A visitor in Athens today, in front of the reconstructed Stoa of Attalos II, experiences the full effects of Pergamene construction as she can nowhere else (Figure 28.1). The stoa defines the eastern edge of the Athenian Agora, provides versatile spaces for archaeological storage and a museum, announces its Pergamene style through palm column capitals and other signs, beckons visitors to enter through its wide colonnade, shields them from the extremes of hot and cold weather once inside, and makes them think about the Attalids of Pergamon all the while. Although Attalos II obviously could not have predicted the presence of modern archaeologists and tourists in Athens, the Attalids did indeed plan for their construction to define space and to facilitate the goings-on of daily life at Pergamon and elsewhere.

**Pergamon and Its Phases of Construction**

Ancient Pergamon (Figure 28.2) was located in the Kaikos river valley of what is now western Turkey, 30 km from the Aegean coast. With second-millennium BCE origins on an acropolis that dominates the landscape, Pergamon eventually spread past its fortification walls to the surrounding plains, where the modern city of Bergama now sits, and its ties extended to the port of Elaia. As the seat of the Attalid Kingdom (241–133 BCE), the city experienced its architectural and cultural floruit in the Hellenistic period, but its political and religious significance persisted, as it became the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and, later, the home of a prominent Christian community. After a devastating earthquake and a succession of invasions, its importance waxed and waned in the Middle Ages, and its acropolis gradually transformed into a castle. At that time, the Byzantines and the Seljuks alternately ruled Pergamon, and the area ultimately became an Islamic urban center in the Ottoman Empire. Yet its ancient remains continued to attract both travelers and antiquarian interest, with modern archaeological explorations starting in 1878 and continuing until the present day (Rheidt 1998; Radt 1998; Radt 2011b). Today, though, these remains give the visitor little appreciation of the full extent of Pergamon’s built environment. For the notable surviving architectural elements – most famously those from the Great Altar and the Propylon to the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros – were reconstructed at the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin, Germany. The excavated architecture’s decoration, blocks, and contents, furthermore, are now split between the Pergamonmuseum and the Archaeological Museum in Bergama.

Most of Pergamon’s architecture was built progressively in four main phases (for plans of the site, see Figure 28.3a and b). The first phase of construction, spanning the Archaic through early Hellenistic
periods, was concentrated on the top of the acropolis. This settlement was walled as early as the seventh–sixth centuries BCE and included structures that have been identified as religious buildings. Later, during the rule of the Gongylids in the fifth century BCE, the archaic wall’s gate was renovated and one portion took the form of a tower whose remains are still visible. In the fourth century BCE, the site was abandoned, and when inhabitants returned, they appear to have built the Sanctuary of Athena as well as houses on the slope of the acropolis, above the archaic wall. During the second phase of construction that was stimulated by the founder of the Attalid dynasty, Philetairos (r. 281–263 BCE), the city was rewalled along the lines of the original archaic wall, and a grid was created for a rough scheme of narrow streets and drains that led wastewater to the city’s southeast gate. The Temple of Athena and the buildings on the top of the acropolis were the center of Philetairos’ city (Radt 2001; 2011b; see also Chapter 20).

The third and perhaps most ambitious phase took place during the reign of Attalid King Eumenes II (r. 197–158 BCE). New walls extended as far as the Selinos River Valley, and a new grid created a fan-shaped network of insulae, or blocks, that corresponded with the terrain of the acropolis. The area of the Lower Agora and the Gymnasium were then the focal point of civic activity, and more houses were built within the city walls. The acropolis’s citadel, moreover, was restructured to incorporate such construction as the reorganized Sanctuary of Athena, additional royal buildings, the Great Altar, and the Theater. Finally, the fourth phase, undertaken during the reigns of the Roman emperors Trajan
Kristen Seaman and Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE), established a new grid and expanded the city to the plain below the acropolis. The Temple of Trajan, whose orientation apparently determined the grid, was constructed on the citadel of the acropolis, while houses, the Asklepeion, the “Red Hall,” the Roman theater, the stadium, and the amphitheater were built on the plain. The Roman city had no fortification walls until the third century CE, when a new wall was built along the lines of Philetairos’ wall; this rebuilt fortification may suggest either a temporary or a more enduring contraction of the city’s residential areas, possibly for security (Radt 2001; 2011b).

Throughout all these phases, Pergamon’s architecture had a marked sculptural quality. To some extent, this is not surprising: after all, Greek architects and sculptors underwent similar training, and some prominent men were both architects and sculptors (e.g., Pollitt 1995: 20–22; Senseney 2011: 177–181). Yet Pergamene construction emphasized three-dimensionality much more than that of other poleis. In fact, we can even say that the definition of space was both its predominant aesthetic and its main organizing principle.

### The Pergamene Aesthetics of Space

In a passage quoted by Strabo (13.1.44), Attalos I (r. 241–197 BCE) describes a beautiful pine tree by breaking it into defined three-dimensional parts and articulating their mathematical relationships with each other: “Its circumference is twenty-four feet; and its trunk rises to a height of sixty-seven feet from the root and then splits into three forks equidistant from one another, and then contracts again into one head, thus completing a total height of two plethra and fifteen cubits” (trans. H.L. Jones, Loeb ed.; cf. Senseney 2011: 143–145). This may give us some insight into what could be called the Pergamene aesthetics of space. Throughout Pergamon’s built environment, we can observe this same aesthetic, indeed philosophical, inclination to intellectualize space by reducing it to its articulated components.
Figure 28.3a  Pergamon, plan. Source: F. Pirson, DAI.
Unterbauten der hellenistischen druckwasserleitung

Arsenale (Fundamente)

Saal (Fundamente)

Byzantinische burgmauer (steht auf der antiken)

Westhalle

Westkopfbau

Substruktionen

dionyssos-Tempel

Ältere Burgmauer

Terrasse

Terrasse

Tempel

Halle

Halle (Fundamente)

Obere Agora

Halle (Fundamente)

Halle (Fundamente)

Obere Agora

Altäre

Humann Grab

Altarraum mit Mosaikboden

Altargemach mit Mosaikboden Älteres Arsenal

Nordhalle

Osthalle

Propylon

Südhalle

Burgtor

Herson für den Herrscherkult römischer Zustand

Substruktionsgewölbe

Trajans-Tempel (Fundamente)

Vorfeld des Trajaneums

Großer Altar (Fundament)Halle

Postament

Stützmauern und Unterbauten

Frühere Mauern

0 50 100 m

Figure 28.3b Pergamon, plan of citadel. Source: DAI.
By the time of its heyday during the reign of Eumenes II in the second century BCE, Pergamon had been divided into two broad spatial zones that could be clearly seen from a distance. The fortification walls divided the rulers from the ruled: the Royal District with its palaces, its arsenal, and its Sanctuary of Athena at the top of the citadel from the civilian space below (Pirson 2011). The result was a monarchical hierarchy of space that contrasted the divisions of more democratic poleis in Asia Minor such as Priene (Radt 1993). There was no functional zoning in the civilian space, but its built environment did control the flow of traffic and the overall rhythms daily life there (cf. Edensor 2010b). The repetition of walls and gates throughout the city, in fact, gave the impression not so much of a unified town plan, but of self-contained “architectural ensembles” connected by relatively narrow roads and paths. By Eumenes II’s day, a gate with towers controlled the main entrance to the city. Facilitating the traffic inside were roads about 4 m wide that were constructed on axes that related to the Gymnasium. The older roads higher up the acropolis, though, remained narrower and more restrictive at about 2 m wide. And paths, rather than paved roads, were the conduits of traffic in less inhabited areas, particularly on the northeast slope (Pirson 2011). Open spaces such as the Upper Agora punctuated the flow of traffic through the city, and requisite entrance rituals such as purification undoubtedly further reinforced the partitioning of the city’s religious spaces (Paus. 5.13.3; Gheorghiu 2001; Dignas 2012).

Pergamon’s special attention to space was due not only to social structure but also to necessity: its location on a steep acropolis that made construction difficult. The Attalids increasingly exploited their architecture’s three-dimensionality, while asserting both their Greek and their Asian cultural identities, which was especially important for a new Hellenistic dynasty with tenuous ties to both mainland Greece and Asia Minor (Gruen 2000; Tanner 2005: 222–233; Kuttner 2005). They appear to have evoked and thus competed with fifth-century Athens: like that of the Athenian Acropolis, the Pergamene skyline was asymmetrical, aggregate, and easily recognized from a distance, particularly from the west (cf. Leatherbarrow 2009). And they achieved this asymmetry by employing the sort of terracing that had been used to lesser extents at sites such as Priene and Halikarnassos in Asia Minor during the fourth-century BCE Ionian Renaissance (Pedersen 2004: 429–432).

This extensive terracing made Hellenistic construction at Pergamon possible, indeed we could even say that the city was sculpted out of its acropolis. The model in Figure 28.4 gives some idea of the jagged positive and negative spaces that were formed by construction on the Pergamene slopes. Terraces

Figure 28.4  Acropolis, Pergamon, reconstruction, after second century CE. Source: Art Resource 182621.
were cut into volcanic rock, yielding stone for the terrace walls and producing flat areas upon which construction took place. Most terraces were narrow and staggered up the slopes, altering orientations as they adapted to the landscape. But large terraces 60–70m deep formed the courtyards of the Sanctuary of Athena and the Great Altar at the top of the acropolis. Architectural innovations contributed to the construction of the terraces. Builders, for example, constructed a peristasis, or slab-covered pathway, as a gap between terrace walls and buildings throughout the city; this network of pathways protected the buildings from water and/or from the lateral earth pressure against terrace walls. Well-preserved peristasis can be found in such buildings as the North Stoa of the Sanctuary of Athena and Building Z, located in the civilian space further down the slope to the south (Hoepfner 1997: 26–28; Bachmann 2011: 80).

The steep Pergamene slopes prompted innovations in the design of stoas as well. While many Hellenistic stoas in mainland Greece and Asia Minor were straightforward one- or two-storied structures that defined flat public squares, Pergamene stoas were three-dimensional tours de force of division, containment, and definition, easily seen by viewers from the plain. Ever adaptable to the requirements of the slopes, Pergamene stoas were often both longer and higher than the stoas at other poleis, and they sometimes were irregular within the same complex in order to accommodate the terrain. Perhaps the most striking examples were the stoas on the Theater Terrace, which were constructed during the reign of Eumenes II: a short one-story stoa abutted the hillside, while another, the so-called West Stoa, helped to form the terrace wall that faced the plain. At over 200m, the West Stoa was the longest in the Hellenistic world, and it consisted of three stories, two of which were basements below the terrace; even its substructures’ buttresses were distinctly articulated and visible from the plain. Similar multistoried stoas were constructed in the Upper Agora, the Lower Agora, and the Sanctuary of Demeter (Coulton 1976: 67–69; Hoepfner 1997: 27–28; Bachmann 2011: 75–76). Yet stoas did more than merely articulate Pergamon’s rocky verticality. They also compartmentalized the spaces on the horizontal terraces themselves, most notably in the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros. And many Pergamene structures, especially during the reign of Eumenes II, generally echoed the stoa form in their courtyards throughout the city. The stoa, then, was the building block of Pergamene architecture, and its ubiquity allowed it to recede into the background, to become the setting of daily life, and to be almost forgotten by viewers – thus demonstrating its true architectural significance (cf. Rossi 1982).

The Royal District

Located at the top of the acropolis, the Royal District is the most prominent part of Eumenes II’s building program. Its identity is secured by a Hellenistic roof tile that is impressed with the stamp basileion, or “of the court” (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 3.45). Eumenes II reorganized this space in the second century BCE, at the same time as he constructed the Theater and the Great Altar at Pergamon. In fact, the Royal District appears to have radiated out from the Theater as part of a unified design, divided from the rest of the city by a wall with a gate in its southern section (Senseney 2011: 80). A narrow paved road passed through this gate into a small courtyard-like space, and it continued across the center of the district. To the right of the road, a row of six building groups extended to the very northern tip of the acropolis, where the Arsenal’s rectangular buildings stored grain with the help of a venting system. To the left of the road was the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros, followed by storerooms or residential quarters, which were later supplanted by the Temple of Trajan in the second century CE (Radt 2011a: 63–78; Zimmer 2011). As we think about the Royal District’s architecture, we should keep in mind that the area was actually quite small and probably did not have adequate living accommodations for everyone who was associated with the court. The Attalids and the “friends of the king” – their courtiers – most likely had additional residences elsewhere in the city and its environs (Evans 2012: 124).

The architectural remains of Building Groups I–VI (numbered consecutively from north to south) are meager, but it is possible to reconstruct their basic configuration in the time of Eumenes II. Building Groups I–III appear to have supported the courtly goings-on of the Royal District. Building Group I, just south of the Arsenal, consisted of a possibly multistoried building that perhaps served as barracks
or a residence hall for staff and guests. What is probably the first Pergamene palace—a house with a peristyle court—had previously been constructed in this area, but its date is uncertain. Building Group II has been connected with the worship of Zeus, Kybele, and the Kabeiroi and, more securely, with Pergamon’s waterworks and pipes. Next, Building Group III has an assemblage of enigmatic foundations whose functions have not been identified (Zimmer 2011: 144–145). They appear to be similar to a poros house, that is a house with a porch in front of its rooms (Radt 2011a: 66–67). This area might have supported aspects of Pergamon’s administration such as record keeping (Hoepfner 1997: 37).

Building Groups IV–V were the most lavish structures of the building groups, and thus they have been identified as “palaces.” The configuration of Palace IV was based on that of a peristyle house: a central courtyard, with a tiled floor and cistern, surrounded by rooms. Two of these rooms have yielded notable finds. Room A, in the southeast corner of the complex, had a hearth or an altar and was decorated with a mosaic floor that depicted fish (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.41), painted stucco walls that imitated marble (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.16), and a miniature stucco entablature with a figural frieze (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.46). Room D featured colored plaster walls, and a terracotta bull’s head protome was attached to one of them. In addition, a peristasis was created between the south wall of Palace IV and the north wall of Palace V (Zimmer 2011: 145–146).

Like Palace IV, Palace V took the form of peristyle house, but it was larger at over 2400 m². Because a rejected block from the Great Altar was found in Palace V’s foundations, we know that the two buildings were built around the same time; this is unsurprising, because Pergamene buildings appear to have been planned in advance, block by block, using mason’s marks (e.g., Korres 1984: 204–205; Kästner 1998: 148–149). The two-storied colonnades around Palace V’s courtyard probably resembled the contemporary stoas of the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros and (more generally) the Great Altar’s interior colonnade, suggesting that Eumenes II and his architects planned for the Royal District and the Great Altar to be unified visually. Because Palace V was relatively large and ornately decorated, it is likely that it was Eumenes II’s main seat in the Royal District. Indeed, it seems to have been exceptionally suitable for royal entertaining. Its walls were faced with marble orthostates, and its floors were paved with mosaics. Room H, in the northeast corner, had metal grating at its entrance as well as an altar or a statue base, thus suggesting a religious function for the room (Radt 2011a: 68–72; Zimmer 2011: 146–147). Mosaics were found here, too. Their surviving fragments indicate that two emblemata depicted theatrical masks above the main composition: an elaborate border surrounded a long panel that depicted a garland with detailed birds and a butterfly below three small emblemata, one of which represented a hyperrealistic parrot (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.42).

Two other rooms appear to have served as dining rooms, owing to their off-centered doors that could have accommodated klinai, or dining couches, around the walls (Hoepfner 1997: 37–39; Radt 2011a: 68–72; Zimmer 2011: 146–147). Excavations of one of these, Room K in the northwest corner, yielded both the “Dancer” marble statuette (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.24) and the Hephaistion Mosaic. Although much of this mosaic is now lost, its extant portions include an elaborate border as well as an emblema representing the artist Hephaistion’s signature on a piece of parchment that appears to be fluttering off the pavement (see Chapter 20). This signature (“Hephaistion made [me]”) is the mosaic’s most celebrated feature, but its border is not without interest. For example, an especially lifelike grasshopper is represented among one band’s vegetation (Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.43). Klinai most likely sat on this border, encircling the room (Zimmer 2011: 146–147).

We also may speculate that the most famous mosaic in antiquity was once in Room I, the larger room next door to the east. Pliny (HN 36.184) states that the Unswept Room by Sosos was displayed at Pergamon. He tells us that it depicted a meal’s realistic detritus and was associated with another scene that represented birds preening themselves around a kantharos, or drinking vessel. Roman copies of both scenes have been identified—and have strongly suggested a trompe l’oeil hyperrealism (Parlasca 1963; Andreea 2003: 161–175). As a copy at Aquileia attests, the trash most likely surrounded the central avian scene in Sosos’ original composition (Torlo 2005: 16–17). Klinai probably sat on or around the depiction of this trash, and tables possibly stood on top of it, too, making diners seem especially messy—and the host especially lax with etiquette—at symposia, or drinking parties. Through the
process of elimination, I believe that Room I is the most likely candidate of all excavated Pergamene dining rooms for Sosos’ mosaic: no other mosaics were found there in situ; its grand setting would have been a fitting place for such an eye-catching mosaic; and, as we saw with the Hephaistion Mosaic, Eumenes II had an established interest in mosaicists who made their names known in antiquity. All the mosaics that are associated with Palace V, then, helped create the Pergamene aesthetics of space: because of their hyperrealistic details (including shadows), they emphasized three-dimensionality within a bound architectural area.

Between Palace V and the Royal District’s gated entrance was Building Group VI. Owing to excavated finds such as arrows and spear tips as well as its suggestive location, this complex is thought to have had a military function, which included guarding the king and his courtiers (Zimmer 2011: 145, 147).

Directly across the Royal District’s paved road from Building Groups V–VI was the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros. Here, the marble L-shaped North-East Stoa and the South Stoa created a pi-shaped boundary opposite the Temple of Athena that framed the sanctuary. Visitors entered the sanctuary through a Propylon that faced the courtyard-like area right at the entrance to the Royal District. Now on display at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, the Propylon took the innovative form of a two-tiered stoa surmounted by a frieze of garlands and bucrania and, finally, a pediment. Its architectural configuration was repeated throughout the sanctuary’s stoas: a lower story with an outer Doric colonnade and an upper story with an outer Ionic colonnade connected by reliefs that formed a balustrade. Both stories also had an inner row of columns, with Ionic capitals on the first story and distinctive Pergamene palm capitals on the second, much like those of the Stoa of Attalos II in Athens (Kästner 2011c; Radt 2011a: 159–168).

An inscription on the Propylon’s architrave announced the sanctuary’s patronage: “King Eumenes [dedicated this] to Athena Nikephoros” (Kästner 2011c: fig. 9). And the architectural sculpture of the Propylon and the stoas alluded both to the Attalids’ victories and to their mythical past, especially their founder Telephos and his Trojan War that took place not far away. Most of the extant balustrade reliefs, for example, depict spolia, or captured weapons, thus monumentalizing the Greek custom of displaying real spolia in stoas (cf. Coulton 1976: 12–13). Other panels represent the Greeks building the Trojan Horse, Athena with Telephos or his father Herakles, and a gigantomachy that includes Zeus and Athena (Grußinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: nos. 6.24–26). Although scholars most often associate these mythological reliefs with the stoas, it is worth keeping in mind that the reliefs currently displayed in the Propylon are actually plaster casts. Thus it is possible that the three mythological reliefs were originally displayed in the Propylon’s second-story balustrade; their varying lengths do fit its spaces for a longer central relief flanked by two narrower ones. This allusion to the Attalids’ mythical past appeared elsewhere in the stoas as well. The North Stoa’s niches displayed relief panels that carried figures such as Prometheus, Herakles, and the personified mountain Caucasus (Grußinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011: no. 5.31).

As the ancient visitor walked through the Propylon, he faced the Temple of Athena Nikephoros within the area enclosed by the sanctuary’s stoas. Probably dating to the fourth century BCE, the temple had actually been the original part of the sanctuary and thus was a fitting focal point. Combining Doric features with local techniques and materials, the design of the temple suggests that patrons and builders were interested in fusing elements from both mainland Greece and Asia Minor at the very start of monumental architecture on the Pergamene acropolis in the fourth century BCE. This Doric peripteral temple was oriented north–south, with a plan of 6 x 10 columns, on a two-step krepidoma. The cela, most likely divided by a cross wall, was framed with a pronao and an opisthodomos, both of them dityle in antis. The unusually slender columns of the peristyle were spaced further apart than usual, and therefore its Doric frieze required three metopes and two and two half triglyphs per interaxial space; together with a low epistyle, this resulted in a proportionally low entablature, with the result that the elevation had a light, Ionic appearance. Its manufacture, moreover, was highlighted: the columns were deliberately left unfluted, and pi-shaped clamps remained visible in dovetail-shaped cuttings on the blocks of the stylobate and the krepidoma step. It was constructed of local andesite stone, with local tuff Doric capitals. Overall, its construction seems deliberately similar to other temples in Asia Minor such the Temple of Athena at Assos and buildings at Labraunda (Hoepfner 1997: 30–35; Pedersen 2004: 415–427; Kästner 2011b; see Chapter 27).
The sanctuary’s courtyard, moreover, was full of sculpture. Most notably, the sanctuary bound and contained three monuments that commemorated Attalos I’s victories in the 230s–220s BCE: the Kaikos Monument, in the center of the courtyard; the Greater Attalid Dedication, which ran parallel to the South Stoa; and the Epigenes Monument, whose exact location is unknown. The Kaikos Monument most likely consisted of a colossal Athena Promachos atop a round base. The Greater Attalid Dedication, furthermore, probably displayed a Gallic and Seleucid bronze battle group on a long base. And the Epigenes Monument possibly carried a portrait of Attalos I. The sanctuary also enclosed numerous other military dedications as well as expropriated sculpture by such classical Greek artists as Myron and Praxiteles (Brogan 1999: 67–119; Marszal 2000; Stewart 2004: 197, 213–214; Tanner 2005: 222–233).

The famous Library of the Royal District has been tentatively identified as the building that joins the North Stoa on its north side, accessible through the stoa. This building had one large room, with three smaller rooms to its west. A 50-cm-wide stone podium ran along three walls of this large room, and holes suggest that these walls might have displayed bookcases, paneling, or pinakes (plaques) that perhaps were inscribed with the Library’s catalogue. A one-third scale representation of Pheidias’ Athena Parthenos from the Parthenon in Athens also was found here. The podium might have carried other artworks, too. The smaller rooms, furthermore, could have accommodated the 200,000 scrolls that the Library possessed (Plut. Ant. 58.5–59; Wolter-von dem Kneseeck 1995: 45–56; Hoepfner 2002b; Brehm 2011; Radt 2011a: 165–168). Together with the Library of Alexandria, the Library at Pergamon was one of the two preeminent intellectual centers in the Hellenistic world. Although the archaeological evidence does not conclusively prove that it was located in the Royal District, its connections with the Attalid court support its tentative association with this building. And this building’s location directly across the street from Palace V – the probable main palace of Eumenes II – is suggestive for the social courtly life of the intellectuals who used the Library.

Overall, then, the sanctuary’s – and thus the Royal District’s – bounded space, with its sculptural emphases on commemoration, retrospection, and the mythical past, constructed a site of memory, a place where the viewer could visit the Attalids’ version of the past – and where the Attalids were the triumphant patrons of Classical Greek art and, possibly, literature (cf. Crang and Travlou 2001; Ma 2009).

The Great Altar

Less than 200 m from the gate to the Royal District was the Great Altar (Figure 28.5), which is perhaps the most extraordinary – and certainly the most famous – example of Pergamene architecture. It was a pi-shaped monument (for it is more like a squared temple than a typical altar) that consisted of a colonnaded courtyard supported by a stepped podium, with a grand central stairway up one side. The altar proper (of modest size) was in the center of the courtyard. At 36.80 × 34.20 m (approximately 100 Ionic feet square, or a hekatopmedon), it sat within a large enclosed terrace, just past the Upper Agora, to the left of the road that led up to the Royal District. After entering the terrace from the road, visitors had to walk around the monument to access its entrance-stair because the monument faced the broad plain to the east. The dates of the pottery in its construction fill, the style of its column capitals, and the first known dedication on the terrace suggest that the building was built between the mid-160s BCE and 149/8 BCE, but it was never entirely finished, perhaps owing to Eumenes II’s death in 158 BCE (Stewart 2000; Kästner 1998, 2011a). An inscription on the architrave is phrased in the language that the Attalids used to commemorate victory: “[King Eumenes son of King Attalos and Q[ue[n Apollonis fo]r] the blessing[s] befallen us to Zeus and Athena Nikephoros]” (Green 2000: 177–179). Although strikingly new as an altar, it does resemble monuments in Asia Minor such as the Nereid Monument at Xanthos and the mausolea at Halikarnassos and Belevi, which commemorated the lives of dynasts in the fourth–third centuries BCE (Sturgeon 2000; see Chapter 26). When creating the Great Altar’s new form, Eumenes II and his architects, then, probably alluded to these older monuments in order to commemorate his military achievements – especially his defeat of the Gauls in 166 BCE – in a local Asian-Greek way. What is more, we may perhaps associate the construction of the Great Altar, if
not his entire building program, with his attempt to assert his own importance for Ionian Greeks in the mid-160s (cf. Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae [OGIS] 763).

From top to bottom, the Great Altar was both sculptural and Pergamene in conception, with clearly articulated parts. Within its enclosed terrace, it was framed much like the bound and contained temple and sculpture in the contemporaneous Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros. Akroteria that represented gods, horses, lions, tritons, griffins, and centaurs sat on its roof, leaving marks on the extant roof blocks that prove their ancient presence. The next register had an Ionic colonnade with Asiatic-Ephesian bases that consisted of a flat plinth, a spira with a double scotia, and a convex torus. The capitals on these Ionic columns were varied; one conspicuous type depicted a scroll with Zeus’s thunderbolt. Below this, a baroque sculptural frieze represented a gigantomachy, or battle of the gods and giants, around the monument’s exterior. Inside the courtyard, an Ionic colonnade stood in front of a frieze that depicted the life of Telephos on the courtyard’s walls. Finally, in the center of this courtyard was an altar (Kästner 1998, 2011a).

This interior altar was a rectangular podium flanked by wings and covered with a (now-lost) fire-resistant layer of plaster (Kästner 2011a: 207). Literary and numismatic evidence indicate its sacrificial function in at least the Roman period, but, because of cuttings on the top, it appears to have displayed spolia during the time of the Attalids. Such a display was consistent with the exhibition of arms and armor in the Greek world, especially in stoas. The colonnade around the interior courtyard made the space resemble a stoa, and the spolia themselves echoed the representations of weapons on the balustrades of the stoas in the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros (Lucius Ampelius Liber memorialis 8.14; Stewart 2000: 46–49).

Yet the exterior and interior friezes were surely the monument’s most memorable features. Carved in situ, the exterior Gigantomachy Frieze was originally 113 m long and 2.30 m high. It represented the

![Figure 28.5 Great Altar of Pergamon, second century BCE. Source: Art Resource 4965.](image-url)
battle of the Olympian gods and the giants, who were the children of Gaia (Earth) and Ouranos (Sky). Although some portions are lost, its basic order is known from the extant inscribed blocks that gave identifications of gods and giants (and the names of artists below). These inscriptions were indispensable because the frieze was assuredly just as overwhelming in antiquity as it is today. It continues to impress viewers with its deep carving; snaky scaled legs, feathers, and hair; and seemingly unending presentation of obscure mythical figures. Even with the inscribed glosses, the ancient viewer probably needed to consult the stoic philosopher Kleanthes’ *On Giants* (circa 250 BCE) if he wanted to understand the figures and their individual set pieces within the broader battle. Its sculptural techniques were wide-ranging, drawing upon the history of Greek sculpture up to that point (Stewart 1990: 210–212; Queyrel 2005). Particularly impressive was the choice to make the gigantomachy’s figures spill onto the stairs, entering the viewer’s space and joining him as he goes up to the courtyard. In fact, one could say that the Great Altar’s centrality in Eumenes II’s building program was highlighted by this sculptural passage. For here, the Pergamene aesthetics of space were violated: the sculpture was no longer contained in its articulated compartment. Using every trick in the book of Greek sculpture, the Gigantomachy Frieze suggested that there was nowhere left for architectural sculpture in the Greek world to go – except to the innovative Telephos Frieze in the center of the building.

At first glance, the Telephos Frieze might have appeared old-fashioned when compared with the gigantomachy. But, to be sure, the ancient viewer quickly realized that the Telephos Frieze was doing something new in Greek sculpture: it told the life story, or *bios*, of its main protagonist, from conception through apotheosis. Originally 59.6 m long and 1.58 m high, the frieze now is missing many portions. In antiquity, the ancient viewer first saw the complete frieze through the interior colonnade, whose columns framed the individual scenes in its running narrative. Then, to see the frieze up close, he turned to his left and entered the space between the colonnade and the frieze, encircling the courtyard clockwise. Telephos was a fitting choice for this monument, for not only was he a mythical founder of Pergamon but also he was a focal point for discussions about Greek identity. Although he was born in Greece, he moved to Asia Minor as an adult. Details on the frieze such as clothing and footwear highlighted his Asian-Greek identity and that of other figures. Thus, like Eumenes II (and the Attalids more generally), Telephos was both Greek and Asian (Eur. *Telephus*; Stewart 1996; Kuttner 2005).

**Pergamene Architecture outside Pergamon**

The Great Altar was (and is) dazzling, but the Attalids and their architects did not restrict their innovative architecture to Pergamon itself. As we saw with the Stoa of Attalos II at Athens at the beginning of this essay, the Attalids were heavily involved in architectural projects outside Pergamon, too: stoas, fortifications, temples and sanctuaries, gymnasia, harbor mole, and probably a stadium (Hansen 1971: 284–298; Winter 1993; Winzor 1996: 63–144). They were active in Asia Minor and were donors at heavily visited places such as Athens, Delos, and Delphi. Indeed, their beneficence was well known throughout the Greek world, though their motives were occasionally questioned (Livy 42.5.3; Polyb. 22.8.5). They funded construction and maintenance in both Asia Minor and mainland Greece, sometimes providing a steady stream of revenue through donations of money or grain for a system of loans (e.g., Polyb. 4.65.6; Clara Rhodos 9: 190/208; *Miletos* 45). Micromanaging their projects, they hired overseers and supplied craftsmen as well as materials (e.g., FD III 3:239; *Miletos* 44; *Sammlung Griechischer Dialekt Inschriften* II 2001). Masons’ marks and stamps even indicate that some blocks and roof tiles might have originated in Pergamon (e.g., Welter 1954: cols. 45–46; Korres 1984: 204–205; Pirson 2004: 207–208).

Many people throughout Greek areas, then, experienced the Attalid built environment on a daily basis. And, to be sure, some obvious labels such as dedicatory and honorific inscriptions indicated the origins of such beneficence. But to what extent did viewers recognize the construction as Pergamene? Most viewers, especially those in mainland Greece, had no first-hand knowledge of Pergamon. Therefore they could have identified Pergamene style only through perceiving the commonalities of Attalid construction closer to home. For a start, Attalid architecture throughout Asia Minor and Greece exhibited the Pergamene aesthetics of space. The stoa, to be sure, was a ubiquitous element
in public spaces. The best preserved (and certainly most thoroughly reconstructed) example is the Stoa of Attalos II at Athens (circa 150 BCE, Figure 28.1). It not only defined the Agora’s horizontal space by making a border on its eastern edge, but it also defined and articulated uneven ground by including a subterranean level (Kohl 2001). Attalid patronage was especially successful with making steep slopes look Pergamene and thus marking Attalid presence at the whole site. The Attalids and their architects certainly contributed to, and perhaps even dominated, the southern skyline of the Athenian Acropolis. They erected colossi of an Attalos and a Eumenes and the Lesser Attalid Dedication (200 BCE), a long battle monument with under lifesize giants, Amazons, Persians, and Gauls, on top of the Acropolis (Stewart 2004). And, on the South Slope, the Stoa of Eumenes II (circa 170–160 BCE) provided a façade for the gymnasion in front of it (Calligas 2009; Tofi 2010). The Terrace of Attalos I in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (circa 210 BCE) also defined and articulated the verticals and the horizontals of the sanctuary’s rocky incline, and it even framed pillar monuments of Attalos I and Eumenes II (Roux 1987; Jacquemin and Laroche 1990, 1992). More grandly, Eumenes II probably subsidized the construction of the pi-shaped upper stoa and the terrace at the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Kos, Rhodes, which transformed the spatial orientations of the entire site (Winter 2006: 216–217).

The Attalids favored construction that receded into the background of daily life, just as they did at Pergamon. Thus, the majority of their known projects used such stoas. Ancient literary and epigraphical evidence suggests how everyday people experienced these versatile buildings, sometimes in ways that deviated from original intentions. In the Roman period, for example, audiences knew the Stoa of Attalos II to be a backdrop for public speaking in the Athenian Agora (Ath. 5.212f). By this time, too, the Stoa of Eumenes II at Athens afforded theatrical storage and a place for theatergoers to escape inclement weather (Vitr. De arch. 5.9.1). And the stoa in the Terrace of Attalos I at Delphi was apparently such a popular (and perhaps ill-treated) place that the Amphictyonic League had to regulate its use (Corpus d’Inscriptions de Delphes 485). The Attalids also demonstrated a clear interest in building walls and fortifications, and even this utilitarian construction was appreciated (Polyb. 4.65.6; Winter 1966). Other practical works such as post-earthquake repairs were noted on publicly displayed inscriptions as well (FD III 3:239).

Informed by such inscriptions, visitors undoubtedly connected these projects with the Attalids, but the Attalids’ interest in facilitating the mundane was indeed subtle (and thus all the more politically effective). Certainly more noticeable were the details that viewers saw when standing next to Attalid construction. Pseudo-isodomic masonry – that is masonry that alternates wide and narrow courses and incorporates small blocks – is seen in Attalid construction projects both at Pergamon and elsewhere (see Chapter 18). In Athens, it appears in the Stoa of Attalos II and in the bases of at least two pillar monuments on the Acropolis, one at the northeast corner of the Parthenon (Figure 28.6) and one near the Propylaia (Korres 2000; Kohl 2001: 247–252; Monaco 2010). These pillar monuments were probably honors from the Athenian demos that responded to Attalid benefaction (cf. Goette 1990; Korres 2000). Their masonry, then, suggests that the Attalids facilitated construction, just as Eumenes II did when the Milesians honored him with a gold statue (OGIS 763). At Delphi, this masonry appears throughout the Terrace of Attalos I, including the stoa, the so-called oikos building, and the bases of the pillar monuments (Roux 1987; Jacquemin and Laroche 1990, 1992). What is more, the lower parts of columns were left unfluted at such buildings as the Stoa of Attalos II and the Stoa of Eumenes II at Athens as well as at the Stoa of Attalos I at Delphi (Roux 1987: 55–58; Kohl 2001: 247–250). Pseudo-isodomic masonry and unfluted column drums had practical functions: ensuring sturdiness and minimizing damage from passersby (Winter 1966: 130). But they also tied Attalid construction together visually. Less functional and thus even more obviously a Pergamene marker were the palm capitals that appear in both the Stoa of Attalos II and the Stoa of Eumenes II at Athens (Kohl 2001: 249). These are similar to the capitals in the North Stoa in the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros at Pergamon itself. Yet it should be noted that Pergamene architecture on mainland Greece did differ from that at Pergamon in other respects. For example, the Athenian stoas used the local proportions of the Doric order and not those of Pergamon (Winter 1993: 261). Therefore, we know that the Attalids and their architects were selective when giving Pergamene architectural signs to viewers outside Pergamon.
Figure 28.6  Attalid pillar monument, Athenian Acropolis, reconstruction, late third–early second century BCE.  
Source: M. Korres.
Of course, at some sites it is difficult to differentiate Attalid patronage from architecture that merely appropriates Pergamene elements. For this reason, scholars have often used the catchall phrase “Pergamene influence” to describe architecture that looks Pergamene but cannot be directly connected with the Attalids through inscriptions or literary references. Falling under this heading, for example, are stoas in the agoras at Aigai and Assos (circa mid-second century BCE), which had not only subterranean levels but also peristaseis that responded to the terrain (Coulton 1976: 70–71, 213–214, 218–219). The most notable example of Pergamene influence is, perhaps, the Sanctuary of Athena Lindia at Lindos, Rhodes. Here, circa 200 BCE, colonnaded terraces were added to its propylaia, which ascended the acropolis until it reached the temple at the top. Together with steps, they defined and articulated the slope with vertical and horizontal lines, much as the stoas at Pergamon did (Winter 2006: 217–218). Given that they were constructed around the very beginning of Eumenes II’s reign, one does wonder, though, whether such “influence” worked both ways and the work histories of architects and workmen – not to mention the mechanisms of patronage – were more dynamic and fluid than we usually consider.

More explicit references to Pergamon’s architecture and its contents continued throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods, too. Often they involved the display of Hellenistic rulers. At the beginning of his reign and the closing of the Hellenistic world, the Roman emperor Augustus presented himself as a Hellenistic ruler though his residential architecture. A peristyle house complete with a library and a nearby temple, the House of Augustus on the Palatine Hill in Rome seems to have been modeled on Palace V and its proximity to the Library and the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros (Hoepfner 1997: 38–39). Private Roman individuals appear to have consciously emulated Attalid display as well. Roman villas, according to Cicero (Verr. 2.127), were decorated with Pergamene art (Kuttner 1995: 166). And the many copies of the Unswept Room mosaic attest to the popularity of one such artwork (Moormann 2000; Andreac 2003: 161–174). Because Pliny mentioned its Pergamene context, we know that the mosaic’s Pergamene associations were well known in the Roman world. The sculptural contents of Pergamene architectural spaces also had a long afterlife – copies of vanquished figures in the Greater and Lesser Attalid dedications were displayed, for example, in Republican and Imperial Rome – though there the specifically Pergamene associations seem weaker (see Stewart 2004).

Allusions to Pergamene architecture also dealt with cultural identity. It is not surprising that inhabitants of Asia Minor selected Pergamene architecture – especially the Great Altar – as a reference point. One frieze on the second-century BCE Temple of Hekate at Lagina, for example, recalled the Great Altar’s gigantomachy (Kuttner 1995: 167; Baumeister 2007). And, later, the second-century CE Parthian Monument probably echoed the Great Altar’s pi-shaped form, sculptural friezes, and broad themes of negotiating Greek identity (Winkler-Horaček 2009). Like the Great Altar itself – indeed all Pergamene architecture – these monuments helped to construct Asian-Greek identity in Asia Minor, which was made even more complex by Rome’s increasing presence in the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Margaret M. Miles for inviting this contribution; Andrew Stewart for reading a draft of it; Felix Pirson and the DAI for permission to reproduce a plan of Pergamon from the recent excavations; and Volker Kästner, Manolis Korres, Michaelis Lefantzis, Samantha Martin-McAuliffe, and Christina Vlassopoulou for help with particular points.

FURTHER READING

Up-to-date archaeological information about Pergamon and its architecture is found on the website of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (www.dainst.org/en/project/pergamon) Results of the archaeological excavations have been published in the Altertümer von Pergamon and the Pergamenische Forschungen series. The most comprehensive recent publications about the site are Radt 2011a and Grüßinger, Kästner, and Scholl 2011, with useful new computerized reconstructions. The older architectural summaries of Hoepfner 1997 and Radt 1998 are still useful, as are more specific studies about planning and urbanization (e.g., Radt 1993, 2001; Pedersen 2004). Winter 1993 and

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