excavating in Antakya, formerly the ancient city of Antioch. Currently the capital city of Hatay Province, Turkey's southernmost province, the original settlement was founded in a fertile valley on the Orontes River about 20 kilometers from Turkey's ancient city of Antiocheia.



Ad

Around 300 BC the city was founded by **Seleucus**, as one of the heirs to **Alexander the Great's** fragmented empire. This was but one site in what would become the Seleucid Empire, a Greek state in West Asia that existed during the **Hellenistic** Period. According to **Daily Sabah** the city flourished and under the **Romans** became incredibly wealthy and influential" in the region.

Famously, in Christian circles, it was here in Antioch that the term "Christian" was first coined - referring to followers of Jesus Christ. Now, for the first time, the ancient city's residential areas have been excavated revealing secrets about how the Romans worshipped at this ancient holy site.



- · The Rise and Demise of the Seleucid Empire
- The Maccabean Revolt: The Jewish Rebellion Against the Seleucid Empire

Being A Christian Was Dangerous Back Then

Dedicated to the first pope, **St. Peter** (Pierre), according to **UNESCO's website** "the world's very first cathedral" was expanded from a cave around 38-39 AD. The oldest surviving parts of the church date, including floor mosaics, and traces of frescoes on the right side of the altar, date to around the 4th or 5th century AD. The holy site today measures 9.5 meters (31.16 ft) wide, 13 meters (42.65 ft) long and 7 meters (22.96 ft) high.

From within the church a tunnel is accessible leading to the surrounding Mount Staurin (Mt. Starius). Archaeologists assume this tunnel once served Christian worshipers as an evacuation route should the church be raided. Husnu Isikgor, the provincial culture and tourism director, told Anadolu Agency that while this holy building is compact, it is a very important place for religious tourism. St. Pierre, the world's first pope, was the fou the archpriest of the first Christian community in Antic originally worshiped in the cave that was later turned importance.

Ad

X

- Time Capsule of the House of the Tesserae Opens Window into the Past
- World's Oldest Christian Letter Found On 3rd Century Egyptian Papyrus

Diving Into The Foundations Of The World's First Church

A report in *ArchaeoNews* says a 12-strong team of archaeologists led by the *Hatay Archeology Museum* began excavating the cave Church of St. Pierre earlier in October. Legends maintain St Luke the Evangelist was the first to use the cave for Christian worship and that he gave it to the fledgling church in Antioch. Thus, the researchers were digging in what is not only the oldest church/cathedral in the world, but also the *first recorded* site of Christian pilgrimage.

Now, Ayse Ersoy, head of the Hatay Archaeology Museum, says that the recent excavations revealed "rooms and many offering vessels belonging to the settlement from the late Roman era." These recent digs represent the first scientific excavations in the residential areas of Antiocheia, said Ersoy. The archaeologists unearthed late Roman-era chambers filled with clay offering vessels. Ersoy thinks the ancient people who paid pilgrimage to the church "bought offering vessels" and filled them with holy water in the Church of St. Pierre.



Ad



Today, big finance has replaced Holy Water as the nu(x)er one concern within the Church of

Rome, but back in the initial years certain bodies of w Many know of the healing powers associated with the every ancient church was built beside a waterway of:

According to *Britannia*, in early Christian communitie water" of rivers and streams which was preferred for century, water sources were becoming increasingly p

sickness and diseases that were being spread in contaminated water.

estuary.

maintained they were cleansing the waters of unholy spirits, this was in reality a flight against the

Х

Therefore, the sacred water vessels discovered in the Church of St Pierre are artifacts from a time in history when Romans were increasingly seeking purified water sources. And in a world void of microscopes and bacteriology, a holy man's blessing was the best water filter available.

Top image: Excavations at the first known Christian church at Antakya, Turkey. Source:

Anadolu Agency

By Ashley Cowie

Section: News History & Archaeology

Tags: Church Christian Antakya Roman Temples & Monuments

Al Tech Millionaire Warns: "If You Have \$250, Do This"

Discover the future of investing with our Al-powered stock trading software! Harness the power of advanced algorithms to analyze market trends.

Banxso | Sponsored

Learn More

Seniors over 60 May Pay Really Low Rates For Life Insurance Because Of This

Covered For Life | Sponsored

Learn More

Pensioners will be able to buy these electric cars, see the price

electric cars | Search ads | Sponsored

Learn More

Electric Companies Hate When You Do This But They Can't Stop It

This genius new invention will save you up to thousands of dollars a year off your electric bill! This Amazing Opportunity Is A No-Brai r For All Homeowners.

EcoWatt Shop | Sponsored

Symptoms Of Dementia Seniors Should I

Dementia Signs and Symptoms | Search Ads | Sponsored

Ad

Χ

Get Insight On Credit Card Trends For 2025 In Canada

Local Plan | Sponsored

Learn More

ASHLEY

Ashley Cowie is a distinguished author known for his four non-fiction books and more than 2,000 articles on archaeological and scientific topics. His work spans documentaries, books, and podcasts, and he has produced and hosted projects for major networks including... Read More

Ancient Origins has been quoted L,















OUR MISSION

AN

At Ancient Origins, we believe that one of the most important fields of knowledge we can pursue as human beings is our beginnings. And while some people may seem content with the story as it stands, our view is that there exist countless mysteries, scientific anomalies and surprising artifacts that have yet to be discovered and explained.

The goal of Ancient Origins is to highlight recent archaeological discoveries, peer-reviewed academic research and evidence, as well as offering alternative viewpoints and explanations of science, archaeology, mythology, religion and history around the globe.

We're the only Pop Archaeology site combining scientific research with out-of-the-box perspectives.

By bringing together top experts and authors, this archivexamines sacred writings, tours ancient places, investigmysterious happenings. Our open community is dedical species on planet earth, and question wherever the distribution to the story of our beginnings.

Ad

^

Disclaimer - Terms of Publication - Privacy Policy & Cookies - Advertising Policy -

A project of Stella Novus