Abstract. Asklepions had a place in Greek Pantheon since 5th century BC. As the physician-god or the god of healing, his cult spread to whole Antique World and over than 200 healing temples were built in the name of Asklepios. His family started to develop together with his myth. He and is wife Epione have two sons named Machaon and Podalirios and five daughters named Hygieia, Panacheia, Acheso, Iaso and Aigle. His daughters have some of his powers. The most famous one of his daughters is Hygieia. She became a symbol of preventive medicine. The temples established in the name of Asclepios are called Asclepion. According to Strabon who was the most famous historian and geographer in Antique World, the oldest Asclepion is in Epidaurus. It is predicted that there are over than 200 temples in the west coasts of Anatolia, in Aegean Islands and in Greece, but many of them are not known yet. The most famous Asklepions are in Bergama, Rhodes, Epidaurus and Cos. The new healing centers belonging to the Antique World, except Bergama Asklepion, were discovered in Trace in the last digs. The most important ones are Allioni, which is 18 km northeast of Bergama and Heraion Teichos (Karaveiliati), which is 15 km. away from Tekirdag. As a result of the digs, there are some setting places such as Karahoyuk village in Eskehir, Kainos, Ephesos and Yumurtalik in Adana, which are not proved to be an Asclepion yet. However, there is some evidence that show that these places are health centers. In addition to this, Vitruvius (90-20 BC) who was a famous architect mentioned that there was an Asclepion Temple in Troia Region and Tralles (Aydin).

Keywords: asklepion, antique world, asklepios, temple

In Ancient Greek culture, Asklepios (Esculap, Aesculapius), as the “physician god” or “god of medicine”, was the most important god of health. His cult spreads to an era of approximately thousand years. Its source is unknown, as is the case with other Greek and Roman mythologies, and there are various stories about his birth. In general, the accepted one is the way it is depicted in the third Pythonikon lyric poem written by Pindaros in 5th century BC. In the Iliad of Homer, Asklepios is described as a very famous physician. He is reported to have sent his two sons, who were also good physicians, to the War of Troia [1,2].

Asclepios was added to Greek Pantheon in 6th century BC. As his cult became popular, his myth and his family have broadened as well. He and his wife Epione have two sons, Makhao and Podalirios, and five daughters named Hygieia, Panakeia, Akeso, Iaso and Aigile. His daughters also possess some of his powers. In the Asclepios cult, Asclepios, Telesphoros and Hygieia constitute an inseparable ternary. Telesphoros, the symbol of convalescence and dreams, became famous in Bergama at the end of Hellenistic period in 2nd century. He was perhaps a great physician in his lifetime and after his death he had been turned into a god [3-6].

The temples, which were established in the name of Asklepios, are called “Asclepion”. The first Asclepion had been built in Epidaurus and other famous Asklepions are in Cos and Bergama. On the other hand, it is known that there are many other Asklepions in west Anatolia and the Aegean coasts. Famous architect Vitruvius (c. 90-20 BC) explained the conditions to be paid attention to in the architecture of Asklepios. “Especially, for Asklepios and other health gods who are supposed to heal a lot of sick people, little temples can be built. If the place of these temples is chosen near appropriate spring water, this appropriateness can rely on natural reasons. Because, when sick bodies coming from unhealthy places are bathed with health giving mineral water, they can get recover faster and so the respect for the god can be increased by using entirely the natural properties of the place” [7,8].

At first the Asclepios were established outside the city, close to rivers and water sources and in places with fresh air. They resembled today’s sanatoriums. After that their structures and proportions had changed. In the early times Asclepios contained a fountain, a temple, and an altar, whereas libraries and monumental health buildings were added later on to Asclepios. In addition, different treatment methods had been developed. In Roman culture, psychotherapy and also hydrotherapy became important for treatment of obstetrics, dermal and rheumatic diseases have been shown interest in [9-12]. The physicians in Asclepion, called Asclepiads, were considered as the sons and daughters of Asclepios. Hippocrates, Calos, Antipos, Galenos, Nikamedes, Flavius, Hermokrates, Claudius are among the famous asclepiads.

Asclepion of Bergama

Archeologist B. Aziz Ogan and Prof. Dr. Von Theodore Wiegand, director of Berlin Museum, discovered Asclepion of Bergama in 1927. To define the place of this Asclepion, Prof. Wiegand used a work of Aristeides (Hieroi Logoi), which he came across in the Library of Vatican Palace. According to the famous ancient writer Pausanias, the first Asclepios Temple in Bergama was established in southwest of the city of Bergama, at the site of the sacred water devoted to Asclepios in the first half of 4th century BC. It has been determined that this sacred place has existed since the 4th...
century BC, and progressed in the Hellenistic Period. However the golden age of Bergama Asclepion was the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. The remaining buildings were mostly built by Emperor Hadrian (117-138 BC) [13]. With the addition of a theatre and a library in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC, the Asclepion of Bergama became a center in which sick people were healed. Healed people used to visit the Asclepios Temple and grant money in proportion to their wealth. A miniature sculpture of healed organs was usually offered as a vow. This tradition also appeared in Rome [14].

The treatment of people who believe in Asclepios and delivered them to this temple relied on cleaning, interpretation of dreams and inculcation. The treatment methods were curative water and mud baths, sports activities, medicines made of herbs, music, rituals, and the most popular method was to interpret the patient’s dreams and inspiration. The bronze and ivory instruments in Bergama Museum show that basic surgical operations such as opening a wound or draining pus were performed here. The clause below was written on the gate of Asclepion: For the exaltedness of all gods, entry of death to this sacred place is forbidden. For this reason, seriously ill people, pregnant women just about to give birth, exhausted patients from distant countries were examined at the entrance gate and if it was impossible to cure them, they would not be accepted. Thus, the admitted patient believed that he or she was saved from death when he or she went through the big gate [15].

**Allianoi Health Center**

Allianoi is in Pasha Illicasi region, close to Bergama – Ivrindi Highway. In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC, Aelius Aristides of Mysia wrote a book called Hieroi Logoi (Sacred Words) and mentioned that when he was traveling from Hadrianotai to Bergama, he became ill and he went to Allianoi, drank its thermal spring water and got better. He said that he dreamed of God Asclepios and felt himself better with the inspirations of Asclepios. He said that the distance of this thermal spring water center to Bergama was 120 stadia (23-25 km). There is not any other important thermal water complex known between Bergama and Balikesir. Although there is no epigraphic finding, relying on Aristeides work it is claimed that this place is Allianoi [7,16].

Allianoi was established in Hellenistic Period (323-330 BC) and its golden age was in the reign of Roman Emperor Hadrian (117-138 BC). It is thought that this place was not really an ancient city, but a health center belonging to Pergamum Kingdom. The biggest evidence for this is the fact that no coin in the name of the city existed. This center was used continuously between 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BC and 11\textsuperscript{th} century AD [7,17]. This site is thought to be a general cult site belonging to the God of Health Asclepios, for there are many works of art related with him. Two Asclepios statues, small bas-reliefs of Telephoros, two altars belonging to Asclepios and many medical tools made of bronze were found. All these artifacts are kept in the Bergama Museum. These artifacts also suggest that the cult of Telephoros existed before the cult of Asclepios [7,18]. Apart from the bath structures indicating intense use of thermal therapy, there are also a large number of findings in the site of Allianoi. Among these are spatulas, urogenital catheter (anea fistula), various forcepses used for different purposes, and bronze scalpel handles which prove that surgical interventions had been performed.

**Karaevlialti (Heraion Teichos) Health Center**

Archeological research is going on in Karaevlialti under the directorship of Associate Prof. Dr. Nese Atik from Mimar Sinan University. Karaevlialti, known as Heraion Teichos in antiquity, is at a 15 km. distance from Tekirdag. Early findings suggest that the site first became populated around 3000 BC and contains various floors of cultures till the 13\textsuperscript{th} century. A large ebony courtyard with walls surrounding it was found at the site in 2001. The ongoing research at the area revealed many medical tools. Later on, baked soil figurines (symbolizing offerings) dating from the 1\textsuperscript{st} century were discovered [19]. In addition, remnants of some kind of mashed seashell, known as Murex in Latin, were discovered in some parts of the courtyard. The seashell was boiled in water to produce a certain type of dye giving claret red-purple tones, known as Purpur. This dye was very precious for thousands of sea shells were required to make only one gram of dye, and it was used in the dresses of kings. Later, studies on sources dating from antiquity revealed that the Murex in mashed and burnt form was used in the making of drugs rather than dyes, and the mashing was a part of this procedure. This drug was first used for cleaning of the teeth and in the treatment of ear infection when combined with pork oil and honey. This drug is also mentioned in the Materia Medica of Dioscorides to be used for abscess drainage and cleaning of the teeth [19,20]. In the light of all these findings, it is suggested that an Asclepios temple must have existed here.

**Datea (Knidos) Health Center**

Datea (Knidos), situated on the coast of Southwestern Anatolia, was a competitor of Istanboly (Cos), a leading center of medicine of the antique age. Knidos was one of the important schools of medicine that educated physicians, and it supported a doctrine that classified diseases according to the organs involved. Knidos defended the same principles of medicine with Cos, and distinguished physicians such as Herodikes and Europhon were among its students. However, no remnants of an Asclepios temple have been found yet in Knidos [9].

**Efes (Ephesos) Health Center**

Ephesos Health Center was famous in the whole Mediterranean region in the Roman Empire era. Rufus of
Ephesus and Soranus are two distinguished physicians of this school. No remnants of this center have been found yet. However, evidence about the names and studies of physicians from writings found in the digs of the Church of Virgin Mary suggest that the place had been a health center in earlier times [9].

**Troia Asclepion**

Strabon, who was born in Amaseia, Pontos in 64 or 63 BC, was a famous geographer and historian. While he was giving information about Troia, he mentioned an Asclepion established by Lysimachos.

Aydin (Tralles) Asclepion

Vitruvius (c. 90-20 BC), a famous architect and writer of De Architectura, a book on architecture, which was dedicated to Roman Emperor Augustus, mentioned books written by architects that lived before him. Vitruvius wrote about the existence of an Ionian Asclepion in Aydin (Tralles), and in addition he said there was a book written by Arcesius about the Asclepios Temple of Tralles.

...... Arcesius, Corinthis proportions, on the Ionian Asclepios Temple in Tralles which he was said to have built it himself, and Stayrus and Pytheos on Mausoleum, each wrote a book [8].

References