

# **‘He who of all mankind set up the most numerous trophies to Zeus’ The Inscribed Pillar of Xanthos reconsidered**

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## **Abstract**

The Inscribed Pillar of Xanthos remains one of the most enigmatic monuments of ancient Lycia. This article addresses the problem of the monument’s authorship, but tries also to shed some light on the relative chronology of its inscriptions (a Greek epigram, a long inscription in Lycian A and a short Lycian B inscription), the relationship between the decorative sculptures of the monument and the content of the inscriptions, the political intention of the Lycian A text, and the significance of the Greek epigram for our understanding of the process of Greek acculturation. We argue that the Pillar results from the interventions of different individuals at different times and its overall design, therefore, does not represent a single and unified concept. Viewed from this perspective, several aspects of the monument, while apparently inconsistent at first glance, reveal their own ‘consistency’, which allows us to resolve the contradictions of previous interpretations.

## **Özet**

Xanthos’un ‘Yazıtlı Taşıma Ayağı’ antik Likya’nın en anlaşılmaz anıtlarından biri olma özelliğini sürdürmektedir. Bu makale abidenin kimliği konusunu sorgularken aynı zamanda yazıtlar ile (bir Yunan epigramı, Likya A ile yazılmış olan uzun bir yazıt ve kısa bir Likya B yazıtı) bağlantılı kronolojiyi, anıta bezeyen heykellerle yazıtların içeriği arasındaki ilişkiyi, Likya A metninin siyasi amacını ve Yunan kültürünü özümseme sürecine açıklık getirmek açısından Yunan epigramının önemini aydınlatmaya çalışmaktadır. Burada söz konusu taşıma ayağının değişik dönemlerde farklı kişilerin müdahalelerinin bir sonucu olarak tüm tasarımın tek ve bütün bir kavramı temsil etmediğini tartışmaktayız. Bu görüş açısından bakıldığında, ilk bakışta birçok yönüyle tutarsız gibi gözüken anıtın kendi içindeki ‘tutarlılığı’ ortaya çıkmakta, bu da bize daha önceki yorumların çelişkisini çözümlemeye fırsat tanımaktadır.

**A**t a prominent location in the Lycian city of Xanthos (fig. 1), just a few metres northeast of the great theatre, there stands a substantial portion of one of the most impressive epichoric monuments of the city, the so-called Inscribed Pillar, sometimes also called the Xanthos Stele (figs 2, 3). Fragments of the monument, including much of its ornate decoration, were brought to the British Museum by Ch. Fellows in the 19th century soon after its discovery. These and other surviving fragments, now in Istanbul, together with the base and the pillar still *in situ*, give us, at first sight, a picture of a regular Lycian pillar tomb on a roughly square ground

plan. The substructure carrying the monument is exceptionally high (2.27m) and consists of a two-step platform and, upon it, a huge monolithic pedestal. On this stands the shaft, a tapering rectangular block. This shaft once supported a tomb chamber covered with elaborate reliefs (described in detail by Demargne 1958: 87–102), enclosing a narrow space for one or more cremated bodies. The monument was crowned by a lid with a seated statue on it. There can be little doubt that this statue portrayed, or at least represented, the person responsible for the creation of the monument and honored by it, one of the most powerful dynasts of

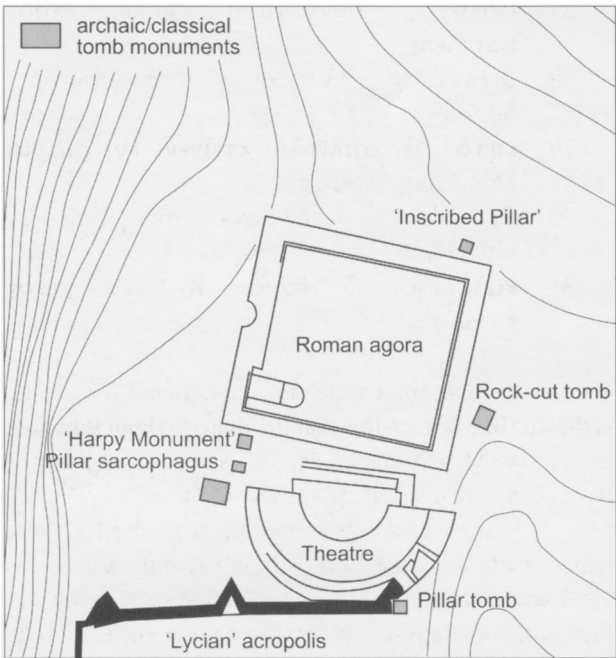


Fig. 1. The agora of Xanthos (present-day contour lines)



Fig. 2. The Incribed Pillar, remains in situ

Xanthos. This whole monument is very slender, compared to others of the same type (Nieswandt 1995: 21), which might attest to its late date of erection, but might also indicate a slightly different function.

The precise age of the monument can only be guessed. The first part of the long inscription covering its shaft gives some *termini post quos*, but, as will be discussed below, this part of the inscription is likely to have been added more than 20 years after the erection of the pillar. The reliefs, ornaments and the statue on top of the pillar give some hints, though. There is no need to describe them here (see Demargne 1958: 87–102). It is sufficient to state that they presumably all showed scenes from the life of the tomb owner. Dates have been given to them, based on their style, ranging from ca. 425 to the beginning of the fourth century (Deltour-Levie 1982: 164; Bruns-Özgan 1987: 54–55; Nieswandt 1995: 22; Keen 1998: 9).

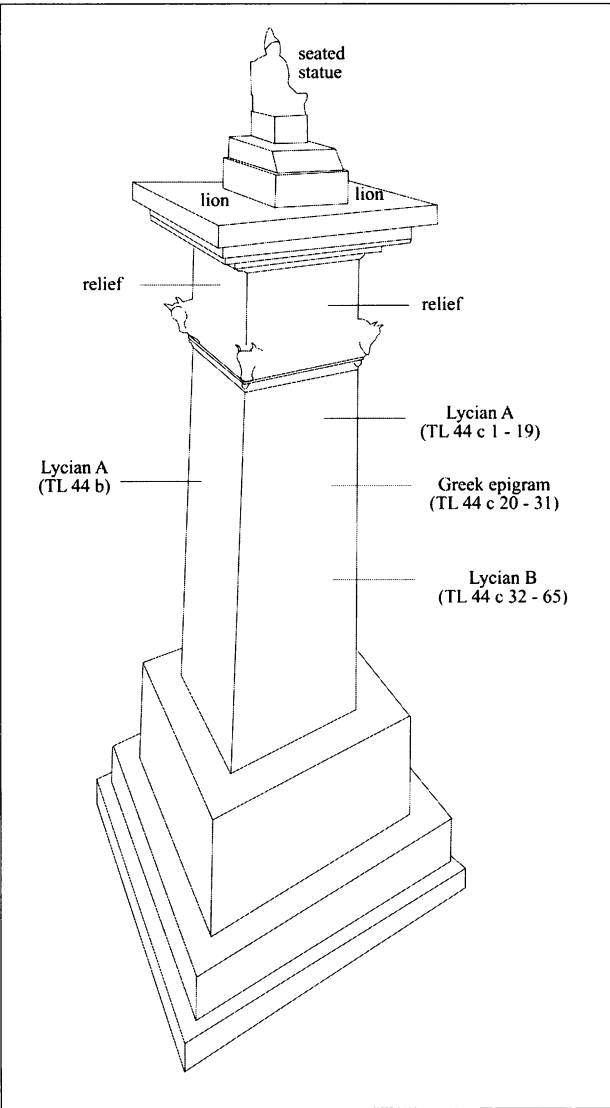


Fig. 3. The Incribed Pillar of Xanthos, hypothetical sketch (with statue facing north), view from northeast

The surviving fragments of the reliefs and the statue base are of considerable importance for our understanding of Lycian culture and ideas (Nieswandt 1995: 42–44). What makes the Inscribed Pillar such an extraordinary monument, though, is its long inscription, first published as TAM I (or TL) 44. This inscription covers all four sides of the monument's shaft. It consists of three clearly distinguishable parts. The south (a), east (b) and part of the north (c) sides bear an inscription in Lycian A, the comparatively well-known language of most Lycian monuments. On the north side there follows a Greek epigram of just 12 verses in Attic dialect, itself followed by the beginning of a metric inscription in Lycian B (for a metric analysis see Eichner 1993: 128–53), a little understood derivative of Lycian A. This last text also covers the whole west (d) side of the pillar's shaft. This monument has always raised many questions, and in the following, we wish to propose some new considerations.

To begin with the most basic question: who was the Lycian dynast in whose honor the pillar of Xanthos, with its extensive inscription, was erected? Scholars are divided on this issue between those who think it was xeriga and those who believe it was xerēi (xeriga: Bousquet 1975; Wörrle 1991: 208; Keen 1992: 58, n. 25, 59, n. 28; 1998: 129–30; Domingo Gygax 2001: 69–70; Tietz 2003: 73; xerēi: Childs 1979: 97–102; Asheri 1983: 86; Bryce 1986: 97; Jacobs 1989: 58; 1994: 136; Brodersen et al. 1992: 93; Carruba 1993: 25; Nieswandt 1995: 24, n. 20; Cau 1999: 23–24). Both were members of the Xanthian dynasty, and both are mentioned in the Lycian A inscription and coins issued in the last decades of the fifth century BC, a period consistent with the style of the monument. It is very likely that the dynast of the pillar was one of these two individuals, but which one? In attempting to answer this question it is of crucial significance to consider the Greek epigram inscribed on the northern side of the pillar (TL 44c, lines 20–31, improved edition in Bousquet 1992: 159–60).

- 20 [Ε]ζ οὗ τ' Εὐρώπην [Α]σίας δίχ' αὖ πόντος  
 21 [ο]ὕδ' ἐς πῶ Λυκίων στήλην ποιάνδε  
 22 [δ]ώδεκα θεοῖς ἀγορᾶς ἐν καθαρῶι  
 23 [νικ]έων καὶ πολέμου μνημα τόδε  
 24 [..]ρ[.]ις ὅδε Ἀρπάγου υἱὸς ἀριστεύσας τὰ  
 25 [χε]ρσὶ πάλην Λυκίων τῶν τότε ἐν ἡλικίαι.  
 26 [πο]λλὰς δὲ ἀκροπόλεις σὺν Ἀθηναίαι  
 πτολιπόρθωι

- 27 [π]έρας σὺν γενέσιν δῶκε μέρος  
 βασιλέας.  
 28 ὧν χάριν ἀθάνατοί οἱ ἀπεμνήσαντο  
 δικαίαν,  
 29 ἐπτα δὲ ὀπλίτας κτεῖνεν ἐν ἡμέραι  
 Ἀρκάδας ἀνδάρας,  
 30 Ζηνὶ δὲ πᾶσι προπαῖα βροτῶν  
 ἔσθ' ἔτ' ἔσθ' ἀπάντ' ὄντων,  
 31 καλλίστοις δ' ἔργοις Κα[.]ίκα γένος  
 ἐστεφάνωσεν.

The epigram, from which the quotation of this article is drawn (line 30), claims that the dynast whom it honors has surpassed all previous rulers: 'Since the time when the ocean separated Europe from Asia, no Lycian has ever yet raised such a stele to the Twelve Gods in the holy temenos of the agora, this immortal monument to his victories in war (?) [lines 20–23].' Immediately after this the name is mentioned, but unfortunately only the letters of the final part are legible, [..]ρ[.]ις : 'It was [..]ρ[.]ις, the son of Harpagos, having excelled in all respects the youth of his day in his prowess at wrestling, who conquered many acropoleis with the support of Athene, sacker of cities, and distributed part of his kingdom amongst his kin' (lines 24–27) (translation: Bryce 1986: 97).

One figure seems to be the perfect candidate for consideration as the subject of this epigram: Gergis, the father of the dynast Arbinas (in Lycian Erbbina). Gergis is mentioned in three inscriptions on the bases of two statues erected by Erbbina (Bousquet 1975: 141–48; 1992: 156–59). These are the relevant lines, with Bousquet's reconstructions in his edition of 1975.

1. Statue of Erbinna (verses of Symmachos from Pellana)  
 1 Ἀνθετό με Ἀρβίν]ας παῖς Γέργ]ιος,  
 ἔργα τελέσσας?]  
 2 [ἄ]ξια τῆς προγόνων] ἀρετῆς, κτλ.  
 [Arbina]s, son of Gerg[is], [dedicated me, having  
 accomplished  
 deeds worthy of the] virtue [of his forefathers]
2. Statue of Erbbina (verses on the narrow side)  
 33 εἴ τε γὰρ ἀθ]ά[νατο]ν Γέργι] δοίη κ[λ]έος  
 ἔσθ' α[ι]  
 34 Ἀρτεμ]ις ἡδὲ? Ν]ύμφαι μὴ κάκ[ι]ον  
 πατέρω[ν]  
 ... and shall Artemis and the Nymphs grant Gergis  
 (immortal) glory, not less than the one of the  
 ancestors
3. Statue of Artemis  
 1 Γέργιος ὦν υἱὸς τ[οῦ] Ἀρπάγου  
 ἐκγεγαῶτος?]

The name Gergis is consistent with the two, almost three, letters preserved in the epigram ([..]p[.].ı̄s), and with the total number of original letters (six). Moreover, as Erbbina was active as a dynast in Xanthos at the beginning of the fourth century (Keen 1998: 145–47), it is quite plausible that his father was honored around 400 BC. And last but not least, a Lycian inscription on one of the statue bases just mentioned (Bousquet 1975: 141–42) tells us that the name of the dynast Gergis in Lycian was ‘xeriga’, the name of one of the dynasts at the time the monument was built.

[er]binayēne ubete xruwata ertēmi [xer]igah tideimi  
seyupēneh

Erbbina, son of xeriga and Upēni, has dedicated it (as)  
an offering to Ertēmi (translation: Bryce 1986: 94)

Taking all this into consideration, it seems unreasonable to deny that the dynast of the pillar was xeriga, known in Greek as Gergis, the father of Erbbina. However, if we analyse more carefully the Lycian inscription, this identification becomes less clear. TL 44a starts with the following sentence.

1. Ebēñni[ : stta]lā[ : me]nad[ē:.....:A]rppa-  
2. xuh : tid[eimi : ]xe[.i]gah[..... : ]Kup[r]lle[h]  
3. xahba : a[.....16/17.....]e : s[ek]eb[u-]  
This stele has made (*adē*)....., the son of Harpagos,  
the.....of xe.iga, the *xahba* of Kuprlli

Lines 30 and 31 repeat almost the same words.

30. hi : Arppaxuh : tideimi : xerig[ah : ..... : Ku-]  
31. prlleh : xāhb : xezigah : tuhes : me[.....]  
-hi, the son of Harpagos, the.....  
of xeriga, the *xāhb* of Kuprlli, the *tuhes* of xeziga

The parallels between both passages are so clear that xe[r]jiga must be posited for line 2; any other restoration is implausible. Restoring it as xe[z]jiga (Bousquet 1992: 172) has no epigraphic justification and can only be characterised as an ad hoc restoration designed to adapt the text to the thesis that xeriga was the dynast of the pillar. Everything therefore leads us to read lines 1–2 as follows.

This stele has made (*adē*)....., the son of Harpagos,  
the.....of xeriga, the *xahba* of Kuprlli

Having established that this is the most likely reading, we must conclude that xeriga cannot have been the person who did something to what the Lycian inscription calls ‘the *sttalā*’ expressed with the word *adē*, a transitive verb which has to be translated as ‘made’

(Eichner 1993: 139, n. 117; Melchert 2004: 2), unless we assume that there were two persons called xeriga (compare Mørkholm, Zahle 1976: 87 and Cau 1999: 24, who dismisses this possibility). And even in the case that there were two xerigas, we would have to address the problem that in line 30 the name of Harpagos’ son, which must be the same as the one mentioned in relation to the *sttalā* (line 1) ends with -hi (nominative). This ending is incompatible with ‘xeriga’.

In conclusion, the assumption that according to the Lycian A inscription xeriga commissioned the *sttalā* is as implausible as saying that, on the basis of the Greek epigram, the author of the monument was not Gergis, that is to say, xeriga. In other words, according to the Lycian A inscription we should conclude, that xeriga did *not* order the *sttalā*, while if we are to believe the Greek inscription we must presume that xeriga ordered the construction of the monument. How can this apparent contradiction be explained? Changing in the epigram [Ge]r[g]is to [Ku]r[r]is or [Ko]r[r]is (Bryce 1986: 97), a hypothetical Greek equivalent to xerēi, and filling in TL 44a the space in line 1 with ‘xerēi’, is not a persuasive solution: the name Kurris (or Korris) is not attested elsewhere, besides the fact that it is altogether uncertain whether the Greek equivalent to xerēi could be a name ending with -is (Bousquet 1987: 127). Moreover, the name in line 1 had six letters and not, as xerēi, five (Laroche 1974: 145–46). Finally, as has been mentioned, according to line 30 the name of the author ended in -hi.

It seems that the best solution to the problems is simply to trust the Greek and Lycian texts and accept that the dynast who constructed the monument in his own honor was xeriga/Gergis, while the person connected with the *sttalā* in the Lycian A inscription was another person, someone who, as has been suggested by Eichner (1993: 139, n. 117; 2005: 19–20), would have been responsible only for the Lycian A inscription, chronicling the principal achievements of the Xanthian dynasty. The word *sttalā* (stele) may have been used to refer to the inscription as Eichner seems to assume, so that the sentence in the first line of the Lycian A text may be understood as a case of synecdoche (the rhetoric figure consisting in using a part to present the whole or vice versa). The verb *adē* in line 1, though, may also refer to a process of completing, inscribing or decorating.

Who, then, commissioned the Lycian A inscription, if not xeriga himself? Eichner (1993: 139, n. 117) has suggested that someone called Merehi did it, since this name is mentioned twice in the inscription (TL 44a, line 17 and TL 44b, line 24) and its ending fits with the -hi in line 30 (TL 44a). This suggestion, however, has found little acceptance because Eichner did not have all the information we have now available and had to

propose a rather unconvincing hypothesis. The only Merehi Eichner knew, was the one mentioned in the inscription of the so-called Merehi-sarcophagus (TL 43) as *merehi cudalah kñtlah tideimi*, that is to say, ‘Merehi, son of the *kñtlah* (an office?) Kudalah’. But if we restore [*Merehi*] and [*Mere*]hi in lines 1 and 30 of TL 44a respectively, this Merehi would be the ‘son of Harpagos’. Therefore, Eichner had to assume that the Merehi of the Lycian A inscription had been adopted by Harpagos or that there was a second Merehi, of whom there was no evidence other than the one in TL 44a and b (Eichner 1993: 140, n. 17).

If indeed we should assume different authors or sponsors for the Greek epigram and the Lycian A inscription, we are faced by further implications. The latest *terminus post quem* of the Lycian A inscription is 404/403 BC, when Darius II and Artaxerxes II are presumed to have ruled jointly. Both are attested as *khntawati - basileis* in TL 44b 58–60 (Childs 1981: 66; Keen 1998: 9). Because of this, some have suspected that TL 44 as a whole may have been added later to the stele, which originally would have been merely the tomb of a Xanthian dynast (Keen 1998: 9, n. 9). In this case there would have been a ‘builder’ of the stele and, later, an ‘author’ of the inscription. Some have also assumed different dates for the Greek and Lycian A texts. However, these scholars regarded both texts as belonging to a single design and a slightly longer period of construction that would only have been shortly interrupted by the death of xeriga, while one of his relatives would have completed the monument (Eichner 1993: 137, n. 115; 2005: 19–20). In our opinion, it is not even necessary to assume that death prevented xeriga from finishing his monument as he wished to. We shall here argue that the Inscribed Pillar, together with the Greek epigram, formed a complete design and monument, to which the Lycian A text was a later addition, not an immediate completion or one that followed the original design in any respect.

The Lycian texts still present problems of interpretation, especially the Lycian B section. It is obvious, however, that TL 44 is not a bi- or trilingual inscription in the strict sense of the word, because the Greek epigram is neither a translation nor even a short summary of the other texts. It is much shorter than both, with its 12 verses comprising only 4.7% of the text on the pillar. Furthermore, it is written in hexameters and deals exclusively with the deeds of one single man, xeriga. By contrast, the Lycian A text (132 lines) appears to be a lengthy chronicle in prose of the Xanthian dynasty in the late fifth century, while the Lycian B text (105 lines) deals with matters of religion and cult (Eichner 1993: 128–53, 158–69) and is

probably an eulogy on xeriga (Eichner 2005: 21). Therefore, the Greek epigram has to be understood as a separate text, although one could perhaps argue that there is a connection between the epigram and the Lycian B text, mainly because of the poetic nature of both of them (Eichner 1993: 129) and xeriga being the main subject of both inscriptions. The relationship between these two texts will be dealt with later.

The most important reason for combining the Greek epigram with the pillar itself and assigning a considerably later date to the Lycian A inscription is that only the epigram appears to harmonise with the other features of the pillar, while the Lycian text does not. The Inscribed Pillar is the funerary monument for a single dynast, who is represented on top of it, as stated in the Greek epigram but not in the Lycian text. The sculptural decoration of the pillar celebrates battle and hunting, and shows the defeat of seven hoplites by a single warrior (fig. 4). All this is consistent with the contents of the epigram, especially the seven defeated hoplites. On the most famous of the reliefs, two warriors are engaged in battle. Behind them six shields are depicted hanging on a wall. The seventh shield is that of one of the warriors, which is being grasped by his victorious opponent. On the other hand, this decoration is hardly consistent with the Lycian chronicle where xeriga is not an outstanding personage and is simply mentioned. In addition, the epigram only speaks of xeriga as the builder of the pillar. In the Lycian A text it is not clear what the person named in line 1 actually did. Besides, the chronicle does not so much as mention the event most likely to have been the conflict in which xeriga may have killed the seven (for the meaning of numbers in the Greek epigram see

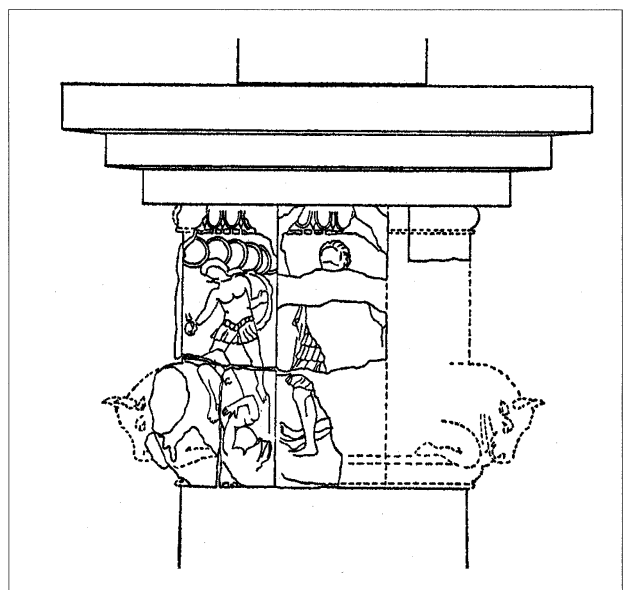


Fig. 4. The Inscribed Pillar, reliefs on the tomb chamber

Nieswandt 1995: 26–28) Arcadians (definitely not allies of the Athenians), i.e. the war with *Humrkhkha*/Amorges of Caria in 428, in which xeriga is likely to have been engaged (TL 44a 55; Childs 1981: 64; Bryce 1986: 108; Meiggs, Lewis 1988: 283; Bruns-Özgan 1987: 56; compare Thuc. 8, 28, 4; Keen 1998: 133 suggests that the Arcadians may have been part of the Athenian force led by Melesandros; however, there were no Arcadian allies of Athens in 430/429 BC). The account of the Athenian expedition led by Melesandros in 430/429 (Thuc. 2, 69; Keen 1998: 125–35), is followed immediately by the Ionic War of 414 (TL 44a 41–52). In TL 44a 49 there is mentioned the figure CII, which probably means ‘seven’, and Bryce suspected a relation with the seven Arcadians. He has to admit, though, that the ‘context is obscure’ (Bryce 1986: 61).

If these considerations hold true, the pillar would originally have been plain on its south, east and part of the north side, while a small part of the north side and the tomb chamber would have been decorated with reliefs and bearing the oldest Greek inscription yet to have been discovered on Lycian soil.

It seems that the position of an inscription on the north side of the monument would have made it difficult for anyone to see. Today it is universally acknowledged that the main side of the pillar is the south side, as indicated by the orientation of the base of the dynast’s statue crowning the monument, and by the splendid reliefs which originally framed the tomb chamber, the most significant of which — the aforementioned depiction of the tomb owner’s triumphs documented by the seven shields — faces south. This is part of the reason behind a recent suggestion that the Greek epigram was younger than the two Lycian texts (Nieswandt 1995: 21–22, n. 9). As discussed above, though, the Greek epigram should be viewed as an independent document, and its appearance on the north side would in any case be a disadvantage, irrespective of whether it was incised before, at the same time as, or later than the other two inscriptions. We rather have to ask: how likely is it that space should have been left for an epigram of exactly this length in the middle of the north side of the monument? Moreover, the Lycian B text also commences on this seemingly shy north side. Not much is known about the Lycian agora of Xanthos (Demargne 1958: 81–82, 103; des Courtis, Cavalier 2001: 154–55), and certainly not enough to rule out the possibility that the north side of the Inscribed Pillar may at one time have been accessible and visible to the passing public. The gentle slope now situated north of the Inscribed Pillar (fig. 1) consists exclusively of erosion material (Demargne 1958: 103) and has, thus, nothing to do with the situation around 400 BC. We also know nothing about the location and extent

of the temenos of the Twelve Gods, or indeed about the nature of the Twelve Gods themselves. These gods have in the past been identified with indigenous gods and those known from the long Hittite inscription of Yazılıkaya (Keen 1998: 206–07). The connection with the agora, however, is strongly reminiscent of the Athenian *dodekathēoi*, and it has been suggested by various scholars that this identification is the most plausible (Demargne 1979: 97; Freyer-Schauenburg 1994: 77). A connection with the (probably) indigenous Twelve Gods, known especially from later reliefs (Freyer-Schauenburg 1994: 77), is possible but not necessary. Their existence may simply have made the adoption of the Greek gods a little easier.

It may be possible, therefore, to regard the Inscribed Pillar as a donation to the Twelve Greek Gods, for which a Greek dedicatory inscription is perfectly appropriate. The language of the images — the statue of the dynast himself and various reliefs illustrating his deeds for the Xanthian population, which was either illiterate or at least lacked knowledge of the Greek language — would have faced the agora where everybody would have been able to understand the message even from a distance. There would have been no need, however, to put the Greek epigram on this same side. It may well have been addressed exclusively to the Twelve Gods and, for this reason, pointed toward the interior of the sacred precinct, the temenos.

Another possibility, however, comes into view when one reminds oneself that the south side of the pillar is not necessarily the main one. This *communis opinio* is based only on the assumption that the Lycian A text is the first and main part of TL 44. That has led to some sort of circular reasoning, and over time the excavator’s tentative attempt to arrange what is left of the reliefs has become a universally accepted certainty, though it is based only on the pieces’ position when found. This position, however, lacks any clear stratigraphic context (Demargne 1958: 87–88). The numerous holes on top of the lid suggest that the seated statue of the dynast was facing either south or north (Demargne 1958: fig. 15). It has to be stressed, therefore, that we do not know the main side of the Inscribed Pillar, and that the common message of the monument and Greek epigram is a strong argument that it might be the northern one (fig. 3).

Other arguments that have been advanced for considering the Greek epigram the youngest inscription on the pillar (Nieswandt 1995: 21–22, n. 9) imply at most that it was incised at a different time from, but not necessarily later than, the Lycian A text. For instance, the letters in the epigram are less regular than most (though not all) in the Lycian text, perhaps indicating a different inscriber. With this statement, though, nothing is said about the

chronological order of the inscriptions, because even a monument already standing upright must not have hindered a sufficiently accurate inscription, as can be shown by many examples, for instance on the walls of already existing temples. This is especially true for our inscription, because it is situated far above the pedestal, which might have been an obstacle for a text in its immediate environment. The fact that there is a hole in the shaft of the pillar which compelled the inscriber to separate the word *a - goras* (l. 3) does not necessarily mean the Greek text was added later on the least suitable space, since it is impossible to say when this particular damage may have occurred.

If this chronological order, with the Greek epigram dated some 25 years earlier than the Lycian A chronicle, is far from certain, we are on even more shaky ground when we try to give a date to the Lycian B inscription, which for the most part is still unintelligible. Yet even if we do attempt to do this, all the evidence actually points in the same direction: the Lycian B inscription seems to have been created at a later moment in time than the Greek epigram, but nonetheless before the Lycian A text. What does appear to be the case is that the Greek epigram seems to have determined the space available for the Lycian B text, because when the stonemason made a mistake (d 29–30) not enough space was left to finish the text at the end, and thus its last stanza remained incomplete (Eichner 1993: 130–31). But there are also some connections between the two inscriptions. We have already mentioned that these two parts of TL 44 are metric inscriptions while the Lycian A text is written in prose. Moreover, xeriga seems to play the same prominent role in both texts. In the Lycian B section he is mentioned six times (c 37, 50, d 8, 19, 45, 53). It would be reasonable to assume that the Greek epigram and the Lycian B text were written at the same time. But the problem with this assumption is that Erbbina, the son of xeriga, is mentioned in d 53; Erbbina must have been a very young child at the time of his father's death, because he is described as 'still at the beginning of his youth' (Erbbina B l) when he came to rule in the last years of the fifth century. We are fairly certain about the chronological order of the Xanthian dynasts: Kuprlli – xeriga – xerēi – Erbbina, xeriga and xerēi presumably being brothers or cousins and Erbbina certainly the son of xeriga (Eichner 1993: 138, n. 116; Keen 1998: 221). There are various types of evidence for the chronological order: some of the coins issued by these rulers are die-linked, and some of the motifs depicted on the coins are identical with one another or otherwise significant. For instance, Kuprlli issues coins stamped with a Lycian goddess; the early coins of xeriga bear the image of this same goddess, but with an owl beside her; and later coins

of xeriga depict a purely Greek Athena, accompanied by the owl. As we have to assign a considerable length of time to the reign of xerēi — approximately 20 years (Zimmermann 1992: 31; Keen 1998: 221) — Erbbina was indeed probably very young when his father died, perhaps an infant. This may also serve as an explanation why instead of Erbbina his uncle xerēi became the ruler of Xanthos after xeriga. In any case, it is not very likely that Erbbina was mentioned in an inscription commissioned by his father, and so the Lycian B text was probably composed some years after the latter's death.

Thus, the most likely chronological order of the three inscriptions of TL 44 is as follows: Greek epigram – Lycian B text – Lycian A text. With every piece of new information about the meaning of certain Lycian words and phrases in TL 44, this proposed chronological sequence may help us to gain a more detailed understanding of the Lycian dynasty of Xanthos.

Finally, if our line of thinking holds true, it is worth considering the fact that the Greek epigram in TL 44 is by far the oldest Greek inscription known from Lycia. The first exclusively Greek documents known so far date back only to the reigns of Erbbina and Perikles of Limyra, dated around 400 or 370 BC respectively (Wörrle 1996/1997; Tietz 2003: 99). Furthermore, it should be remembered that some of the oldest Lycian coins — issued around or shortly after 500 BC — only bore Greek, and not Lycian characters (Mørkholm, Neumann 1978: 6; Auction Catalogue Dr Busso Peus Nachfolger [Frankfurt, Germany] No. 360, 4–7).

And it was certainly xeriga who inaugurated the Lycians' course towards Hellenisation in his coinage: he is the first to introduce the Attic Athena, together with her owl, and perhaps even had himself depicted wearing an Attic helmet on some of his coins (Eichner 1993: 140, n. 121; Tietz 2003: 99). The creator of the so-called Arbinas A-inscription identifies himself as a *paidotribes*. If he had been the teacher of Erbbina himself, which seems rather probable, the fashion for teaching the Greek language to young Lycian nobles may have started already in the generation before Erbbina, i.e. during the reign of his father xeriga. It seems, therefore, that the Greek language had never been completely abandoned on public monuments in Lycia since the time of the first coins. And perhaps it need not surprise us if we encounter a Greek inscription at Xanthos before instances of the same phenomenon appear in other Lycian cities.

Let us now return to the initial question of the authorship of the Lycian A text. Bousquet's publication (1992: 183) of a Lycian inscription on the base of Erbbina's statue, which appeared too late for Eichner to take into account, provides considerable evidence for the

view that the Lycian A inscription had been commissioned indeed by someone called Merehi. Erbbina's inscription refers three times to someone with this name (lines 14, 20, 22). The text is very fragmented, but it seems that this person, who, like Kudalah, the father of Merehi in TL 43, was also a *kñtlah* (line 22), played an important role in the reign of Erbbina (the inscription mentions him in connection with some kind of religious regulations). In contrast, the Merehi of TL 43 seems to have ended his career much earlier: TL 43 has the formula *ene...kñatawata*, a 'quasi dating formula' (Bryce 1986: 133), which in TL 43, like in other Lycian inscriptions (TL 11, 61, 64, 67, 103) is used to date the inscription (Keen 1998: 49), to be more exact, to date it in the time of xeriga: *ene kñatawata ker[i]kehe* ('in the reign of xeriga'). It does not seem probable that a man who was at such an advanced age in the reign of xeriga as to order a sarcophagus, and who is identified as the owner of the sarcophagus already in an inscription of xeriga's time, and who in addition was probably one of the elderly people represented in the reliefs on the sarcophagus, could be the same person who had a relevant position in the reign of Erbbina, some 20 years later. So everything indicates that after Merehi I, as we shall call the son of Kudalah in TL 43, there was a different person with the same name, Merehi II, who could have been the son of Harpagos. In this case, he would probably have been a younger brother of xeriga and xerēi and maybe, because of his *kñtlah* position, also a nephew of Kudalah. (Bousquet 1992: 177, 188, also arrived at the conclusion that there are two Merehis and that the second one is the person named in line 30 of TL 44a. However, this did not lead him to assign the commission of TL 44a to Merehi, because he was convinced that the person named in line 1 as author of the 'stele' is xeriga.) This reconstruction not only fits well with the ending -hi of line 30 and with the fact that a Merehi is mentioned twice in TL 44 (a, line 17 and b, line 24), but also with the reference to Erbbina in TL 44a, line 25. If the Lycian A inscription is an addition to xeriga's monument by a Merehi active in Erbbina's time (Merehi II), it is natural that this Merehi cites Erbbina. On the other hand, the conclusion that the Merehi highlighted by Erbbina, Merehi II, was Erbbina's uncle and the author of the chronicle inscribed on the monument of Erbbina's father, would also fit. If our line of thinking is correct, lines 1–2 and 30–31 should be translated as follows.

This stele has made [Merehi], the son of Harpagos,  
the [brother] of xe[r]iga, the *xahba* of Kuprlli

[Mere]hi, the son of Harpagos, the [brother]  
of xeriga, the *xahba* of Kuprlli, the *tuhes* of Keziga

It is plausible that inscribing the Lycian chronicle on xeriga's pillar was an act of legitimisation by the Xanthian dynasty after Erbbina, the son of xeriga, had expelled xerēi from Xanthos and the cities dominated by Xanthos. The poem by Symmachos from Pellana on Erbbina's statue (Bousquet 1992: 156) states that Erbbina 'in his youth conquered in one month three cities — Xanthos, Pinara and Tel[messos] with its fine harbor — striking terror into many Lycians and becoming their mas[ter]' (lines 5–7; translation: Bryce 1986: 96). These conquests are also cited in the poem on the narrow side of the statue base (Bousquet 1992: 157, lines 4–6) and in the Artemis' statue (Bousquet 1992: 159, line 3). We know that xerēi issued coins in those three cities and all evidence points towards the fact that xerēi was the dynast from whom Erbbina took away the control of these cities, provoking a violent change within the Xanthian dynasty (Bousquet 1992: 177; Keen 1998: 142–43; Domingo Gyax 2001: 76–77, n. 42; Tietz 2003: 73–74), a change that may have required a legitimating gesture by the new strong men in Xanthos, Erbbina and Merehi II.

To conclude, let us summarise the main results of these inquiries. The Inscribed Pillar of Xanthos, like many other monuments in antiquity, was not made at one sitting and does not correspond to any one design. It is rather the result of different historical moments and of the performance of various actors who intervened in different contexts. If it is analysed from this 'plural' perspective, what might seem at first glance contradictory, makes sense and shows a consistent picture, without it being necessary to invent new names and characters of whom there is no evidence, neither to ignore the similarities among almost identical passages in TL 44 nor a valuable piece of information like the ending -hi of the name in TL 44a (line 30). The pillar of Xanthos was commissioned by the Lycian dynast xeriga, whose Greek name was Gergis, and not by xerēi, whose hypothetical Greek name Kurris or Korris is unknown. According to the original design, a Greek epigram was inscribed on the monument, verses which have xeriga/Gergis as their main character. Slightly later, there was added a metric text in Lycian B, probably dealing with cult matters inscribed after the epigram. The epigram matches in terms of content some aspects of the decorative sculptures, and it is the most ancient Greek inscription in Lycia, a testimony to the Hellenisation of the Xanthian élite, which already around 500 BC issued coins bearing only Greek characters. Some time later a long inscription in Lycian A was added to the pillar, a chronicle of the main deeds of the Xanthian dynasty. This chronicle may have been inscribed in order to legitimate the change within the



dynasty after Erbbina supplanted xerēi, his father xeriga's successor. The person in charge of this project was someone whose name ends with -hi, most probably, Merehi (II), perhaps the youngest brother of xeriga and xerēi, who played a prominent role in the reign of his nephew Erbbina and who might have been a relative of another distinguished member of the Xanthian court in xeriga's time, the owner of the so-called Merehi (I) sarcophagus.

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