POSTCARDS FROM COLOSSAE:  
a series of informative snapshots

The series of “Postcards from Colossae” is designed to overcome a great deficiency in understanding about the ancient site of the city of Colossae and its related urban centre Chonai. Each postcard focuses on one aspect of the site and its history and draws together in a concise selection the information that can be found in various sources. The postcards have had recourse to ancient texts and artefacts, materials from comparative sites, the writings of early travellers and the most recent scholarship. Some of the information provided in the postcards has never before been published and reflects extensive research in various libraries and archives throughout the world. These include the University of Aberdeen, the British Museum, the British Library, the University of Texas, the Archbishop Marsh library in Dublin, St. Deiniol’s Library in Wales, the British Institute in Ankara, the Denizli Müze, the French Embassy in Istanbul, the Royal Geographic Society, the National Library of Scotland, Cambridge University Library. To the staff of each of these institutions, profound thanks must be given for the support and insight that they have generously extended to those involved in the Colossae Project. Our most sincere thanks must also be given to the library staff of Flinders University who tirelessly laboured to search out rare books from across Australia and the world for our use. The research that has fed into the production of these “postcards” was in no small measure made possible by a number of agencies. Firstly, Flinders University itself must be acknowledged for making possible the travel necessary to conduct the research. Secondly, the Australian Research Theology Foundation has provided considerable support for the publication of the results of this research. And thirdly, a number of
agencies have provided that necessary support that keeps body and soul together — the Gaskill Foundation, the Society of the Sacred Mission, the Golden Key organization.

There can, in the end, be no substitute for spending time at the site itself. Sincere thanks is due to Bay Ismail Iyilikçi and his wife Hafize for the profuse and long-standing hospitality warmly extended to a succession of Australian visitors to Denizli in south-west Turkey. This hospitality not only facilitated a deep and enduring friendship between Turkish and Australian people, but also opened up widespread contacts with civic, academic and local leaders. Without the building of friendships with the faculty at Pamukkale University, the directors of Denizli Müze and with local people who live in the region, many of the insights and discoveries that have been made at Colossae and Honaz would not have been possible.

The “postcards” therefore contain much information gained from the actual experience of the site and its surrounding region. There are numerous photographs contained in these “postcards” that have never been published, including of items and scenes that few have seen, certainly outside of the area.

The “postcards” began as a series of short information pieces designed to raise the profile of the Colossae Project within the confines of Flinders University and its associated campuses. They have been extended and supplemented in preparation for the conference “Colossae in time and space: linking with ancient city”. They have been written by Alan Cadwallader, Joan Riley, Michael Trainor and Rosemary Canavan from areas of their theoretical and applied research into the archaeology, history, and literature connected with Colossae and Chonai (Honaz). Each of the “postcards” has been reviewed by members of the “Greek Reading Group”, a post-graduate research seminar at Flinders University, with a view to ensuring that the information and interpretation speaks to an informed undergraduate and interested lay audience. To those involved at various levels and at various times, warm thanks is given: Rosemary Canavan, Joan Riley, Nicoly Moyes, Frances Passingham, Cameron Doody, Emily Harding, Julie Hooke, Margaret Hokin, Christine Lawrance. The postcards will not disappoint more scholarly interest
however, as considerable material is either unpublished or has never before been synthesised. It does mean however that footnotes have been eschewed. Sufficient indication and accreditation are given in the texts for those who wish to explore further some of the avenues opened up in each piece. A subsequent publication will provide detailed bibliographic sources to facilitate these enquiries.

Colossae has suffered considerably in scholarship from a lack of privileged attention, investigation and publication. These “postcards” reveal that, even in the absence of any formal survey and excavation to date, there is much more that can be known about the site and its surrounding area than has previously been thought. The development of a jaundiced assessment of the site in the nineteenth century has handicapped ongoing investigation and positive appreciation of its significance. It is hoped that these “postcards” may overcome something of this impoverishment, provide an impetus to further study of the site across its many epochs and demonstrate the warrant for a formal archaeological and cultural exploration of the site in its ancient and contemporary contexts.

Currently, the list of postcards are as follows:

*The Big Postcards*

Unearthing Ancient Colossae: A project to bring together two nations, their people, scholars and students.

The Value of Artefacts

A Bare-Faced Colossae: Why is Colossae so … lacking in ruins?

The Impact of Archaeology on the Seven Churches of Asia

Remembering Colossae Today

The Contribution of Ancient Coins

Debunking Herodotus

Dionysos in Kolossai: more than just the wine

The Power of Money

The Gods

Old Honaz
Stationing Armies
The Reverend Edward T. Daniell and a Woman from Colossae
Epigraphical Fever
The Fortress
Building with Local Stone
Kolossai in the Sources: the classical period
Hunting at “the Damascus of Anatolia”
The River and the City
A Laodicean Letter: or the case of the lost epistle.
An Impress on the World: the icon of St Michael of Chonai
Why are the Colossians so BIG? Or how a metaphor became literal.
Christian Presence in Chonai during the Ottoman Period.
“Tograi Smith” and the beginning of publication about Turkish Antiquities

The Mini Postcards
The Eumenian Christians
Horus
The “Hoglings” Epitaph
The Subterranean Lycus
The Theatre Mound at Colossae
The Colonnade Access to the City
The Water Channels at Colossae
The View from the Theatre Mound at Colossae
The River Lycus at Colossae
A Seat from the Colossae Theatre
A Garland Sarcophagus
A Memorial Bomos
A “Rock Tomb”
Clothing Industry in the Lycus Valley

Alan Cadwallader