



## DIDYMA

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**DIDYMA** (Gk. τὰ Δίδυμα, probably of Carian origin), district ca. 20 km south of the Ionian Miletus and site of a pre-Greek (Pausanias, 7.2.6) sanctuary of Apollo, to which a famous oracle was attached. Didyma was connected to Miletus by a partially paved sacred way via Panormus on the sea. The 6th-century temple, which incorporated its smaller predecessor, was destroyed by the Persians in 494 B.C.E., after the failure of the Ionian revolt (Herodotus, 6.19.3; according to Strabo, 14.1.5, however, it was Xerxes who destroyed the temple). The hereditary priests, the Branchidae, descended from a shepherd named Branchus said to have been granted the prophetic gift by Apollo himself, were expelled, and the bronze statue of Apollo, by Canachus of Sicyon (Pausanias, 2.10.5), was carried away to Ecbatana; Seleucus I Nicator brought it back in around 300 B.C.E. A huge bronze knucklebone (weighing ca. 100 kg) has been excavated at Susa; it must have been part of the Persian loot from Miletus or Didyma.

A new sanctuary of great dimensions was planned by [Alexander the Great](#); construction seems to have begun under Seleucus and to have continued until the 2nd century C.E. (cf. Pausanias, 7.5.4), but it was never finished.

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