

# INSCRIPTIONS FROM PALAIROS

(PLATES 63-64)

IN the westernmost reaches of Akarnania, south of Actium, there are the impressive and largely unknown remains of an ancient site, occupying a high steep hill just to the south of the brackish lake Voulkaria (Fig. 1). Long stretches of fortification wall stand many courses high, and within this circuit the ground plans of houses and public buildings can be made out with ease. More structures and an extensive cemetery can be traced outside the walls as well.<sup>1</sup>

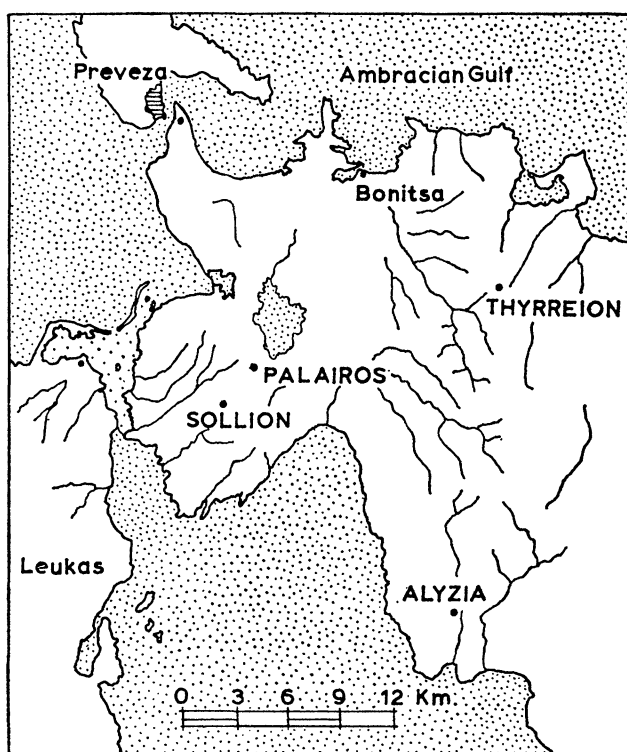


FIG. 1.

<sup>1</sup> For descriptions of the site see L. Heuzey, *L'Acarmanie*, Paris 1956; E. Oberhummer, *Akarnanien*, Munich 1887; and *ArchAnz*, 1916, cols. 221-226. Also the article by E. Kirsten in Pauly-Wissowa, *RE* (Palairos) XVIII, cols. 2455-2467. Over one hundred inscriptions, mostly grave-stones, are known from the site; all but the most recently discovered are in *IG IX 2* (G. Klaffenbach, 1957), 451-472.

Ancient references to the site include: Thucydides, II.30.1; *IG IV 1*, 95, line 21 (Epidauros, 4th cent. B.C.), *Documenti ant. dell' Africa ital.* II, i, p. 30, line 35 (Cyrene, 4th cent. B.C.); *SIG<sup>a</sup> 557*, App. b (Magnesia, 3rd cent. B.C.); Strabo, X.2.2, 21; and Stephanos Byzantinos (*Ἀντικύραι*). See also footnote 4 below.

Ancient references to the site are scarce, and its identification in the past has been based largely on a passage in Strabo:

Μεταξὺ δὲ Λευκάδος καὶ τοῦ Ἀμβρακικοῦ κόλπου  
 λιμνοθάλαττά ἐστι, Μυρτούντιον λεγομένη. ἀπὸ  
 δὲ Λευκάδος ἐξῆς Πάλαιρος καὶ Ἀλυζία τῆς  
 Ἀκαρνανίας εἰς πόλεις (X.2.21)

Between Leucas and the Ambracian Gulf is a  
 salt-lake, called Myrtuntium. Next after Leu-  
 cas one comes to Palaerus and Alyzia, cities of  
 Acarnania (Loeb trans.)

Commentators have had no difficulty associating Myrtuntium with Voulkaria, and the substantial remains just south of the lake with the first of the two cities mentioned by Strabo. With the recent discovery of two inscriptions at the site there is now welcome epigraphical evidence to confirm its correct identification as the Akarnanian city of Palairos.<sup>2</sup>

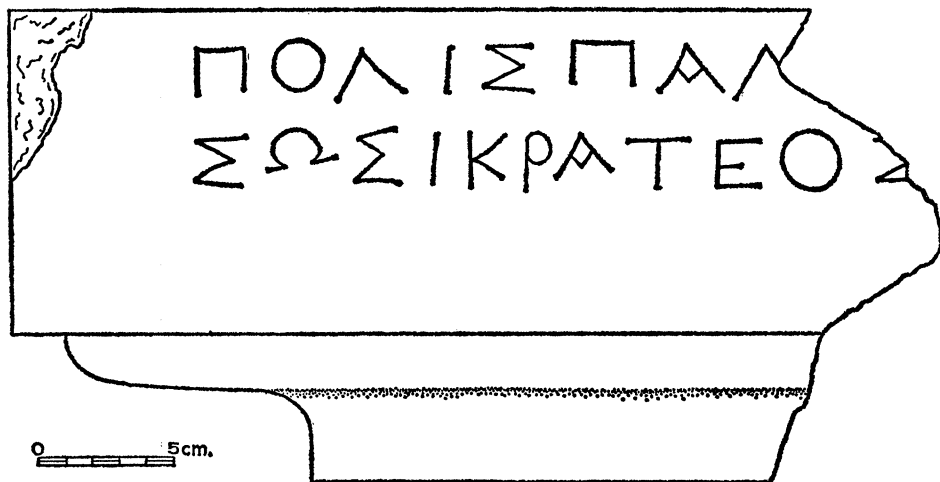


FIG. 2.

1 (Fig. 2, Pl. 63:a-c). Large fragment of the crowning member of a statue or monument base, broken at the right. Found September 16, 1974, on the terrace at the southernmost tip of the inner circuit of walls. Fine buff limestone, weathered gray.

<sup>2</sup> Thanks must be expressed to Francine Stone, who first spotted 1 and 3, and to Margot C. Camp for 2. Alan and Julie Boegehold and Edith S. C. Camp provided help and good company during subsequent visits to the site. I am also indebted to Ph. Zaphiropoulou, Ephor of Antiquities of Delphi, for her interest and aid, as well as for permission to publish the stones. E. Vanderpool, as always, has made several useful suggestions, and Abigail Camp helped with the illustrations.

H. (over-all) 0.175 m.; H. of inscribed face 0.12 m.; pres. W. (over-all) 0.55 m.; pres. W. of inscribed face 0.34 m.; L. 0.743 m.; H. of letters 0.016-0.021 m.

Πόλις Παλ[αιρέων nomen]  
Σωσικράτεος [ ---- ]

Line 1, in addition to the name of the honoring city, would have included the name of the man honored. Line 2 preserves the patronymic, presumably followed by the ethnic, or some honorific phrase (e.g. ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα), and/or ἀνέθηκεν.<sup>3</sup>

The letters are clear and deeply cut, with the ends widening into serifs. Their dimensions vary and their disposition on the stone is somewhat haphazard. The date of the inscription should be late Hellenistic. The broken-barred alphas suggest a *terminus post quem* in the 2nd century B.C., and the year 31 B.C. seems a likely *terminus ante quem*, for it is at that time that most of, if not all, the cities of Akarnania were abandoned in order to populate the newly founded city of Nikopolis.<sup>4</sup>

The block itself is of some interest. It takes the form of a broad, low, cyma reversa molding surmounted by a plinth, the face of which carries the inscription. On the underside there is a single square dowel hole. On the upper surface of the block there is a narrow relieving edge along the left side, 0.02 m. wide and recessed 0.003 m. At the rear of the block there is half of a  $\Gamma$  clamp, suggesting the placement of a second block behind. A small irregular area at the back of the top rises ca. 0.02 m. above the surrounding surface. There is no trace of any cutting for the anchoring of a statue, either of bronze or marble, and the actual supporting base must have been a separate block. The clamp and the lack of any cuttings for the statue both suggest that this block is only part of either a larger base or perhaps a monument. It is worth noting that the piece was found only a few meters to the north of the foundations of a hemicycle, clearly a small curved exedra of the common type. These were often used as bases for statues and it seems entirely possible that the block represents one endpiece of this exedra.<sup>5</sup>

2 (Fig. 3, Pl. 64: a). Fragment of the front left corner of a crowning block similar to 1. Broken at right and back. The face is weathered and chipped at the top and left. Found September 27, 1975, on the southern terrace, ca. 20 m. east of 1. Fine buff limestone, weathered gray.

H. (over-all) 0.17 m.; H. of inscribed face 0.11 m.; pres. W. 0.29 m.; pres. Th. 0.275 m.; H. of letters ca. 0.023 m.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for example, from Thermon, Δελτ 1, 1915, p. 50, no. 22, and p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, X.2.2, includes Palairos among those cities which became dependencies (περιουκίδες) of Nikopolis. It is not specifically included among those which were actually abandoned in order to provide the new population for the city: Strabo, VIII.7.6; Pausanias, V.23.2, VII.18. 7-8, X.38.4; also Antipater, Epigram 33.

<sup>5</sup> The foundations are shown on the plan in *ArchAnz*, 1916, Abb. 2 (opposite p. 221) just north of Gate F. For similar exedras with statues, cf. the recent excavations by A. K. Orlandos at the Asklepieion of Messene: Πρακτικά, 1971, pp. 162-163, 166-167; 1972, pp. 135-136.

Πόλις Πα[λαιρέων nomen Σωσι? -]  
 κράτεος [-----]

The honorific formula would presumably have been similar to that of 1. The lettering of the two inscriptions is very similar, particularly the way in which both lambda and alpha tilt somewhat toward the left. Slight differences in dimensions are all that prevent certainty in assigning the two stones to the same monument, for they are similar in all other respects. Findspot, general appearance, material, and lettering all suggest their association. Indeed, though there are other possibilities, it is tempting to restore Sosikrates as the patronymic in 2 as well and assume that the



FIG. 3.

exedra held the statues of two brothers, one on each wing. Whether or not the two should be thought of as coming from the same monument or as separate bases, they serve to identify beyond question the ancient city of Palairos.

Also from the site of Palairos comes a third inscription, the precise sense of which continues to elude me. Nonetheless it seems worth presenting here in the hopes that it will speak more clearly to others.

**3** (Fig. 4, Pl. 64: b, c). A complete cube, perhaps a wall block. Found September 16, 1974, in the northwest part of the site, *ca.* 20 meters south of the arched gate.<sup>6</sup> Gray granite-like conglomerate, with white inclusions.

H. 0.355 m.; W. 0.34 m.; Th. 0.26 m.; H. of letters *ca.* 0.05 m.

ΚΑΛΕΙΣ  
 ΑΡΤΕΜΙ  
 ΟΡΑΣ

<sup>6</sup> Gate C on the plan in *ArchAnz*, 1916, Abb. 2.

Figure 4 shows what can actually be seen on the stone or read from a squeeze. As is clear from the drawing the letters are large and somewhat sprawling; nonetheless their readings are generally straightforward.

The first letter in line 1 seems to be a kappa, though digamma should also be considered a possibility. The two right-hand strokes are close to parallel and they do not spring from the same point on the vertical hasta.

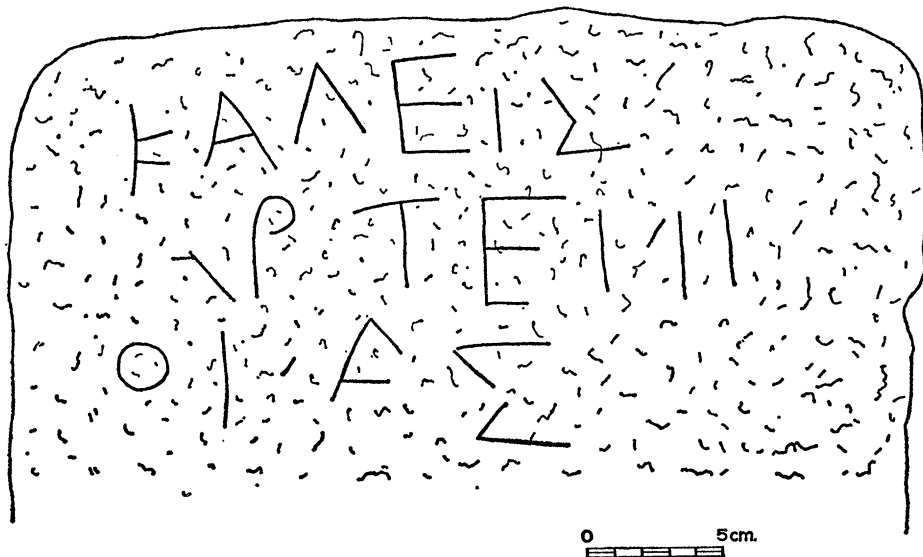


FIG. 4.

Line 2 could be either the vocative or, less probably, the dative form of Artemis.<sup>7</sup>

It is possible that lines 2 and 3 should be read together, so as to make a name. Artemidora comes to mind, though there is no trace of a delta in line 2, where there is space enough and the surface of the stone is undamaged. Furthermore, the first letter in line 3 should then be an omega. Another possibility, Artemithra, can be read without damage to the text but seems to be unattested.

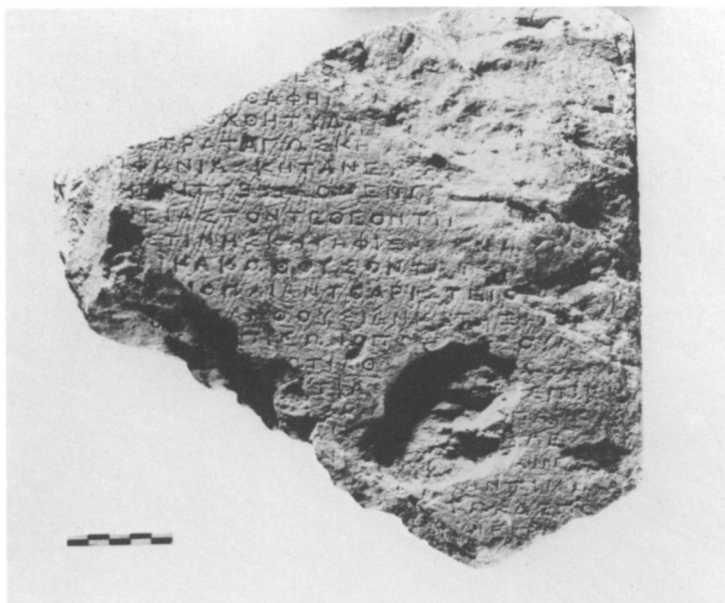
The text would seem to be complete as it stands, though it is possible that there was more, carved onto adjacent blocks of the wall. As is, it means something like 'you call/Artemis/you see,' apparently a sort of shorthand, perhaps some sort of invocation.<sup>8</sup>

JOHN MCK. CAMP II

ATHENIAN AGORA EXCAVATIONS

<sup>7</sup> For the shortened form of the dative, see *IG* IV, 577, from Argos (Liddell-Scott-Jones).

<sup>8</sup> For the worship of Artemis at Palairos see *RE* (Palairos) XVIII, col. 2465. A large Doric temple on a terrace to the northwest of the site has been identified as belonging to Artemis; the identification is based on statuettes found in the vicinity.



GERALD V. LALONDE: A BOIOTIAN DECREE IN ATHENS



a. No. 1, top



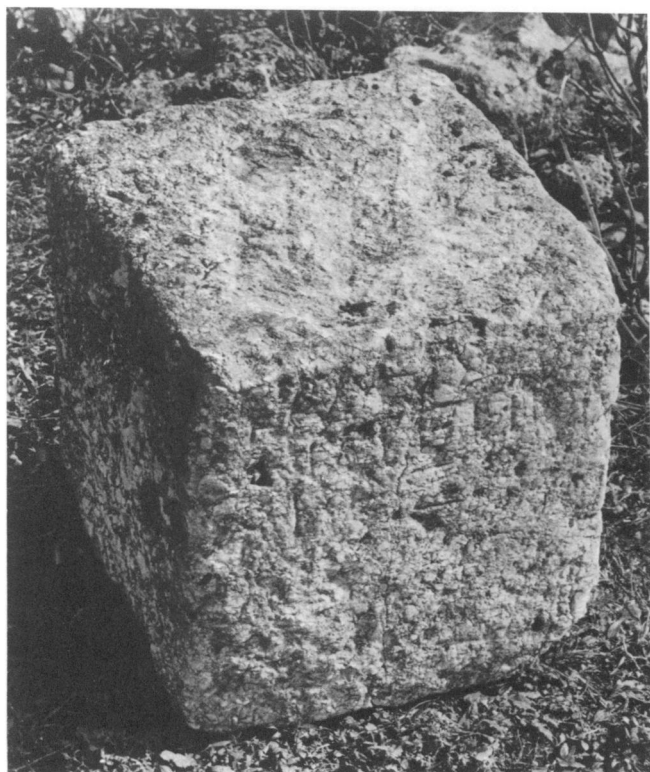
b. No. 1, bottom



c. No. 1, text



a. No. 2



b. No. 3, block and text



c. No. 3, text