

PRE- AND EARLY -ROMAN ROADS OF ASIA MINOR

A Hellenistic Stadion-stone from Ephesus

(Pl. LXI)

In *IK* 17, 2 (Ephesus 7, 2) (eds. Meriç, Merkelbach, Nollé and Şahin) an inscribed stone (No. 3601), giving the distance in *stadia* between Sardis and Ephesus, is listed as a milestone¹ ("*Meilenstein am Weg von Ephesos nach Sardis*") in a section which concerns Roman milestones. By direct attribution, therefore, it is dated to the period of the Republic and of the Principate, along with three indisputably Roman milestones from the Ephesus-Sardis road. The possible significance is not discussed.

1. The stone came to light in the course of research carried out by Recep Meriç in the Küçük Menderes valley. Since the appearance of the editio princeps, I have been able to examine the inscription, now in the Efes Museum. The description of the stone is as follows:

MEHMETLER

Map	Manisa 12-İö Hacı Mehmet
Inv.No.	Efes Müzesi 3-22-83
Location	"Gefunden nordlich von Mehmetler im Tal, unterhalb der strasse nach Tire" (<i>IK</i>); the village of Mehmetler (= Hacı Mehmet) lies c. 1 km. SW of Üzümler (= Hacınebi on the map, Fig. 1).
Publication	<i>IK</i> 17, 2. 3601 (copy of Meriç)
Description	<i>Stadion-stone</i> ² , in the form of a simple, rectangular slab. The back (= side 2) is chipped at the top right; at some point in time, a large hole has been cut into the centre of the slab and a square hole cut into the left side. Smooth surface on the front and back; all other surfaces are dressed by hammer or by claw-tooth chisel but have not been smoothly finished. Hard, white marble.
Dimensions	height 0.715 (on left); width 0.425 (top); depth 0.17; letters: c. 0.03.

¹One cannot, I feel, describe an inscription, where the unit of distance was not a mile, as a milestone.

²The term, *stadion-stone*, I have adopted from Macedonia in the third century B.C. (Hammond, N. G., *A History of Macedonia I*, Oxford 1972, 56).

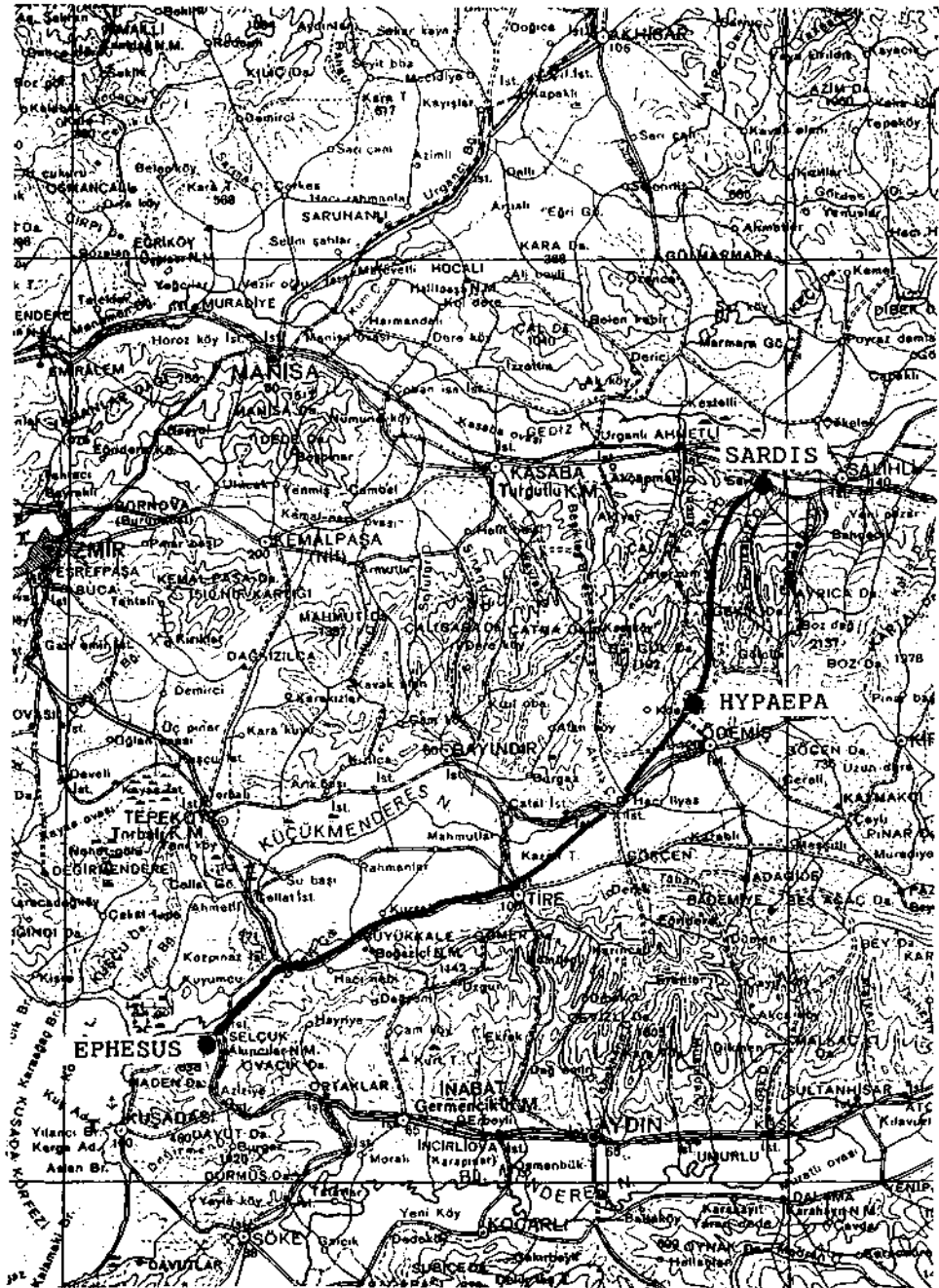


Fig. 1: Map of the Sardis-Ephesus Road

Pre- and Early -Roman Roads of Asia Minor

Text	(side 1 = front [Fig. 2])	(side 2 = back [Fig. 3])
	B AA	B {?}
	Ἐξ Ἐφέσου	Ἐξ Σάρδεων
	στάδια ἐνε-	στάδια τε-
	νήκοντα	τρακόσια
	(caduceus)	δέκα
		(caduceus)
Translation	(1) "From Ephesos 90 <i>stadia</i> " (2) "From Sardis 410 <i>stadia</i> "	
Date	No precise date, other than a general attribution under 'Roman', was offered by the editors. There is no internal evidence for the date of the Mehmetler stone. The letter forms are not specifically helpful but perhaps a fifth or fourth century date could be excluded. The use of <i>stadia</i> ³ does not preclude a Roman date, since the term is used by Roman-period authors. On the other hand, the method of measurement employed for road-markers of the Roman period is never other than <i>milia passuum</i> . A terminus can therefore be established. The first milestones were erected	

³*Stadion* as a unit of measurement was never inscribed on Roman milestones in Asia Minor. For the use of *leuga* on milestones in Gaul, see Chevallier, R., *Roman Roads*, London 1976 (English ed.), 41 and nn. 88-90; cp. *Itin. Ant.* 232.3, 359-363, 365-366 in Gaul, and 251-256 in Pannonia. The schoenus was employed as a unit of measurement in Egypt according to Herodotus (2.6.9, 5th cent. B.C.); see also Strabo 11.11.5 (C 518) and 14.11 (C 530), 12.3.34 (C 558) and 17.1.24 (C 804-5), 31 (C 807) and 41 (C 813); for the use of the schoenus on Parthian territory, see Isidorus of Charax (*passim*). For a rare appearance of the schoenus in Asia Minor (on the territory of Sagalassus in the early 1st cent. A.D.), see the inscription (an Imperial rescript) published by Mitchell, S., "Requisitioned Transport in the Roman Empire: A new inscription from Pisidia", *JRS* 66 (1976), 121. *Stadion*, as a term of distance, persistently survived and can be found in authors of the Roman, Late Roman/Early Byzantine and Byzantine periods:

Pliny *NH* 3, 19, 129 (writing mid-1st cent. A.D.)

Aristides (ed. Dindorf) 350, 1,5 (writing mid-2nd cent. A.D.); in Mysia

Amm. Marc. 15, 4, 3, A.D. 355, Lake Brigantia in Raetia, 17, 1, 4, A.D. 357 in Germania, 19, 6, 1, A.D. 359 at Ziata in Mesopotamia

Vita S. Theodoti (ed. Franchi) 10: 4th cent. in Galatia, quoted by Ramsay, W. M., *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, London 1890, 251 and Mitchell, S., "The Life of Saint Theodotus of Ancyra", *AnatSt* 32 (1982), 96.

Vita S., Callinici ASS 29 Jul.: quoted by Ramsay, W. M., *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, London 1890, 258

Theophanes (ed. CSHB) 54, A.D. 340 in Mesopotamia and 223, A.D. 504, Nisibis - Amida

Anna Comnena (ed. CFHB) 6.10, A.D. 1097 in Bithynia, Nicaea - Basileia

in the years 128-126 B.C., under Manius Aquilius.

The most probable date is 3rd - 2nd century B.C., i.e. in the period⁴ after 323 B.C. and before 128 B.C.

Comment

For the use of ἐξ for ἀπό in Asia Minor, see Kawerau and Rehm (1914: 226 No.149) ll.44-45 ἐκ τῆς Πιδασιδος, Miletos, [?] 182 B.C.) and I. Didyma (ed. Rehm).41 ll.22-23 ἐξ Ἰωνίας πόλεως, Didyma, 174/3 B.C.

The meaning of the letters in the top corners above the inscription is not clear to me but they were evidently accepted abbreviations (perhaps some sort of official system?).

For the *caduceus* (the staff carried by Hermes), see Pekary, Th., *Untersuchungen zu den römischen Reichstrassen*, Bonn (*Antiquitas* 1.17), 1968, 38 re Janus, "Unter anderem ist daher auch seine Verwandtschaft mit Hermes abzuleiten, da ja an griechischen Strassen Hermen als Wegweiser standen"; and also *op. cit.* 64-65.

2. On what road was the stone erected? Undoubtedly on the road, over the Tmolus range (modern Bozdağ), from Sardis to Hypaepa and the Cayster valley (modern Küçük Menderes) and thence to Ephesus. By what route? Foss, in a detailed study (Foss, C., "Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11: 21-60 and Pls. 1-9, 1978), described two routes⁵ over the Bozdağ to Günlüce (formerly Datbey, ancient Hypaepa⁶):

(1) [on E] via Üçtepeler village,

(2) [on W] via Lübbey yaylası.

The complete route of (1) [= Foss' eastern route via Üçtepeler] I assume to be as follows: Sart - Üçtepeler - Subatan yaylası - Datbey (now Günlüce) - Hacıilyas köprüsü - Tire - Çepinler (now Çayırılı) - Hacımehmet (= Mehmetler) - Belevi - Selçuk - Efes.

The distance I calculate to be c. 94.4 km.: c. 26 km. to Datbey, c. 68 km. to Efes.

3. The distance-figures on the Mehmetler stone

(side 1) from Ephesos 90 *stadia*

⁴Dr. Milner writes (pers. comm.) that "the 3rd-2nd cent. Hellenistic date is the most plausible on the basis of the letter-forms and overall relationship of the lines (horizontality is dominant). The letters N, E and Φ with their subtle apices do not look Roman. The form A in this context is often pre-200 B.C."

⁵The route, Sardis to Ephesus, was a palimpsest, so to speak, of roads: Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Turkish (Foss, C., "Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11, 27-37).

⁶For the site of Hypaepa, see Foss, C., "Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11, 32 and nn. 27, 28 and 36.

(side 2) from Sardis 410 *stadia*; total 500 *stadia* are compatible with the modern measurable distance from Efes to Sart, namely, c. 94.4 km. (by either of the two routes described by Foss), if one *stadion* is calculated at 185.625 m. / *stadion*, thus: 500 st.x185.625 m. = 92.8 km.

The distances on the Mehmetler stone can be calculated as follows:

(side 1) 90 st.x185.625 m. = 16.7 km.

(side 2) 410 st.x185.625 m. = 76.1 km.

On the basis of these figures the Mehmetler stone was originally located in the valley plain due N of Mehmetler village, near to the place where the stone was reportedly found. Most probably, therefore, the stone was discovered more-or-less in situ. The finely preserved surfaces support the possibility that, as found, the stone had not travelled far nor had been exposed for many years to the weather. Was the stone, therefore, not long erected before it was replaced by another marker, such as a Roman milestone?

4. Herodotus (5. 54) reported the information that the distance from Sardis to Ephesus was 540 *stadia*; he added that it was a three-day journey. If one *stadion* is calculated as 185.625 m., 540 st. = 100.24 km. A much later source, the Peutinger Table, indicates 63 MP as the distance from Sardis to Ephesus. If 1 MP = 1.485 km., then 63 MP = 93.96 km. From these calculations a difficulty arises. Whereas the distance (between Sardis and Ephesus) given on the Mehmetler stone comes close to the modern measurement (c. 94.4 km) and the Tab. Peut. comes even closer, one (the Herodotean) of the three ancient sources does not approach the modern figure:

(1) Herodotus 540 st. = 100.24 km. (if 1st. = 185.625 m.)

(2) Mehmetler stone 500 st. = 92.81 km. (if 1st. = 185.625 m.)

(3) Tab. Peut. 63 mp = 93.56 km. (if 1 mp = 1485 m.)

There are three possible solutions to the difficulty in Herodotus' account:

(1) a textual error,

(2) the use of a short *stadion* (1st. = 178.271 m.),

(3) the existence of two different routes, namely

1. a longer, Persian (= the Herodotean) road,

2. a shorter, Hellenistic⁷ (= the Mehmetler *stadion*-stone) and Roman (= the Tab. Peut.) road.

Of the three solutions the most apposite, in my view, would be (2), the

⁷(?)Hellenistic structure beside the Üçtepeler road (Foss, C., "Explorations in Mount Tmolus", CSCA 11, 30, 52 and 54).

use of a short *stadion* in Herodotus, as can now be demonstrated, I believe, for the Royal Road (see. *PRRAM* 2. Section 2.5). Moreover, it is inherently improbable that Herodotus, in two closely juxtaposed and thematically related passages, would employ different units of distance. Even so, the calculation, based on the short *stadion* (1st. = 178.271 m.) for the Sardis-Ephesus road, produces a high figure, 96.27 km., which is longer than the modern figure, c. 94.4 km.: a difference of c. 2 km. Was there perhaps a divergence (unlikely, I believe) in the route of the Herodotean road?

Or was the centre of earlier Sardis and Ephesus not the same as that of the later city? and consequently the starting-points for the measured roads in the Achaemenid period would not be the same as in the Hellenistic or the Roman periods?

At least three measuring-points for Sardis and Ephesus in the Achaemenid and in the Hellenistic and Roman periods can be suggested, e.g.

- (1) from temple to temple,
- (2) from city-gate to city-gate,
- (3) from city-centre to city-centre.

It is possible that the *stadion* figures on the Mehmetler stone match the actual distance from temple to temple. The Artemis temple at Ephesus lies c. 1.4 km. N of the nearest existing gate, the Coressian Gate, and at Sardis the temple of Artemis is not less than 1 km. distant from the site beside the modern road. Perhaps one may speculate that the Mehmetler stone marked a particularly significant road (an *ἱερὰ ὁδός*⁸ so to speak, between two temples of Artemis⁹) in a net-work of contemporary roads.

5. It is interesting to note that on the Mehmetler stone there is no reference to Hypaepa: the distance-figures refer only to Ephesus and Sardis. It is thereby implied that the purpose of the stone was to emphasize the relationship (political? religious?) between the two cities which lay at the ends of the road.

Herodotus mentions the Ephesus-Sardis road twice, (1) (5. 54; quoted by Foss, ["Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11: n. 18, quoting Magie (1950.1: 39 and 2: 786-789)]; see below, Appendix 1) in reference to the

⁸For sacred ways in Asia Minor, see (1) *I. Didyma* (ed. Rehm), 40 ll.11-12, 174/3 B.C., the sacred way from Miletus to the temple of Apollo; (2) Strabo 14.2.23, C 659, the sacred way from Mylasa to the temple of Zeus at Labraunda. For Greece, see (1) Xenophon, *Anab.* 5.3.11, a road from Lacadaemon to the temple of Zeus at Olympia (400 B.C.) and also the inscription, *SIG* 1069 (for earlier references, see Pekary, Th., *Untersuchungen zu den römischen Reichstrassen*, Bonn (Antiquitas 1.17) 1968, 64; (2) *SEG* 40. 542, for a sacred road in Chalkidike, from the temple of Artemis (Philip II, 359-336 B.C.).

⁹For comments on the position and role of Artemis at Sardis and Ephesus, see Greenewalt, C. H., "Sardis in the Age of Xenophon", *Pallas* 43 (1995), 130-131 and n. 12).

Royal Road and (2) [5.100; quoted by Foss, "Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11: 27, 28]; see below, Appendix 2) in an account of the seizure of Sardis by the Athenians in 499 B.C. Xenophon (*Hellenica* 3. 2. 11) recounts that in 397 B.C. Dercylidas "*then (sc. from Atarneus) went on to Ephesus which was three days march from Sardis*"; cp. Hdt. 5. 54. Xenophon (*Hellenica* 3. 4. 21; quoted by Foss ["Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11: 28 and n. 19]) implies that in 395 B.C. Tissaphernes must have used the road in order to take his forces (sc. from the South) across the Tmolus range and meet Agesilaus before the latter, who had marched northwards (sc. through the Karabel Pass) to the Sardis area, could attack and capture the city from the West.

Much later, writing in the late 1st century B.C. early 1st century A.D., Strabo (13. 4. 7, C 627; quoted by Foss, ["Explorations in Mount Tmolus", *CSCA* 11, 28]; see below, Appendix 3) mentions Hypaepa in relation to the road descending southwards from the Tmolus to the Cayster valley. In Strabo's account the city located on the road is given as much prominence as the road itself.

On the Mehmetler *stadion*-stone it is the two major cities, named as the origin and destination of the road, on which attention was focused. Evidently there was no necessity to name a minor city. On the other hand, despite the presence of the two city-names, there is no evidence of an executive decision by the boule and/or demos of either city nor any indication of financial provision and administrative authority.

It is probable, I suggest, that in the Hellenistic period, particularly under the Attalids¹⁰, the role of individual cities (however richly endowed) as of the two cities named on the Mehmetler stone was subordinate to a strategic and administrative requirement for road communications, in fact to the same imperative as had existed under Achaemenid rule.

6. In summary, I consider this stone to be Hellenistic: I find unacceptable the Roman date attributed to it. Although no distance stones of the Hellenistic (or of any earlier) period in Asia Minor are known to me - a handful only have been found in Greece - nevertheless I propose a Hellenistic date for this stone, which, by use of *stadia*, would be unique even if the date were Roman. Further, I suggest that the stone marks the distance along a "*King's road*", the Hellenistic equivalent of the Persian royal roads, one of a network in Western Asia Minor in the post-Achaemenid, pre-Roman period.

¹⁰There is evidence that in the administration of his domains in Asia Antigonos was concerned with the communication of news (by fire-signal and courier, Diodorus 19. 57. 5, in reference to [?] 321 or 315 B.C.). In the years before 133 B.C. it is possible that the Pergamene kingdom had developed a strategic perspective (on the availability and administration of roads) which the Romans subsequently adopted for their new province.

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APPENDICES

1. *"But, if anyone wants still greater accuracy, I would point out that the distance from Ephesus to Sardis should be added to the total, so that one gets, as a final measurement of the distance from the Aegean to Susa - the 'city of Memnon' - 14,040 furlongs, Ephesus to Sardis being 540 furlongs, which increase the three months' journey by three days"* (Herodotus 5. 53, Penguin transl.).

2. *"The fleet sailed for Ephesus, where the ships were left at Coressus in Ephesian territory; the troops, a strong force, then began their march up-country with Ephesian guides. They followed the course of the Cayster, crossed the ridge of the Tmolus, and came down upon Sardis, which they took without opposition, "* (Herodotus 5. 100, Penguin transl.).

3. *"Hypaepa is a city as one descends from the Tmolus to the plain of the Cayster"* (Strabo 13. 4. 7, C 627).

Illustrations:

Fig. 1: Map of the Sardis-Ephesus road

2: Squeeze of the Mehmetler Stadion-stone, side 1

3: Squeeze of the Mehmetler Stadion-stone, side 2

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