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## THE SITE OF DERBE ; A NEW INSCRIPTION <sup>1</sup>

By M. BALLANCE

THE QUESTION OF the site of Derbe has for many years exercised the ingenuity of those who have studied the topography of ancient Lycaonia.

As long ago as 1824 Leake wrote that " of the cities, which the journey of St. Paul has made so interesting to us, the site of one only (Iconium) is yet certainly known. Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, and Derbe, remain to be discovered ".<sup>2</sup>

Leake's own conjecture as to the site of Perga was confirmed within thirty years ; Antioch was fixed beyond reasonable doubt by Arundell in 1833 ; and fifty-two years later Sterrett confirmed Leake's suggestion that Lystra lay at Hatunsaray.<sup>3</sup>

The following dedication by the council and people of Derbe, found by the writer in 1956 at Kerti Hüyük, twenty-two kilometres north-north-east of Karaman, provides an answer to the last of Leake's problems and shows that his own location of Derbe at Maden Şehir, based though it was on the slenderest of evidence, was probably closer to the truth than any of those proposed by his successors in the field.<sup>4</sup>

The text is cut on one face of a whitish limestone block (h. 1.05, w. 0.69, th. 0.68 m.) which probably formed the shaft of a large statue-base. The letters (0.025 to 0.035 m. high) are somewhat roughly cut and of predominantly square form, unusual at so early a date.<sup>5</sup> The left-hand side of the inscribed face has been broken away.

5. Αὐτοκράτορα] Καίσαρα Θεοῦ  
Ἀδριανοῦ υἱὸν Θεοῦ Τραιαν[οῦ  
Παρθικοῦ υἱὸν Θεοῦ Νέρ-  
ουα ἔκγονον, Τ. Αἴλιον Ἀδρια-  
νὸν Ἀντων[εῖνον Σεβ(αστὸν) Εὐσε-  
βῆ ἀρχιερέα] μέγιστον δημ-  
αρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ κ', ὕπατο-  
ν τὸ δ' π(ατέρα)π(ατρίδος)] θεῶν ἐνφανέστατο-

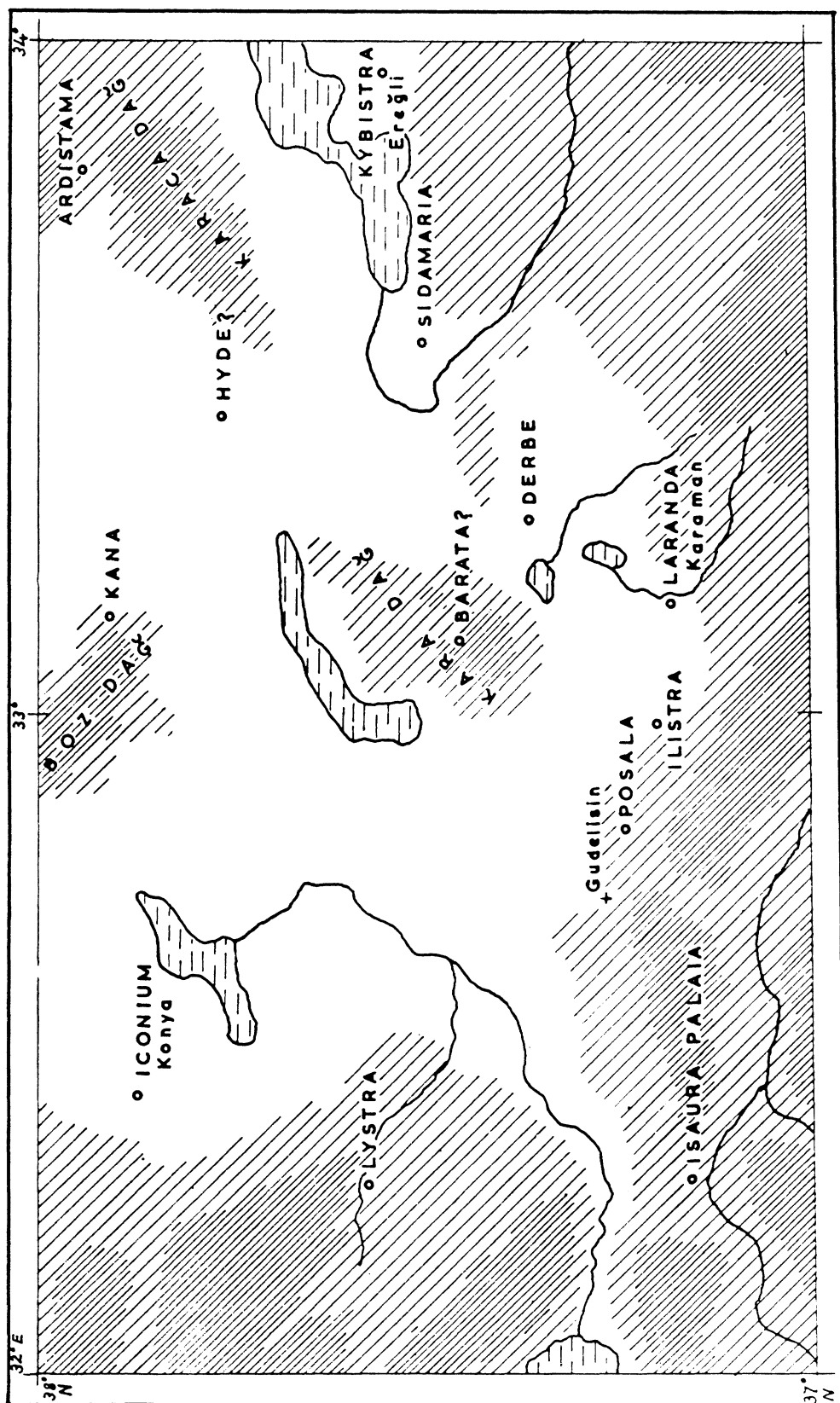
<sup>1</sup> The writer is indebted to Sir William Calder for his help at all stages of the preparation of this article and to Mr. M. R. E. Gough, who has read the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, 1824, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Perga ; *CIG.* III, p. 1160, No. 4342b<sup>3</sup>. Antioch ; F. V. J. Arundell, *Discoveries in Asia Minor* I, 1834, 268 ff. Lystra ; J. R. S. Sterrett, *Papers of the American School at Athens* III, 1884-5, p. 142.

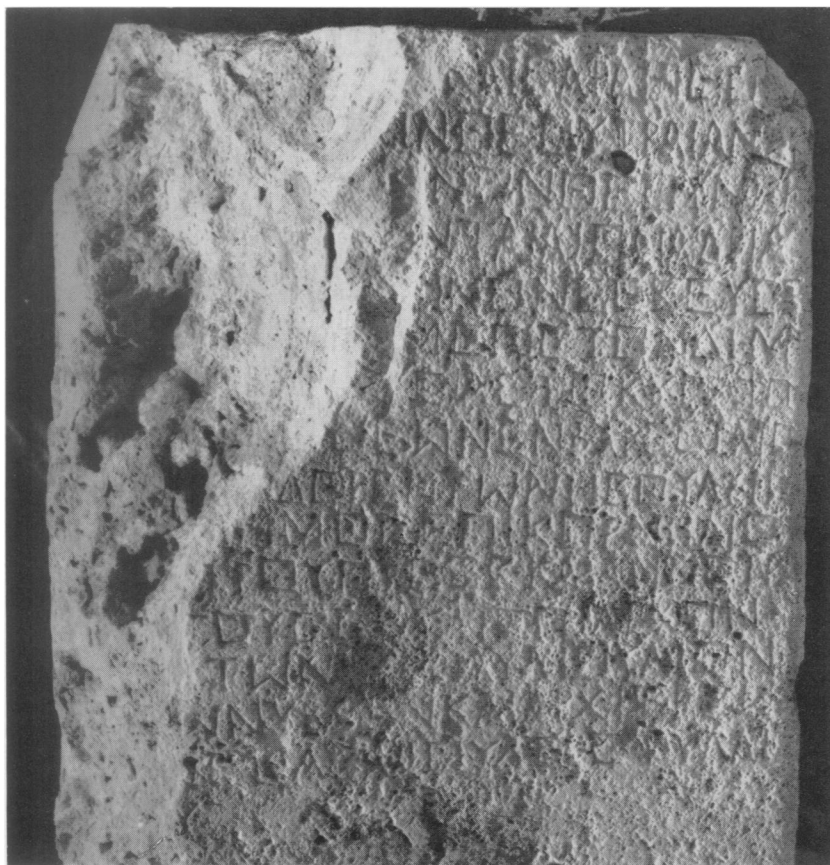
<sup>4</sup> Leake, *op. cit.* p. 101. For other early identifications, ranging as far as Divle, some 55 km. east of Karaman, see Ruge in *RE.*, s.v. Derbe. Sterrett (*op. cit.* p. 22 f.) having fixed the position of Lystra, put Derbe in the area of Losta and Bosola, 30 km. west of Karaman, apparently on the assumption that *Acts* xiv, 20, implied that Paul and Barnabas travelled from Lystra to Derbe in a single day. Ramsay (*Jahresheft d. Österreichischen Arch. Inst.* VII, 1904, *Beiblatt*, col. 75-7) located the Byzantine Posala at the modern Bosola and moved Derbe still further west to Gudelisin.

<sup>5</sup> For other early examples of the square *omikron*, see *MAMA.* IV, No. 53 ; VII, No. 14a. The former is of Neronian date.





(a) Kerti Hüyük : dedicatory inscription by the council and people of Derbe.



(b) Dedicatory inscription by the council and people of Derbe : the text.

- ν, Κλαυδιο]δεϱβήτων ἡ βουλὴ κ-  
 10. αὶ ὁ δ]ῆμος ἐπὶ Κορηλί-  
 ο υ Δέξ]τρου πρεσβ(ευτοῦ) καὶ ἀντιστρα-  
 τήγ(ου)] τοῦ Σε[β] καὶ ἐπὶ ἀρχόν-  
 των] τῶν [πε]ρὶ Αὐλ(ον) Ἰούλιον  
 ἐπ]ώνυμον καὶ ἀρχιερέω[ς  
 15. τοῦ] Σεβ. Αὐλ(ου)Ἰουλ(ίου) Σηστυλλια-  
 νο]ῦ.

Except in lines 9 and 11 the restoration may be regarded as virtually certain, with the proviso that there is considerable variation in the width of the letters, which makes it difficult to determine the extent of the abbreviation used, for instance, in lines 8 and 12.

The date is A.D. 157. In lines 1 to 8 the imperial titles follow the customary formula (e.g. *IGR.* IV, no. 575, at Aezani) except in the omission, as in some other cases elsewhere, of the words αὐτοκράτορα τὸ β' <sup>6</sup> and the inclusion of the rare θεῶν ἐνφανέστατον for which parallels are known, e.g. in Lycia.<sup>7</sup>

In l. 8 π. π. does not quite fit the available space, whereas πατ. πατ. is probably too long. In l. 9 Κλαυδιο] is restored on the analogy of coins bearing the legend Κλαυ(διο)δεϱβ(ήτων) Κοι(νοῦ) Λυκαιο(νίας).<sup>8</sup>

In line 11 the governor (*legatus Augusti pro praetore* of the combined province of Cilicia, Isauria and Lycaonia, to which Derbe then belonged) is perhaps to be equated with the Sex. Cornelius Dexter, who after holding various equestrian appointments, some at least under Hadrian, was honoured in his native city of Saldae <sup>9</sup>; though there is no evidence of his having subsequently attained senatorial rank. The horizontal stroke of the τ in the *cognomen* is broken away on the left. It is possible, though very unlikely, that its prolongation beyond the junction with the vertical stroke was a slip of the engraver; in this case, the correct reading might be Νι]χρου.

Kerti Hüyük, situated in the triangle formed by the modern villages of Beydilli, Aşiran and Salur, is a mound of moderately large size, which appears from the pottery on its surface to have been still occupied in the Roman period. The stone, which weighs about a ton, lies on the gently sloping skirt of the mound and, as there are no modern buildings in the vicinity, there would be no obvious reason for assuming, even if the stone were much smaller, that it had been brought from a distance. The use of a similar type of limestone for inscriptions at various points round the

<sup>6</sup> e.g. *Année Épigraphique*, 1910, 154 (Sutunurca); 1916, 17 (Cuicul); 1926, 93 (Nicomopolis ad Istrum); 1930, 40 (Zama).

<sup>7</sup> *IGR.* III, 704, III B-C (Cyaneae), and *TAM.* II, 905, cap. 53, 59 = *IGR.* III, 739 (Rhodiapolis). This phrase can hardly imply a personal visit by the Emperor and thus explain the occasion on which he was honoured by Derbe. There is no hint of such a visit in the Lycian examples and there is a strong presumption that Pius never left Italy during his principate (P. von Rohden in *RE.* II, 2508, and W. Hüttel, *Antoninus Pius I*, Prague, 1936, p. 60).

<sup>8</sup> G. F. Hill, *Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria and Cilicia*, British Museum, 1900, p. xix.

<sup>9</sup> *PIR.* II, 1936, pp. 316 f., no. 1344; *CIL.* VIII, 8934.

northern end of Kara Dağ suggests that the quarries from which it was obtained were comparatively close at hand.

The importance of Derbe in antiquity can never have been very great and, apart from a brief period of notoriety as the home of Cicero's turbulent friend Antipater (Cic., *Ad Fam.* XIII, 73 ; Strabo 535, 569), its only claim to fame is that it was visited by St. Paul on at least two occasions, once after the disturbances at Lystra (*Acts* xiv, 20-1), once while on the way from Cilicia to Lystra (xvi, 1) and probably also on his third journey referred to in xviii, 23. It may be assumed from the second of these passages that it lay on a road leading from the Cilician gates to Lystra and Iconium. In common with other cities of the Koinon of Lycaonia, it struck coins in the latter part of the second century.<sup>8</sup>

The new location postulated by this inscription does to some extent explain the rather puzzling statements of ancient writers concerning Derbe. It fits well enough with Hierocles (675), who gives Laranda—Derbe—Barata—Hyde in that order, though less well with the Notitiae, where the order is Laranda—Barata—Derbe. While it goes no further in explaining the Δέρβη φρούριον Ἰσαυρίας καὶ λιμὴν of Stephanus, it makes good sense of the emendation of λιμὴν to λίμνη, as Kerti Hüyük lies in an ill-drained plain, which until recently contained marshes fed by the streams that rise in the hills south and east of Laranda.<sup>10</sup>

It now becomes plain that Strabo, in his account (534 f.) of the Eleventh Strategia of Cappadocia, is writing of the period after 64 B.C., when Derbe, with Laranda, formed a separate principality under Antipater. There is, in fact, no need to assume that either Derbe or Laranda ever belonged to the Eleventh Strategia.<sup>11</sup> The principality of Antipater was later annexed by Amyntas and after his death presumably formed part of the original province of Galatia, as organised in 25 B.C. Eventually, though it is uncertain at what date, both Laranda and Derbe must have been incorporated in the Cilician kingdom of Antiochus of Commagene ; for they are mentioned by Ptolemy (V, vi, 16) as belonging to the Strategia Antiochiana, which presumably succeeded the Kingdom in A.D. 72.

The apparent contradiction between the disappearance of Derbe from

<sup>10</sup> The emendation was proposed by Coray in *Géographie de Strabon traduite du Grec en Français* IV, ii, Paris, 1816, p. 97 f. Even if Ramsay's explanation (op. cit. col. 75, N. 22) of λιμὴν as a customs'-post on a land frontier is theoretically possible, it is most unlikely that Stephanus would have used the word in this sense without explanation. To his readers it would have meant simply that Derbe was a harbour on the coast of Cilicia Tracheia.

Marshes in the region of Kerti Hüyük are shown on the Turkish 1 : 800,000 map. Drainage works are in progress and a sizeable channel now passes a mile or two west of the mound.

<sup>11</sup> Ramsay (op. cit. col. 72) assumes that the Eleventh Strategia of Cappadocia was formed in 129 B.C. D. Magie (*Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, Princeton, 1950, I, p. 375) assigns its creation to Pompey in 62 and concludes that Cappadocian control over Lycaonia from 129 to 62 was only nominal. Strabo (537), when referring to the areas added to Cappadocia by the Romans, mentions Castabala, Cybistra and τὰ ἐν τῇ τραχείᾳ Κιλικίᾳ, but not Laranda or Derbe.

the ecclesiastical lists after the Arab Wars and the " great Byzantine ruins " seen by Ramsay at Gudelisin (op. cit. 75) now disappears.<sup>12</sup> It seems, moreover, that Derbe, though only as a village, retained its name and identity at least until the 15th century ; it can probably be equated with the *Dirvi* mentioned in a supplement, dated 1465, to the *vakfiye* of the İmaret of İbrahim Bey at Karaman.<sup>13</sup>

A further visit to Kerti Hüyük in June, 1957, showed it to be larger than at first thought ; the mound is some 300 m. long, 200 m. wide and 20 m. high. A quantity of Iron Age, Hellenistic and Roman pottery, including some pieces of unusually fine quality, was collected. The villagers of Aşiran assert that the inscription of Derbe has been in its present position for at least fifty years. The only other inscription found nearby was a well-cut epitaph now built into a well at Aşiran Yaylası. It is said to have been brought from Kerti Hüyük and is inscribed in letters of square form similar to those of the dedication.

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<sup>12</sup> There remains the problem of the identification of Gudelisin. There is no certain evidence of its having been a city in the full sense of the word. It is perhaps too much to hope, on the evidence of a slight resemblance in name, that it may prove to be Dalisandos.

<sup>13</sup> I. H. Uzunçarşılıoğlu, in *Belleten* I, 1937, pp. 103, 108.