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Felipe Rojas
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ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about archaeology and history at a time when neither of those disciplines existed – at least not as we know them today. It concerns people in the Roman world who felt the urge to explore and explain their past by interpreting and manipulating things that they understood to be its material remains. Some traces of the past attracted visitors from around the ancient Mediterranean and beyond; others were the object of attention only of the few men and women who lived in the immediate vicinity of those traces. When the inhabitants of Roman Anatolia explained the remnants of former times to themselves or to others, they occasionally did so in terms that would be recognizable, even familiar, to archaeologists and historians working today. For instance, many people in the region at the time believed that the mound of Hisarlık (near modern Çanakkale, Turkey) was the site of Homer's Troy and of events narrated in the *Iliad* – at least some modern scholars insist on the validity of that equation.[1]

On other occasions, ancient and modern horizons overlap only awkwardly. Traces of the past that modern paleontologists understand to be the petrified bones of Miocene giraffids and other such prehistoric creatures were explained by Greek and Roman intellectuals as having belonged to mythological heroes and their monstrous adversaries.[2] More jarring from a modern Western scientific perspective, there were places in the classical Mediterranean where it was said that one could perceive the olfactory remnants of such beings. People claimed to be able to smell the lasting rot of decomposing centaurs,

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for example, or the peculiar aroma of the clay used by Prometheus to craft the first humans.[3] In addition to bones and smells, countless other phenomena, both anthropogenic and natural, were – and in some cases still are – understood to be the lasting indices of former times. This book is about people in Roman Anatolia who sought to find the past in things, about the things that those people considered to be meaningful, and about the various stories that they told about earthen mounds, rock-cut reliefs, ruined buildings, obsolete weapons, fossilized bones, inscriptions in forgotten writing systems, and myriad other traces of the past.

TWO EXAMPLES: THE MACE-HEAD AND THE GODDESS

Two concrete examples will serve to illustrate the principal questions in my investigation as well as the kinds of sources I have used to conduct it. In 2005, I was excavating in the ruins of a Roman temple in the ancient city of Sardis in western Turkey. That temple, originally a first-century AD construction, had been razed to the ground at some point in the late fourth or early fifth century AD, a victim of urban renewal.[4] Since most of its once imposing marble columns had been reduced to lime in antiquity, I had to dig in the building's foundations, which themselves had been robbed out by people seeking the solid limestone blocks on which the temple's columns had once stood. Amid the detritus dumped in the ruins, a curious object caught my attention: a yellow-and-black stone, polished and smaller than a child's fist (Figure 1.1).

Once a spheroid, the stone had been cracked roughly in half, revealing fine drill-marks along its central axis. Though evidently anthropogenic and ancient, I could not identify what it was or even place it in a sequence in relation to other material remains at Sardis. As the day's work continued, I left the stone by the side of my trench. When the director of the excavation visited my trench to inspect my progress, he immediately recognized the artifact as an Early Bronze Age mace head and thought of parallels found in the relevant strata at the site of Alaca Höyük in central Turkey.[5] The sundry demands of the season took precedence and there was little time to dwell upon the yellow-and-black stone in the field. Still, the thought of it kept prompting me to wonder: what was a Bronze Age mace head doing in the ruins of a Roman temple? Would the inhabitants of Sardis in the first few centuries AD have identified that object as an ancient symbol of political power, as modern archaeologists now do? Would it have struck them as stylistically, functionally, or otherwise culturally incongruous in their present – a trace not only of former times but also of long-gone people? Alternatively, was it unremarkable, mere rubbish in the temple? In short, how would *they* have understood what scholars today might call "pre-classical material remains"? This last question drives my investigation.

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1.1 Bronze Age mace head from Wadi B temple at Sardis. (© Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College.)

In addition to archaeological remains, Greek and Latin literary texts dealing with Bronze Age artifacts provide insight into possible strategies of interpretation of antiquities in Roman Anatolia. They also highlight differences and similarities between ancient and modern approaches to the physical traces of the past. My second example involves precisely one such text. In the second century AD, the Anatolian traveler and historian Pausanias reported the following while journeying through the southern Peloponnese:

> Thirty stades beyond them [i.e., the islets of Trinasus] is Acriae, a city by the sea. There is a temple there and a stone statue of the Mother of the Gods which are sight-worthy. According to those who live in Acriae this is the oldest of all the sanctuaries of this goddess in the Peloponnese, while the Magnesians who inhabit the territories north of Mount Sipylus have the most ancient of *all* statues of the Mother of the Gods on the rock of Coddinus. The Magnesians say that Broteas, the son of Tantalus, made it.[6]

Scholars do not know what exactly Pausanias saw at Acriae. In fact, they do not even know the exact location of this "city." Whatever it was Pausanias saw there, he qualified the locals' claim – "oldest… in the Peloponnese." According

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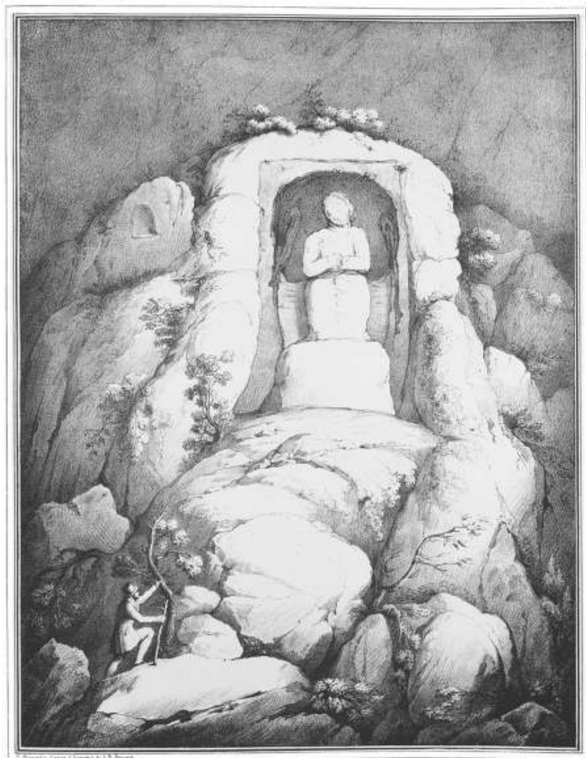

1.2 Engraving of "Niobe," from John Robert Steuart, *A Description of Some Ancient Monuments: with Inscriptions, Still Existing in Lydia and Phrygia, Several of which are Supposed to be Tombs of Early Kings*, 1842, plate 1. (Public domain scan from the collection of The New York Public Library.)

to him, the most ancient of *all* statues of the Mother of the Gods was to be found not in Greece, but in western Anatolia, near his native Magnesia (some 50 kilometers west of Sardis).

In the nineteenth century AD, European travelers to western Anatolia sought to identify on the ground the monuments mentioned by Pausanias in his occasional descriptions of the region. Since then, most scholars have assumed that a colossal rock-cut monument in a place called Akpınar, on the northern slopes of Mount Sipylus (Spil Dağı in Turkish), is the monument Pausanias considered "the most ancient of all statues of the Mother of the Gods."[7] (See Figure 1.2 and also see Figure 3.2.) One of those nineteenth-century travelers, John Robert Steuart, climbed Mount Sipylus in 1837 and summarily confirmed that the statue in Akpınar was probably the "oldest in existence."[8] Steuart had a copy of Pausanias to help him interpret the rock-cut monument, but how did Pausanias himself go about explaining the statue?

Pausanias relates that his fellow Magnesians believed that the statue on Mount Sipylus had been carved by the mythical sculptor Broteas, son and brother,

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respectively, of the equally mythical Tantalus and Pelops. Pausanias may have identified the handiwork of Broteas on the basis of style, as an art connoisseur might today and as Pausanias himself sometimes did in the case of ancient Greek artists.[9] He may have understood that statue's rough finish as a deliberate and distinctively Brotean trait. Additionally, Pausanias could have assumed that the very old statue in Anatolia was necessarily earlier than the very old statue in Greece, because Pelops, who first ruled over the Peloponnese (and was that region's namesake), was originally an Anatolian.[10] However it was that Pausanias reached his conclusions, the short passage quoted above demonstrates that some people in the Roman Mediterranean were interested in what archaeologists and historians now call Bronze Age *realia* and, more interestingly, that even in antiquity, there were differing understandings of the origins and meaning of such artifacts.[11]

Modern archaeologists and historians have reached their own conclusions about the rock-cut monument on Mount Sipylus: the statue was most likely carved around the thirteenth century BC by the Luwian-speaking people of the Seha River land.[12] The statue's coarse features, which are peculiar when compared with many other Bronze Age rock-cut monuments in Anatolia, have been explained as the result of the fact that the colossal carving was left unfinished in the Bronze Age. Whether or not the monument was unfinished, archaeologists are now generally convinced that it represented a mountain god, not a goddess. The historical veracity of the specific ancient or modern interpretations – the Mother of the Gods as sculpted by Broteas or a Bronze Age mountain god commissioned by a Luwian-speaking ruler of the Seha River land – is of less importance to me than the fact that Pausanias and his contemporaries strove to fit antiquities such as the monument at Akpınar (and perhaps also the yellow-and-black stone in the temple at Sardis) within their own historical frameworks. How and why they did so are key questions in this investigation.

GEOGRAPHIC AND CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPE

My geographic scope is easy to specify: Anatolia is a relatively well-defined geographic entity where it is bounded by water, to the north, west, and south. The eastern limit of the region, by contrast, is less obvious and has been geopolitically contentious since the Bronze Age, if not before then. An expansive definition of Anatolia's limits, such as that used by contemporary Turkish authorities, extends its eastern boundary up to the Lesser Caucasus and into ancient Greater Armenia. The common scholarly tendency to equate the borders of classical Anatolia with those of the modern Republic of Turkey,[13] however, retrojects nationalistic claims into the past and takes no notice of the historical instability and cultural dynamism of the territories in question. More problematically, it disregards the opinions of religious and ethnic minorities living in those territories who have imagined and continue to imagine

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More Information

different historical and political geographies.[14] Put in strictly geographic terms, most of my evidence comes from places that lie west of an imaginary diagonal line extending roughly from the modern city of Latakia, Syria, to the modern city of Batumi, Georgia.

My chronological scope also requires clarification. I am interested in what people from about the early second century BC to about the fourth century AD thought about and did with things that at that time were already old (or imagined to be old). If a reader would prefer to conceive the temporal range of my investigation in terms of precise historical events or even of dates, the battle of Magnesia fought in 190 BC, in which Roman forces defeated the Seleucid king Antiochus III and thus took control of Anatolia roughly coincides with its remote limit, while the death of the emperor Theodosius and the subsequent splitting of the empire in two halves in 395 AD roughly coincides with its proximate one. Most of my case studies, however, cluster in the first three centuries AD.

At the outset it is worth noting that I deal throughout the book with artifacts that are not usually considered Roman and that are not primarily studied by scholars who specialize in Roman culture. Understandably, archaeologists and art historians tend to label material culture according to its moment of production, rather than focusing on later episodes in the biographies of specific artifacts. Some of those later episodes, however, are my principal concern. The "Bronze Age" mace head in the temple at Sardis and the "Bronze Age" statue on Mount Sipylus were at some point "Roman" material culture, at least inasmuch as people in Roman Anatolia interacted with them. Inevitably, then, this book transgresses rigid periodizations.

ARCHAEOLOGY, ANTIQUARIANISM, AND ARCHAEOPHILIA

At the core of this book are examples of what scholars have sometimes described as Roman antiquarian and even archaeological thoughts and practices. The adjectives "antiquarian" and "archaeological" are convenient, but also anachronistic. Archaeology as a discipline did not exist before the nineteenth century AD. And so, referring to situations in antiquity as evidence of "archaeology" (and, as is also frequently done, labeling ancient individuals "archaeologists") obscures cultural and historical specifics and poses a teleological trap.[15] Ancient interactions with the traces of more ancient pasts, even in the relatively familiar classical Mediterranean (a region of the world that is arguably much better understood by archaeologists and historians than, say, the pre-Columbian Amazon or Iron Age Arabia) are more than a simple foreshadowing of modern archaeological thoughts and practices. They provide insight into ancient systems of thought that could and did account for the origins and meanings of the physical traces of the past in the past.

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More Information

Without doubt, the term "antiquarianism" is more general and less bound by disciplinary strictures than "archaeology," but it is also properly associated with a series of early modern European intellectuals who, in the words of Arnaldo Momigliano, "preferred travel to the emendation of texts and altogether subordinated literary texts to coins, statues, vases, and inscriptions."[16] Even if the term "antiquarianism" can be fruitfully applied to cultural phenomena outside early modern Europe – as has been done, for example, by European Sinologists who have called attention to social and epistemological parallels between early modern European and Chinese "antiquarian" practices – it can hardly serve to describe every case of human interest in the traces of the past.[17] One of the distinguishing achievements – or rather, hermeneutic strategies – of early modern European antiquarians, as Momigliano emphasized, was to subordinate *texts* to *things*. In cultural situations in which texts did not exist, or in which texts and things were recognized as equally authoritative sources of information about former times, the term "antiquarianism" is potentially misleading.

I would rather understand the cases of ancient interaction with the traces of the past that are discussed in this book as instances of archaeophilia, that is, of a pervasive human impulse to use objects as historical evidence.[18] Archaeophilia is not only the urge that incited Pausanias and his contemporaries to reflect about the antiquities of the Roman Mediterranean, but also that which motivated early modern European and Chinese antiquarians to undertake their studies, and indeed that which drives modern archaeologists, in whatever variety they may exist today. The term designates a more generalized practice than either archaeology or antiquarianism. It is deliberately intended to be expansive and inclusive; and yet, it always has specific historical and cultural contours.

I am aware of the staggering diversity of ways in which humans have interacted with artifacts that they consider to be material indices of former times.[19] Archaeophilia in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica is different from archaeophilia in Ming China and prehistoric Europe.[20] Just as much diversity is encountered when one considers the same place at different times: archaeophilia in central Anatolia during the Neolithic period is different from archaeophilia in the same region under the Seljuk sultans.[21] In fact, even in a single synchronic encounter with antiquities some heterogeneity among different interpreters is to be expected since the material and mental processes by which someone determines that the past was a certain way are, to say the least, multiple and complex. The hypothetical links binding things in the present to chronologically remote events involve ideas about materiality, temporality, ontology, causality, and agency that are neither natural – whatever that may mean – nor self-evident, not to mention agendas, practices, and social structures that are themselves historically and culturally specific. Although focused squarely on

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More Information

Roman Anatolia, this book aims to stimulate comparative discussions about how humans have explored and explained the physical traces of their own pasts across the world.[22]

I examine here ancient interpretations and interactions with material remains in terms that people in Roman Anatolia considered meaningful.[23] In other words, I am interested in taking Pausanias's claims seriously: I want to understand why and how he concluded that the statue on Mount Sipylus was the work of Broteas, rather than to dismiss his interpretation as historically improbable or archaeologically naïve. I do not aim to judge the truth or falsehood of ancient archaeophilia, or to expose either the shortcomings or the precocious insightfulness of the explanations of Pausanias and his contemporaries in the light of early modern antiquarianism or modern archaeology. Rather, I reflect upon the widespread cultural importance of archaeophilia in Roman Anatolia and indeed in the Roman world at large. Encounters around antiquities, such as the one that took place between Pausanias and the Acrians in the southern Peloponnese, occurred also throughout the Anatolian peninsula. Those encounters compelled dialogue and debate among different historical traditions. However indirectly, they illuminate the dynamics of cultural interaction both among the inhabitants of the region, internally, and between those people and their various neighbors in the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Iran, the Levant, and the Caucasus.

WHY ROMAN ANATOLIA?

Historians of archaeology have demonstrated that human interest in material remains that are old (or understood to be so) is at least as early as the Neolithic period and widespread, although arguably not universal.[24] It was certainly pervasive throughout the Roman world. A brief and very partial list of ancient remains in the Roman Mediterranean with which people interacted – even if that list is limited only to monumental stone structures in the region – may give a sense of the variety of evidence available to conduct this investigation. In Roman Greece, Mycenaean fortifications and tombs; in Roman Egypt, pharaonic temples and obelisks; in Roman Iberia and Gaul, the enormous chambers and sculptures called dolmens and menhirs; in Roman Sardinia, the prehistoric megalithic tower complexes known as nuraghi – the list could go on.[25] Why, then, study archaeophilia specifically in Roman Anatolia? I offer three related reasons, all having to do with the entangled claims of multiple stakeholders over the antiquities of Anatolia.

The first is the fact that, as is often touted in both tourist brochures and academic publications, Anatolia has been a crossroads of civilizations for millennia. Its key geopolitical position has ensured that, at least since the Bronze Age, there have been many conspicuous and imposing physical traces

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More Information

of the past throughout the peninsula, as well as many individuals and communities who have cared about the origins and meanings of those monuments and objects. Moreover, since at least the second millennium BC, there have also existed textual records in a variety of languages and scripts that shed light on the historical significance of those monuments and objects *in antiquity*.[26] This abundant and diverse material and textual evidence provides insight into the opinions of many different ancient interpreters, and also, more generally, into the cross-cultural dynamics of archaeophilia in the region over several thousand years.

The second reason is that imperial and provincial pasts were intertwined in Roman Anatolia – arguably more so than elsewhere in the Mediterranean. From at least the second century BC onwards, many Roman historians imagined that Rome itself had been founded by exiles from Troy.[27] Roman emperors traced their roots to what was in their own day an otherwise insignificant town in western Anatolia. In Rome, other narratives about the origins of the city co-existed alongside the Trojan one (including, famously, that involving the she-wolf that suckled the twins Romulus and Remus).[28] Even so, the cultural relevance of the story of Aeneas and his wandering band of refugees made Anatolia's past a foundational part of Rome's own.

Roman emperors, on their part, were well aware that they themselves were latecomers to the peninsula. They knew that Rome ruled Anatolia as the most recent in a multi-millennial succession of empires that had left imposing remnants of former might in the Anatolian landscape. Conversely, the inhabitants of the peninsula in the first few centuries AD were virtually obsessed with their own origins: public orators made speeches about the foundation of cities great and small; coins honored epichoric heroes and their exploits; and public inscriptions as well as sculptural reliefs in theaters and other public buildings celebrated historical and mythological genealogies. When the cities of Anatolia vied against each other for political and financial privileges from Rome, they often did so by invoking local antiquity. Some Anatolians took advantage of the Trojan and divine ancestry of Roman emperors to make their claims, but many others looked elsewhere than to Rome when celebrating their Anatolian origins.[29] Pre-classical Anatolian ruins and statues, funerary mounds, inscriptions, and sometimes even entire landscapes served as historical evidence about the Anatolian past in the Roman present.

The third reason is that ancient and modern interests in the antiquities of the region are also themselves intricately entangled. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century AD, the ruined cities of ancient Anatolia were a major focus of European, Ottoman, and eventually also American archaeological endeavors. It was in Turkey, after all, where Heinrich Schliemann dug into a settlement mound that he identified as Homeric Troy.[30] Archaeology – at least as it has been practiced in the Mediterranean – came to be the discipline that

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it now is partly in the ruins of ancient cities in Anatolia, including not just Troy, but also Ephesus, Pergamum, and Sardis. Not entirely independently of archaeological endeavors, modern scholars have sometimes recognized ancient Anatolian intellectuals such as Herodotus and Pausanias as historians and even archaeologists *avant la lettre*. Indeed, the opinions of such Greek and Roman archaeophiles about Anatolian antiquities have informed and limited those of modern scholars. For instance, although some nineteenth-century AD observers suspected that the colossal statue in Akpınar mentioned by Pausanias was bearded,[31] many insisted on regarding the figure as female, dismissing their own autoptic observations in order to make sense of that monument through the writings of Pausanias.

Some of the specific questions that had concerned Pausanias in the second century AD about the ancient statue on Mount Sipylus (including who had carved it and how long ago) regained relevance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when early modern antiquarians and modern archaeologists attempted to explain that statue and other pre-classical Anatolian monuments as part of universal art history.[32] Only on a handful of occasions, however, did classical authors unequivocally discuss such remains. Partly as a result of the scarcity of explicit references dealing with Anatolian antiquities in Greek and Latin literary texts, many monuments and objects in the peninsula posed serious taxonomic difficulties to antiquarians and archaeologists. Where did the statue of the Mother of the Gods fit in a global history of art and to whom did it belong culturally? For scholars in early Republican Turkey and beyond, such questions became increasingly urgent with the "rediscovery" and "rescue" of the Urartians and the Hittites and their impressive material remains during the late nineteenth and especially twentieth century.[33] Scholars debated whether the Bronze and Iron Age antiquities of Anatolia were related to later inhabitants of the region (including the Turks, Greeks, and Armenians).[34] European and American historical linguists quickly recognized the Hittites as the earliest attested speakers of an Indo-European language, and thus, as part of what was then called by some Indo-Aryan history.[35] By contrast, many Turkish academics and government officials in the early years of the Republic enthusiastically embraced the notion that the Hittites were somehow the predecessors of the Turks in Anatolia, entirely independently of linguistic filiations.[36]

Indeed, the Hittites remain prominent and controversial in the Turkish historical and political imagination today, especially in Ankara, which is only 200 kilometers west of the ruins of the ancient capital of the Hittite Empire, Hattusas. Since the late 1970s, Ankara's most recognizable landmark has been a gigantic replica of a Bronze Age Anatolian artifact: the so-called Hittite Sun Course monument.[37] When over the past few decades local leaders have threatened to take the piece down, protests have taken place on the monument

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