

**Commagenian Funerary Monuments:
Ancestry and Identity in the Roman East**

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Ancient History

Acknowledgments

**Thank you Professor Barringer,
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Contents

List of illustrations – 3

List of Abbreviations – 5

Main Text

Introduction – 6

Chapter 1. Invention of Tradition: Nemrut Dağ – 13

Chapter 2. Honouring Ancestors: Dynastic Funerary Monuments – 22

Chapter 3. Back to the Future: Philopappos' Monument – 28

Conclusion – 38

Appendix – 41

Bibliography – 63

List of Illustrations

- Fig. 1** Map of Commagene showing proximity to the Euphrates. Sullivan. 1977. 735.
- Fig. 2** Nemrut Dağ East Terrace. Situation before Goell's campaigns. Versluys. 2017.
Fig.2.9
- Fig. 3** Nemrut Dağ East Terrace. Situation in 2004. Versluys. 2017. Fig. 2.8.
- Fig. 4** Reconstruction drawing of the East Terrace colossi. Versluys. 2017. 61.
- Fig. 5** Reconstruction drawing of the West Terrace colossi. Versluys. 2017. 66.
- Fig. 6** Lion horoscope of Antiochos I. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 60.
- Fig. 7** Façade of Ramases II's temple at Abu Simbel. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 6b.
- Fig. 8** Persian ancestor relief *stelae*. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 62.
- Fig. 9** Great cult inscription of Antiochos I. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 66.
- Fig. 10** Behistun relief of Darius I. Trilingual inscription recording his Achaemenid dynastic lineage. Versluys. 2017. Fig. 3.4.
- Fig. 11** Dexiosis relief of Antiochos and the goddess Commagene. Drawings and cast by Karl Humann, 1883. Brijder. 2014. Figs. 49a-c.
- Fig. 12** Dexiosis relief of Antiochos and Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 50a-b.
- Fig. 13** Dexiosis relief of Antiochos and Zeus-Oromasdes. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 51a-b.
- Fig. 14** Dexiosis relief of Antiochos and Artagnes-Heracles-Ares. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 52a-b.
- Fig. 15** Dexiosis relief (detail). Brijder. 2014. Fig. 44b.
- Fig. 16** Hittite relief of Kubaba. Eighth century BC. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 44a

Fig. 17 Coin of Tigranes the Great. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 46.

Fig. 18 Tumulus and East Terrace before Goell's campaigns. Versluys. 2017. Fig. 1.10.

Fig. 19 Rock-cut relief of Samos II. Arsameia ad Euphratem. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 75.

Fig. 20 Hittite rock-cut relief. Brijder. 2014. Fig. 30b.

Fig. 21 Processional way, reconstruction. Arsameia ad Nymphaeum. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 80.

Fig. 22 Inscription on pedestal II reverse. Arsameia ad Nymphaeum. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 82.

Fig. 23 Dexiosis relief *stelae* of Antiochos I and Mithridates I. Arsameia ad Nymphaeum.
Blömer/Winter. 2011. 83.

Fig. 24 Great cult inscription. Arsameia ad Nymphaeum. Blömer/Winter. 2011. 86.

Fig. 25 Dexiosis relief of Antiochos I and Heracles. Arsameia ad Nymphaeum.
Blömer/Winter. 2011. 85.

Fig. 26 Philopappos Monument, Athens. Situation in 2017. Author.

Fig. 27 Reconstruction drawing of Philopappos' funerary monument by Stuart and Revett,
1762. Miles. Fig. 2.2.

Fig. 28 Reconstruction drawing of the Mausoleum of Augustus. Rome. Early first century
CE. Versluys. 2017. Fig. 3.2

Fig. 29 Gemma Augustea, c.10 CE. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Author.

Fig. 30 Togate male portrayed with portrait busts of his ancestors. Rome. First century BC.
Versluys. 2017. Fig. 3.6.

Fig. 31 Nereid Monument. Early fourth century BC. British Museum. Author.

Fig. 32 Reconstructed cross-section of the Mausoleion of Halicarnassus. Jeppesen. 2002. 44.

List of Abbreviations

AJA = *American Journal of Archaeology*.

BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin. 1862-

IG = *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin. 1873-

IGL Syr. = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Paris, 1929-

JRS = *Journal of Roman Studies*.

Nomos = *Great Cult Inscription*, trans. F.K. Dörner, in Sanders/Goell. 1996. Winona Lake,
Indiana.

Nomos II = *Great Cult Inscription from the hierothesia of Mithridates I Callinicus*. Trans.
Blömer/Winter. 2011: 87.

Introduction

Funerary monuments arguably provide the most conspicuous and the most useful material evidence for the conception and representation of identity in the ancient Roman East. Posthumous commemoration was an important socio-cultural process for both the living and the dead in antiquity, as it is today.¹ In the Greek world, monumental inscriptions commemorated the deceased at their final resting place from the 7th century BC onwards.² Monumental funerary markers are equally the material testimony of one's life as they are memorials to one's death. Common funerary practices spatially separate the sphere of the living from areas designated for the dead. These areas can vary cross-culturally in terms of form and location, but, overall, burial grounds and tombs are extra-ordinary places that are physically removed from the daily lives of the living.³ Due to the unequal distribution of resources within communities, royal and elite burials often surpass the societal standards of scale and ornamentation. Therefore, funerary monuments are particularly effective vehicles for communicating the status and ideology of the deceased, and their family, to an audience.⁴ In the ancient world, "the deeds of illustrious ancestors could be used to enhance one's own status or justify an achieved position".⁵ The evidence from their funerary monuments suggests that the importance of ancestry followed elites into the afterlife.

In the Iliad Hector hopes that the tomb of an opponent will be recognised as "the mound of a man who died long ago" by "men who are yet to be".⁶ Written several centuries later, Pericles' funeral oration acknowledges that the Athenians' motivation behind the erection of impressive monuments was to create a lasting impression on viewers, present and the future:

¹ Duff, 2002.

² Hansen, 1998, 327.

³ Hoffman/Attula, 2017, 250.

⁴ Toynbee, 1971.

⁵ Fleischer, 2002, 59.

⁶ Hom. Il. 7.81-91.

‘... and everywhere... we have founded imperishable monuments of our successes and failures’.⁷ This idea permeated societies in to the Roman period, demonstrated by a wide cross-section of archaeological evidence in central and peripheral contexts, particularly funerary monuments. Thus, funerary monuments were built to serve as historical sources of a kind, and the extravagant tombs of ruling elites in the Roman East present exceptional examples of this social practice.

Those pertaining to the monarchs of Commagene (table 1), a late-Hellenistic kingdom turned client state of Rome, are archaeological sites of great significance for the study of the links between multiculturalism, ancestry and identity in antiquity. Commagene’s territory included the Taurus mountain range, which provided resilience against external threats. Hence, in 163/162 BC the region’s governor, Ptolemaeus, defected from Roman authority and established himself as King Ptolemaeus I of Commagene, ‘being chiefly emboldened by its natural advantages for defence’.⁸ Due to the nation’s geographical proximity to the Euphrates, historically a topographical boundary between the Greco-Roman world and the vast Parthian empire (fig. 1), Commagene experienced cultural influences and exchanges between the East and West.⁹ This dynamic aspect of Commagene is tangible in both the epigraphic and iconographic elements of its ruling dynasty’s funerary monuments, recurring over centuries. The key royal burial sites in Commagene are the late-Hellenistic building projects of Antiochos I. Most notable is the *hierothesion* he erected for himself on the zenith of Nemrut Dağ, and those constructed for his father Mithridates I Callinicus and grandfather Samos II at Arsameia ad Nymphaeum and Arsameia ad Euphratem, respectively.

⁷ Thuc. 2.41.5.

⁸ Diod. 31.19a.

⁹ Strabo 16.1.28.; Jos. BJ. 7.228.

Antiochos' own funerary monument has faced a mixed reception from scholars since its discovery in the late-nineteenth century. The architecture of Nemrut Dağ has been described as a work of hybridity which encapsulates the king's hybrid cultural heritage, and the multicultural character of the Commagenian population.¹⁰ However, Nemrut Dağ was often neglected from twentieth century art historical discourse for its divergence from the revered style of classical Greece.¹¹ Critics have claimed that Antiochos' eccentric temple-tomb is simply a superficial display of 'megalomania'; others have concluded that his elaborate sepulchral monument is unusual in the context of Hellenistic kingship.¹² On the contrary, Antiochos I was a Hellenistic ruler in the purest sense, and his monumental building projects provide a unique insight into the construction and presentation of identity within a late-Hellenistic dynasty. His monumental projects emphasise his ideological connections to his predecessors, their empires, and their gods – including Alexander the Great, whose rule was the political and ideological foundation of Hellenistic kingship.¹³ Moreover, his sculptural programme demonstrates the convergence of multifarious Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultural inputs, which characterises the Hellenistic period in terms of its artistic traditions and syncretistic belief systems.

The last Commagenian dynast, and heir to Antiochos' legacy of diversity, Philopappos, erected his funerary monument in Roman-ruled Athens in the early second century CE. Nonetheless, as even his name (which means 'ancestor-lover') suggests, Philopappos promoted his royal Commagenian heritage in a Greco-Roman context.¹⁴ Being temporally and geographically disparate, the monumental tombs built by Antiochos I and his descendant Philopappos demonstrate both continuity and change in the Roman East. The monuments

¹⁰ Smith 1988, 104; Versluys, 2017, 19.

¹¹ Boardman, 1994, 82; T. Goell, excavator, counters this: Goell 1957, 9.

¹² Gardner, 1896; Dörrie 1978, 245; Smith, 1985, 275-277.

¹³ Fleischer, 2002, 59-60.

¹⁴ Kleiner, 1984, 15.

highlight the character of the transition from the Hellenistic into the Roman era, and the interplay of material culture and political ideology. Furthermore, the monuments elucidate a flaw in the conceptual polarisation of East and West, and present a case for multiculturalism in the ancient world.

The interpretation of the monuments' recurring theme of ancestral heritage through the lens of multiculturalism is fundamental to understanding the Commagenian dynasts' conception of identity. That is, their role as members of a ruling dynasty within a complex network of imperial powers whose authority was in flux as Rome's influence expanded, and the autonomy of Hellenistic kingdoms was compromised. It is notable that Philopappos recalled the elaborate sepulchral structures built by his ancestor Antiochos I, and preserved the dynasty's diverse background through the text and imagery of his own funerary monument. Material evidence of other Hellenistic rulers' burial traditions will be utilised to contextualise the burial sites of the Commagenian dynasty. Contemporary comparisons will also be used to discuss Philopappos' funerary monument in Roman Athens. This analysis is important as external influences were fundamental in the construction and material articulation of the dynasty's multicultural identity. This term, multicultural identity, combines two strands of thought that have been a focal point of ancient history since the development of post-colonial discourse.¹⁵ Firstly, the complex semantics and caveats of these concepts must be addressed before they can be applied to the material evidence.

Multiculturalism is a useful concept for the study of cultural exchange and its consequences, which can be seen in the material output of a society. By considering the concept on an individual basis, thereby giving agency to those living in areas subject to foreign influences, but also within the communal context of a society that facilitates the perpetuation

¹⁵ Webster/Cooper, 1996.

of cultural and racial diversity, the material output by the ruling dynasty of Commagene can be understood.¹⁶ Situated between Rome and Parthia, two imperial rivals, Commagene has been dismissed by scholars as a mediator or a pawn between two superior neighbours.¹⁷ This negates the agency of Commagenian rulers, and encourages a misinterpretation of the motivations behind their output of material culture. Material culture and cultural ‘styles’ are expressions of pre-conditioned notions of self-perception in relation to one’s environment and cultural influences. When an area is open to heterogeneity, an interplay of cultural influences facilitates the creation of identity drawing on pre-existing traditions and hybrid innovation. Commagene should be viewed as multifaceted and open to heterogenous influences from east and west, rather than as an unstable nucleus of mutually conflicting paradigms.

This notion follows Wimmer who postulates that culture is a compromise formed by the (personal or communal) negotiation of external and internal influences.¹⁸ Commagenian royal funerary monuments embody multicultural influences, however, their syncretistic elements have been misinterpreted as evidence of acculturation (a previously accepted archaeological framework, now denounced as a flawed conceptualisation of cultural change and exchange).¹⁹ The notion of acculturation polarises different cultures, suggests a process of cultural appropriation, and therefore generalises the complexities of cultural contacts.²⁰ The risk of generalisation is also responsible for the shift away from the notions of ‘Hellenization’ and ‘Romanization’ to explain cultural interaction.²¹ These paradigms are flawed because they imply that unilateral influence from a dominant society is met with passive acceptance and assimilation by all native populations.²² Moreover, it propagates cultural duality, and this

¹⁶ Adler, 1976; Modood, 2007, 16.

¹⁷ Versluys, 25.

¹⁸ Wimmer, 1996.

¹⁹ Defined by Redfield/Linton/Herskovits, 1935, 145-148.

²⁰ Hofmann/Attula, 2017, 251.

²¹ Mattingly, 2014, 37-38.

²² James, 2001, 191.

borrowed too heavily from the literary sources that previously dominated classical studies and archaeology. From the material evidence, particularly the *hierothesia* built by Antiochos I, this binary did not manifest in the material culture of Commagenian kingship. Materiality, as Meskell posits, “is a set of cultural relationships”, and is therefore essential for explaining multiculturalism, and vice versa.²³

Similarly, the material culture of the Commagenian kings can be analysed through the theoretical lens of identity. Identity is expressed, and therefore accessed, through material culture after death, as it is in life: “Through studying objects that belonged to, were created by, or were buried with individuals, we can begin to understand the creation and projection of social identities”.²⁴ Thus, the study of identity in the ancient world is now a pertinent area of classical studies.²⁵ Although Mattingly believes that as identity is a fluid concept “its multiform nature arguably makes identity a flawed paradigm to work with”, the semantic flexibility allows the concept to be applied in various ways, for example native identity, or displayed identity.²⁶ Accordingly, identity is the intrinsic element of “individual or collective selfhood”; although it is a multifaceted concept, this should not impede its use.²⁷ In fact, in the context of our period, this is what makes it invaluable. The complex identity propagated by Antiochos I is “the product of multiple and competing discourses, highlighting the dynamic, fragmented, and plural nature of sense of self”.²⁸

The Commagenian dynasty constructed relationships with the past, especially their ancestral heritage, to propagate their authority and status. This theoretically contextualises the dynasty’s funerary monuments, which are physical testament to ‘social or political action’ –

²³ Meskell 2005, 6.

²⁴ Dellino-Musgrave, 2005, 220.

²⁵ Mattingly, 2014, 38.

²⁶ Mattingly, 39.

²⁷ Brubaker/Cooper, 2000, 6-8.

²⁸ Ibid.

identified by Brubaker and Cooper as a potential basis and/or product of the notion of identity.²⁹ Versluys succinctly juxtaposed the pitfalls with the benefits of using the concept of identity as a foundation for archaeological methodology.³⁰ Due to its ambiguous nature, it has encouraged new questions and ideas within the field of classical archaeology. Of particular note is the question of how the past was viewed in antiquity, and how it shaped notions of tradition and constructions of identity. This is pertinent to the interpretation of the funerary monuments of both Antiochos I and his descendent, Philopappos, who manipulated existing artistic and cultural practices in places of historical significance to construct and portray their identities. Due to their elite bias, the monumental tombs of Commagene's ruling dynasty cannot be used as evidence of native Commagenian identity overall. However, they are fundamental for understanding how a family of late-Hellenistic rulers interpreted the materiality of the past to construct their own identities in the present, which were materialised in their funerary monuments and are thus permanently preserved in stone.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Versluys, 2008, 346.

Invention of Tradition: Nemrut Dağ

The *hierothesion* of King Antiochos I is a temple-tomb situated upon the peak of Nemrut Dağ, within the Taurus mountain range of South-East Turkey, over 7,000 ft. above sea level.³¹ The site was excavated in the early 1880s by a native Turkish team, who believed the monument to be Assyrian, based on their understanding of its architectural style.³² Their efforts were followed in the mid-twentieth century by Karl F. Dörner, who worked collaboratively on the site with Theresa Goell. The monumental tomb is dated to the latter part of Antiochos' reign, c.50-36 BC. Despite not proving "indestructible by the ravages of time", as Antiochos anticipated (figs. 2, 3), the material evidence from Nemrut Dağ offers an almost comprehensive understanding of Antiochos' genealogy and his cult, from which interpretations of his rule and ideology of divine kingship have been extrapolated.³³ Goell posited that the high plateau served as a Hittite sacred place during the second millennium BC, which would have been enveloped by the construction of Antiochos' burial and cult site, comprised of a large tumulus flanked by monumentalised terraces on its north, east and west sides.³⁴ This is plausible when considering the comparative evidence from imperial sanctuaries in Syria, which replaced earlier structures but retained their sacred characters.³⁵ If this is the case, Antiochos' elaborate temple-tomb is a monument of cultural memory: a material reconstruction of common historical knowledge to make a political or socio-cultural statement.³⁶ Antiochos' sacred tomb epitomises the notion that 'memory is a process initially centred on the individual, but which can be shared, and thus

³¹ Brijder, 2014, 1.

³² Versluys, 185.

³³ Nomos. 36.

³⁴ Goell/Sanders, 8, 141-143.

³⁵ Freyberger, 1998, 38-39.

³⁶ Versluys/Strootman, 2017, 17.

contribute to a sense of the past, a social memory, which builds a communal or collective identity'.³⁷

Antiochos' father and grandfather were also buried upon hilltop sites, which contextualises his choice of location within an existing Commagenian royal funerary tradition. However, the term *hierothesion* (sacred tomb) may be an Antiochan innovation, as it is not attested in inscriptions beyond the great cult inscription of Antiochos I, other than the inscriptions he set up to commemorate the burial sites of his closest paternal ancestors.³⁸ In his great cult inscription, Antiochos identifies his funerary monument as "not only a tomb but a place of pious veneration of the gods and the deified royal ancestors".³⁹ Pausanias mentions that statues of the gods were to be found at the *hierothysion* at Messene, but no sources yield evidence of the exact term elsewhere.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the concepts defined by the term *hierothesion* are not unique to Antiochan Commagene. Both ruler worship and ancestor worship in the Hellenistic east had precedents with widespread influence. Antiochos' conception of ruler cult had origins in Pharaonic Egypt, which was normalised after the posthumous deification of Alexander the Great by his successors for their own political leverage. Notably, Antiochos I claimed descent from Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander's *Diadochi*.

Influences from Egyptian, Achaemenid and Seleucid rulers are conspicuous in the sculptural programme of Nemrut Dağ. The sacred complex is perhaps best known for the 10m tall seated colossi depicting the gods, Antiochos among them, which sit before the east and west sides of the burial mound (figs. 4,5). In funerary contexts, colossal sculptures represent the deceased on an elevated, magnified scale, suggesting the end of their mortal life facilitated

³⁷ Cubitt, 2007, 14-15.

³⁸ See Chapter 2.

³⁹ Nomos. 34-35.

⁴⁰ Paus. 4.32.1; Goell, 4.

immortal empowerment. Notably, the deities depicted with Antiochos represent religious syncretism of east and west pantheons. Antiochos is flanked on the left by a female personification of Commagene, and on the right by Zeus-Oromasdes, Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes, and Artagenes-Heracles-Ares. Antiochos' clean-shaven appearance is a Hellenistic feature akin to Alexander the great, whose image was based on the youthful Greek gods, Apollo and Achilles.⁴¹ Religious syncretism and assimilation are not Commagenian conceptions. Affiliation with Zeus-Ammon consolidated different spheres of influence for Alexander the Great. The seated colossi are then flanked by an eagle and a lion on both sides of the burial mound. A lion can also be seen in the magnificent horoscope relief from the West terrace (fig. 6).

The figure of Commagene, the only female colossi, is shown in the Greek chiton and himation; whereas the male figures are dressed in Persian style clothing of boots, trousers, tunic and cloak. The assimilation of Greek and local Commagenian elements embodies the cultural fluidity of the Hellenistic age. Artagenes-Heracles is identifiable from his club, while Commagene held a cornucopia of plenty, signifying the prosperity of the king and his country. The composition of the relief sculpture recalls the Eastern tradition by which gods and rulers are represented on an equal scale. Additionally, Antiochos, Zeus and Apollo are all holding the *barsom*, a Near-Eastern ritual implement comprised of small branches. The facial similarities between the colossal heads of Antiochos and Apollo are apparent: they are both unbearded, youthful males with strongly articulated features including deep-set eyes and pouting lips. Apollo was also relevant to Antiochos' ideological principles as he was the putative founder of the Seleucid dynasty, from whom Antiochos traced maternal descent.⁴²

⁴¹ Fleischer, 60.

⁴² Strootman, 2007, 247-248.

Moreover, comparison can be drawn between the imposing scale, rigid seated position and block-like form of the colossi of Nemrut Dağ and Pharaonic sculpture (fig. 7).⁴³ Visual association with divine kingship in Egyptian culture is potentially evidence of Antiochos' divine aspirations. Antiochos' vision for Nemrut Dağ is overall in keeping with Hellenistic ruler cult, and thus represents divergence from the more conservative values of contemporary Rome. However, it is critical to avoid thinking of Commagene only in terms of its relationship with Rome. Commagene clearly did not exist in a cultural vacuum, but nor did the kingdom passively exist under the mutually exclusive influence of either Rome or Parthia. Indeed, the monument has attracted attention as a unique example of Hellenism fused with Persian/Iranian style in the early Roman period. Versluys applies the concept of 'Persianism' to his analysis of Antiochos' eccentric sepulchral monument.⁴⁴ This term explains responses and references to Achaemenid culture, which are abundantly clear in the visual style of the *hierothesion*.⁴⁵ Antiochos I's inspiration was fundamentally drawn from the ideology and materiality of the nation's previous rulers, and his own ancestors.

Honouring "the deified royal ancestors" was integral to the construction of Antiochos' ruler cult. This is expressed in his great cult inscription, or *Nomos* (Law), which was carved in Greek on to the backs of the colossal sculptural groups (fig.8).⁴⁶ This invaluable piece of epigraphic evidence explicitly states that Antiochos "recorded for all time" the function of the site, the gods worshipped there, and instructions for maintaining the cult. The great cult inscription begins by stating Antiochos' titles as "The Great King Antiochos, the God, the Righteous One, the Manifest [Deity]". Antiochos manipulated cultural memory to create his own tradition by using the honorific title Great King. The Seleucid king Antiochos III recalled

⁴³ Smith, 103.

⁴⁴ Versluys, 2016.

⁴⁵ Versluys/Strootman, 10.

⁴⁶ See Appendix.

the rule of Seleucus Nicator, Alexander the Great, and even Achaemenid predecessors, by assuming the title of Great King.⁴⁷ Moreover, the significance of Antiochos' mixed ancestral background is evident as he prioritises his genealogy in the great cult inscription, identifying himself in terms of his relations:

“the son of King Mithridates Callinicus and of Laodice the Brother-loving Goddess, the Daughter of King Antiochos Epiphanus, the Mother-loving”.⁴⁸

The sole use of Greek in the great cult inscription is notable, as it deviates from the multilingual norm which had been established centuries prior, and exemplified by the trilingual Behistun inscription of his Persian ancestor Darius I (fig. 9). Multilingual texts facilitate wider accessibility and understanding, and are hence arguably necessary in public contexts, such as the *Nomos* inscription. However, the inscription was not carved in a conspicuously visible place for all to read. On the other hand, the inscription was replicated at sites of royal cult worship across Commagene, per the text's commands. Thus, literate devotees could read the inscription for themselves, and those who were illiterate could listen to a literate person read the inscription aloud. Even without any understanding of the text, visitors would surely be wonderstruck by the scale of the architectural programme, and believe they had entered a sacred space.

The sculptural programme of the *hierothesion* also includes two rows of relief *stelae* on the East and West terraces. Each row depicts Antiochos' paternal Achaemenid and maternal Macedonian ancestors, respectively. Each relief *stela* had a small altar situated directly in front, which imply that libations of wine were to be offered here. The relief sculpture itself also references this: each processional figure carries either a *phiale* or *rhyton*, ritual libation vessels (fig. 10). Antiochos' maternal ancestry is just as significant for his dynastic claims as his paternal lineage: he claimed kinship with the Seleucid-Macedonian line through his mother.

⁴⁷ Plischke, 2017, 173.

⁴⁸ *Nomos*. 1. N.B. Latin spelling used by Goell/Sanders.

Thus, the Seleucid queen Cleopatra Tryphaina, plus Antiochos' mother, wife and daughter (whom he married into Parthian royalty), are all shown in relief on the East Terrace. However, he was not the only Hellenistic ruler to claim dual Greco-Persian ancestry. Mithridates Eupator, ruled Pontic Cappadocia between 111-63 BC.⁴⁹ His genealogical claims also extended back to Cyrus the Great on one side, and Alexander the Great on the other.⁵⁰ This benefited rulers' public appeal and political legitimacy in a diverse, multicultural climate. It has been suggested that Antiochos' association with Alexander the Great held contemporary connotations of anti-Roman sentiment, but the fact Antiochos identifies himself as "Friend of the Romans" in his great cult inscription does not support this.⁵¹ Like Alexander, Antiochos appealed to pluralist cultures and his funerary monument makes ideological statements which echo his predecessor's.

Ancestor galleries are commonly found in Hellenistic dynastic contexts. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, built in the fourth century BC, contained an upper gallery which displayed dynastic portrait sculptures on all four sides. In this instance the sculptural programme juxtaposed statues of the city's founding fathers from the heroic past with the ruling dynasties of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, the Lygdamids and Hekatomnids, including their female members.⁵² Various male members of the fourth century satrapal dynasty were depicted in Persian dress, just as Antiochos' paternal ancestors are shown on the ancestor reliefs.⁵³ Furthermore, Hekatomnos, the founder of the dynasty, named his son and daughter Maussollos and Artemisia after members of the Lygdamid dynasty to create a sense of dynastic assimilation and propagate his family's hereditary right to rule.⁵⁴ This concept was clearly explored by

⁴⁹ Lerouge-Cohen, 2017, 227.

⁵⁰ Just. 38.3.10, 38.7.1.

⁵¹ Lerouge-Cohen, 232.

⁵² Jeppesen, 2002, 44.

⁵³ Hoepfner, 2002, 419.

⁵⁴ Jeppesen, 46; Waywell, 1978, 41.

Antiochos I, who named his son and heir Mithridates II to recall the rule of his father, and perhaps the renowned Mithridatic dynasty of Pontus.

On the West terrace of Nemrut Dağ, Antiochos erected sandstone *dexiosis* relief *stelae* depicting himself and pertinent deities: Commagene, Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes, Zeus-Oromasdes, and Artagnes-Heracles-Ares (figs. 11-14). Pairs of large sandstone lions and eagles flank these *stelae*, mirroring the pairs which flank the colossal statues. Antiochos wears eclectic headwear in the *dexiosis* reliefs that combines a *polos* with a five-pointed Armenian tiara to create a unique style (fig. 15).⁵⁵ The *polos* form of his headwear recalls a pre-existing Hittite style, as seen on a stele depicting the Hittite deity Kubaba from the eight century BC (fig. 16).⁵⁶ The Armenian tiara is so-called because of its appearance on the coinage of Armenian ruler Tigranes the Great (fig. 17), but Antiochos may also have borrowed this motif from his grandfather, Samos II, as he is also shown wearing the same guise on coinage.⁵⁷ The rows of *stelae* depicting Antiochos' Persian ancestors show them wearing various forms of royal headdress, some of which overlap into the "divine wardrobes" of the gods.⁵⁸ The headdress proves an effective and simple guise for visual assimilation, employed extensively at Nemrut Dağ. The Pointed tiara, featuring a pointed peak and diadem is worn by Antiochos' father Mithridates I on coinage and in his depiction in relief at Nemrut Dağ. Antiochos also uses it to link his father's appearance in sculpture to the rock-cut relief of his grandfather Samos II, which he commissioned for his burial place at Arsameia ad Euphratem. The archaeological evidence suggests the colossal sculptures of Artagnes-Heracles-Ares were also adorned with this pointed style of headwear. By using the same design for gods and ancestors, he affiliates himself with both.

⁵⁵ Young, 1964, 33.

⁵⁶ Brijder, 88.

⁵⁷ Smith, 121; Sullivan, 750.

⁵⁸ Young, 30.

From Nemrut Dağ the *hierothesia* of Antiochos' predecessors would be visible, and vice versa. The dramatic location of the funerary monument was chosen as halfway point between heaven and earth, as Antiochos himself wished to be buried, and worshipped, "in closest proximity to the heavenly throne".⁵⁹ Antiochos dedicated the building project to himself, thereby elevating himself to divine status.⁶⁰ The scale of manipulation of the landscape and its natural resources is awe-inspiring; the 50m high tumulus would almost certainly have been perceived by its ancient audience as a God-like feat of engineering (fig. 18).⁶¹ Perhaps Antiochos was inspired by the words of his ancestor Seleucus I, who reportedly stipulated: "all things which are beautiful and are admired by the people are the result of efforts and danger".⁶² The tall climb to visit the monumental mountain-top tomb would indeed have been an extraordinary event for the people of Commagene. However, this seemingly backfired on Antiochos' intention of establishing his funerary monument as a place of worship. While the monument presumably continued to house his body (although the burial chamber has not been identified), the archaeological evidence of its continued use as a cult centre is negative. Pilgrimage to a cult site was not unusual in antiquity, but the abandonment of Nemrut Dağ can be attributed to its high altitude and limited accessibility. Despite the king's efforts to promote ruler worship, public participation was short-lived. The site was likely abandoned two generations later, after the death of his son, Mithridates II, who fulfilled his father's wishes by also being buried at the site.⁶³

Through analysis of the physical remains of Nemrut Dağ it is evident that Antiochos I attempted to establish a legacy centred on the creation of his own divine status, legitimised by his rich ancestral and cultural background.⁶⁴ He traced his family to its quasi-divine origins, as

⁵⁹ Nomos. 37.

⁶⁰ Nomos. 36 ff.

⁶¹ Versluys, 53.

⁶² Diod. Sic. 19.90.5.

⁶³ Blömer/Winter, 64.

⁶⁴ Nomos. 36.

Alexander the Great, the Seleucids, and the Orontid dynasty of Commagene had done previously. The burial site also references cosmology in its relief sculpture, notably the lion horoscope relief, a representation of Antiochos' astrological symbol and constellation. The temple-tomb was likely planned at an orientation for alignment with astronomical phenomena, associated with the date the royal cult was established on the site. The foundation of the cult may have been Antiochos' birthday, considering the stipulations regarding birthday celebrations in the great cult inscription.⁶⁵ A stepped platform was constructed on the east side of the east terrace, presumably a designated space for ritual activity, but the excavation of the site yielded a paucity of finds which can be connected to its use. Public participation in the cult was conceived by Antiochos to encourage the creation of cultural memory, as "memory can be both collective and individual, conditioned by cultural, societal or religious context and culturally conditioned by its performative and sensory elements".⁶⁶

Using this framework, the immortality Antiochos I hoped to condition by constructing a temple-tomb to his own cult can be understood. The historic ritual significance of the mountain-top site was heightened by the Antiochan building project of colossal religious sculpture and dynastic cult imagery that conflates symbols of Hellenic and Persian royalty. The *hierothesion* of Antiochos I is therefore the materialisation of 'invention of tradition': an interpretation and appropriation of cultural inputs by Antiochos I to perpetuate his own authority and identity.⁶⁷ As the temple-tomb was constructed towards the end of his reign, Antiochos seemingly hoped to immortalise the Hellenistic identity he created through his monumental building venture.

⁶⁵ Nomos. 102-104; 130ff.

⁶⁶ Hope/Huskinson. 2011. xiii.

⁶⁷ Boschung/Busch/Versluys, 2015, address the concept of 'invention of tradition' in antiquity.

Honouring Ancestors: Dynastic Funerary Monuments

The act of commemorating ancestors was a familiar concept to Antiochos I. His father Mithridates I constructed a shrine in memory of his mother at the modern-day site of Karakuş. The tumulus was encircled by limestone Doric columns on top of which stood sculpture, including a *dexiosis* relief stele picturing the king shaking the hand of a woman who, in context, can be identified as his mother.⁶⁸ A similar funerary monument at Sesönk featuring a burial mound and three pairs of Doric limestone columns topped with sculpture may also have been built by Mithridates, for Antiochos' Greco-Syrian mother, Laodice.⁶⁹ Influenced by his father's building programmes, Antiochos developed the resting places of his paternal relatives.

Arsameia ad Euphratem, which was named after the Armenian king Arsames who ruled the territory two centuries prior to Antiochos I, is the burial place of Antiochos' grandfather, Samos II.⁷⁰ The location's connection to the previous king, a paternal ancestor, surely motivated Samos II to select this spot for his monumental burial. Moreover, the site had pre-existing sacred associations with a local goddess, Argandene.⁷¹ Thus, the location had a rich heritage which emphasised the divinity and royalty of the Commagenian king buried there by association. Like the *hierothesion* upon mountainous Nemrut Dağ, the sacred burial site of Samos II is situated upon an elevated plateau, overlooking the Euphrates and Gerger rivers. The dramatic height of the tomb and its panoramic vista recall the monumental manifestation of authority expressed by Antiochos I at Nemrut Dağ. The burial sites are linked by a road via Narince, meaning pilgrimage between the two was manageable during Antiochos' reign, and thereafter. Samos II traced his descent to the Armenian Oronotids, but his reign is not recorded in written sources. Unlike Nemrut Dağ, Arsameia ad Euphratem has not been subject to

⁶⁸ Colledge, 2003.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Blomer/Winter, 70.

⁷¹ Ibid.

excavation. Therefore, the evidence of the site's function as the tomb and sanctuary of Samos II is limited to two monumental inscriptions and a 4m high rock-cut relief, all of which were commissioned by Antiochos I during the monumentalizing process of his familial burial sites.

An inscription written in Greek is situated below an over life-size royal portrait, carved high into the rock face on the western side of the plateau (fig. 19). This text identifies the figure as Samos II, from which it can be extrapolated that Arsameia ad Euphratem is indeed his burial site. However, the inscription was erected by Antiochos I in memory of his grandfather, and therefore also provided Antiochos with an outlet to articulate his own sense of self and authority over this landscape. The image of Samos II, cut in low relief in a niche on the west-facing rockface, provides a visual link to the ancestor reliefs at Nemrut Dağ. The rock relief is a form of sculpture borrowed from the Hittite Empire. A comparable example is a rock relief depicting the Hittite ruler Tarkasnawa in the Karabel Pass.⁷² The king is shown striding to the right, armed with a long spear in his left hand, and a bow in his right (fig. 20). In contrast, Samos II is shown facing the opposite way (to the viewer's left), and he holds a *rhyton* in his right hand. This vessel, used to make ritual libation offerings, informs the viewer that this is a sacred place. Moreover, his pose recalls that of the paternal forefather *stelae* at Nemrut Dağ, in which Antiochos' ancestors are shown making the same gesture, holding either a *phiale* or *rhyton* in their right hand. Alternatively, the object could be identified as a *barsom*, but this does not correlate with the reliefs set up by Antiochos at Nemrut Dağ.⁷³

Compared to the relief sculptures of Nemrut Dağ, the articulation of clothing is less detailed, but is still in keeping with the Persian/Iranian dress and pointed conical tiara worn by those on the paternal ancestor *stelae*.⁷⁴ Like Antiochos I, his grandfather is shown clean-

⁷² Brijder, 54.

⁷³ Blömer/Winter, 75.

⁷⁴ Brijder, 56.

shaven. Visual similitude is fundamental as it suggests ideological similitude to the viewer. By visually comparing himself with his predecessors, Antiochos linked his reign with that of his deified forefathers. Thus, the Commagenian rock reliefs may have been influenced by royal Hittite precedents, but were executed differently to serve a different ideological function in the context of Antiochos' reign.

There is potentially further evidence for the sacred status of the site in the medium of relief sculpture. A naturally occurring niche in the rock on the north side of the plateau contains a trace of a *dexiosis* image, like those found at Antiochos' other funerary monuments.⁷⁵ The relief was unfortunately defaced in an apparent act of iconoclasm, but the basic outline of the image, a handshake between a king (Antiochos?) and a god (Heracles?), can still be identified. The *dexiosis* relief is accompanied by a lengthy Greek inscription consisting of six columns, which is now in poor fragmentary condition. It details the name of the site, and its significance as a *hierothesion* of Antiochos' ancestors, but does not state which ancestor(s) in particular: 'he consecrated *hierothesia* for the royal bodies in this place'.⁷⁶ In addition, the main body of the text is the *Nomos* of Antiochos, in accordance with his desire for it to be displayed at all sanctuaries. Thus, Antiochos built on the pre-eminence of the site in relation to his dynastic background to promote the notion of his ruler cult.

A similar development is evident at the site of Arsameia ad Nymphaeum. The site was initially founded in the second century BC by Armenian ruler Arsames to serve as his royal residence.⁷⁷ Excavations by Dörner and Goell in the mid-twentieth century yielded valuable evidence for importance of ancestry in the establishment of Antiochos' ruler cult.⁷⁸ Antiochos I commemorated his father, Mithridates I Callinicus, here by developing the *hierothesion* upon

⁷⁵ Blömer /Winter, 73.

⁷⁶ IGL Syr I, 48.

⁷⁷ Blömer /Winter, 78.

⁷⁸ Dörner/Goell, 1955; Dörner/Goell, 1963.

the acropolis plateau, also high above ground level and the Nymphaeum river. However, the hill-top burial site was also a major cult site of the Commagenian god, Mithras. The processional way which leads up to the plateau was punctuated with monumental pedestals, upon which stood relief sculptures and inscriptions. There were also rooms and passages cut into the rock which acted as entranceways to the next level of the site. As visitors ascended the sloping processional way, they would first have seen a *dexiosis* relief portraying Mithras and Antiochos I, erected upon pedestal II (fig. 21). Again, the reverse of this relief stele was inscribed in Greek (fig. 22). The inscription reveals that a priest was employed to oversee the worship of Mithras-Apollo-Helios-Hermes at the site, another example of religious syncretism at a royal Commagenian funerary monument. As worshippers climbed closer to the summit, they would pass pedestal I, upon which two relief *stelae* depicted life-size male figures in Persian dress also shaking hands (fig. 23). Although these reliefs are now fragmentary, it is most likely that they represent Antiochos I and his father, as this is his dynastic cult site. The corresponding inscription on the back of the relief designates this area of the site as a ‘pronaos’. Presumably, this is the central point of ancestor worship of Antiochos’ father, Mithridates I Callinicus.

The processional way culminates at another tunnel hewn into the rock. The underground passage was excavated in 1953 and 1956, but its original purpose, whether cultic or pragmatic, is unclear. On the smoothed rockface above the entrance to the tunnel is a monumental reiteration of Antiochos’ great cult inscription. The text also confirms that his father “dedicated this hierothesion to his own body”, but that the building activity was the work of Antiochos I in honour of his father – and himself:

“I erected altars and sacred votive offerings as benefits the *manes* of my father in accordance with my piety, and I have established statues and images of the gods,

together with the representation of myself, lifelike in shape and form, for eternal memory'.⁷⁹

To the left-hand side of the tunnel is a platform known as pedestal III. Atop this third pedestal stood an over life-size *dexiosis* relief of Antiochos I and Heracles (figs. 24, 25). This is the best preserved of all the relief *stelae* from both *Arsameia ad Euphratem* and *Arsameia ad Nymphaeum*. The stele stands at 3.34m high and the sculptor's attention to detail is evident. The king is again shown dressed in Persian attire, and wears the same extravagant headdress featured in his relief *stelae* at Nemrut Dağ, which combines both a diadem and a tall five-pointed tiara. The recurrence of Heracles at Antiochos' *hierothesia* shows that he was fundamental in the Commagenian pantheon under Antiochos I. Heracles was the ideal prototype for Hellenistic rulers seeking divine worship as he transcended the mortal world and was divinized as a hero. Alexander the Great legitimised his reign and divine status by claiming him as an ancestor. This percolated from the Macedonians to the Seleucid line, from whom the Antiochos claimed descent. It is notable that in this relief, Antiochos' headgear makes him slightly taller than his divine counterpart, who is shown in the traditional Greek guise of heroic nudity and curly beard. Heracles holds his attribute, a club, in his left hand while his right hand is locked in a handshake with the Commagenian king.

The cult site of *Arsameia ad Nymphaeum* was built to encourage a tripartite framework of worship. The first tier reached by visitors was dedicated to the local god Mithras, the second to Mithridates I Callinicus, and the third to Antiochos I himself. Indeed, Antiochos is the common element in the visual language of each. At each level, a monumental pedestal displayed a *dexiosis* relief depicting a pertinent deity with Antiochos. Ancestry was the foundation of his reign and he emphasised this by monumentalising ancestral burial sites,

⁷⁹ Nomos II. 60 ff.

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where he conspicuously used the concept of dynastic worship to legitimise his own ruler cult across the kingdom.

Back to the Future: Philopappos' Monument

The funerary monument of Philopappos was initially subject to excavation by Homer Thompson and John Travlos in the 1940s, followed by a second archaeological study by Maria Santangelo.⁸⁰ Their work was developed by Diane Kleiner's 1975 study, which resulted in the publication of the major monograph on the monument nine years later.⁸¹ Philopappos' monument, built c.116 CE, draws on the same concepts that underpin Antiochos' *hierotherisia* in Commagene to formulate and present his own identity, but in a different geopolitical context. Built high upon the Mouseion hill in Athens, Philopappos' funerary monument stands around 1m higher than the acropolis hill, and would have been visible from several miles outside the city in antiquity.⁸² The Mouseion hill derived its name from being the burial place of Mousaios, a priestly poet of the 6th century BC who received divine inspiration from the muses.⁸³ Thus, the Mouseion hill was a place of historic cultural relevance, much like the burial sites chosen by Philopappos' ancestors in Commagene.

The monument is positioned north-east to face the acropolis; thus, it is aligned to meet the gaze of those standing between the Propylaia and the Parthenon. This commanding position is undeniably an allusion to the mountain-top tombs of Philopappos' relatives in Commagene, namely Nemrut Dağ. Pausanias' brief description of the site notes that it stood 'inside the ancient ring-wall' of the city, a reference to the ancient Themistoclean wall.⁸⁴ The position of the monument was clearly noteworthy to Pausanias, most likely because ancient burials were typically extra-mural for reasons of sanctity and sanitation.⁸⁵ However, the writer refers to

⁸⁰ Santangelo, 1941.

⁸¹ Kleiner, 1984.

⁸² Kleiner, 37.

⁸³ Paus. 1.25.8

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Boardman/Kurtz, 1971, 92-188; Toynbee, 73.

Philopappos' tomb simply as 'a monument for a Syrian man'.⁸⁶ His account ironically fails to elaborate on the multicultural ancestry of the man buried there, which Philopappos conspicuously strived to express.

Only two thirds of the monument's concave façade are extant; the burial chamber itself has been reduced to its foundations (fig. 26). Nevertheless, the remaining structure displays a plethora of epigraphic and iconographic evidence of the role of ancestry in the self-identification of a prominent individual of the imperial Roman period. Philopappos' hill-top funerary monument conceptually recalls the funerary tradition that was conceived by his ancestors in Commagene. However, Greco-Roman architectural elements, for example the engaged Corinthian pilasters, do not reflect the architectural programme of Commagenian funerary monuments. On the other hand, the concept of juxtaposing styles could itself be an allusion to the eclectic *hierotheresia* of his ancestors, especially Nemrut Dağ. A reconstruction of the monument has been produced from the surviving material evidence (fig. 27), which shows the tomb's façade conspicuously divided into two registers. The upper register is subdivided vertically into three corresponding components, each containing a niche. The niches to the left and right of the central niche contained portraits of Antiochos IV, Philopappos' paternal grandfather, and Seleucus Nicator, from whom his ancestors claimed maternal descent and Hellenic connections. The sculptural portraits of these two Near Eastern rulers are integral to the monument's sculptural programme, and highlight the value of mixed ancestral heritage to Philopappos.⁸⁷

In contrast with Antiochos I, Philopappos did not use his tomb to express divine pretensions – at least not conspicuously. It has been postulated that, as intramural burial was reserved for semi-divine heroes in Athens, Philopappos' funerary monument was in fact a

⁸⁶ Paus. 1.25.8.

⁸⁷ IG II², 3451.

heroon.⁸⁸ Philopappos' hill-top burial conforms to the burial practices of his ancestors in Commagene, but is unusual in the context of Roman Athens.⁸⁹ However, the absence of cult worship at the place of Philopappos' internment differentiates his tomb from those constructed by Antiochos I. Nemrut Dağ was designed to function both as a place of burial and of ruler cult worship, whereas Philopappos' tomb is a solitary monument. This is likely due to the decline of foreign divine monarchies within the sphere of Roman influence; the rise of imperial cult authority in the Eastern empire denied foreign dynasts cult dedication and worship.

Nonetheless, the sepulchral depiction of Philopappos and his ancestors is visually reminiscent of the seated colossi of Antiochos I upon Nemrut Dağ. Greco-Roman funerary portraits carved in the round are typically shown standing, not seated.⁹⁰ Although Philopappos is not shown on a colossal scale, he is depicted in the guise of heroic nudity. Colossal portrait sculpture is an artistic tradition of the Hellenistic kings which was perpetuated by Augustus and the emperors of Philopappos' day.⁹¹ Colossal sculptures, especially in the Roman imperial period, have divine connotations. It is notable that the *Mausoleum Augusti*, built in the form of a tumulus, was topped with an over life-size sculpture of the first *princeps* (fig. 28). Deification and apotheosis of Rome's imperial family became normative, but only after death was an emperor's divinity peddled to the public. Assimilation with deities in the living world was restricted to elite art of the private sphere, for example the Gemma Augustaea that depicts the imperial family in the guise of gods from the Roman pantheon (fig. 29). Thus, it was socially acceptable for Philopappos, a prominent public figure in Roman Athens, to be represented in heroic nudity in his funerary portrait sculpture, as this was a reference to Heracles or Zeus that

⁸⁸ Brijder, 76.

⁸⁹ Boardman/Kurtz, 92, 188.

⁹⁰ Kleiner, 54-55.

⁹¹ Ruck 2007, 119.

was deemed appropriate in *post-mortem* representation. However, he is not represented on an equal scale to the gods, as his ancestor Antiochos I represented himself in funerary sculpture.

The lower register of the monument's sculptural programme is a frieze carved in high relief depicting the consular procession of Philopappos. It is understandable why Philopappos chose to commemorate himself with this image, as consulship was the pinnacle of an elite male's career in the Roman world. As the heir to a kingdom dominated by Rome, Philopappos maintained his family's elite status and held titular authority. Plutarch notes that despite the annexation of his ancestral territory by emperor Vespasian in 72 CE, Philopappos was referred to by his friends as 'king'.⁹² Despite several diplomatic errors (Antiochos I deployed Commagenian *hippotoxotai* to fight for Pompey during the civil war, for example), the Commagenian dynasty experienced a graceful decline, recorded sympathetically by Josephus.⁹³ Philopappos' chariot frieze echoes the image of Titus returning to Rome in a triumphal chariot with the spoils of the Jewish War as depicted on his triumphal arch in Rome. Both scenes read left to right, with the chariots positioned at the right side of the relief. Moreover, Philopappos' bodily position mirrors Titus': they both stand in a three-quarter view with their heads turned to the right.⁹⁴ This visual allusion is a conspicuous 'nod' to the Roman imperial family, but also to Philopappos' ancestral connection to the victor of the Jewish War. Recalling his putative ancestor Alexander the Great, Antiochos IV sent troops under the command of his son Epiphanes, calling themselves 'Macedonians' to aid Titus during the siege of Jerusalem.⁹⁵ The choice to depict Antiochos IV on his funerary monument combines his ancestors' native Commagenian past with the Greco-Roman present. The juxtaposition of his

⁹² Suet. Vesp. 8.4; Plut. 628a.

⁹³ Jos. BJ 5. 460-465; 7.238-239.

⁹⁴ Kleiner, 83.

⁹⁵ Jos. BJ. 465.

dynastic and civic values shows that Philopappos conceived his own identity as an amalgamation of Commagenian, Greek and Roman cultural influences.

Philopappos is depicted togate in the sculptural frieze, which is in keeping with elite Roman values expressed in portraiture (fig. 30). This contrasts sharply with his nude portrait sculpture, which arguably recalls divine heroes. However, he is also wearing a radial crown associated with the divine, and akin to the headpiece worn by Apollo-Helios shown in scenes of *dexiosis* with Antiochos I at Nemrut Dağ. Moreover, Philopappos recalls Antiochos' assimilation with Heracles, who is shown both in relief and in free-standing sculpture at Nemrut Dağ, and in the well preserved *dexiosis* relief at Arsameia ad Nymphaeum. Not only does Philopappos' chariot shows an image of Heracles, but the scene itself invokes the hero's ascension to the afterlife by way of chariot. Preceding the Roman period, Heracles' chariot-driven ascension proved a popular mythological motif on Greek vase painting and metalwork.⁹⁶ Heracles was embraced by Hellenistic rulers including Philopappos' ancestors. Therefore, the motif of Heracles can also be interpreted as an allusion to his dynastic heritage. Overall, the combination of portraits carved in the round and relief sculpture recalls the multifaceted sculptural programme of Antiochos I's temple-tomb.

Despite recognising that Philopappos “lived at the confluence of many other cultures”, Baslez refers to him as ‘a prince between *two* worlds’.⁹⁷ The epigraphic evidence from Philopappos' funerary monument demonstrates his ability to navigate multiple cultural influences and articulate his identity using the concept of code-switching, a theoretical framework described as “the working of inherent pluralism”.⁹⁸ Cicero's use of Latin for public speaking and Greek for private correspondence exemplifies the practice of code-switching in

⁹⁶ Richter, 1941.

⁹⁷ Baslez, 1992, 90. Italicised by author.

⁹⁸ Versluys, 29.

language.⁹⁹ The Philopappos monument demonstrates the conscious use of both Latin and Greek in a funerary context. The use of bilingualism is notable in a provincial Roman context, when Greek was considered a marker of educational and cultural status, not just a sign of ethnic identity.¹⁰⁰ For Philopappos, however, the predominant use of Greek on his funerary monument tells the viewer of his affiliation with Greek culture, not only that of second century CE Athens, but also his Greek heritage. Fundamentally, epitaphs are focussed on an individual to convey a message that has been commissioned to immortalise the deceased in a carefully constructed text. The epigraphic evidence from Philopappos' tomb elucidates the role of material culture in expressions of identity. By switching between Greek and Latin, Philopappos presented the appropriate identity, depending on context.

Five inscriptions from the tomb's façade have been preserved, to varying degrees. Three were erected beneath the trio of seated sculptures, with an additional two flanking the central niche containing the image of Philopappos. The Greek inscription located directly beneath his portrait asserts his Greek lineage and Athenian identity: "Philopappos, son of Epiphanes, of the deme Besa".¹⁰¹ Philopappos was not only granted Athenian citizenship, but also possessed the role of Athenian archon. Although this is missing from the monument's extant inscriptions, it is recorded in textual and epigraphic evidence elsewhere.¹⁰² It is likely that Philopappos drew on Greek burial traditions by rejecting the inclusion of 'job titles' in the Greek inscription.¹⁰³ The adjacent pilaster featured a Greek inscription which attests to Philopappos' royal Commagenian heritage: "King Antiochos Philopappos, son of King Epiphanes, son of Antiochos".¹⁰⁴ Although this inscription is non-extant, a 15th century drawing produced by Giuliano da Sangallo documents its content. It is notable that he retains

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Whitmarsh, 2008, 9.

¹⁰¹ IG III¹, 557.

¹⁰² Plut. Quaest. Conv. 1.10; IG II² 1759; IG III¹ 1020.

¹⁰³ Boardman/Kurtz, 1971, 260-266.

¹⁰⁴ IG II² 3451.

royal titular and references his father and grandfather Antiochos, the last Commagenian ruler, just as Antiochos I referred to his closest paternal ancestors in the construction of *hierotheresia* to legitimise his ideological building programme of his own funerary monument, Nemrut Dağ.

In contrast, Latin was used to convey Philopappos' role in a Roman context.¹⁰⁵ The Latin text on the left pilaster provides full details of his Roman titles:

“Caius Iulius Antiochos Philopappus, son of Caius, of the Fabian tribe, consul, and Arval brother, admitted to the praetorian rank by the emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Optumus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus”.

The use of Latin spelling for his Roman name contrasts with the Greek inscription centred on his local Athenian role. Moreover, the inclusion of his *tria nomina* links him to the pertinent *gens* Iulia and *tribus* Fabia. Philopappos received Roman citizenship through his ancestral line; Antiochos III is thought to have first been granted citizenship by association with the *gens* Iulia.¹⁰⁶ He is therefore implicitly linking back to his family while asserting his citizenship status. Through his family connections Philopappos achieved great success within a foreign empire; he integrated successfully in to elite circles and held notable roles in both Athens and Rome. As names are markers of identity, particularly when used on public facing funerary monuments, correctly deploying one's preferred nomenclature for oneself is integral to the concept of self-presentation and displayed identity as exemplified in the epigraphic medium.¹⁰⁷

The inclusion of titles in the Roman inscription is useful for dating the monument retrospectively. Trajan's titles Germanicus and Dacicus point to a date of around 114 CE. Absent from the inscription is Trajan's title Parthicus, received in 116 CE, thereby dating the

¹⁰⁵ CIL III 552.

¹⁰⁶ Sullivan 794.

¹⁰⁷ Mullen/James, 2012, 8.

inscription, and presumably the tomb itself, to 114-116.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Latin text reveals that Philopappos held pivotal positions in Rome. He served as consul, as shown on the consular frieze, and was part of the Arval brotherhood, an exclusive priestly college whose membership included the emperor.

Despite the abundance of information contained within Philopappos' epitaph, there is no written testimony of who erected the monument. As Philopappos lacked any known heirs, the patron may have been his sister Julia Balbilla.¹⁰⁹ Balbilla was a member of Hadrian and Sabina's inner circle, and is known in the archaeological record for leaving graffiti in the form of panegyric poetry on the Colossi of Memnon at Luxor. In the graffiti, Balbilla asserted her genealogical claims, much like her ancestor Antiochos I in his great cult inscription:

“For pious (*eusebeis*) were my parents and grandparents, Balbillus the Wise and King Antiochus: Balbillus the father of my mother a queen; and King Antiochus, father of my father. From their stock I too have obtained noble blood, and these are my writings, Balbilla the Pious (*eusebes*).”

The emphasis on piety, and the conscious decision to inscribe this on to a colossal seated sculpture, certainly recall the great cult inscription carved in to the back of the colossi upon Nemrut Dağ.¹¹⁰ As the heir to the dynasty, Balbilla had at her disposal “enormous ancestral wealth” to erect a monument for her next of kin, which also celebrated her ancestry.¹¹¹ Unlike the many formulaic epitaphs of the non-elite that urge the passer-by to “stop and look” at their tomb, Philopappos' funerary monument surely attracted attention from a wide audience simply from its conspicuous intramural presence in Athens.¹¹² Respectively, it is clear from the

¹⁰⁸ Kleiner, 14-15.

¹⁰⁹ Brennan, 1998, 226.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix for Nomos.

¹¹¹ Tac. Hist. 2.81.

¹¹² CIL I².1210; CIL VI. 15346.

combination of epigraphic and iconographic decoration of the tomb that the patron was aware that it would address a diverse audience. Therefore, they ensured that even if viewers could not read the bilingual epitaph, they could interpret the visual motifs of the impressive monument and recognise that this was commissioned to commemorate a person of high esteem.

There are no precise architectural parallels to the monument of Philopappos, but, like the *hierotheresia* built by Antiochos I, his monument incorporates traditions of East and West. Kleiner suggests that the design of Philopappos' monument took inspiration from the Nereid monument in Xanthos, Lycia.¹¹³ This royal tomb in Asia Minor was also built on a hill overlooking the city, and is similar in proportions and scale to Philopappos' monument. The tetrastyle structure includes three portrait sculptures in the round; the tripartite composition is similar to the upper register of the Philopappos monument, but the Nereid sculptures are crucially shown standing (fig. 31). Nonetheless, a sculptural frieze decorates the Nereid monument's lower half, like the processional frieze on Philopappos' monument. Comparative evidence also suggests that the Nereid monument inspired the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, built in the mid-fourth century BC (fig. 32). In turn, this pyramidal 'tumulus' influenced the style of tomb built at Belevi for a Hellenistic king, which has been linked to Antioch II of the Seleucids, an ancestor of Philopappos (this is not implausible, but Lysimachos may equally have been the monument's patron).¹¹⁴ It is apparent that the individual responsible for the construction of Philopappos tomb – either himself or his sister, Balbilla - explored a multitude of cultural influences and traditions from Asia Minor and Commagene in the East, to Greco-Roman style.

¹¹³ Kleiner, 58.

¹¹⁴ Stilwell, 1976, 148.

On the other hand, Vermeule stipulates that the design of Philopappos' monument is "more of a nymphaeum without water than a funerary structure in the Greco-Roman sense".¹¹⁵ Philopappos' tomb does indeed resemble a monumental fountain or nymphaeum, which were particularly popular in the second century CE.¹¹⁶ Examples of such structures, featuring concave façades and sculptural decoration, are present in the near East, North Africa and Greece; a local example is in the Athenian Agora, dated to the mid-second century.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the contemporary nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus at Olympia contained two tiers of sculptural portraits. The upper tier showed the patron's own family, while the lower displayed the imperial family, thus creating a parallel between Greek and Roman elites and reinforcing the significance of ancestry through public-facing monuments during the Roman period. Therefore, the Philopappos monument is not unique in its focus on ancestry. However, it is a unique monument architecturally, and it serves as a uniquely conspicuous insight into the construction and presentation of identity by a foreigner living under Rome's aegis. While complying with official culture, Philopappos maintained multiple identities; his local Athenian identity, native Commagenian identity, and public Roman identity are equally portrayed in his funerary monument.

¹¹⁵ Vermeule, 1968, 82.

¹¹⁶ Kleiner, 76.

¹¹⁷ Neureburg, 1965, 57-58; Thompson/Wycherley, 1972, 202-203.

Conclusion

Overall, the funerary monuments of Commagene's ruling family provide a plethora of evidence for the influence of ancestry upon identity in the Roman East, on a grander scale than the average citizen's wealth could facilitate. The parallels between the monumental burial sites of the best known Commagenian dynasts show how a Hellenistic royal house strove to establish and retain an identity, despite the wider geopolitical changes exacted by Rome upon autonomous kingdoms in the East. The funerary monuments of Antiochos I and Philopappos not only act as their personal resting places, but serve as permanent material legacies of a kingdom whose sovereignty was compromised after its territory was annexed by Rome. Although only ruins of these impressive tombs survive today, the interconnected political and religious ideologies of their respective royal patrons are as tangible to the modern viewer as they were to their contemporary audiences. As funerary monuments were effective vehicles for communicating ideology and identity in antiquity, it is apparent that ancestry played a formative role in the identity of a dynasty asserting their noble and divine status across a period of heightened political change and cultural exchange, on the periphery of Rome's increasingly influential empire. The dynasts' posthumous representation emphasises that the multicultural nature of their ancestral background was foundational to their identity, and an effective combination of text and imagery was used to reinforce this.

Similarities between the funerary monuments of Commagenian dynasts include their visually impressive scale and design, but also their prominent hill-top locations that facilitate wide visibility. The dynastic monuments constructed by Antiochos I for his father Mithridates I and grandfather Samos II can easily be interpreted as a means for Antiochos to further his ruler cult at familial temple-tombs; through association with his deified ancestors he constructed his own identity as a divine ruler. His ideology was consolidated by promulgating

his great cult inscription and replicating relief sculpture at his ancestors' burial sites. Visual assimilation with ancestors is a common element of the *hierotheresia* of the Commagenian dynasty: attributes and headwear are shown repeatedly in the relief sculpture of each site. *Dexiosis* reliefs depicting the king locked in handshakes with deities were erected at Nemrut Dağ and Arsameia ad Nymphaeum to relay Antiochos' divine persona. A further common feature of the Commagenian *hierotheresia* is that they hold local sacred significance, which is fundamental for linking the dynasty with the divine and suggesting that upon death the dynasty transcended the celestial divide. This idea is also propagated by the common element of Heracles, from whom their putative ancestor Alexander the Great had claimed descent.

On the other hand, Philopappos' funerary monument is not a *hierotheresion*, which, as Goell concluded, are exclusive to the kingdom of Commagene. Nonetheless, he is shown seated, in the guise of a semi-nude hero. The central placement of Philopappos, flanked on one side by an heir to Alexander the Great's empire, and on the other by the last Commagenian king, recalls the seated colossi on Nemrut Dağ which elevate Antiochos I to divine status by visual association. His funerary monument plays on pre-existing dynastic traditions, but, due to the political environment of his age, Philopappos focussed on his legitimate lineage rather than claims of divine kinship to cultivate credibility. Thus, the Philopappos monument is indebted to his ancestors' *hierotheresia* while also exhibiting stylistic elements of Greco-Roman architecture and contemporary Roman values. The material evidence of Philopappos' multiculturalism can be analysed through the frameworks of bilingualism and code switching. Like the cultural and religious syncretism exhibited in sculpture from Commagenian *hierotheresia*, Philopappos' funerary monument illustrates a confluent discourse between East and West. His monumental, bilingual epitaph embodies multiculturalism and conveys that identity is a complexity that is both personal and communal, and derived from multiple cultural inputs.

The prevailing theme of all the dynastic funerary monuments is the use of the past as a reference point for the construction of cultural and social memory. The references are numerous, ranging from the explicit to the implicit: from borrowing sculptural styles to appropriating the historical significance of each burial site, the Commagenian dynasts manipulated the shared past to formulate their displayed identity. With influences ranging from the Hittites to their Persian and Hellenistic predecessors, the Commagenian dynasty embraced cultural heterogeneity and their illustrious ancestry to construct, convey, and preserve their identities in monumental fashion. More than a century after the construction of Nemrut Dağ, Philopappos (or perhaps his sister, Balbilla) recalled his mixed ancestry in a multifaceted funerary monument that distinguishes his cultural identity from his public role within elite Greco-Roman society.

Appendix

Table 1 Commagenian Royal Genealogy

Ptolemaeus	163 BC – C. 130 BC
Samos II	C. 130 BC – C. 100 BC
Mithridates I Callinicus	C. 100 BC – C. 70 BC
Antiochos I	C. 70 BC – 36 BC
Mithridates II	36 BC – C. 20 BC
Mithridates III	C. 20 BC – 12 BC
Antiochos III	12 BC – 17 CE
C. Julius Antiochos IV Epiphanes	38 CE – 72 CE

Fig. 1

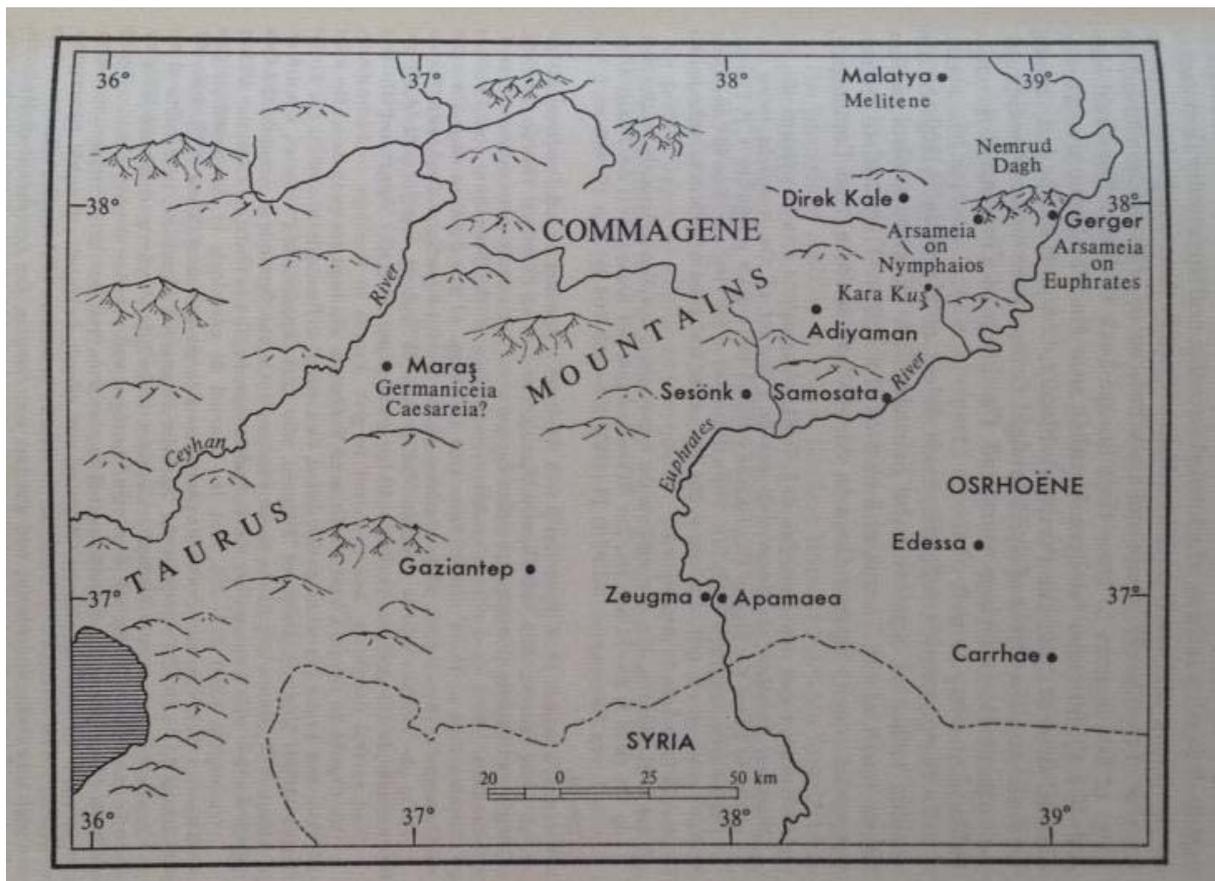




Fig.2

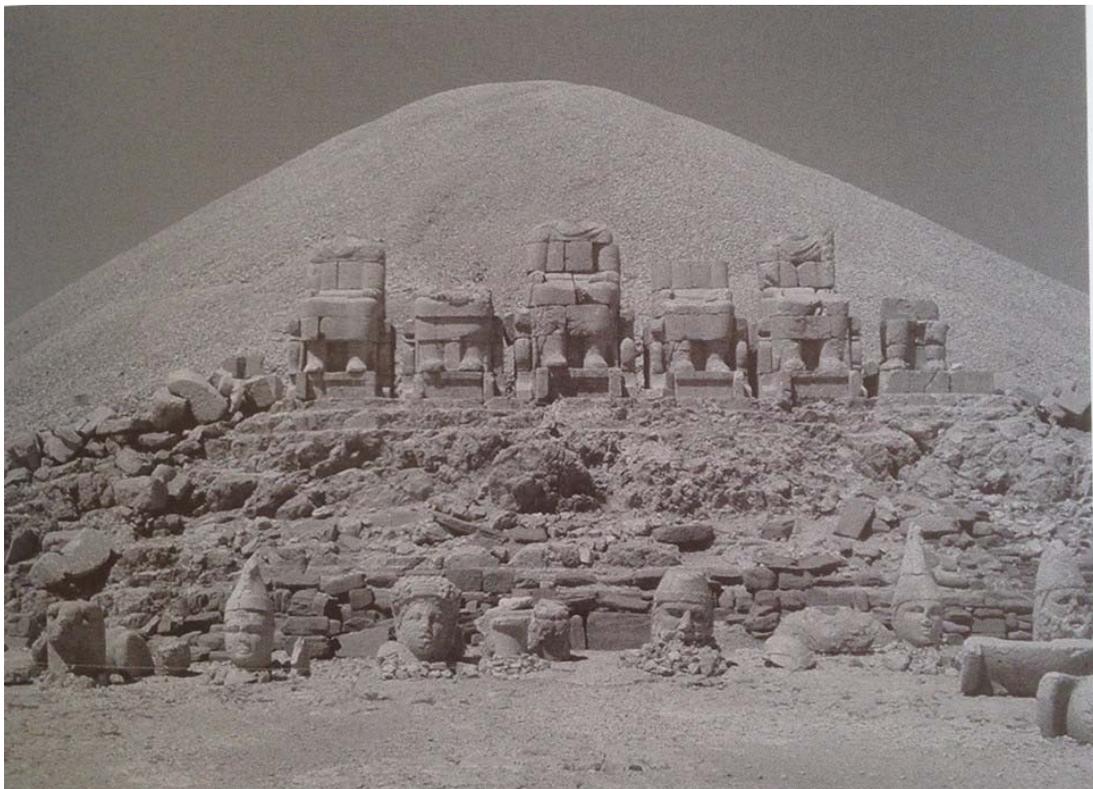


Fig. 3

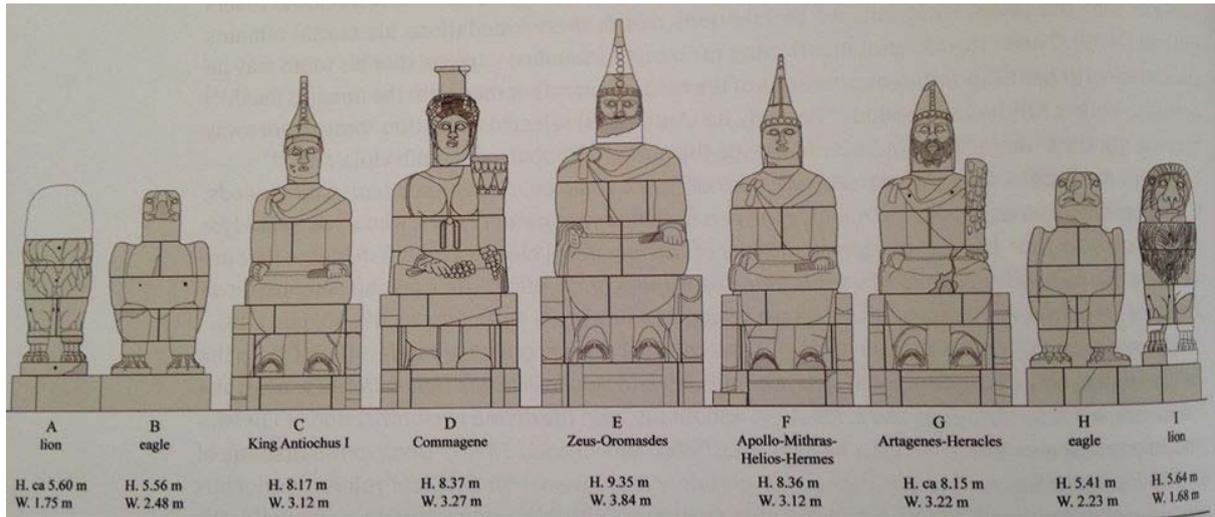


Fig. 4

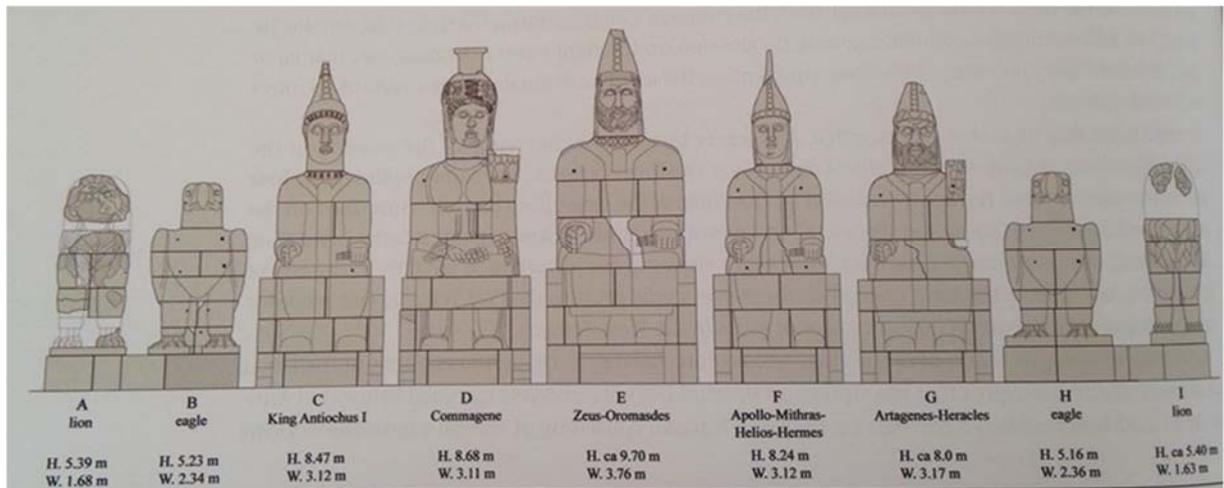


Fig. 5

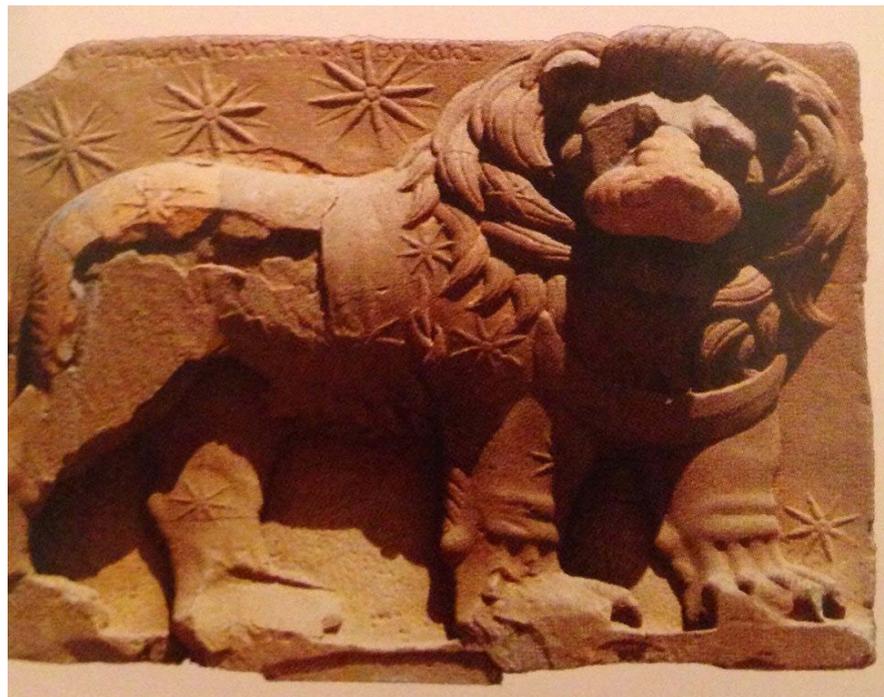


Fig. 6

Fig. 7

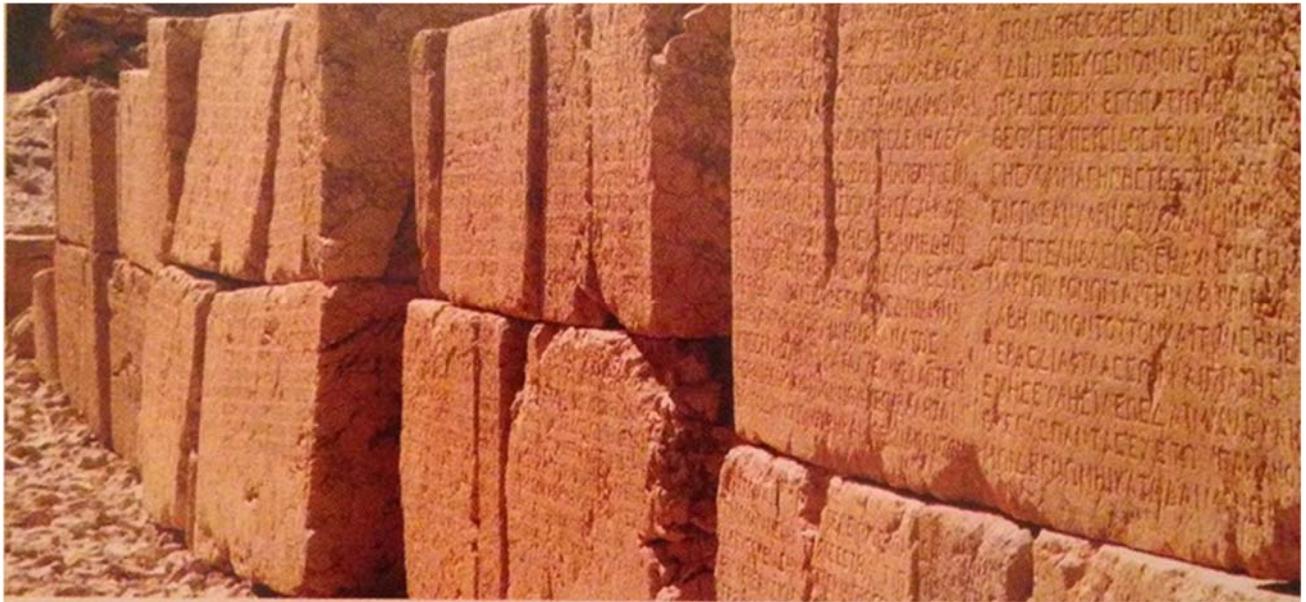
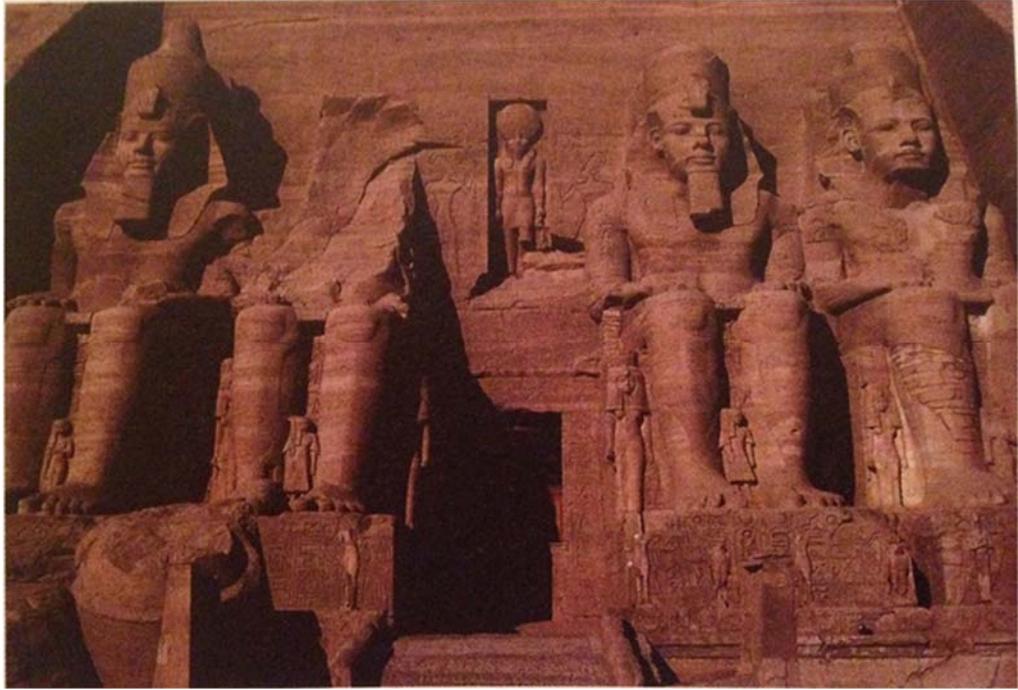


Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

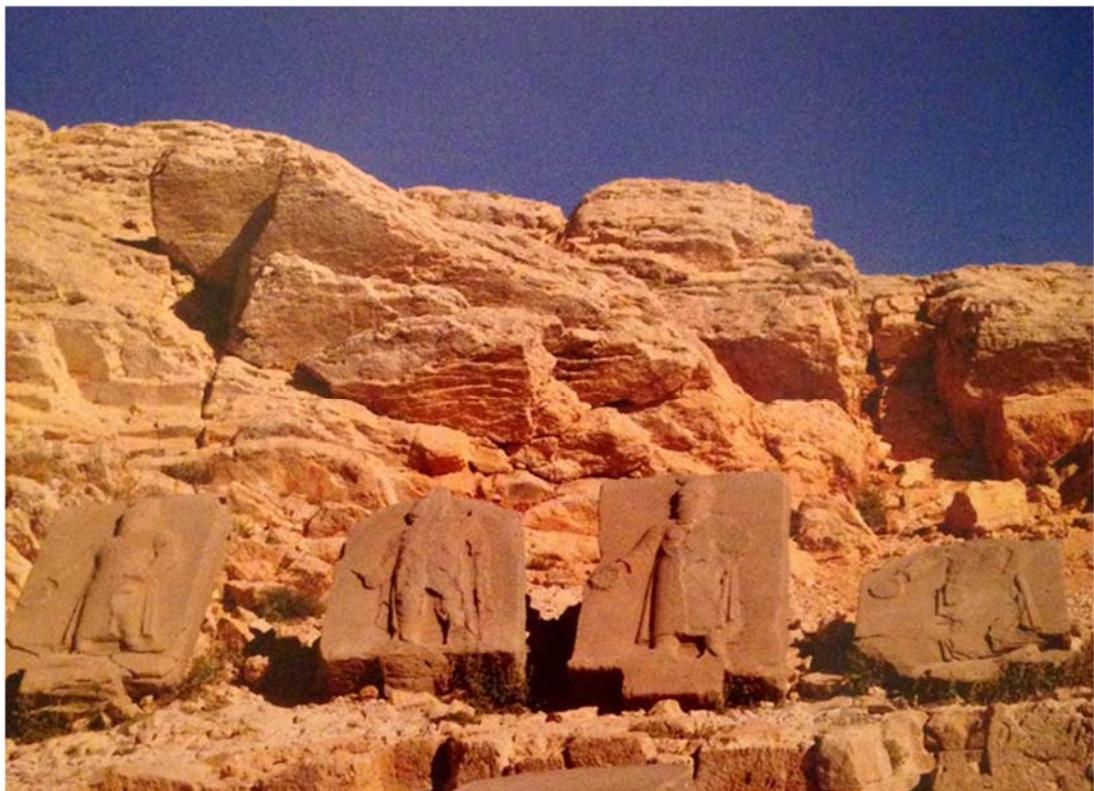


Fig. 10

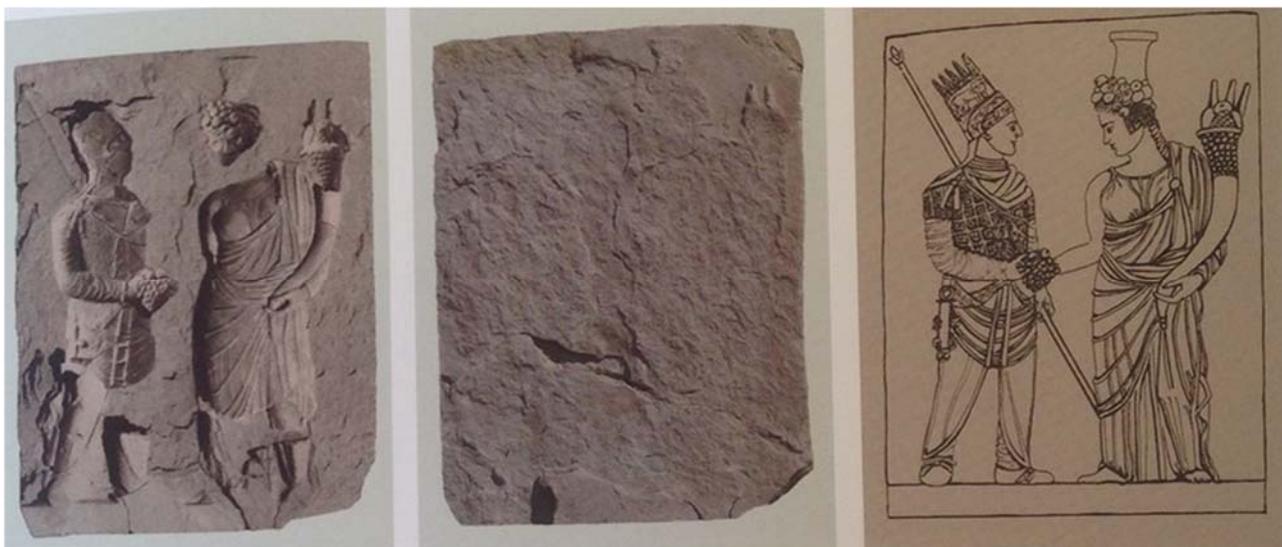


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

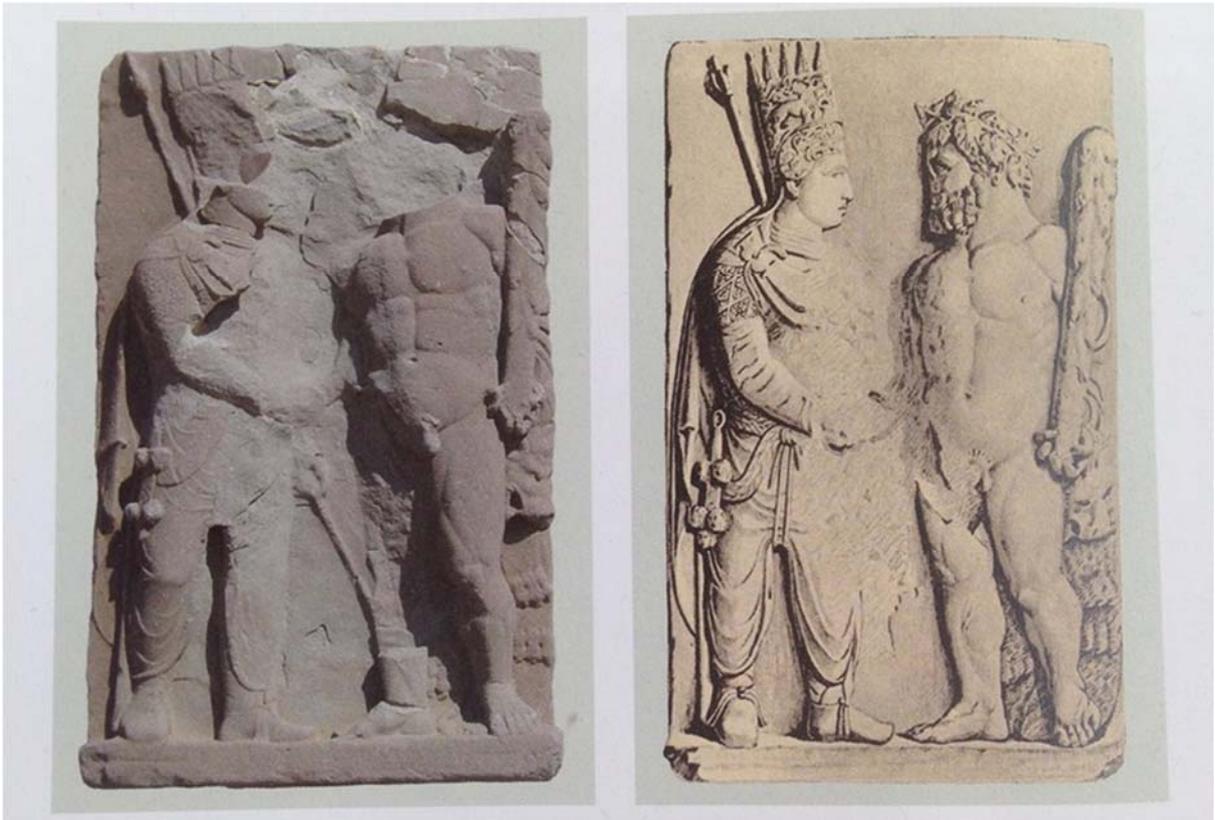


Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

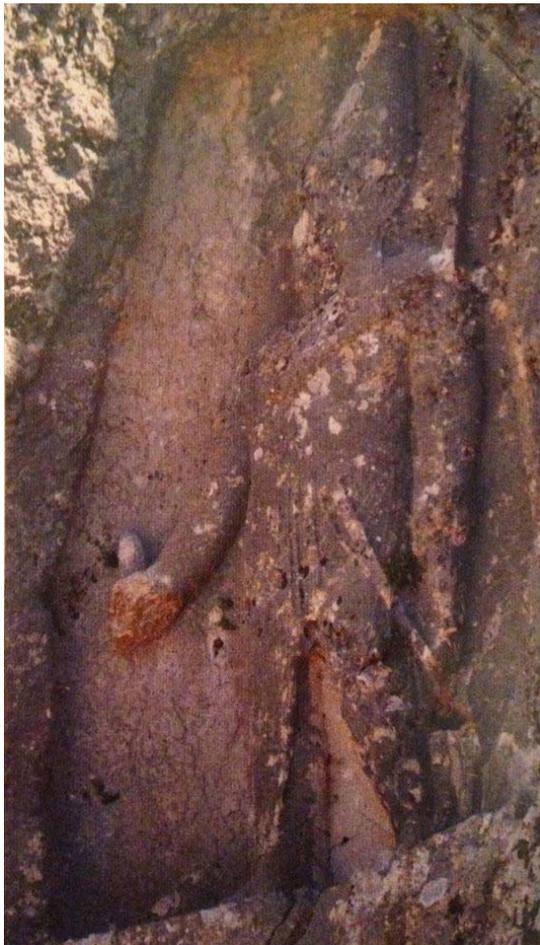


Fig. 19

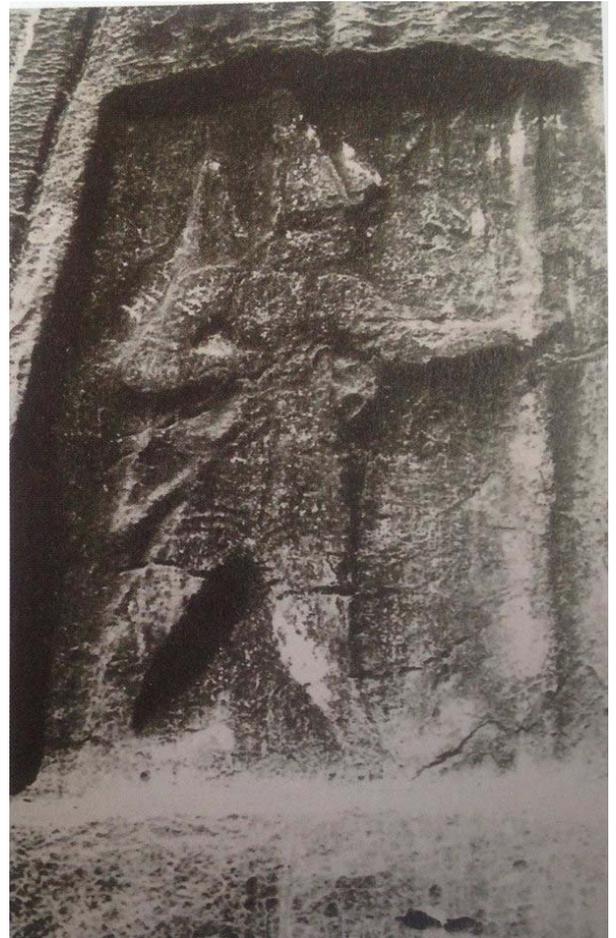


Fig. 20

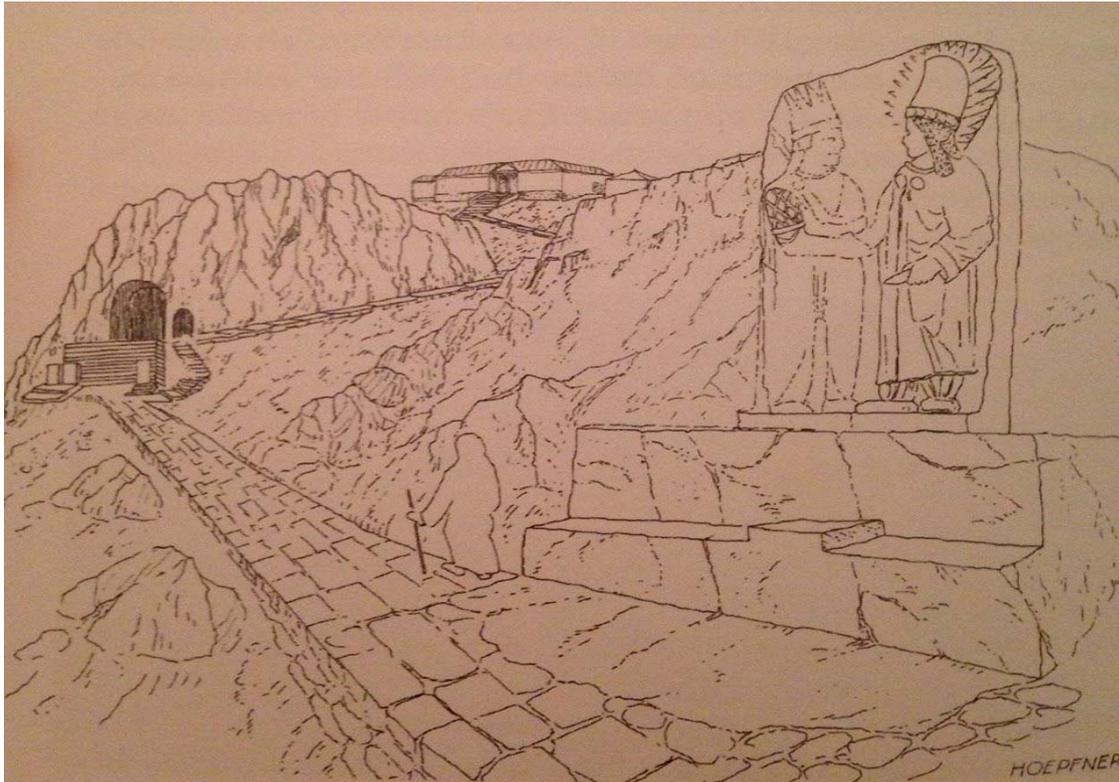
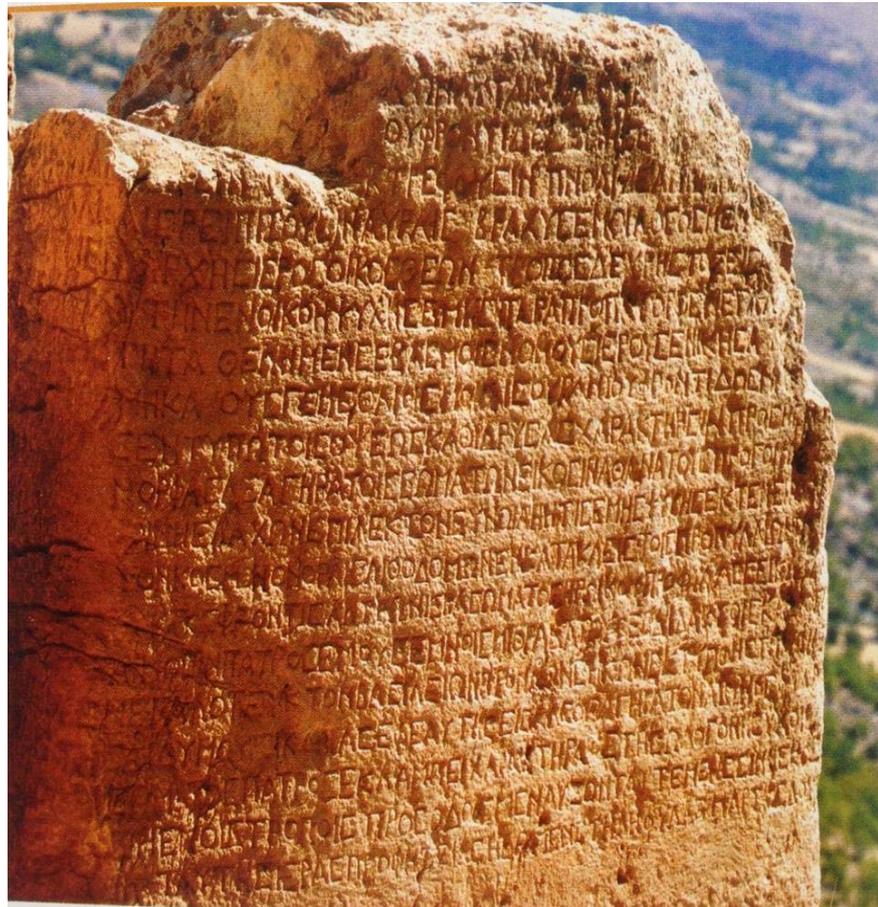


Fig. 21

Fig. 22



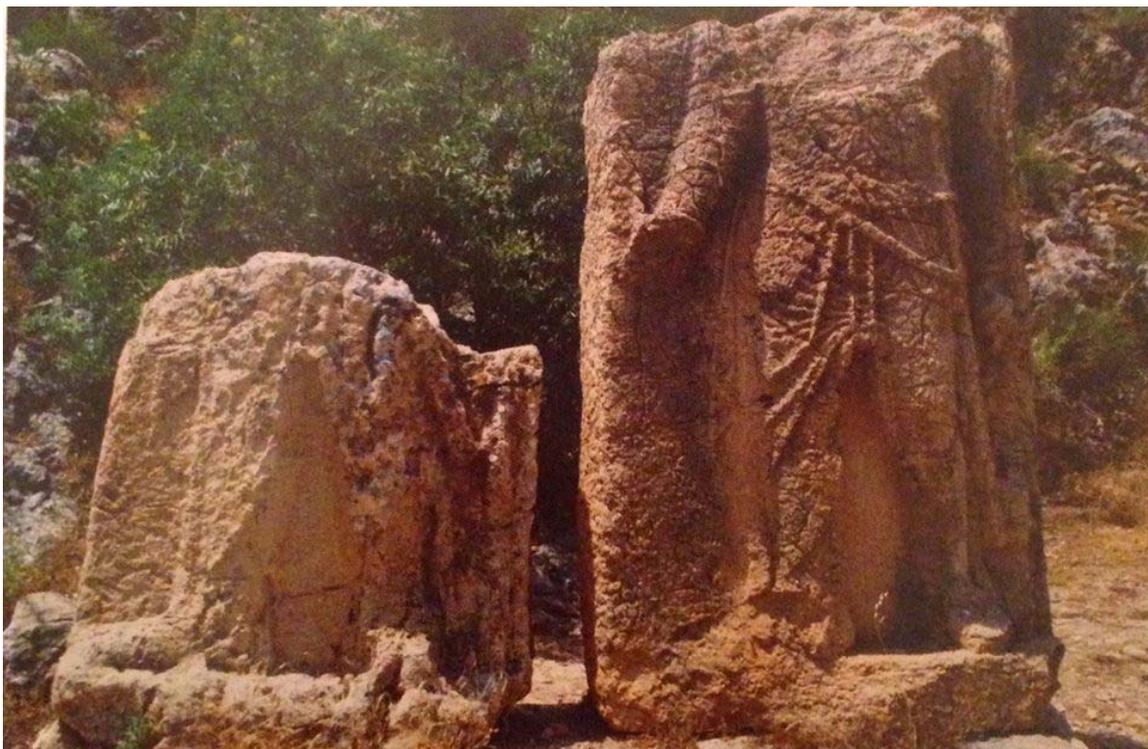
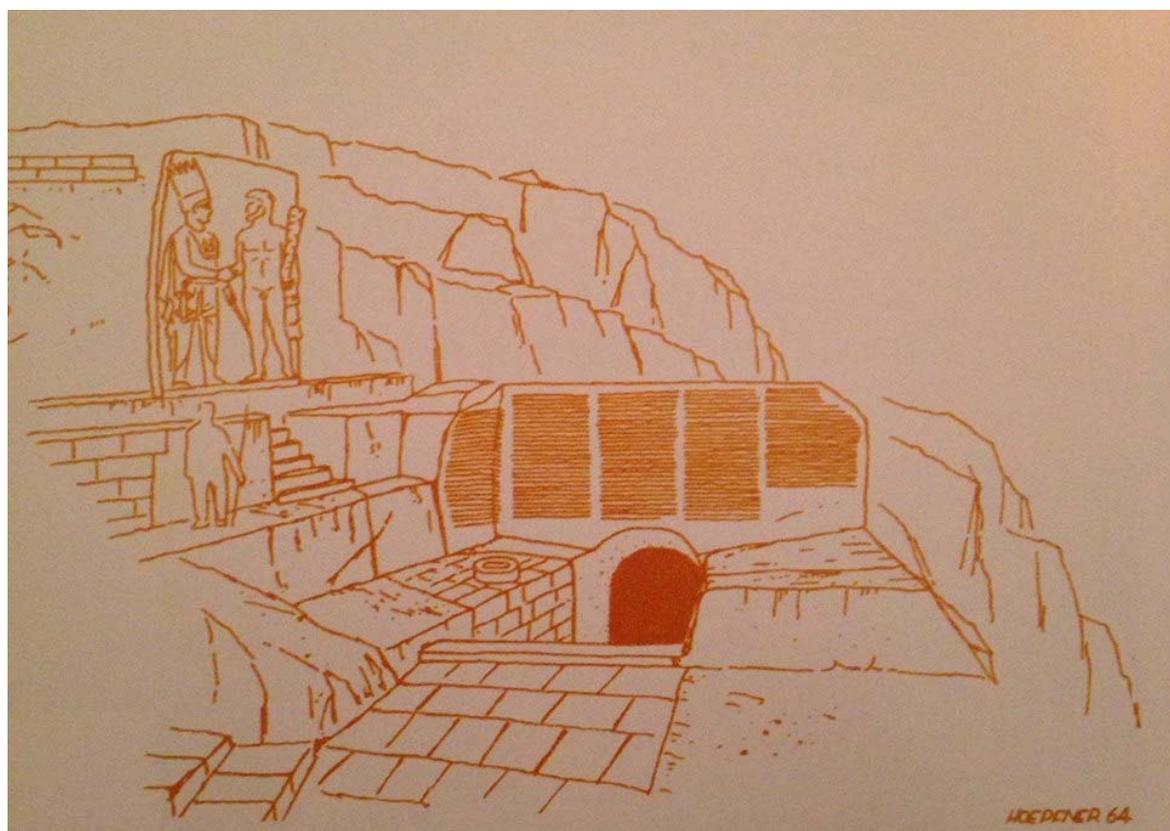


Fig. 23

Fig. 24



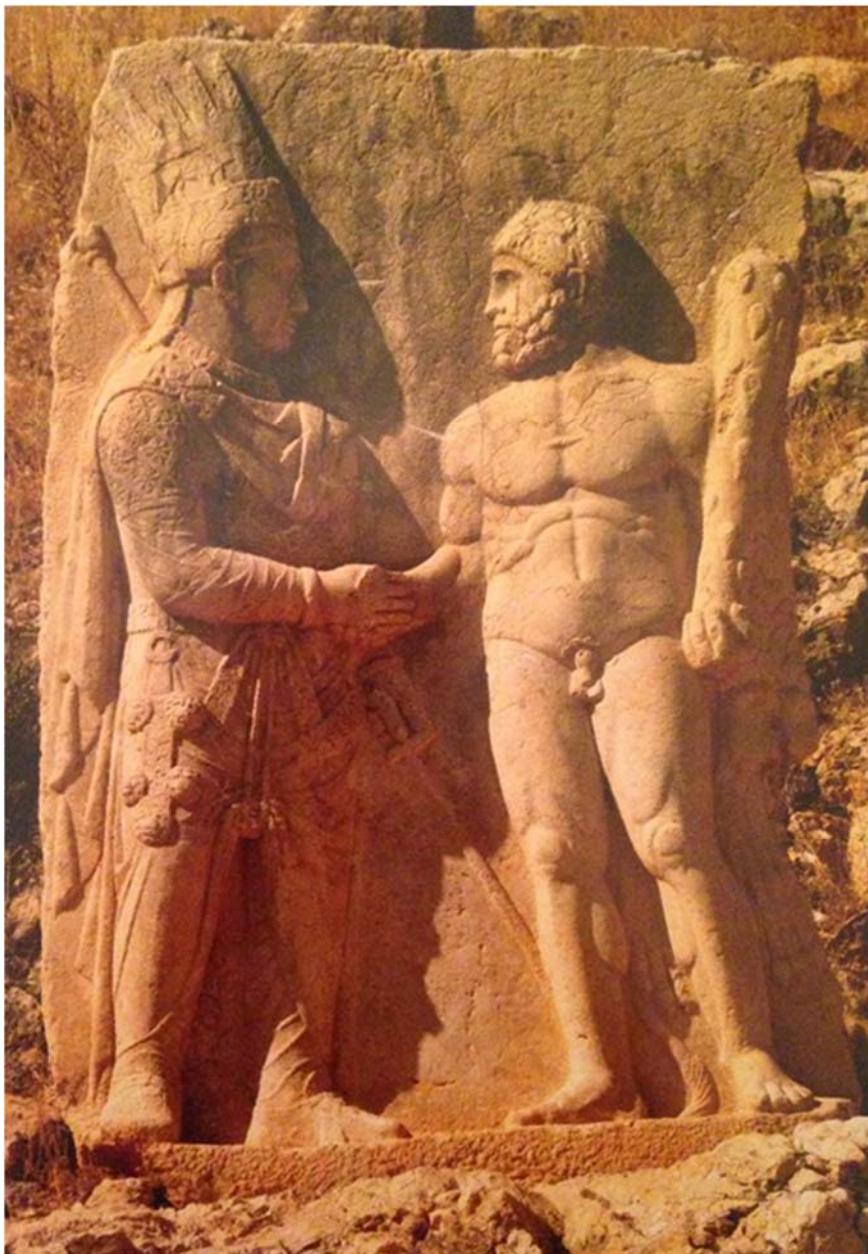
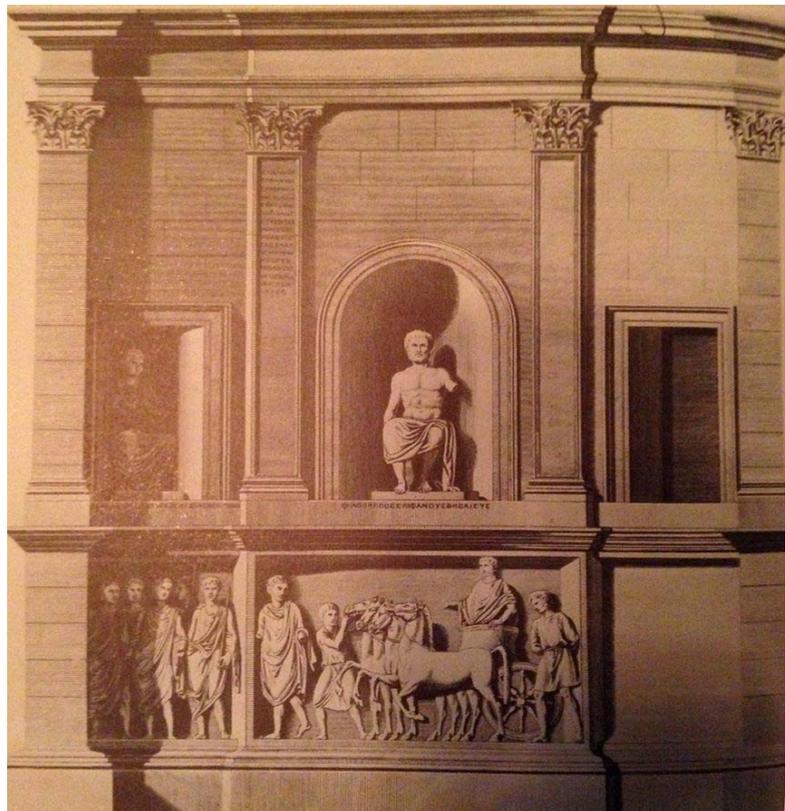


Fig. 25



Fig. 26

Fig. 27



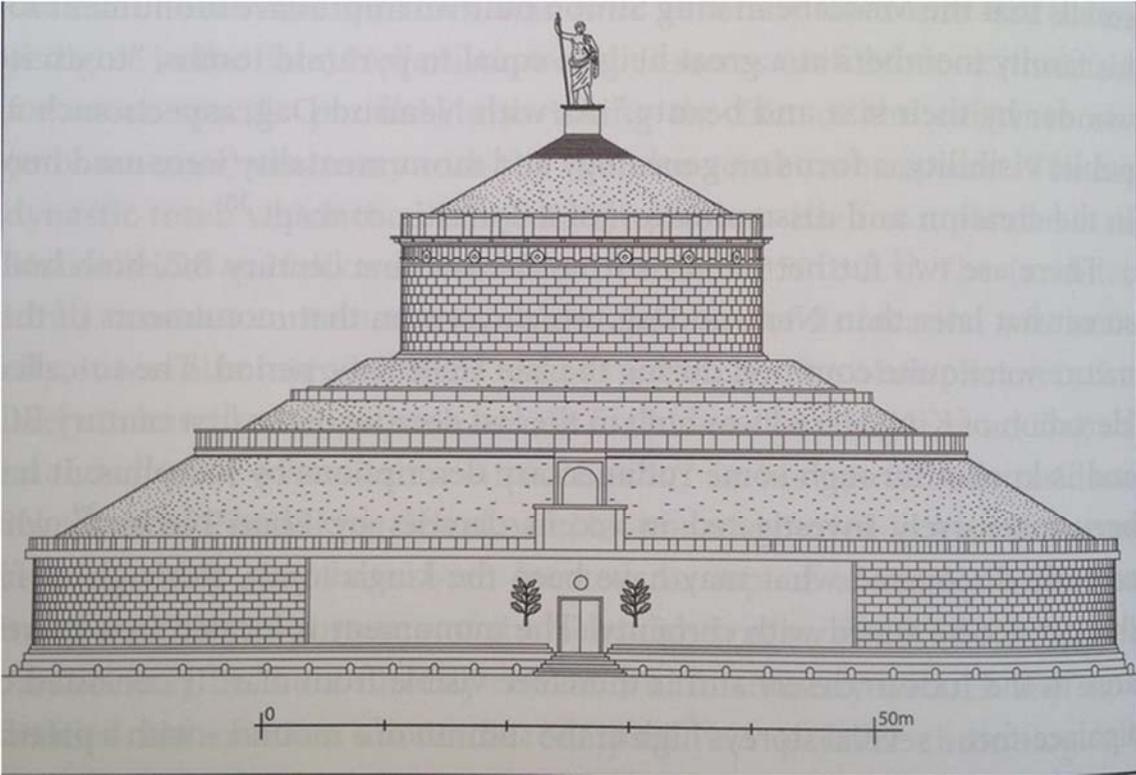


Fig. 28



Fig. 29

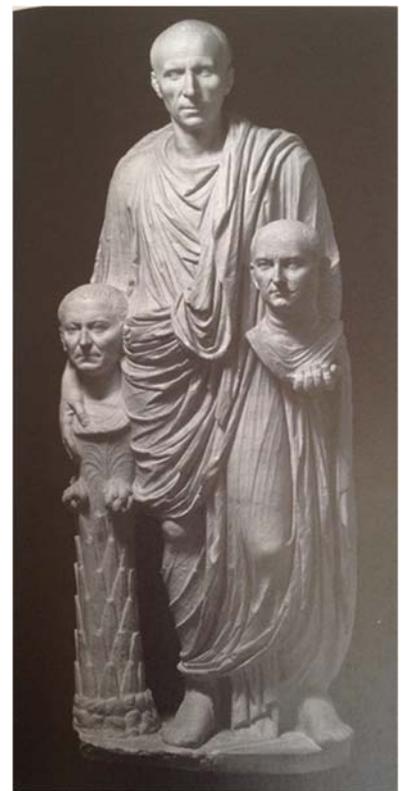


Fig. 30

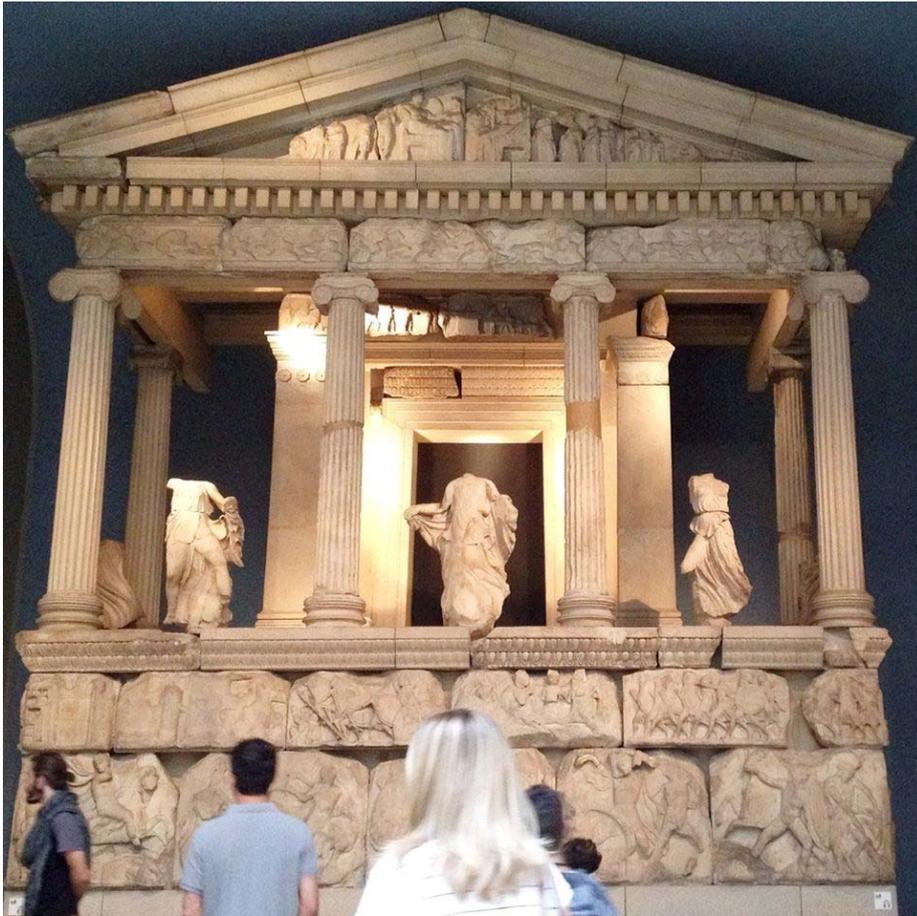
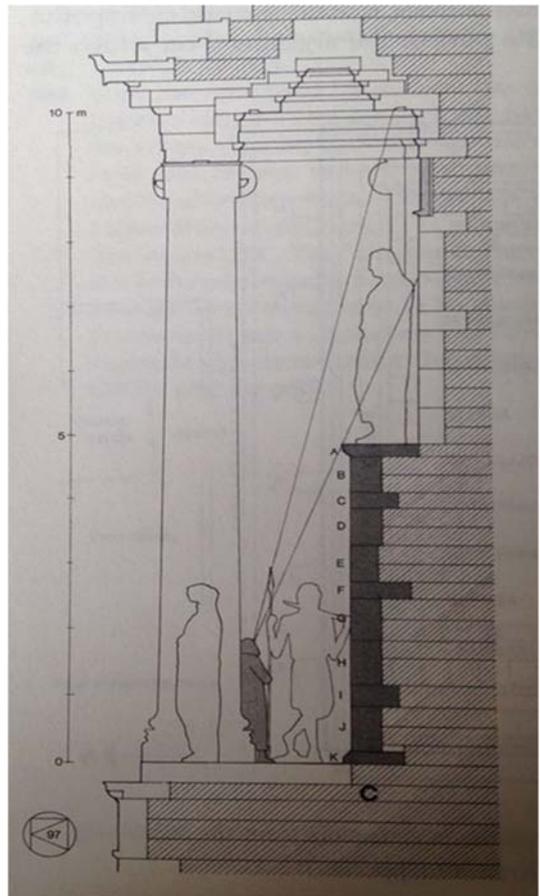


Fig. 31

Fig. 32



Nomos Inscription. Translated by Friedrich Karl Dörner, in Goell, T., D. Sanders. 1996. *Nemrud Dağ i: The Hierothesion of Antiochus I of Commagene - Results of the American Excavations Directed by Theresa B. Goell. Eisenbrauns: 206–217.*

I. Introduction

1. Significance and purpose of the inscription

The Great King Antiochos, the God, the Righteous One, the Manifest [Deity], the Friend of the Romans and the Greeks, the son of King Mithridates Callinicus and of Laodice the Brother-loving Goddess, the Daughter of King Antiochos Epiphanus, the Mother-loving, the Victorious, has recorded for all time, on consecrated pedestals, with inviolable letters the deeds of his clemency.

2. Piety – the most secure possession for mankind

I have come to believe that, for mankind, of all good things piety is both the most secure (11) possession and also the sweetest enjoyment. This judgement became, for me, the cause of fortunate power and its blessed use; and during my whole life I have appeared to all men as one who thought holiness the most secure guardian and the unrivalled delight of my reign [or kingdom]. By this means I have, contrary to all expectations, escaped great perils, have easily become master of hopeless situations, and in a blessed way have attained to the fullness of a long life.

3. Commagene – common dwelling place of all the gods

After taking over my father's dominion, I announced, in the piety of my thought, that the (24) kingdom subject to my throne should be the common dwelling place of all the gods, in that by means of every kind of art I decorated the representations of their form, as the ancient lore of Persians and of Greeks – the fortunate roots of my ancestry – had handed them down [to us], and honoured them with sacrifices and festivals, as was the primitive rule and the common custom of all mankind; in addition my own just consideration has further devised still other and especially brilliant honours.

II. Significance and Purpose of the Hierothesion

1. The hierothesion – not only a tomb but a place of pious veneration of the gods and the deified royal ancestors

And I have taken forethought to lay the foundation of this sacred tomb, which is to be (36)

indestructible by the ravages of time, in closest proximity to the heavenly throne, wherein the fortunately preserved outer form of my person, preserved to ripe old age, shall, after the soul beloved by God has been sent to the heavenly thrones of Zeus-Oromasdes, rest through immeasurable time so I chose to make this holy place a common consecrated seat of all the gods; so that not only the heroic company of my ancestors, whom you behold before you, might be set up here by my pious devotion, but also that the divine representation of the manifest deities might be consecrated on the holy hill and that this place might likewise not be lacking in witness to my piety

2. The erection of divine images and the establishment of the new Tyche

Therefore, as you see, I have set up these divine images of Zeus-Oromasdes and of (53)

Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes and of Artagnes-Heracles-Ares, and also of my all-nourishing homeland Commagene; and from one and the same quarry, throned likewise among the deities who hear our prayers, I have consecrated the features of my own form, and have caused the ancient honour of great deities to become the coeval of a new Tyche. Since I thereby, in an upright way, imitated the example of the divine Providence, which as a benevolent helper has so often been standing by my side in the struggles of my reign.

3. The organisation of the cult and its revenues

Adequate property in land and an alienable income therefrom have I set aside for the (67)

ample provision of sacrifices; an unceasing cult and chosen priests arrayed in such vestments as are proper to the race of the Persians have

I inaugurated, and I have dedicated the whole array and cult in a manner worthy of my fortune and the majesty of the gods. I have decreed the appropriate laws to govern the sacred observances thus established for everlasting, so that all the inhabitants of my realm may offer both the ancient sacrifices, required by age-old common custom, and also new festivals in honour of the gods and in my honour. The birthday of my natural body, the sixteenth of Audnaios, and the tenth of Loos, the day of my accession to the throne, I have consecrated to the manifestation of the great deities, who were my guides in a prosperous beginning and have been the source of universal blessings for my whole kingdom. Because of the multitude of offerings and the magnificence of the celebration I have consecrated two additional days, each of them as an annual festival. The population of my empire I have divided up for the purpose of these assemblies, festival gatherings, and sacrifices, and directed them to repair by villages and cities to the nearest sanctuaries, whichever is the most conveniently located for the festival observance. Moreover, I have appointed under the same title that, in addition to the observance just named, my birth on the sixteenth and my accession on the tenth shall be observed every month by the priests

4. The proclamation of the Holy Law

Now that these regulations have been established, to be observed continually as the (105)

pious duty of men of understanding, not only in my honour but also in the blessed hope of their own good fortune, I have, in obedience to the inspiration of the gods, ordered to be inscribed upon sacred, inviolable stelae a holy law, which shall be binding upon all generations of mankind who in the immeasurable course of time, through their special lot in life, shall successively be destined to dwell in this land; they must observe it without violation, knowing that the stern penalty of the deified royal ancestors will pursue equally the impiety occasioned by neglect as that occasioned by folly, and that disregard of the law decreed for the honour of

the heroes brings with it inexorable penalties. For the pious it is all a simple matter, but godlessness is followed by backbreaking burdens. This law my voice has proclaimed, but it is the mind of the gods that has given it authority.

III. The Holy Law

1. Appointment, duties and obligations of the priests

(a) Exclusive service in the hierothesion; care and adornment of the sacred images

Law

The priest who is appointed by me for these gods and heroes, whom I have dedicated at (124)

the sacred tomb of my body, on the topmost ridges of the Taurus range, and who shall at a later time hold this office, he, set free from every other duty, shall without let or hindrance and with no excuse for invasion keep watch at this memorial and devote himself to the care and the proper adornment of these sacred images.

(b) Birthdays of the king as festivals and their financing, duties of the priest guests to be invited

On the birthdays which I have established forever as monthly and annual festivals of (132)

the gods and of my own person, throughout the whole year he shall, himself decently garbed in Persian raiment, as my benefaction and the ancestral custom of our race have provided, crown them all with the gold crowns which I have dedicated as the sacred honours due the deified ancestors; and out of the income from the villages, which I have designated for the sacred honours of the heroic race, he shall offer on these altars rich additional offerings of incense and aromatic herbs, and also splendid sacrifices in honour of the gods and in my honour, in worthy wise setting up sacred tables with appropriate foods and filling jars from the winepress with precious drink (that is, wine mixed with water). He shall hospitably

welcome the whole of the assembled people, both the native and the foreigners who stream hither, and he shall provide for the common enjoyment of the feast by the assembled multitudes, in that, as is the custom, he shall take for himself a portion, as a gift in honour of the priestly office, and distribute the rest of my benefaction to the others for their free enjoyment, so that during the holy days everyone may receive a never failing sustenance and may thus be able to celebrate the festivals without running the risk of malicious calumny. The drinking cups, which I have dedicated, are to be used by them as long as they remain in the holy place and participate in the general assembly for the feast.

2. The musicians in the hierothesion, their rank, and protection for them and their descendants

The group of musicians whom I have chosen for the purpose and those who may later (161)

be consecrates, their sons and daughters, and also their descendants shall all learn the same art and be set free from the burden of every other responsibility; and they are to devote themselves to the observances which I have established to the end, and without any evasion are to continue their services as long as the assembly requests it. No one, no king or ruler, no priest or official shall ever make slaves of these hierodules, whom I have, in accordance with the divine will, consecrated to the gods and to my own honours, or their children or the descendants of their children, who shall continue their family to all later time; he shall neither enslave them to himself nor alienate them to anyone else in any way, nor injure one of them, nor deprive him of this ministry; but the priests shall take care of them, and the kings, officials and all private persons shall stand by them, and the favour of the gods and heroes will be laid up for them as a reward of their piety.

IV. Provisions for the Continuation of the Cult in the Hierothesion

1. Interdiction of any alterations in the status of the hierothesion

or its property and threat of punishment

It is equally not permitted for anyone to appropriate or to alienate the villages which I (191)

have dedicated to these gods, to sell them or to devote them to some other purpose, or in any way injure those villages; or to reduce the income from them, which I have dedicated to the gods as an inviolable possession. Nor shall anyone go unpunished who shall devise in his mind against our honour some other scheme of violence or of disparaging or suspending the sacrifices and festal assemblies which I have established. Whoever shall presume to rescind or to injure or guilefully to misinterpret the just tenor of this regulation or the heroic honours which an immortal judgement has sanctioned, him the wrath of the daemons and of all the gods shall pursue, both himself and his descendants, irreconcilably, with every kind of punishment.

2. The hierothesion as an example of piety for children and grandchildren

A noble example of piety, which it is a sacred duty to offer to gods and ancestors, I (212)

have set before the eyes of my children and grandchildren, as through many others, so too through this work; and I believe that they will emulate this fair example by continually increasing the honours appropriate to their line and, like me, in their riper years adding greatly to their personal fame.

3. Favour of the deified ancestors and the gods for descendants who observe the law

For those who do so I pray that all the ancestral gods, from Persia and Macedonia and (232)

from the native hearth of Commagene, may continue to be gracious to them in all clemency. And whoever, in the long time to come, takes over this reign as king or dynast, may he, if he observes this law and guards my honour, enjoy, through my intercession, the favour of the deified ancestors

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and all the gods. But if he, in his folly of mind, undertakes measures contrary to the honour of the gods, may he, even without my curse, suffer the full wrath of the gods.

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