

SPEAR-WON LAND

Sardis from the King's Peace
to the Peace of Apamea

Andrea M. Berlin
and Paul J. Kosmin

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Edited by

Andrea M. Berlin and Paul J. Kosmin

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To all the members of the
SARDIS EXPEDITION

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ABBREVIATIONS

References to classical authors are according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edition); references to epigraphic sources follow the abbreviations listed in the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG). In addition:

- AD* Sachs, Abraham, and Hermann Hunger. 1988–96. *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*. Vienna.
- BCHP* Finkel, Irving, and Bert van der Spek. 2012. *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period*. Published online at www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chronoo.html.
- IGUR* Moretti, Luigi. 1968–90. *Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae*. 4 vols. in 5 parts. Rome.
- IvE* Wankel, H., R. Merkelbach et al. 1979–81. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos, I–VII*. IGSK Band 11–17. Bonn.
- IvP* Fränkel, Max. 1890–95. *Die Inschriften von Pergamon*. 2 vols. *Altertümer von Pergamon* 8. Berlin.

SPOTLIGHT

The Metroön at Sardis

Nicholas Cahill

HERODOTUS (5.102) MENTIONS THE TEMPLE OF KYBEBE, or simply the Mother, “the epicchoric goddess” as Herodotus calls her, as the most important temple at Sardis (see chapter 5, “A Clay Kybele in the City Center,” by Frances Gallart Marqués). Although there was probably at least one sanctuary of Artemis during the fifth century BCE, when Herodotus was writing, it escaped his notice or interest; the major city deity seems to have been Kubaba. The burning of this temple in the Ionian Revolt of 499 was the ostensible cause for the Persian invasion of Athens, but it had been rebuilt by some point shortly after the war, in time for Themistocles to visit and even see a statue he himself had dedicated in Athens (Plut. *Them.* 31).¹

We do not know where the temple was located, but a dozen marble anta blocks were found reused in the Roman synagogue, together with sculptures of the goddess, lions, and other apparent dedications from the sanctuary (figs. 3.1, 3.4; see also chapter 1, “Inside Out”).² In addition to four inscribed and well-published blocks, eight uninscribed anta blocks were found in the rubble of the synagogue piers. All are of similar size and working, and they bear similar architectural features, such as finished panels of different widths on the two sides; most also bear Carian lewises and square dowels.³ The blocks alternate between taller, narrower (back to front) dimensions and shorter, deeper ones. Cuttings show that the two types of blocks alternated in courses, so the antae would key into the wall blocks behind. The sides of the blocks are smoothly finished in front but recessed and roughly picked behind; the backs of the taller, narrower blocks are cut on a diagonal. The smoothly finished panels are of different widths; the wider panel probably faced toward the interior of the building, the narrower toward the exterior.

This plethora of anta blocks and the apparent absence of other members of the temple are initially puzzling. These blocks were initially understood as pilasters projecting from slightly offset wall surfaces

1. I am not persuaded by Berndt-Ersöz 2013, which suggests that the sanctuary burned by the Persians was the one at Sector PN. There may have been many neighborhood altars and other sacred spots dedicated to the goddess.

2. Hanfmann 1964b, 34; Gauthier 1989; Knoepfler 1993.

3. Carian lewis: Demirtaş 2006; Pedersen 2011. These are also used in the Hellenistic capitals of the temple of Artemis: see chapter 6, “The Temple of Artemis,” by Fikret Yegül.



Fig. 3.1. Excavations of the synagogue in 1963, showing the collapsed piers of the late Roman building. The blocks with distinctive workmanship are the reused anta blocks from the Metroön, of which twelve were discovered here, four of them inscribed. (Archaeological Exploration of Sardis / President and Fellows of Harvard College)

(*Wandpilaster*), with the roughly picked side surfaces joining to adjacent wall blocks at a right angle (fig. 3.2). The reconstruction drawn in 1987 by the Sardis Expedition for Philippe Gauthier's publication of the inscriptions seemed plausible, as did Denis Knoepfler's alternative reconstruction.⁴ However, shortly after publication, both of these were shown to be wrong by Crawford Greenewalt Jr., who compared the blocks instead to the antae of the andrones built by Mausolus and Idreus at Labraunda.⁵ These also consist of alternating long and short blocks that key into the wall behind, which is made of gneiss rather than marble (fig. 3.3). The roughly finished strips on the sides of the marble antae must have been intended to provide grip for a layer of stucco that covered the rough stone walls, rather than serving as rough joints with other marble blocks. These architectural similarities suggest a more conventional reconstruction for our blocks: as antae for the temple of Kubaba, a normal meaning for the *parastades* on which the inscriptions were ordered to be inscribed (fig. 3.4). They also suggest a roughly contemporaneous date, in the second or third quarter of the fourth century. The comparison also helps to explain why we have so many anta blocks from the Metroön but no identifiable wall blocks: like the andrones at Labraunda, the Metroön was probably built mostly of coarse stone, stuccoed to give it a finished surface, and with only a façade of marble. The coarse wall blocks were probably not considered appropriate spolia by the builders of the synagogue and were discarded or reused elsewhere. The construction is very similar to the later, Hellenistic phase of the altar of Artemis (LA2), which had finely worked marble stairs across the front, the main point of contact with visitors, but was built primarily of coarse sandstone and tufa and given a polished, stuccoed surface (see fig. 1.8). No obvious candidates for columns, capitals, or entablature were discovered in the excavation. In any case, it



Fig. 3.2. Uninscribed anta blocks from the Metroön, set up in a somewhat arbitrary preliminary study. (Archaeological Exploration of Sardis / President and Fellows of Harvard College)

4. Gauthier 1989, pl. 14; Knoepfler 1993, 33.

5. Greenewalt, Ratté, and Rautman 1994, 22.



Fig. 3.3. Anta of Andron B at Labraunda, showing marble anta blocks keyed into gneiss walls. (Photo by N. Cahill)

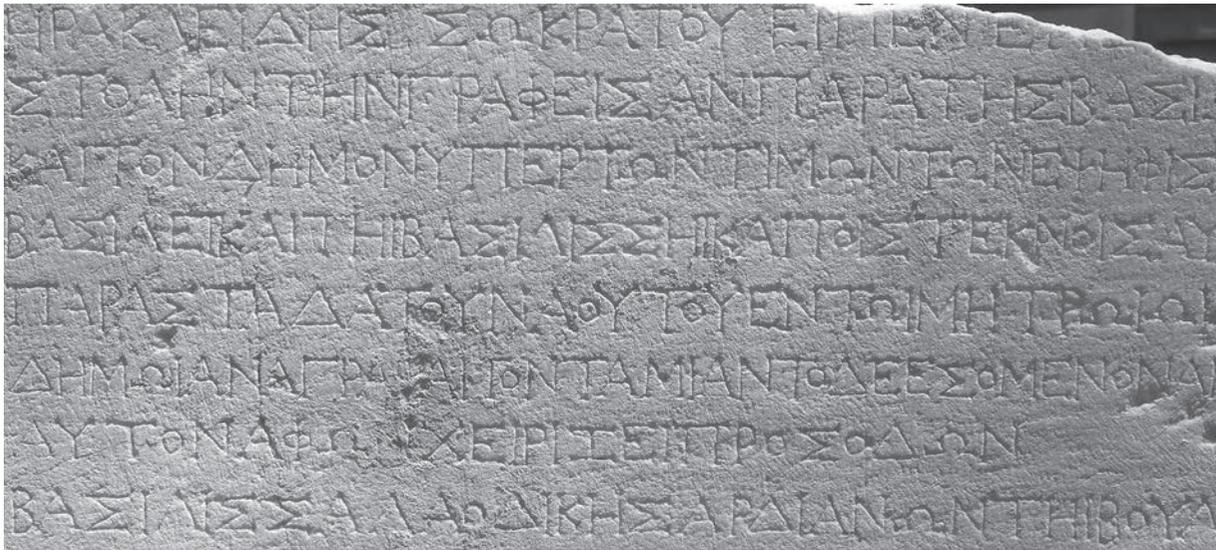


Fig. 3.4. The decree of the Sardians, resolving to inscribe the letter of queen Laodice “on the anta of the temple in the sanctuary of the Mother” (*ἀναγράψαι εἰς τὴν παραστάδα τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ Μητρῴωι*, IN63.121). (Archaeological Exploration of Sardis / President and Fellows of Harvard College)

is tempting to place this building in the milieu of the “Ionian Renaissance,” which is otherwise somewhat strikingly absent at Sardis.

Study of the blocks in 2017 showed that the antae were subtly tapered on both front and sides. The joint between the stucco and the finished marble surface, however, was vertical, so the finished panels narrow slightly toward the top. The inscribed blocks are among the widest of the preserved anta blocks, showing that they were relatively low on the building. Dowel cuttings and dimensions show that, as Knoepfler had already suggested, the short, fat block bearing the first letter of Antiochus III, dated 5 March 213 (IN63.118), was set on the tall, thin block bearing the decree of the Sardians, a letter of queen Laodice, and the beginning of another letter of Antiochus III, dated 6 June 213 (IN63.121; fig. 3.4).⁶ The block on which was inscribed the “second letter of Antiochus III” (IN63.120) is wider and so lower down on the anta, but it does not go immediately below the block with the decree of the Sardians and Laodice’s letter, since it is another short, fat block rather than a tall, thin one. The fourth inscription, bearing the decree concerning Heliodorus (IN63.119), belongs on the opposite anta. However, no other joins are preserved between blocks, uninscribed or inscribed, and the majority of the surviving blocks belong higher up on the walls than the inscribed ones. The taper does not, unfortunately, allow us to reconstruct the likely height of the building. The blocks bear other cuttings that suggest repairs at later periods, including, perhaps, the early Roman era.

Despite the uncertainty of reconstruction and location, the fortuitous preservation of these blocks and the striking number of sculptural dedications from the sanctuary rebuilt in the synagogue and vicinity are a striking reminder of the remarkable mixture of Anatolian and Greek religious practices, the longevity of Lydian customs, and the many important aspects of life in Sardis that are completely unexpected. Among these surprises is the monumental inscription in an unknown and otherwise unattested language, perhaps part of an altar or table, also found with the wreckage of the Metroön (IN63.141; fig. 3.5).⁷

6. Gauthier 1989, chs. 1–2; Knoepfler 1993, 35–38.

7. Gusmani 1975, 115–32.

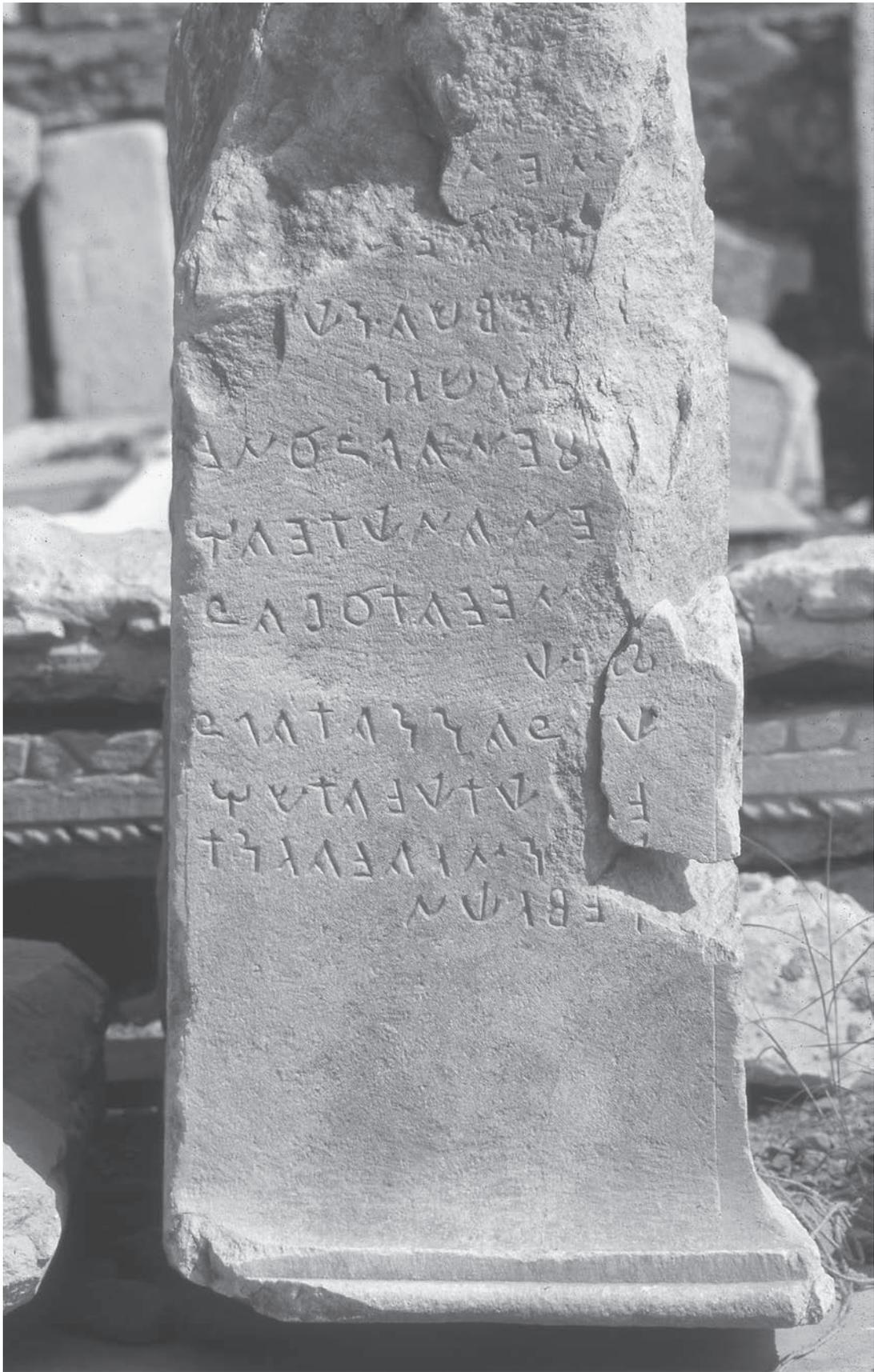


Fig. 3.5. Inscription in an unknown language from a pier of the synagogue. (Archaeological Exploration of Sardis / President and Fellows of Harvard College)