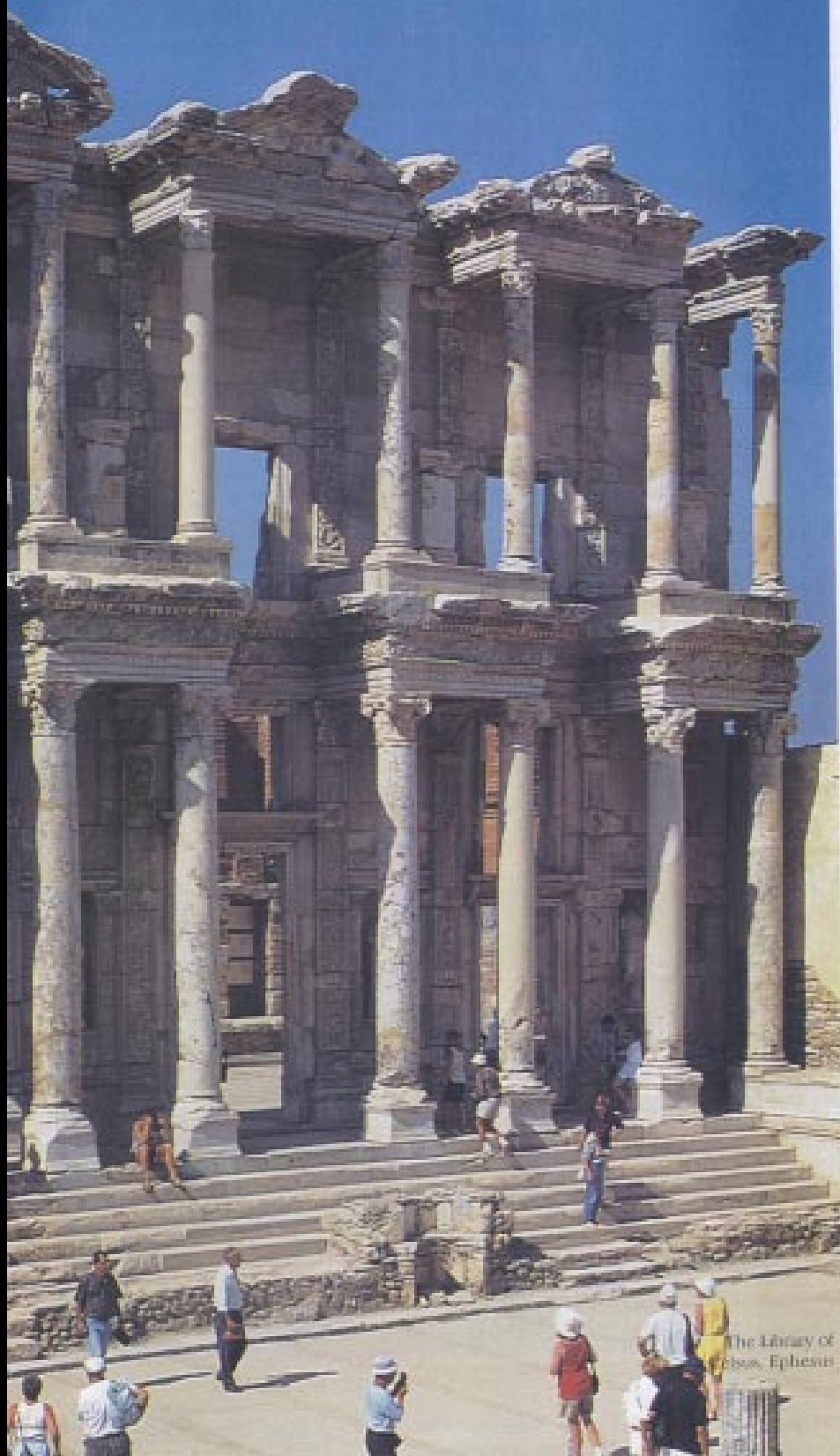


Special Interest



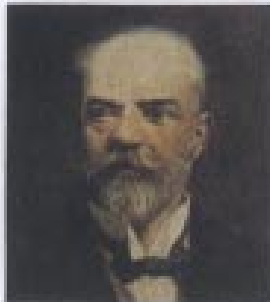
Whatever your interest we make every effort to plan a trip which suits you perfectly. Those with a penchant for archaeology and ancient history will be delighted with our tours to Greece and Turkey... some of the finest art and architecture can be found on our tours to St Petersburg, Sicily and Rome.... and the opera-going fraternity can delight in our opera tours.



ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander the Great, the son of Philip II of Macedonia and pupil of Aristotle, was born in 356BC and became ruler in 336BC. Although only in his early twenties, he showed considerable skill in devising military strategies and embarked upon a series of battles and campaigns to conquer neighbouring lands. By 325BC he had destroyed Thebes, defeated King Darius of Persia, founded the port of Alexandria, conquered Tyre and Sidon, occupied Babylon, Susa and Persepolis and invaded India. After thirteen years of rule Alexander died in Babylon at the age of 33 and his vast empire was divided amongst his generals.

Special Interest



DVORAK

Antonin Leopold Dvorak was born in the Bohemian village of Nelahozeves on 8 September 1841. His father was an inn-keeper and butcher and his mother a servant in the household of Prince Lobkowitz at nearby Nelahozeves Castle. Dvorak was destined to follow in his

father's footsteps but encouragement from his music teacher to learn to play piano, organ and viola meant his life progressed in a very different direction. After completing his apprenticeship to the butcher's trade, he moved to Prague to study German and to continue his music studies. His attendance at the Institute for Church Music in the city heralded the beginning of a long and distinguished career as musician and composer.

KYKKO MONASTERY, CYPRUS

Founded in 1080 by Byzantine Emperor Alexios Komnenos and expanded during the 19th century, Kykko is the most famous of the Cypriot monasteries. Located 1,200 metres above sea level, Kykko is named after the



hill upon which it is built and houses some magnificent mosaics and icons, most significantly an icon of the Virgin Mary said to have been painted by St Luke. Enclosed in tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl, the icon is believed to have miraculous rain-making

powers and has survived the four occasions the monastery has burnt down. Other artefacts include beautiful ecclesiastical vessels, gold and silver ornaments, and embroidered vestments which are displayed in the treasury.

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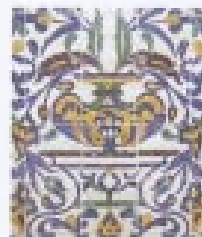
THE MEDIAEVAL CLOISTERS OF MONREALE CATHEDRAL

Begun in c1174 by William II, Monreale Cathedral is celebrated as a masterpiece of Norman architecture with remarkable mosaic and marble decoration. One of its most spectacular features is the serene 12th century cloister whose south walk is part of an abbey built for Cluniac Benedictines. Each of the stunning twin columns is uniquely decorated and capped with a magnificently sculptured capital which features motifs of animals, plants or mythical beasts. Some of the capitals tell us about the people who built the cathedral. One, for instance, is signed by the stonemason and another depicts William II offering the cathedral to the Madonna.



Monreale Cathedral cloister (detail)

IZNIK WARE



The mosques of the Ottoman Empire were decorated with beautiful tiles, rich in colour and ornamentation. The design was invariably floral and the main colours used were blue, green, orange and white. This distinctive style was known as Iznik, named

after the town where the tiles and other ceramic ware were produced. The finest glazed tiles were made primarily for the mosques and royal palaces of Istanbul and these can be still be seen in all their vibrant colour and beauty.



Regatta Pierhead, St Petersburg

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Additionally, most of the tours are accompanied by both a specialist tour leader and either a Page & Moy tour escort or a local escort who will ensure the smooth running of the tour. Specialist tour leaders have been carefully selected for their excellent academic knowledge and for their ability to communicate their love for their subject.