

March 2016
Number 77



ISSN 1470 - 5923

AEMES Journal

www.aemes.co.uk

President: Professor Paul T Nicholson FSA FRGS
Vice President: Dr Paul Collins FSA



Contents

Welcome to the AEMES Journal	4
Michael Hoadley: <i>The Nag Hammadi Library</i>	5
Richard Mandeville: <i>The Symbolism of Hieroglyphs in Ancient Egyptian Art</i>	7
Margaret Beaumont: <i>Just Another Smiting Scene The Baker Memorial Lecture</i>	13
Margaret Beaumont: <i>Living and Dying in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia</i>	17
Visit to the Egypt Exploration Society London Report by Heather Edwards	21
Catherine M.Draycott: <i>Images and Identities: Interpreting Identities in the Tomb Decorations of Anatolia in the Early Achaemenid Period</i>	23
Catherine M.Draycott: <i>History through Architecture: Getting to know a Lycian dynast through his city's urban development</i>	28
Visit to the Collection, Lincoln Report by Margaret Beaumont	34
Chris Elliott: <i>Egypt in England</i>	37
Chris Elliott: <i>Wisdom from the East</i>	40
Irving Finkel: <i>Ancient Egyptian Board Games – Ideas Old and New</i>	43
Annual General Meeting: Draft Minutes of the AGM 16th May 2015 Acting Chairman's Report Honorary Treasurer's Report Honorary Secretary's Report	45
Forthcoming Events	53

History through Architecture: Getting to know a Lycian dynast through his city's urban development

by Catherine M. Draycott

(Durham University Department of Archaeology)

Lecture given on 19th September 2015

(This short article summarizes the arguments of a paper published in *Anatolian Studies* 2015.)

In the mid-5th century BC there was a remarkable urban development at Xanthos, the capital of Lycia, an ancient region located on the Tekke Peninsula in southwest Turkey. It is a development that is little known of, but deserving of attention due to the peculiarities of some of the buildings and what this can reveal about the idea of the city, and how this contributes to the broader cultural history of the Mediterranean in the early Classical period.

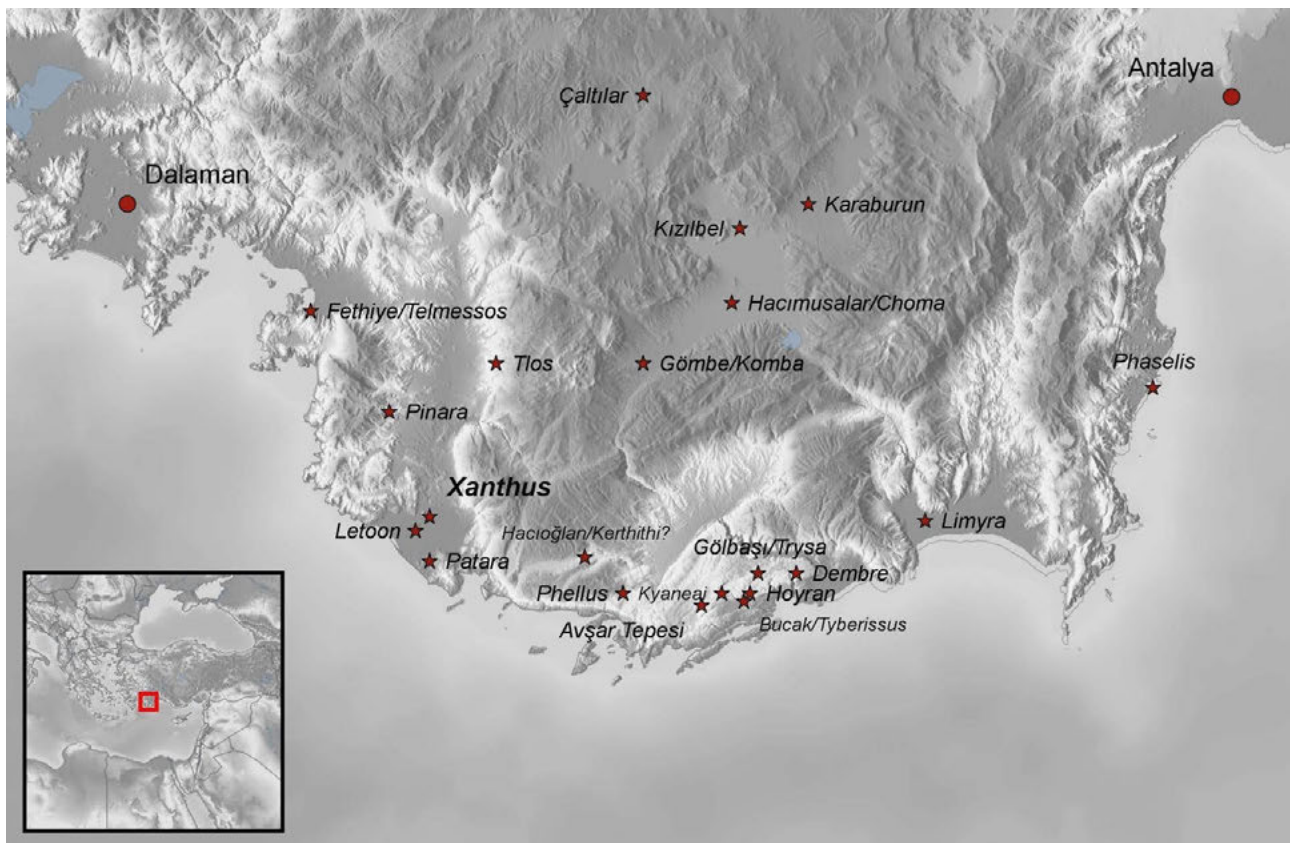


Fig 1. Map of the Tekke Peninsula/ancient Lycia. (Made by author using Stepmap.com.)

The ancient city of Xanthos is situated in the western part of the Tekke Peninsula, on the cliffs above the river of the same name, not far from the coast. It was one of a myriad of cities scattered through the mountainous coastal area of Lycia, some situated on the coast, but others perched on hilltops, with walled citadels and lower cities on the slopes. Of these,



Fig 2. Coin of Kuprlli (spelled Koprll). © Trustees of the British Museum.

Xanthos is one of the best known, both through references to the city in ancient literary sources, which indicate its pre-eminent status, and through excavation. It was first explored in the 19th century by Charles Fellows, who had many rich tombs and remains transported to the British Museum, including the well-known, now partly reconstructed Nereid Monument, prominently displayed in the gallery next to that with the Parthenon marbles. Subsequently, French excavations conducted at the site from the 1950s discovered much about the urban development of the site, and since 2010 a Turkish team from Akdeniz University in Antalya, led by Prof. Burhan Varkıvanç, have been continuing the exploration

At about the time of the urban development that took place in Xanthos Lycia had joined the Athenian-led Delian League – a largely Greek naval league dedicated to continuing to repulse the Achaemenid Persian Empire following the great Greek victories

in the Persian Wars of 480 and 479 BC. The Achaemenids had conquered Anatolia in the 540s BC, taking over the land formerly ruled by the Lydian kingdom under their last king, the famous Croesus, then expanding further to incorporate many other territories in Mesopotamia, the Levant and Egypt. Lycia, as a part of the Achaemenid Empire, had participated in the Persian Wars of 480 and 479 BC on the side of the Persians, but shortly later it, along with other coastal cities on the coasts of Turkey and in the Eastern Mediterranean, had deviated to ally themselves with the Greeks. During this period, as well, Lycian silver coinage suddenly flourishes – a sign of clear economic changes affecting the region, which, however, remain unexplained.

At the same time, there emerges an indication of a leading figure, usually referred to in the literature on Lycia as a ‘dynast’, from the Greek term ‘dynastes’, meaning powerful one, leader, or lord. The name ‘Kuprlli’, which also appears as an important grandfather in inscriptions of later Lycian dynasts, is carried on a great many of the newly abundant coin issues, including those marked as being minted at Xanthos and at the city of Limyra in Eastern Lycia. It is assumed from this that Kuprlli was intimately connected with the political and economic changes taking place, and that he expanded his rule from Xanthos to encompass most of, if not all of, Lycia.

It is Kuprlli, then, that may be considered the ‘architect’ of the urban development of Xanthos at this time. Even though the remains of these developments are very sparse and fragmentary, they indicate substantial construction of stone-built walls and a series of new monumental stone buildings. The most visible area of development is the area of the city known as the ‘acropolis’, in its southwest corner. It is not the highest point of the city, but a rocky plateau that looms over the river below. Fellows had found here a number of sculpted architectural pieces built into later period

walls, and when the French began their work at the site they soon connected these with the foundations for small buildings in the westernmost part of the 'acropolis'. One of these bases, in this case a large terrace or platform on which one of these buildings is reconstructed as having stood, is integrated into a wall ringing the acropolis, indicating that both belonged to the same building programme. Similar masonry in stretches of the city wall beyond the 'acropolis' suggests that the walling of the whole city may have begun at the same time. The dating of this building in the second quarter of the 5th century BC is based on stratigraphy (some remains of buildings dubbed A and B of an earlier phase on the acropolis were found in its southeast corner, and these seem to have been destroyed c. 470 BC according to the latest pottery associated with that level) and by the style of the figurative sculptures on the architectural blocks attributed to the new buildings, which in Greek art historical terms is 'early Classical'.

The so-called acropolis and the whole city, then, may have been walled, with possible zones created in the city. On the acropolis, there are remains of the footprints of two large buildings in the centre (Buildings D and E), the elevations of which are not understood. The architectural remains attributed to the smaller buildings mentioned above, which number three (Buildings F, G and H), however, has enabled reconstruction of their elevations. These buildings, therefore, are very important in understanding the character of the city under construction.

Significantly, these buildings, F, G and H are puzzling. The French excavators had at first assumed that they were shrines, partly due to the size and form, which recalls small shrine buildings from Greek sanctuaries, and partly due to their location, which appears to be an important public area – a citadel where palaces and temples may have stood, as far as can be gleaned from traces of large buildings (hence the use of the term 'acropolis'). They soon adjusted this to declare them funerary buildings, based on the facts that

their reconstructed forms strongly recall later buildings that are certainly tombs, and abundant in Lycia from the later 5th century on, and that unlike in most Classical Greek and Roman cities, in Lycia it is not unusual for monumental tombs to be erected in public areas. They, and subsequent scholars, have recognized that these buildings had a special nature, however. In order to indicate this, they are usually called 'heroa' – a term which implies a shrine-tomb for a 'hero', either a mythical or an historical person. Although it has not been fully articulated in the literature, the special nature of the buildings is apparent not only through their form alone, but through the fact that they are the first of a kind: monuments with an apparently memorial function that imitate wooden buildings. This kind of form becomes familiar in the later series of tombs of

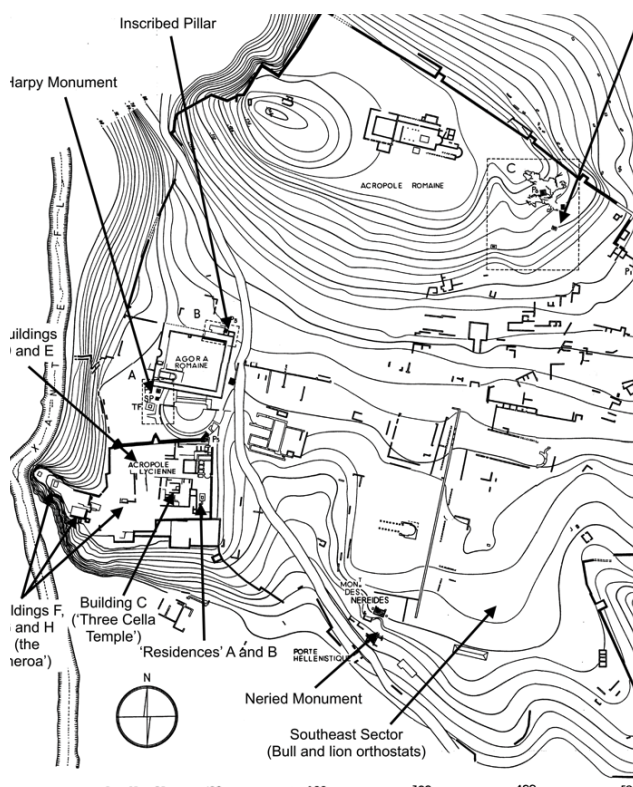


Fig 3. Plan of Xanthos. (With thanks to Jacques des Courtils and the French Mission to Xanthos.)

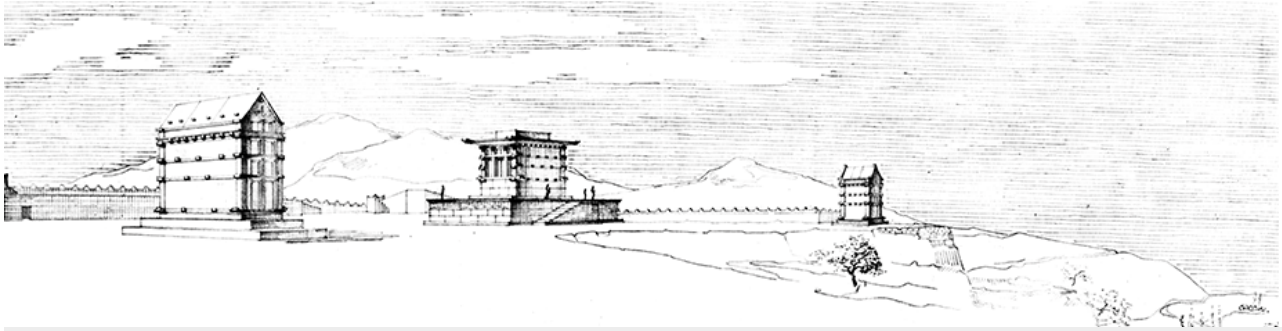


Fig 4. Artist's impression of the three small buildings on the Xanthian 'acropolis', looking southwest. (With thanks to Jacques des Courtils and the French Mission to Xanthos.)

Lycia. But at the time, compared to previous stone-built monumental tombs in Lycia, this marks a striking change. Earlier tombs were of various types, including tumulus mounds, but at settlements a particular type had become prominent in the period 550–480 BC: the so-called 'pillar' tomb – tall, towering monoliths with chambers for bones or bodies either carved into or built at the top. One such pillar tomb, the Harpy Monument, had been set up at Xanthos at about 480 BC, just prior to the new building on its acropolis. Outstripping all previous pillar tombs in size and elaboration, it may have belonged to a ruler of the generation before Kuprlli (if it were not intended for him, himself, and set up as an early show of his supreme power).

The question then, is why was this new type of monument constructed? What did they do, that previous tombs could not? One of the first steps to take in answering these questions is to try to ascertain whether the buildings were actually tombs. Because later tombs may have imitated these buildings does not necessarily mean that they were tombs themselves. For some of the Xanthos acropolis buildings, there are very few pieces enabling the reconstructions – only three in the case of Building F, for instance. However, even these few pieces show that the buildings were quite small inside – large for tomb chambers, but smaller than shrines and treasuries known at Greek sanctuaries. The architectural remains show that they had blind

doors and windows. Not only were these too small to allow regular access, but where it can be ascertained from the few remains it appears that they were designed to be locked into the walls, not allowing easy removal for access. The buildings were, then, sealed once built, which would lead one to think that they were indeed tombs – at least entombing structures. One issue which may be very relevant, however, is the apparent lack of access to the buildings post construction. This raises questions about how the deposition of bodies took place, for one might assume that a body would only be deposited in a tomb only following its construction. This raises the possibility that the Xanthos acropolis buildings were cenotaphs rather than sepulchres.

The next step is to consider how the exterior appearance of the buildings functioned symbolically. One can return here to the shrine-like aspect of the buildings, which prompted the initial identification by the excavators, and which encourages an ongoing recognition that they may have some extra-funerary, religious purpose, encapsulated but not explained by the use of the term 'heroa'. First, the size and positioning of the buildings on the so-called acropolis of the city does give the impression of a sanctuary and in fact an acropolis sanctuary such as that at Athens. Such buildings then may have been chosen in order to create an 'acropolis' effect at Xanthos, endowing it with an urban monumentality of a kind which might be recognized and appreciated

by significant other contemporary powers in the Mediterranean, such as Xanthos' new Delian League allies.

Second, the buildings themselves may imitate an established local, Lycian style of shrine. The source materials for the Lycian tombs that seem to imitate wooden buildings has long been debated. The traditional idea is that they imitated houses, and that the introduction of the style corresponds to the introduction of the idea of a 'house for the dead', perhaps borrowed from the Persians. Hence, the traditional term for such tombs is 'house tombs'. It has been pointed out, however, that even if houses were constructed partly of wood, there is little supporting evidence for houses that would have had such elaborate and substantial forms. Other possibilities put forward include that the buildings imitated banqueting halls (androns), where special feasts attended by elites would have taken place during festivals. Such buildings, although later in date, are known at the important sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda in Caria, a region north of Lycia.

A related suggestion has been that there could have been wooden buildings on top of terraced burial plots, which perhaps functioned as halls for funerary/memorial banquets. It has been pointed out, however, that the purported evidence for cuttings in the stone supporting walls for these terrace burial plots, in which the timbers for wooden structures built atop would have been slotted, is not strong. The best evidence for cuttings in stone that would support substantial timbers for partly wooden monumental buildings is found in the remains of temples, notably the old temple of Apollo at Xanthos' own extra mural sanctuary, the Letoon, just south of the city. Other evidence is found in later reliefs showing what seem to be wooden shrines. A bare trace of a cutting for a wooden beam on the remains of a base for a large building at another site in Lycia, thought to date also to the mid-5th century

BC, hints that the Xanthos acropolis buildings need to be seen in the context of wider contemporary urban embellishment of Lycian cities with other monumental wooden central buildings – perhaps themselves temples.

If the Xanthos acropolis buildings did imitate a style of wooden shrine or temple well-established in Lycia, then this implies that the design was supposed to impart some religiosity, or venerability, to structures that were, for all intents and purposes, memorials (whether sepulchres or cenotaphs). The general term 'heroa' so often applied to these buildings, implying veneration of the figures memorialised by them, would fit such a function. The question remains, though, why would heroa be built at this time? This may be explicable if one takes into consideration contemporary claims being made by cities in the Mediterranean. Cities in the Mediterranean (and indeed beyond) had long attributed their foundations to mythical, heroic ancestors, who led parties to set up new colonies. Such stories formed important political tools, legitimizing rights to occupation of territories and underwriting alliances with other cities that claimed related origins. This behaviour was only intensified in the period around the time of the Persian Wars, when questions of alliance with the Greeks or the Persians were paramount.

The Greek historian Herodotus, who narrated the causes of the Persian Wars and described the participants, indicates that Lycians, and Xanthos in particular, claimed two founders: Sarpedon, a son of Zeus and brother of King Minos of Crete – a non-Greek – and an Athenian prince, Lycus, who arrived on the scene some time later. The implication of the dual heritage is that there was some debate about the ethnicity of the Lycians, but that they could claim to be of both non-Greek, independent stock and to be related to the Greeks. Such claims would have been of importance in decisions about whether

to ally with the Delian League and how this related to their ethnic and cultural identity.

In other cities in the Mediterranean, founding heroes were sometimes bestowed with prominent monuments – shrines or cenotaph ‘heroa’ – in public spaces, often near or on a town square (agora). It is possible that the Xanthians, by erecting the three small tomb-like, but also shrine-like buildings, were doing something similar. Rather than an agora, which Xanthos may not have had at this time, they used the rocky plateau where major buildings were already clustered, and which was very visible from the coastal plain south of the city, also thereby embellishing the city scape with an ‘acropolis effect’ befitting a rising power.

Although Xanthos had good reasons to make monuments for mythical founder heroes, it is worth remembering that it is not actually clear that the three acropolis buildings – the three ‘heroa’ – were made for such figures. A parallel contemporary phenomenon was the elevation of recently deceased historical figures considered to have had such an impact on the city that they are sometimes called saviours, refounders or heroes of the city. It is possible that Kuprlli, who seems to have overseen important economic, political and urban change, was seen in such a way, and that the ‘heroa’ were designed to accord him and members of his family special veneration, in the way that the later Mausoleum of Halicarnassus elevated the Carian King Mausolus while also monumentalising his reordered city.

Whether for mythical heroes or more recent historical heroes, one can appreciate that these three structures represent a new period in the history of Xanthos, when the architecture of the city was harnessed to provide it with a particular identity.

The ‘acropolis effect’ together with the possession of impressive ‘heroa’ could compete with contemporary

forms of urban monumentalization and claims to be the home of powerful figures in ways that would have been recognizable to other Mediterranean powers. The style of the buildings, so different from the Doric and Ionic orders in Greek architecture, at the same time would have distinguished Xanthos and Lycia as an independent cultural entity, in this way perhaps relating to their claims of non-Greek or partly non-Greek descent from Sarpedon.

Kuprlli, as the leading dynast, may not have had total design control over this project, but the ‘heroa’ are important indications of the way the city was taking on a new and very particular shape under his leadership. The architectural forms created in this project would have a lasting legacy in Lycia, followed by the region’s distinctive ‘house tombs’ for generations to come, and they are an important reminder of the varied locations of power and visual cultures that emerged in the early Classical Mediterranean, alongside the better-known ‘birth’ of Classical art and the shifts in political and urban forms taking place in contemporary Greek cities

© Catherine M. Draycott