

“It is therefore not surprising that more trade-guilds are known in Thyatira than in any other Asian city. The inscriptions, though not specially numerous, mention the following: wool-workers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers and bronze-smiths. The dealers in garments and the slave-dealers would have a good market in a road center. Garments were sold ready made, being all loose and free; and from the mention of dealers in outer garments we may infer the existence of special trades and guilds for other classes of garments. The woman of Thyatira, a seller of purple, named Lydia, who was so hospitable to St. Paul and his company at Philippi (Acts 16:14), belonged doubtless to one of those guilds: she sold not simply purple cloth but purple garments, and had emigrated to push the trade in Thyatiran manufactures in the Macedonian city. The purple in which she dealt cannot be regarded as made with the usual dye, for that was obtained from a shell-fish found chiefly on the Phoenician and the Spartan coasts. The color in which Lydia dealt must have been a product of the Thyatiran region; and Monsieur Clerc, in his work on the city, F148 suggests what is at once seen plainly to be true, that the well known Turkey-red was the color which is meant. This bright red is obtained from madder-root, which grows abundantly in those regions. It is well known that the ancient names of colors were used with great laxity and freedom; and the name purple, being established and fashionable, was used for several colors which to us seem essentially diverse from one another.

FIG. 29: The Thyatiran bronze-smith.



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A special interest attaches to Fig. 29. The divine smith, Hephaestus, dressed as a workman, is here seated at an anvil (represented only by a small pillar), holding in his left hand a pair of forceps, and giving the finishing blow with his hammer to a helmet, for which the goddess of war, Pallas Athene, is holding out her hand. Considering that a guild of bronze-smiths is mentioned at Thyatira, we cannot doubt that this coin commemorates the peculiar importance for the welfare of Thyatira of the bronze-workers' handicraft; and we must infer that bronze work was carried to a high state of perfection in the city." Sir William Ramsey, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, ch 23.

“It may be regarded as certain that the importance of the trade-guilds in Thyatira made the Nicolaitan doctrine very popular there. **The guilds were very numerous in that city, and are often mentioned in great variety in the inscriptions. It was, certainly, hardly possible for a**

tradesman to maintain his business in Thyatira without belonging to the guild of his trade. The guilds were corporate bodies, taking active measures to protect the common interests, owning property, passing decrees, and exercising considerable powers; they also, undoubtedly, were benefit societies, and in many respects healthy and praiseworthy associations. In no other city are they so conspicuous. It was therefore a serious thing for a Thyatiran to cut himself off from his guild.” Sir William Ramsey, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, ch 24. [bold mine]