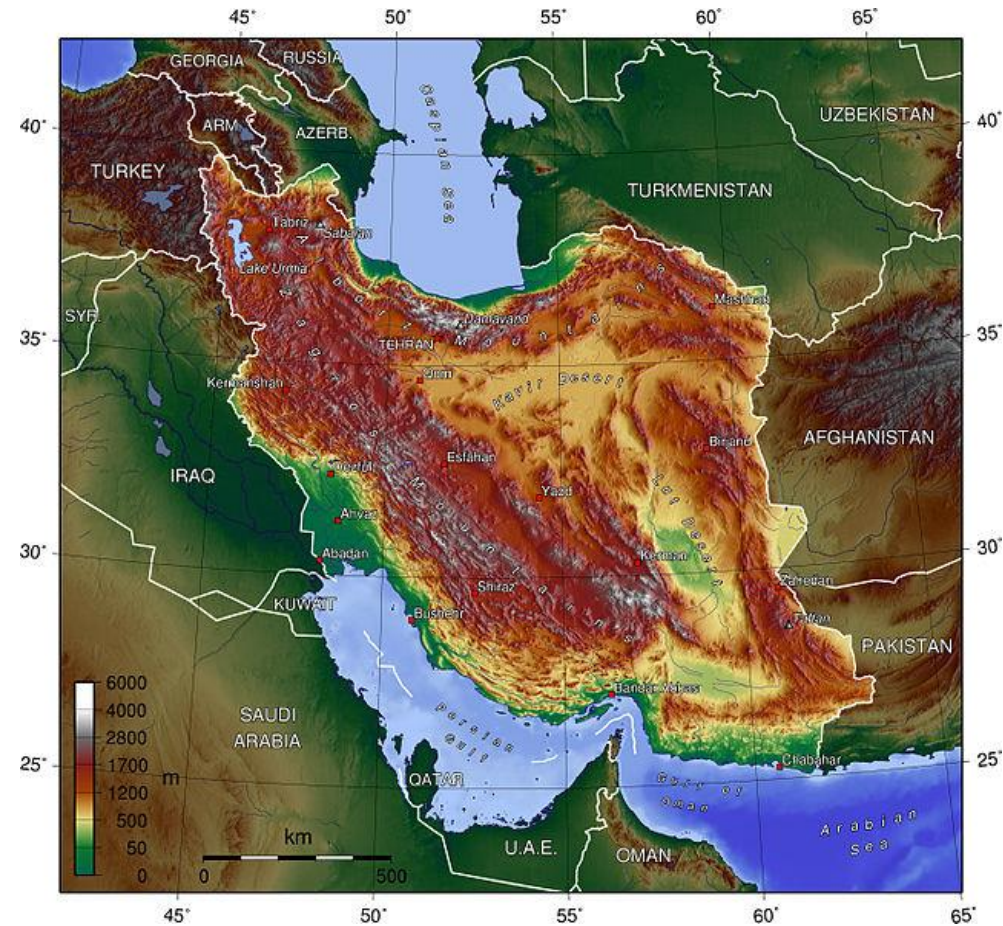


SOME ANCIENT AND SOME
LESSER KNOWN SACRED PLACES

Middle East

Iran

- A land of many borders.



The Zoroastrian site (Pir-E-Sabz) at Chak Chak, on the mountainside.

- Near Yadz



Location in central Iran.



Also near Yadz: Pir-e-Naraki.



Zoroaster's name in its original form is found in the sacred scripture, the Avesta, as Zarathushtra.

- The primary religion in Iran today is the Shia sect of Islam but the far older faith of the prophet Zoroaster is still openly practiced, particularly in the central and north-western regions of the country.
- Approach through the great desert to Chak Chak.



Zoroaster's life is part history and part legend.

- The Zoroastrian religion has three central commands of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.

- Pir-e-Naraki, again.



Birth date unknown.

- It is not possible to say exactly when Zoroaster lived but contemporary scholarship has mostly agreed upon the dates of 660-583BCE, with his birthplace being in the region of north-western Iran now known as Azerbaijan.



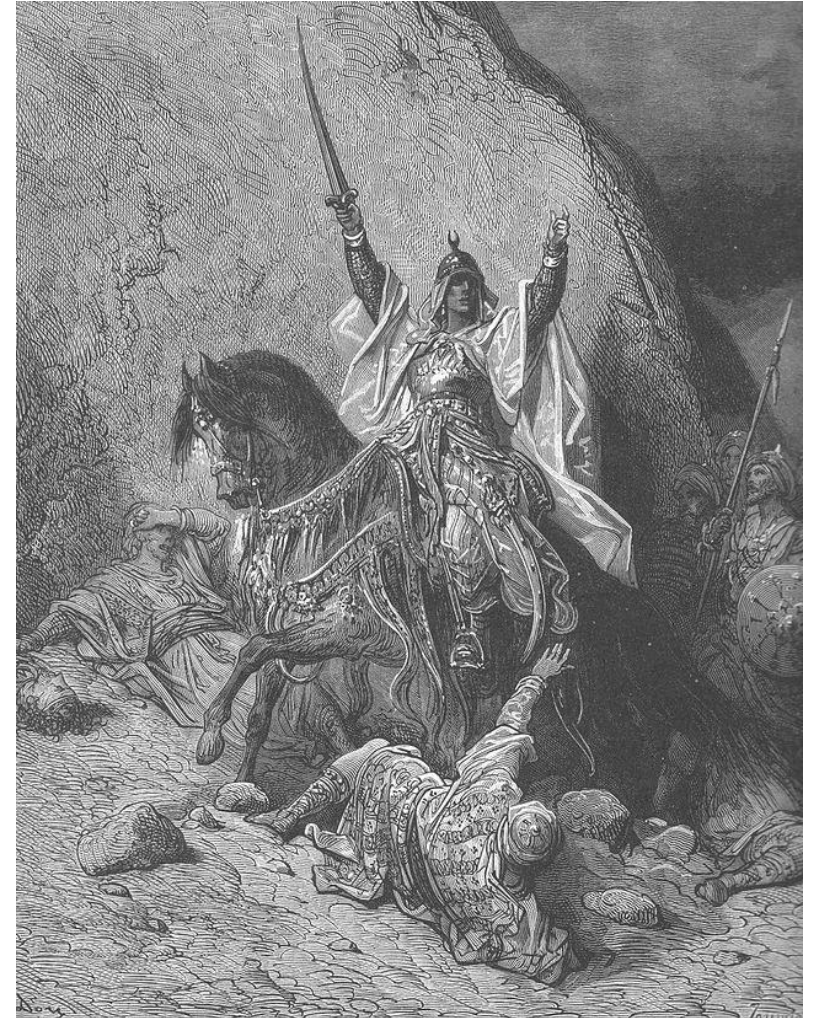
Close approach to Chak Chak.

- There are six holy shrines (called pirs or pirangah) in the Yazd region and the yearly pilgrimages to them are an occasion for the gathering of members of different villages.



During the Muslim invasion of Persia.

- Shrine legends tell of a conquering Arab army that had pursued Nikbanoo, the daughter of the Sassanian Emperor Yazdgird III, to this region. Fearing capture, she prayed to Ahura Mazda to protect her from the enemy.
- In the nick of time the mountain miraculously opened up and gave her protection.



Door of the inner sanctum, temple of Chak Chak.

- This legendary site, where a holy spring issues from the towering cliff, is also called Chak Chak, which means 'drop-drop' in Persian.



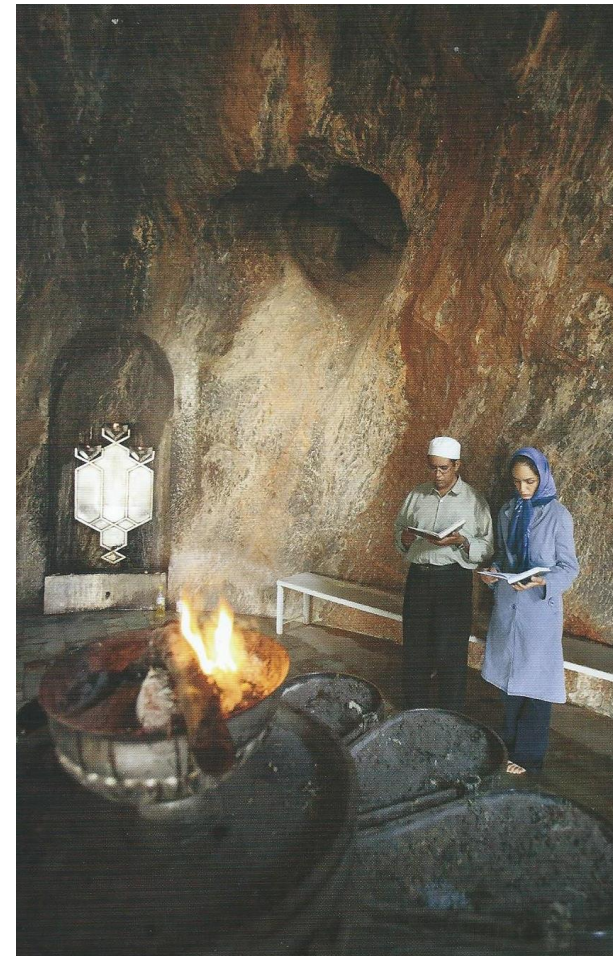
Burning fire in the Zoroastrian temple of Yazd, Iran.

- Growing beside the source of the holy spring is an immense and ancient tree which legends says used to be Nikbanoo's cane, and the waters of the spring are believed to be tears of grief shed by the mountain for Lady Nikbanoo.



The shrine enclosure.

- The shrine enclosure, a man-made cave, is floored with marble and its walls are darkened by soot from the fires kept eternally burning in the sanctuary.
- A Parsi man and woman from India pray at the eternal fire in the temple at Chak Chak.



Divider slide.



Israel

The promised land.

Jerusalem.

A battlefield of faiths.

A distinctive landmark.

- The Dome Of The Rock.
- It was initially completed in 691 CE.
- Although it is sacred to Islam, it is a shrine and not a mosque.



Competing with the Christian Church Of The Holy Sepulchre.

- According to Islamic tradition it houses the rock from which Mohammed ascended to heaven, then was flown back to Mecca on a winged horse, accompanied by Archangel Gabriel.
- The dome was built to prove that Islam could produce buildings as impressive as Christian churches.
- The Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Golgotha.
- Consecrated 325/26.
- Emperor Constantine had it built after his mother Helana declared it to be the site of Golgotha/Calvary.



The Golden Dome.

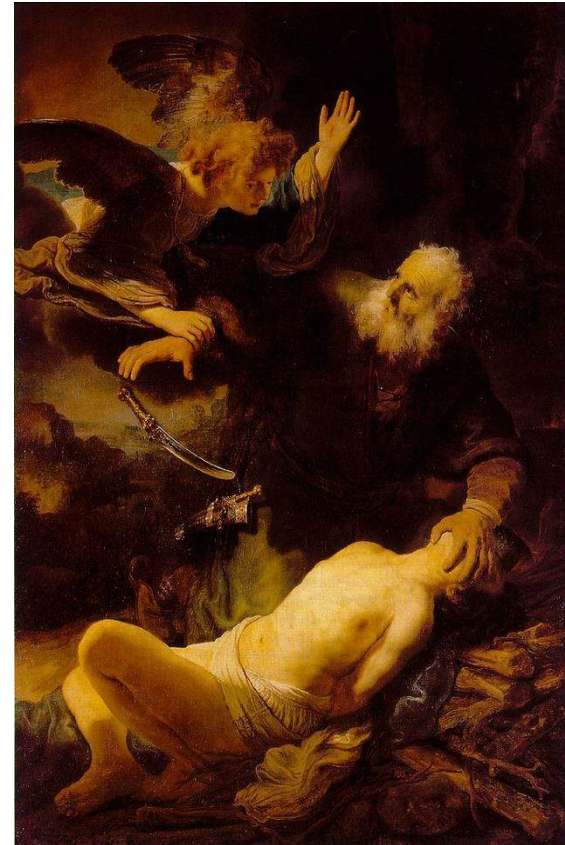
- Originally it was made of gold that was “removed” over the centuries.
- It is now aluminium covered with gold leaf.



Jewish beliefs.

- According to Jewish Tradition the rock enclosed by the Dome is the one where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.

- Abraham and Isaac
(oil on canvas), Rembrandt, 1634.



The Temple Mount and the Western Wall.

- The Dome Of The Rock is on the Temple Mount where stood the Jupiter temple of the Romans and before that, the two temples of the Jews.
- Parts of the wall are remnants of the ancient wall that surrounded the Jewish Temple's courtyard.



It is also called The Wailing Wall.

- Just over half the wall, including its 17 courses located below street level, dates from the end of the Second Temple period, commonly believed to have been constructed around 19 BCE by Herod the Great, but recent excavations indicate that the works were not finished during Herod's lifetime.
- The image of Israeli soldiers shortly after the capture of the Wall during the Six-Day War (5/6/67 -10/6/67).



Another site.



Holy Christian sites in Jerusalem.

- Saint Helena (c. 250 – c. 330) was the consort of the Roman emperor Constantius Chlorus and the mother of the emperor Constantine the Great.



Authenticity?

- The Church of The Holy Sepulchre was built on the orders of Constantine after he converted to Christianity.
- It was claimed that Helena found parts of “The True Cross” at its site.



Ditto?

- Other Christian sites in Israel, such as the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, and the Church on the Mount of Olives are located where Helena made “discoveries”.

- Mount of olives.

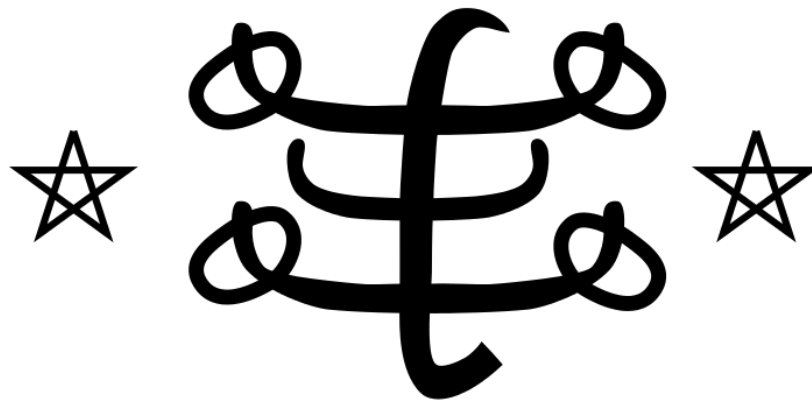


Another site.



The Baha'i Shrines at Acre and Haifa.

- The Ringstone symbol represents humanity's connection to God.



Core doctrines of the Baha'i faith.

- The unity of God, that there is only one God who is the source of all creation; the unity of religion, that all major religions have the same spiritual source and come from the same God; and the unity of humanity, that all humans have been created equal.
- Seat of the Universal House of Justice, governing body of the Bahá'ís, in Haifa, Israel.



Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel that is also a tomb for his remains.

- On 22/5/1844, Siyyid `Alí-Muhammad of Shiraz, Iran proclaimed that he was “the Báb”(“the Gate”).
- His followers were therefore known as Bábís.
- Paralleling Christianity, their doctrine is that the Bab was the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of their faith, just as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth.
- The Bab was tried and shot in 1850.
- His body was thrown outside Tabriz city walls for dogs to eat but his followers rescued the remains.



Bahá'í Temple, Ingleside, Sydney.

- Mírzá Husayn `Alí Núrí was one of the early followers of the Báb, and took the title of Bahá'u'lláh.
- In 1863 Bahá'u'lláh, claimed to be the Messiah.



The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, located in Bahjí near Acre, Israel.

- In 1868 Bahá'u'lláh was banished to the Ottoman penal colony of `Akká,(Acre in present-day Israel).
- He died there in 1892.
- Bahá'ís regard his resting place at Bahjí, the shrine to which they turn in prayer each day.



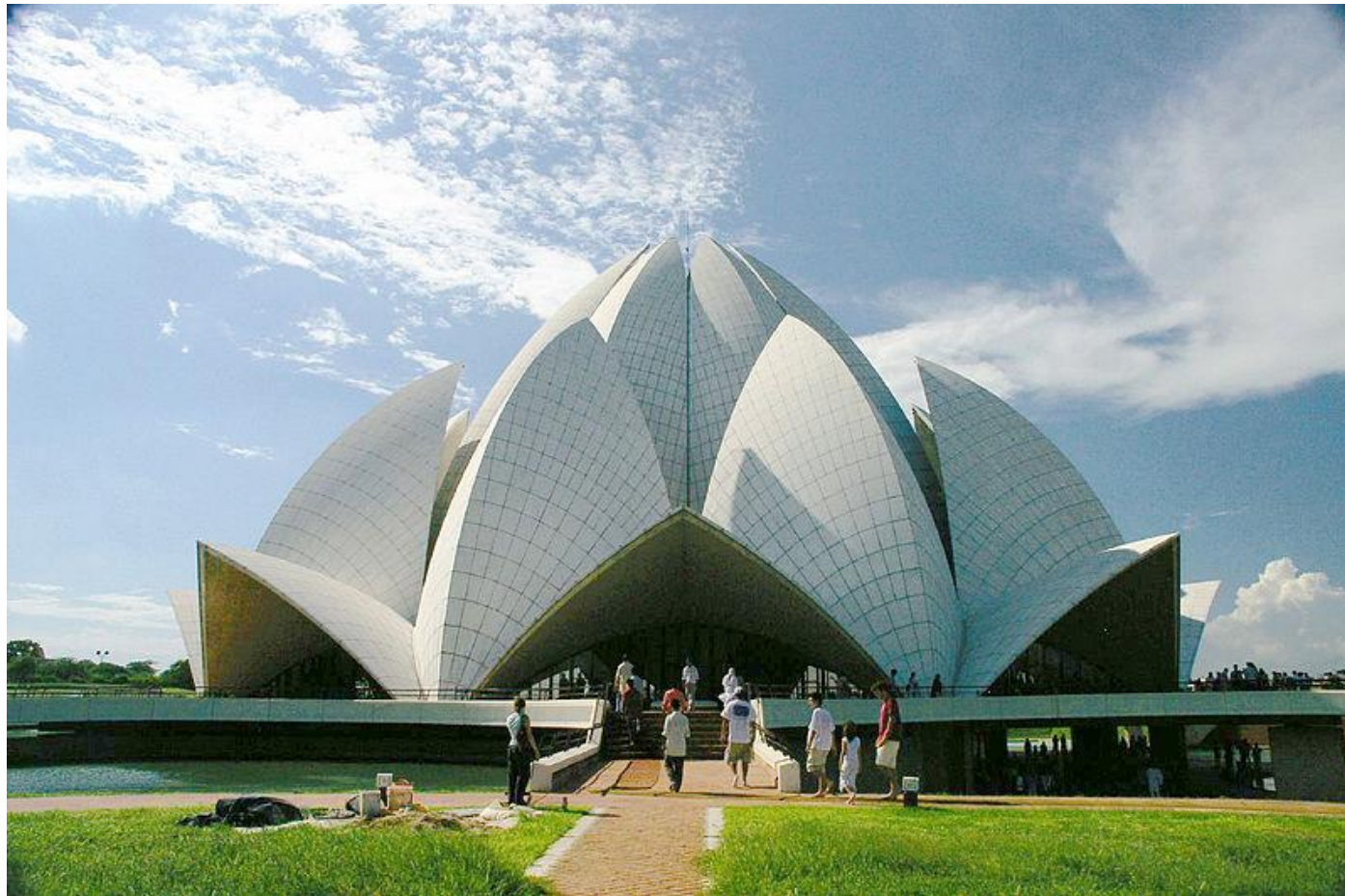
Another place of worship.

- Bahá'í House of Worship, Wilmette, Illinois.



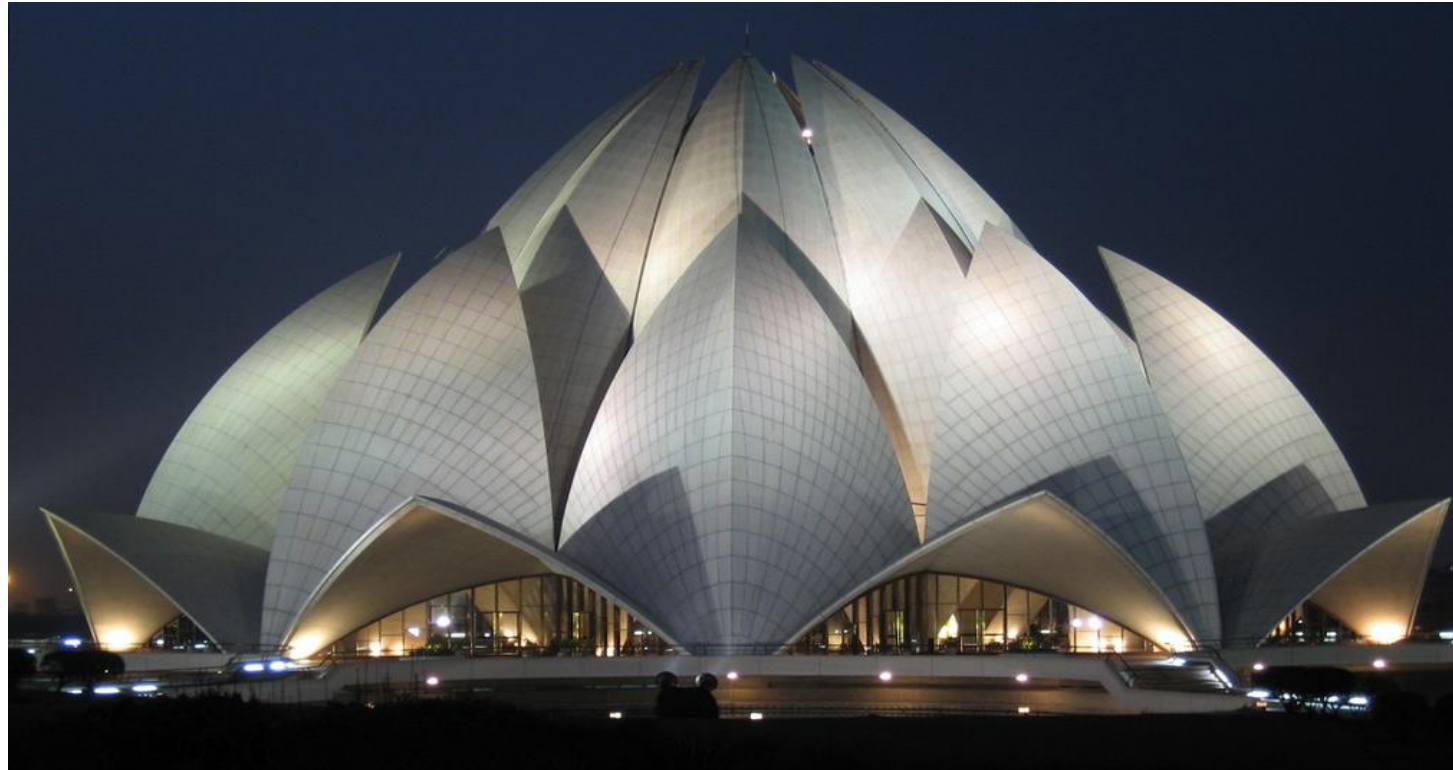
And Another. (Utzon's design for the Sydney Opera House was selected in 1957).

- The Lotus Temple, New Delhi, India, completed in 1986.



There are more than 5 million adherents, in more than 200 countries and territories.

- Inspired by the lotus flower, the design for the House of Worship in New Delhi is composed of 27 free-standing marble-clad "petals" arranged in clusters of three to form nine sides.



Another site.



The Greek Shrine of Pan and the Nymphs, Israel.

- Spring of Banias river, one of the main tributaries of the Jordan River.
- In the background is Pan's cave, in which the river originated in ancient times until an earthquake blocked it.



The water no longer gushes from the cave,
but only seeps from the bedrock below it.

- View at the remnants of the Temple of Pan with Pan's grotto.



Divider slide.



Turkey

Temple of Apollo Didyma in modern Turkey.

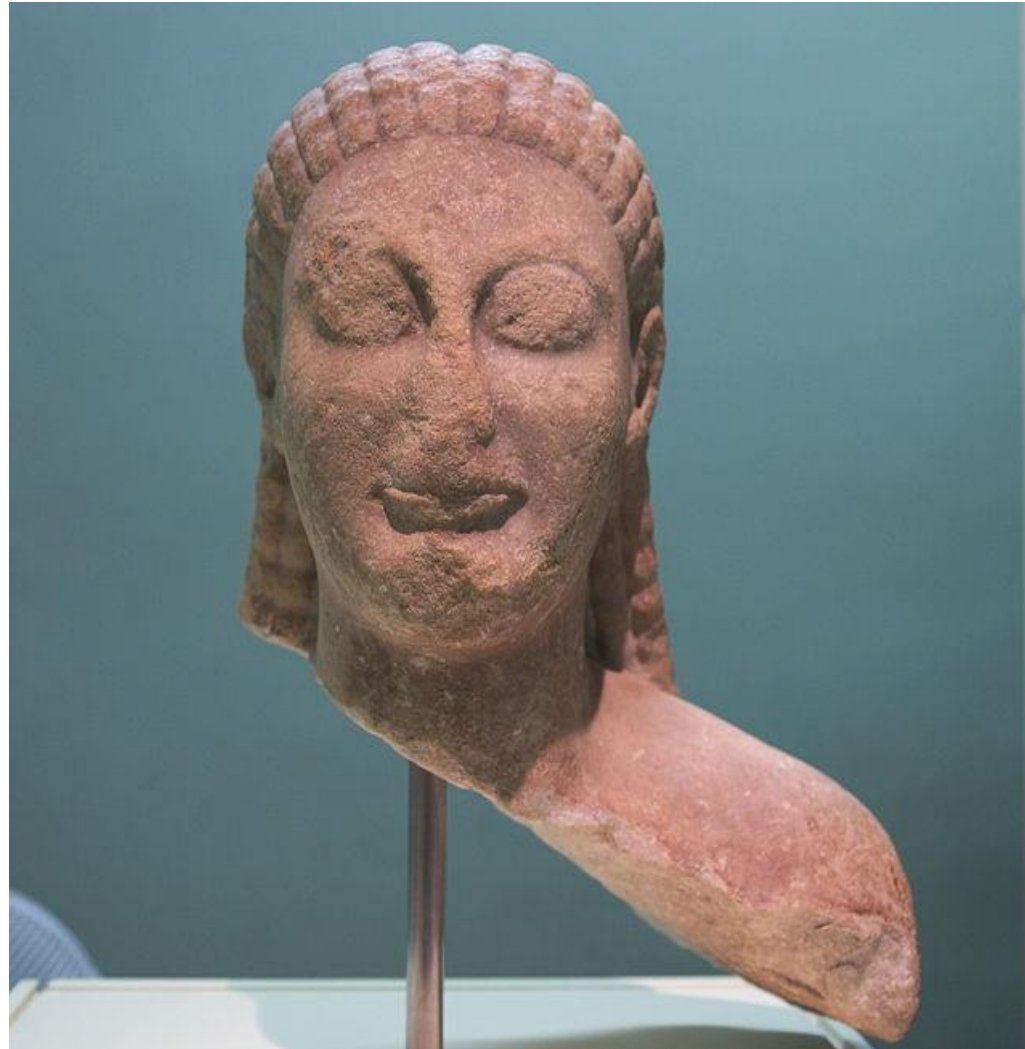


The Temple of Apollo was sacked and destroyed by the Persians in 494BCE.

- Didyma was the largest and most significant sanctuary on the territory of the great classical city Miletus.
- To approach it, visitors would follow the Sacred Way to Didyma, about 17 km long.



Bust of a marble kouros from the Sacred Way at Didyma(550 BCE), now in the British Museum,.



A stone-carved Medusa head.

- Next to Delphi, Didyma, with its sacred spring, was the most renowned oracle of the Hellenic world.



A frieze on the base a column.

- At the end of the fifteenth century, an earthquake reduced the temple to rubble, collapsing all but three of its columns.

