

# SARDIS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN 2005

Crawford H. GREENEWALT\*

The field season at Sardis in 2005 was conducted for two months in June and July, by the Project called Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, or Sardis Expedition; which is co-sponsored by Harvard University Art Museums and Cornell University; the season program included excavation, conservation, restoration, and site maintenance, touristic enhancement, study projects, and ceramic sampling. For support, assistance, and trust, as well as for fundamental permissions, the Sardis Expedition is deeply grateful to the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums, particularly to then Director General Nadir Avcı, Deputy Director General İlhan Kaymaz, Excavations Division Directors Ömer Çakır and Melik Ayaz, and to then Excavations Division Officer Çiğdem Morçöl; and to the Manisa Museum, Director Müyesser Tosunbaş and Assistants Sadrettin Atukeren, Sevgi Soyaker, and Emin Torunlar. The Ministry of Culture Representative was Kemalettin Ataş (General Directorate of Monuments and Museums); his experienced perspectives, perceptive and rational ideas, and supportive attitude towards research and scholarship greatly improved all aspects of the 2005 season programs.

Excavation was conducted at two locations in the city site, in the city core on lower north slopes of the Acropolis, and on a low western spur of the Acropolis above the Sanctuary of Artemis. Monuments and artifacts uncovered in excavation mostly range in date from Lydian era of the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. to Late Roman in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.; one item, recovered out of context, apparently belongs to the 3rd millennium B.C.

The focus of excavation was a large artificial terrace in central Sardis (at sector Field 55) and nearby Roman temple (at sector Wadi B); Terrace and Temple had previously been explored, the Terrace through geophysical Survey (2001; by Mahmut Drahor and his team from 9th of September

\* Crawford H. GREENEWALT, JR. Professor of Classical Archaeology, Department of Classics, UCB, Dwinelle Hall 7303, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720/U.S.A.

University, İzmir) and excavation (2002, 2004), the Temple through excavation (1980-1981, 2004; Fig. 1). Excavation in 2005 confirmed a close physical relationship between Terrace and Temple: further exposure of one temple corner (viz., of its surviving column foundations; Fig. 2) confirmed that the Temple had had a north-south orientation, and had been aligned on the same axis as the Terrace and its monumental north staircase. Terrace and staircase thus evidently served as a Temple precinct. One of you suggested last year that the Terrace might have accommodated a major gymnasium, and that the Temple might have been a gymnasium temple, to Hermes and Herakles or the like. Appropriate for a gymnasium are the level surface of the Terrace and its location adjacent to the stadium (east of the Terrace; not shown in Fig. 1); the Temple, however, which was evidently as big as the Temple of Zeus at Aizanoi- nearly two-thirds the size of the Parthenon- is probably too big for a gymnasium temple; in which case the terrace is unlikely to have been a gymnasium.

The terrace is framed on its downhill north side by a pair of substantial mortared fieldstone walls with deep foundations. The two walls appear to be contemporaneous, and diagnostic artifacts from related earth fills suggest for them a date in the first century A.D.; they may belong to urban reconstruction after the earthquake of A.D. 17.

Excavation on the west side of the terrace exposed quantities of Imperial Roman architecture and sculpture fragments (Figs. 3-5) together with twelve fragmentary or complete Imperial Roman inscriptions, and part of a Late Roman building, with wall painting and various contents. All the Imperial Roman architecture and sculpture (marble) had been either dumped or reused (Fig. 3) in construction of undetermined form, function, and time. Architectural parts included a two-fascia architrave (Fig. 3) with socket holes for the attachment of metal letters and soffit panels with ornate borders, fragments with modillions and meander bands in relief, column drums with deep flutes, an Attic Ionic base (with guilloche on the upper toros, imbrication on the lower), a column capital decorated with four male torsos (Fig. 4), one and probably all four representing Herakles; and a fragment that shows animal foreparts emerging from acanthus foliage and that evidently belongs to the upper corner ornament of the same or another Corinthian-variant capital. A

similar fragment, from the same capital or one like it, was recovered in fill above the temple (Fig. 5). Column shaft and base fragments might be from a single column; in size and decorative features they resemble columns of Wadi B Temple, to which they might belong. The Capital with Herakles torsos also has the same scale, perhaps likewise the fragments with animal foreparts. Prior to these discoveries, the Wadi B Temple columns had been assumed to have Grek Ionic or Corinthian capitals of traditional form; but Corinthian-variant capitals also are possible. Sculpture, much of which may be architectural, included fragments of human/human-like figures at various scales (the largest being life-size or slightly over life-size), in the round and in relief, draped and undraped; as well part of a wing and a lion head; much of it may be architectural sculpture. Inscriptions, apart from the one on the architrave, are cut on statue pedestals and consists of honorific texts; they give convential Sardis city titles (*autochthonos* and sacred to the gods, metropolis of Asia and all Lydia, metropolis of Asia and all Lydia and Greece, twice *neokoros*, friend and ally of the Romans); names of eight individuals (six men, two women; none previously attested) and their titles (which include councilor, *aganothete*, priest of Zeus Poleius, *panegyriarchon*, *strategos*, priestess of Artemis), and one toponym (great street of the cobblers from the Ocean).

Abutting the inner side of the Terrace wall is a Late Roman building, occupied in the 5th or 6th century A.D. (on the evidence of pottery as identified by M.L. Rautman; coins were earlier, i.e., issues of the late 4th-early 5th centuries). Upper debris, which may have been fixed with that of the nearby dumped and reused material, contained part of a marble head crowned with ivy (Fig. 6). The most fully excavated part belongs to a room with tiled floor and wall painting (delimited on two sides by adjoining east and South walls). Exposed parts of the wall painting simulate *opus sectile*. (Fig. 7) Near one wall rested four complete iron sword blades (Fig. 8); elsewhere a variety of items, in metal (e.g., tweezers, finger ring, lock, keg-shaped bronze weight weighing 1633.3 g [Fig. 9] ) and glass (flasks) as well as pottery.

Excavation below Roman and Late Roman levels in the terrace revealed much Roman fill, a Hellenistic stratum, and Early Persian or Late Lydian stratum of the 6th century B.C. that stratum also rested, at least partly, on earth fills, showing that artificial terracing was already a feature of this part of Sardis

in Archaic times. Part of the early Persian or late Lydian stratum, exposed in a deep trench (supervised by intrepid excavator Evren Isınak) preserved part of a pebble floor in which alternating stripes of light and dark had been created with stones of two distinct sizes and colors (Fig. 10): the forerunner of mosaic. Fills above the floor contained fragments of architectural terracottas (mostly *sima* fragments; decorated with Standard pattern ornament; Fig. 11).

Much older than anything else uncovered in this part of Sardis in 2005, evidently, is a fragmentary Stone mace head (Fig. 12); which was recovered in mixed fill (the diagnostic contexts of which were mostly Roman or Late Roman) that had accumulated above the Wadi B Temple. The mace head resembles examples associated with the Early Bronze Age, like the famous one from Alaca Höyük, and therefore may be another Early Bronze Age example. Pottery of the Early Bronze Age has been recovered at Sardis; but, like the mace, out of context. Early Bronze Age graves, however, are located by the shore of the Gygaean Lake, only 11 km. north of Sardis.

The other location of excavation at Sardis in 2005 was in the western part of the site, on a spur of the Acropolis overlooking and about 250 m. distant from the Temple of Artemis (sector KG, Kağırlık Tepe). On one sloping side of the spur an Archaic terrace wall with adjunct features survives in a segment 14 m. long (Fig. 13). It may have been part of the triple defenses of the Acropolis, reportedly admired by Alexander the Great (Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri* 1.17.5) or of landscape terracing, also attested by retaining walls on the north side and summit of the Acropolis. For a possible date of this terrace wall in the 6th century B.C. there is only the evidence of its rough masonry style, a small amount of associated pottery, and a relatively large number of Archaic roof and revetment tiles (the latter preserving egg-and-dart and “star” decorative motifs); none of the ceramic evidence comes from sealed contexts, and none of it is closely diagnostic. Surprisingly, objects recovered from earthy debris over and around the walls were almost exclusively Archaic, with practically no Roman material - normally ubiquitous in surface debris at Sardis.

Conservation, reconstruction, site maintenance, and touristic enhancement projects were managed by six conservators and civil engineer Teoman Yalçinkaya. Some 230 artifacts (recovered in 2005 and all previous seasons)

were cleaned, consolidated, mended, and restored as appropriate. The backing of Late Roman mosaic floor segments, which had been lifted from a sidewalk portico near the Synagogue (at sector MMS/N) and which had a total spatial coverage of nearly 100 square meters, was completed in 2005; the relatively light-weight backing materials, developed by conservator K.J. Severson and used for all lifted segments, have been cited in previous reports. Late Roman wall painting in the apsidal room of a town house, excavated a quarter of a century ago (at sector MMS I, room VI), was cleaned and consolidated (Fig.14); and some cosmetic fills and in-painting were done with acrylic emulsion paints. Several buildings were monitored for conservation needs or treated as appropriate; including Lydian buildings associated with gold refining installations (at sector PN), the Temple of Artemis, Bath-Gymnasium Complex with Synagogue, and unexcavated "Building C" (where oil spay paint dipinti - one with the "11 Eylül" surrounded by a heart – were removed). In a Late Roman town house (at sector MMS II), wall stumps were consolidated and capped with stone, brick, mortar, and a top surface of slate, which both protects the stumps and clarifies the architectural plan.

Two large unexcavated monuments of Roman Sardis, theater and stadium, became endangered a few years ago, through planting by a local land speculator of fig trees and olives in soil covering the ruins. After research in cadastral and title deed offices by N.D. Cahil, C. Şentürk, and T. Yalçınkaya, the land in question, ca.26 dönüm or 2.6 hectares, was purchased by the Sardis Expedition in 2005 for the National Treasury, to ensure the protection of those monuments.

Study projects focused on the Temple of Artemis (by F.K. Yegül and R. Pellegrini), lewis lifting systems (by W. Aylward), Hellenistic pottery (by S.M. Stewart, assisted by R.C. Fowler), Iron Age, Archaic, and Roman pottery from settlements and cemeteries by the Gygaean Lake (by A. Ramage and P.N. Sapiststein) and the mound at Kılcanlar, north of the Lake (by A. Gunter), a funerary assemblage from a tomb of the Persian era, excavated in 2003 (by Ebbinghaus), Croeseid gold and silver coins from contexts that antedate Persian rule at Sardis (by N.D. Cahill). (the coins are the subject of an article by Cahill and J.H. Kroll in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 2005).

Sampling of ceramics for analysis (by M. Kerschner, L.K. Kealhofer, and P. R. Grave), aimed to clarify production centers of pottery recovered at Sardis and the content composition of small jars of the distinctive kind called *lydion*. Almost all *lydion* jars are ceramic, and those produced in Anatolia have simple or minimal decoration. On the other hand, they have a wide distribution in Greek lands and Italy, where they were also imitated; the Greek and Italic imitations often have fancy pattern and black-figure decoration; and there is one Anatolian example made of silver (from a tomb near Güre in Uşak). *Lydion* contents, therefore, were clearly valued, and the nature of their contents is of more than ordinary interest. Preliminary analysis, by T. Craig (University of New England, New South Wales), of *lydion* samples from Sardis and Gordion indicates that *lydion* containers “preserve relatively high volumes of residue suitable for mass spectrographic analyses” (unpublished “Interim Report on the Characterisation of Lydion Residues, 2006) and suggests that their contents were complex, partly vegetable, perhaps standard. Long Ago, Andreas Rumpf proposed (in *Athenische Mitteilungen* 45, 1920) that *lydion* vases had contained *bakkaris* or *brenthium* unguents that are associated with Lydia in ancient literature (notably Hipponax, in the 6th century B.C. [fr. 104 ed. Mason] and dramatic writers of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.); and a plant called *bakkaris/bakcharis* is cited in literature of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. (by Erotianus, Pliny the Elder, and Dioskurides). May T. Craig’s research—conducted halfway around the world from Lydian lands—produce further information on this project!

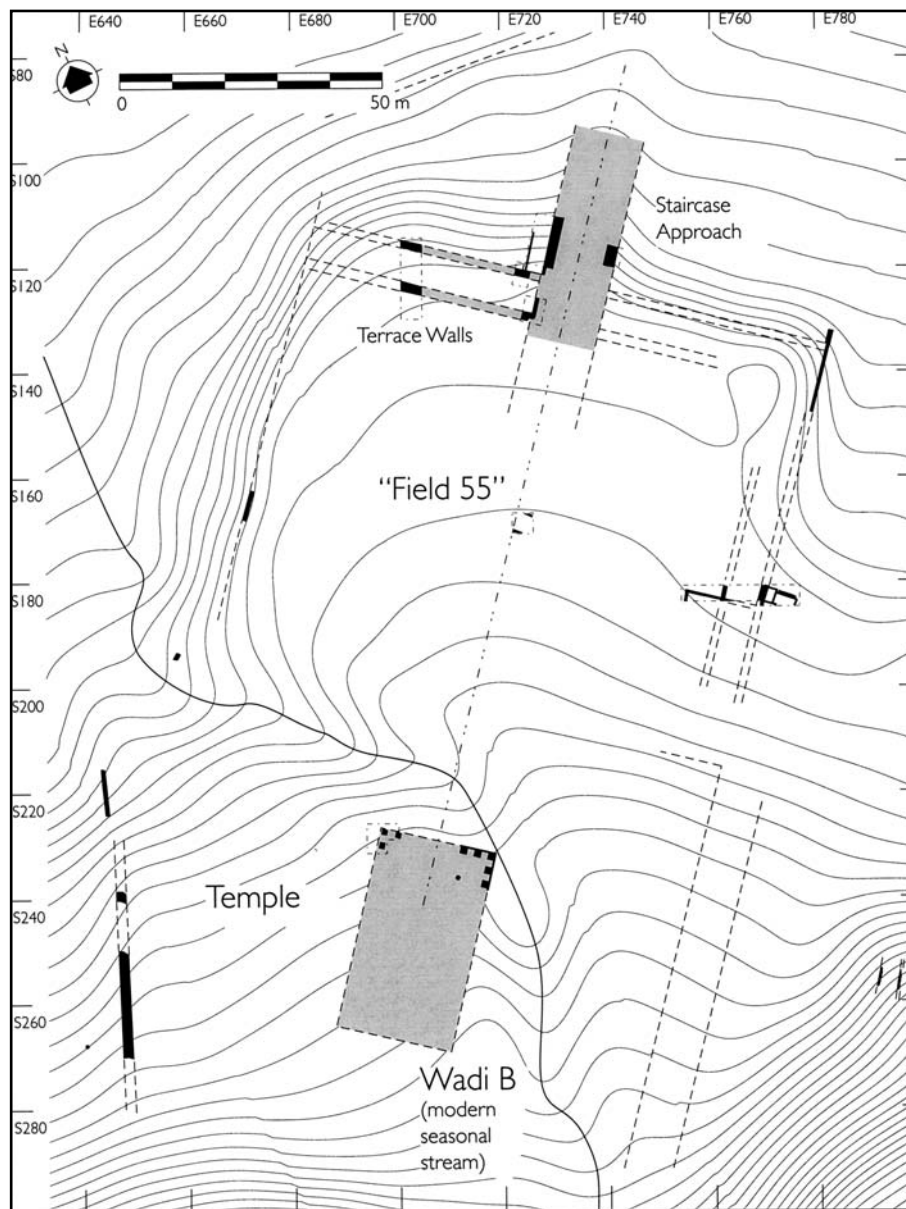


Fig.1: Sardis, sectors F 55 (Field 55) and Wadi B. Interpretive plan showing Roman terrace with staircase and Wadi B Temple

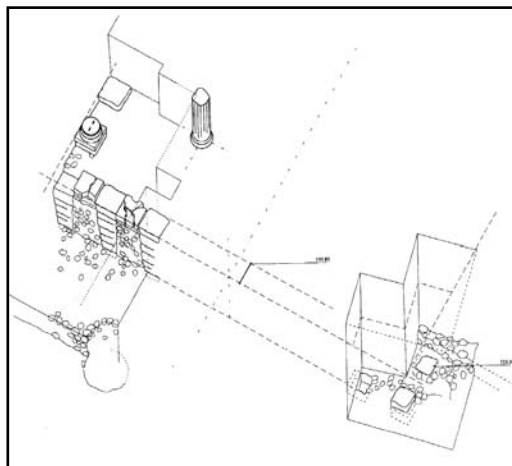


Fig. 2: Sardis, sector Wadi B. North end of the Temple as excavated, with northeast corner (excavated 1980-1981) at left northwest corner (excavated 2004-2005) at right; isometric view looking South



Fig.3: Sardis, sector F 55: west side of the Terrace (the trench appears but is not marked in Fig. 1). Imperial Roman architectural fragments, reused and dumped; view looking west





Fig. 4: Sardis, sector F 55: Corinthian-variant column capital fragment, with four male torsos; one and probably all four representing Herakles

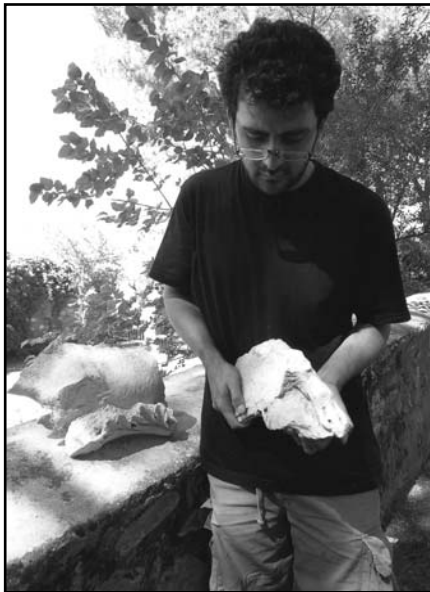


Fig. 5: Sardis, sectors F 55 and Wadi B: Corinthian-variant column capital fragments (one resting on the wall, one, shown in two different views, in the hands of excavator F. A. Rojas)



Fig. 6: Sardis, sector F 55: Imperial Roman head (wearing ivy wreath; with excavator E. Ögüş)

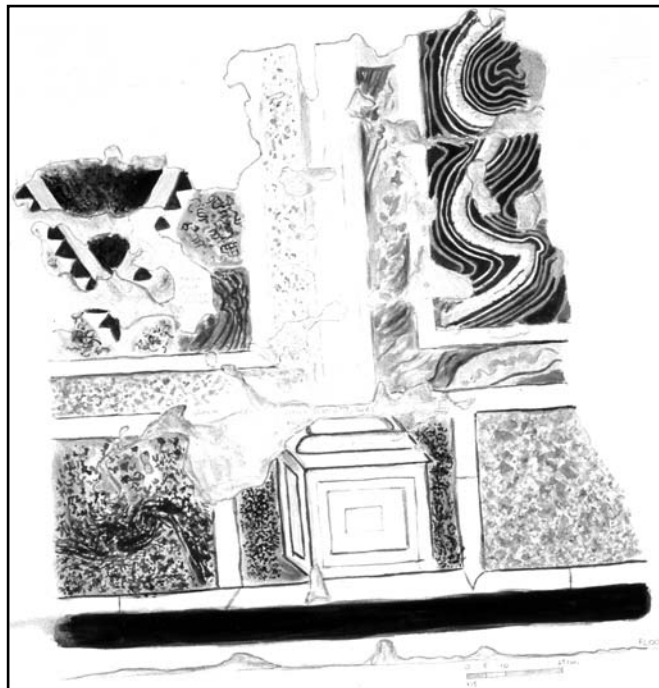


Fig. 7: Sardis, sector F 55: Late Roman wall painting (on the south wall of a large room with tile floor; water-color by C.S. Alexander)



Fig. 8: Sardis, sector F 55: Late Roman room (the wall painting at left is reproduced in water-color facsimile, Fig. 7), with assemblage of four iron sword blades (of which two are shown; with excavator E. Ögüş.)



Fig. 9: Sardis, sector F 55: Bronze weigh from Late Roman room



Fig. 10: Sardis, sector F 55: pebble floor in a stratum of the 6th century B.C.; with excavator E. Işınak; view looking east



Fig. 11: Sardis, sector F 55: architectural terracottas of the 6th century B.C., from the stratum that included the pebble floor shown in Fig. 10



Fig. 12: Sardis, sector Wadi B: fragmentary mace head, perhaps of the Early Bronze Age (exterior at left; interior, showing central drilled hole, at right); from fill that covered remains of the Wadi B Temple



Fig. 13: Sardis, sector KG (Kagırlık Tepe). Archaic terrace wall on a low spur of the Acropolis; view looking west

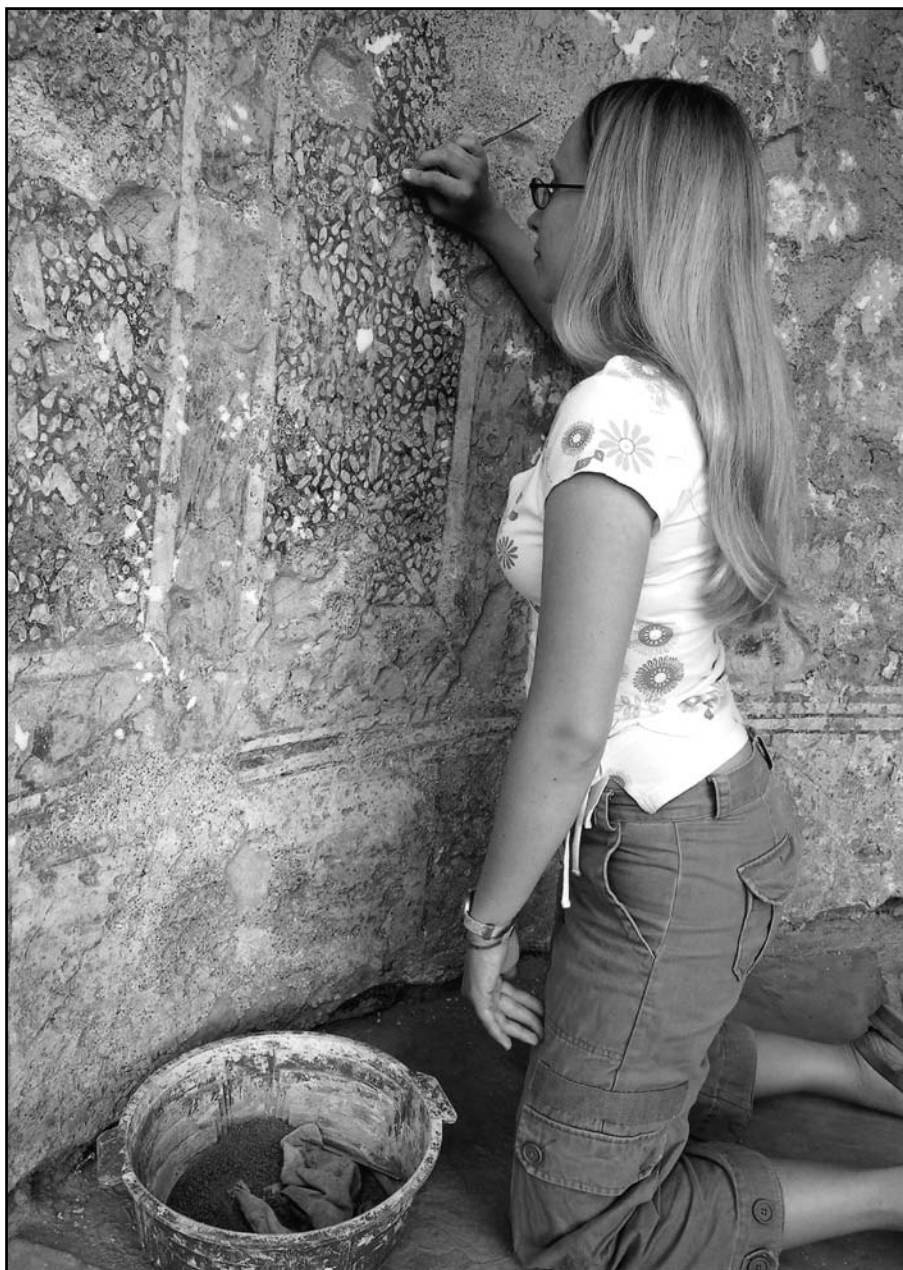


Fig. 14: Sardis, sector MMS I. Late Roman wall painting in an apsidal room (VI) belonging to a town house of the 5th-6th centuries A.D.; view looking west