

# The Pessinuntine Sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods in light of the excavated Roman temple: fact, fiction and feasibility.

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## 1. Introduction

Excavations by Ghent University in ancient Pessinus, which now slumbers under the modern hamlet Ballıhisar in central Turkey, were initiated in 1967 by Pieter Lambrechts. The chief incentive was to locate the sanctuary of the Mother in Pessinus, which Cicero avidly claimed was revered “by all the kings who have ever held rule in Europe and in Asia” (Cicero, *Har. Resp.* XXIII, 28). The Mother, in Greek literature known as *Meter Kubileya* (‘Mother of the Mountain’), *Meter Dindymene* (‘Mother of the Dindymos Mountain’ in Phrygia) or simply *Kybele*, and as the Great Mother, *Mater Magna* by the Romans, was the main Phrygian deity, worshipped as the giver of all life on inhospitable mountains, and associated with wild nature and savage beasts.<sup>1</sup> Ancient authors situate the beating heart of her cult in Pessinus, the (Hellenistic) temple state with presumed Early Phrygian roots, which go back to king Midas. The urban nucleus of the temple state straddles the sacred Gallos, a tributary of the Sangarios River, and lies in a concealed valley to the southwest of the Dindymos, the modern Arayit Dağı (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> The topography of Pessinus is inconsistent with the tenets of the cult; but as we shall see, this is but one of many conundrums pertaining to archaeological investigations of Kybele in Pessinus.

The excavations, which were concluded for the Ghent team in the summer of 2008, but were continued by the University of Melbourne in 2009, revealed several monumental structures, which may qualify, at first sight, as possible cult buildings for Kybele. Sectors B and H, in the south of the village, constitute a significant part of Pessinus’ monumental centre (Fig. 2). The promontory in sector B holds the remnants of a large complex with thick perimeter walls in *emplekton*.<sup>3</sup> It was built in two main phases, one Early Hellenistic (third century BC), the other Late Hellenistic (ca. 120 BC-80 BC). In the late Augustan era, a resonating sample of Roman-style *tabula rasa* urbanism resulted in the removal of the core of the complex.<sup>4</sup> This intervention was part of the levelling works for the construction of a terrace, in which the massive foundations of a marble Corinthian temple on a disproportionately large stepped *krepis* were implanted. The western slope of the promontory was dug out to contain a hybrid structure, which combined a central stairway and a *cavea* and shared the longitudinal axis of the temple above (Fig. 3). A

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<sup>1</sup> E.O. JAMES, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess. An archaeological and documentary study*, New York, 1959; G. DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e tombe rupestri dell’ antica Frigia*, Rome, 1990; L.E. ROLLER, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Kybele*, Berkeley/London, 1999; M. MUNN, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens, and the Tyranny of Asia. A study of sovereignty in ancient religion*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The first mention of the priesthood of the temple state Pessinus is by Polybius XXI, 37, 4-7 (cf. Livy XXXVIII, 18, 9-10). ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> A. VERLINDE, Monumental architecture in Hellenistic and Julio-Claudian Pessinus, in *Babesch* 85, 2010, p. 111-139, part. p. 115-119, fig. 6.

<sup>4</sup> M. WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus: Epigraphical and Numismatic Evidence for its Date and Identification*, in *EA* 7, 1986, p. 37-72; part. p. 39-44; VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 122, 127-132, fig. 19.

massive limestone terrace wall functioned as the *analemma* of the *cavea* wings. All this coincided with the monumentalization of the Gallos, which became a *cardo maximus* framed with marble colonnades and quay walls, connecting the zone of the temple for the first time in its history with the rest of the urban fabric (Fig. 4).<sup>5</sup>

Sector H, to the west of the temple, is located in the river terrace. A limestone colonnaded structure, more specifically a Rhodian peristyle (*'peristylon rhodiacum'*), with a tall Ionic colonnade to the north, and three lower Doric *stoai* adorned with wall paintings on the other sides, was erected here, parallel with the temple axis and along the river bed of the Gallos (Figs. 2 & 5). Originally, this complex was on a purely stylistic basis regarded as late Tiberian or Claudian at the latest, and as part of the temple complex.<sup>6</sup> However, a thorough study of its pottery, wall paintings, architecture and charcoal samples, recently led to the conclusion that it was actually contemporary with and part of the Late Hellenistic complex on the promontory, and perished in a fire around 80-75 BC, about eight decades before the erection of the temple complex.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding these three complexes, over the last two decades, scholars have tried to associate one or the other with the Hellenistic sanctuary of Kybele.<sup>8</sup> I will attempt to demonstrate that their theories are flawed, and not because they are speculative –the scarcity of the evidence does not allow to transcend conjecture– but because they fail to take into account a series of basic archaeological observations, which build a strong case against such an identification. On account of new numismatic, archaeological and epigraphic observations, the traditional identification and chronology of the temple (cult) will be reevaluated. In addition, I will approach a series of issues pertaining to the location and Phrygian/Hellenistic roots of the sanctuary. It will be argued that the temple may not be found in the village of Ballıhisar to begin with, and that the Early Phrygian roots of the sanctuary may have been a later fabrication.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Ancient sources

The passage of fourth century BC historian Theopompus on the Phrygian roots of the Pessinuntine sanctuary is the earliest known.<sup>10</sup> It has come to us via Diodorus Siculus: “As for Cybelê, in ancient times they (*sc. The Phrygians*) erected altars and performed sacrifices to her yearly; and later they built for her a costly temple in Pisinus of Phrygia, and established honours and sacrifices of the greatest magnificence,

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<sup>5</sup> M. WAELEKENS, Le Système d'Endiguement du Torrent, in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELEKENS, *Les Fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973 I A. Texte*, Bruges, 1984, p. 77-141.

<sup>6</sup> WAELEKENS, *The imperial sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 43-44, 47, 54, 59.

<sup>7</sup> VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 119-127.

<sup>8</sup> In particular DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e tombe* [n. 1]; and P. PENSABENE, Non stelle ma il sole. Il contributo della planimetria e della decorazione architettonica alla definizione del santuario di Cibele a Pessinunte in *ArchClass* 55, 2004, p. 83-143.

<sup>9</sup> This possibility was advanced for the first time by DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e tombe* [n. 1], p. 196-199. Compare with G. R. TSETSKHLADZE, Notes on Phrygian Pessinus, in H. Sağlamtimur et al. (eds.), *Studies in Honour of Altan Çilingiroğlu. A Life Dedicated to Urartu on the Shores of the Upper Sea*, Istanbul, 2009, p. 703-717, part. p. 709; and K. STROBEL, Ist das phrygische Kultzentrum der Matar mit dem hellenistischen und römischen Pessinus identisch? Zur Geographie des Tempelstaates von Pessinus in *OTerr* 9, 2009, p. 207-228.

<sup>10</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII, 9, 7), in his description of emperor Julian's interest in the Meter cult, mentions that it was Theopompus who attributed the founding of Meter's sanctuary at Pessinus to Midas. J. STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions of Pessinous*, Bonn, 2005, p. 253 T50.

*Midas their king taking part in all these works out of his devotion to beauty [...]*<sup>11</sup>The reign of the historical King Midas is traditionally situated from around 740 until Gordion fell to the Cimmerians, around 696 BC.<sup>12</sup> During this period, the kingdom of Phrygia, which was at its height, comprised the whole of central and west Anatolia, from the Urartian frontier in the east to Lydia, with the capital at Gordion. The old age and Early Phrygian origins of the sanctuary and cult of Meter Dindymene of Pessinus have been assumed by many Greek authors who by tradition tied everything involving the goddess to king Midas, often forgetting what was myth and what was history.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, much confusion has arisen in modern scholarship about the so-called Phrygian roots of the Pessinuntine sanctuary of the Mother, especially in light of Strabo's remarks on the Attalid involvement in the erection of the shrine (cf. infra).<sup>14</sup> However, it may not be far-fetched to assume that Theopompus' passage is imbedded in the Greek tradition of mythological historization.<sup>15</sup>

When Pessinus became a temple state, at the latest and presumably in the third century BC, the boundaries of its territories were marked by the Sangarios to the south and by the Sivrihisar Dağları, which is joined by the Arayıt Dağı (Dindymos Mountain) to the north and northeast.<sup>16</sup> In the west, the area of Pessinus was probably bordered by Midaion (Karahöyük). The location of the sanctuary may have been anywhere in this large area of about 1000 km<sup>2</sup>, which constituted Pessinus' *chora*. We will learn that in Anatolia it was common for shrines to Kybele to have been situated in remote, inhospitable locations outside of the central settlement.<sup>17</sup>

In the Hellenistic period, Pessinus and Sardis seem to have been the only sanctuaries with a prominent sanctuary of Kybele, both owing their prominence to the support of Hellenistic rulers.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, according to Strabo (XII, 5, 3), a monarch of the Attalid dynasty of Pergamon played an important role in the genesis of the sanctuary at Pessinus during the Hellenistic period:

*“Pessinus is the greatest of the emporiums in that part of the world, containing a temple of the Mother of the gods, which is an object of great veneration. They call her Agdistis. The priests were in ancient times potentates, I might call them, who reaped the fruits of a great priesthood, but at present the prerogatives of these have been much reduced, although the emporium still endures. The sacred precinct has been built*

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<sup>11</sup> Diodorus Siculus III, 59, 8. STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 239 T16.

<sup>12</sup> For the historically attested king Midas, see O. W. MUSCARELLA, King Midas of Phrygia and the Greeks, in K. EMRE / F. HROUDA / M. MELLINK / N. ÖZGÜÇ (eds.), *Anatolia and the Near East: Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, Ankara, p. 333-342; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 69-70; MUNN, *The Mother* [n. 1], p. 45, 68, 77-79, 88, 93-94.

<sup>13</sup> MUNN, *The Mother* [n. 1], p. 94-95.

<sup>14</sup> Compare with STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 209; TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 707-709.

<sup>15</sup> Compare with Cicero's (*De legibus* 1.1.5) remark that the historical work of Theopompus contained many falsehoods. On historical inaccuracies in Theopompus' work, see F. JACOBY, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (2B1), 1929, Berlin, and M. A. FLOWER, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century BC*, 1997, New York, part. chapter 10.

<sup>16</sup> For the territory of Pessinus, consult STRUBBE, *Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 179-184; STROBEL, *das phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 207-208, 224. On the origins of the temple state, see B. VIRGILIO, *Il "Tempio State" di Pessinunte fra Pergamo e Roma nel II-I secolo A.C.*, Pisa; L. BOFFO, *I re ellenistici e i centri religiosi dell' Asia Minore, Florence*, 1985, p. 34-41; M.-G. LANCELOTTI, *Attis, Between Myth and History: King, Priest and God*, Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2002, p. 47-48.

<sup>17</sup> TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 709.

<sup>18</sup> ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 196, 198, 232; MUNN, *The Mother* [n. 1], p. 116-117, 125-130, 137-138, 220-221, 227-231, 254-256, 259-260.

up by the Attalic kings in a manner befitting a holy place, with a sanctuary and also with porticos of white marble. The Romans made the temple famous when, in accordance with oracles of the Sybil, they sent for the statue of the goddess there, just as they did in the case of that of Asclepius at Epidaurus.”<sup>19</sup>

The repute of the temple during the Republican period shines through in Rome’s veneration of the temple. In 205/204 BC, after the Sibylline Books had predicted that the coming of the *baetylus* (representing Kybele) to Rome would guarantee triumph over Carthage, Rome sent out an embassy to receive the sacred stone from Pessinus.<sup>20</sup> According to Livy, king Attalus I Soter (r. 241-197 BC) served as a mediator between Rome and Pessinus and personally escorted the Roman delegation to the sanctuary.<sup>21</sup> J. Devreker proposes that Pessinus received the sanctuary from Pergamon as compensation for ‘losing’ the sacred stone to Rome.<sup>22</sup> Another interpretation is offered by L. Boffo, who suggests that the erection of the sanctuary may only have occurred after 183 BC, when Galatia was subject to Pergamene rule.<sup>23</sup> However, none of these theories explain why Attalus’ moral authority was high enough to assume the role of mediator, or how the Romans could have made the Attalid temple famous, if it did not yet exist by 205/204 BC.<sup>24</sup>

Strabo does not mention any sanctuary preceding the one of the Attalids, and after introducing the Attalid Hellenistic *temenos* he notes that the Romans made it famous when the *baetylus* was retrieved at the end of the third century BC. This gives a *terminus ante quem* for the erection of the Attalid sanctuary, meaning it was built in the third century BC, probably by Attalus I who, before 226 BC, had enlarged his sphere of influence to include Greater Phrygia.<sup>25</sup> Although there is a lacuna in the history of the Gauls of Asia Minor from 229 to 196 BC, it has been alleged that there are reasons to assume the existence of an alliance of Attalus I with those of Pessinus.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Loeb translation. “Πεσσινοῦς δ’ ἐστὶν ἐμπόριον τῶν ταύτη μέγιστον, ἱερὸν ἔχον τῆς Μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν σεβασμοῦ μεγάλου τύγχανον· καλοῦσι δ’ αὐτὴν Ἀγδιστιν. οἱ δ’ ἱερεῖς τὸ παλαιὸν μὲν δυνάσται τινὲς ἦσαν, ἱερωσύνην καρπούμενοι μεγάλην, νυνὶ δὲ τούτων μὲν αἱ τιμαὶ πολὺ μεμείωνται, τὸ δὲ ἐμπόριον συμμένει· κατεσκευάσται δ’ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀτταλικῶν βασιλέων ἱεροπρεπῶς τὸ τέμενος ναῶ τε καὶ στοαῖς λευκολίθοις· ἐπιφανὲς δ’ ἐποίησαν Ῥωμαῖοι τὸ ἱερόν [...].”STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 233 T2

<sup>20</sup> Diodorus Siculus 35.33.2; Livy XXIX, 10, 4-11, 18; Valerius Maximus VIII, 15, 2; Appian, *Roman History* VII, 9, 56; Cassius Dio XVII, 61. Cf. ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 264-269.

<sup>21</sup> Not all the sources mention the role of Pessinus and Attalus in this event. The tradition that the cult of the Magna Mater was introduced to Rome from Pessinus, however, is so unrelenting in the ancient sources from the time of Cicero that it cannot be lightly discarded. For a discussion of the presumed role of Attalus and Pessinus in the retrieval of the *baetylus*, see E.V. HANSEN, *The Attalids of Pergamon* (revised second edition), Ithaca/London, 1971, p. 50-51; E.S. GRUEN, *The advent of the Magna Mater*, in E.S. GRUEN (ed.), *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*, Berkeley, 1990, p. 5-33., part. p. 16-19; and ROLLER, *In Search of* [n. 1], p. 193 n. 116.

<sup>22</sup> J. DEVREKER, *L’Histoire de Pessinonte*, in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les Fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973. I.A. Texte*, Bruges, 1984, p. 13-37, part. p. 14-16.

<sup>23</sup> BOFFO, *I re ellenistici* [n. 16], p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> Compare with the remarks of HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 51; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 270-271; VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 112-113.

<sup>25</sup> R.B. MCSHANE, *The foreign policy of the Attalids of Pergamum*, Urbana, 1964, p. 61; HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that Eposognatus, a chief of the Galatian tribe of the Tolistobogioi who had settled around Pessinus, was met with envoys sent by the Roman consul Gnaeus Manlius Vulso during his expedition against the Gauls in 189 BC. Livy states that Eposognatus was chosen because he “alone of the chiefs had both remained friendly to Eumenes and refused aid to Antiochus against the Romans.” (Livy XXXVIII, 18, 1). Clearly, Eumenes had allied himself with Gallic chieftains from the area of Pessinus before Antiochus had invaded Asia Minor.

Strabo's observation that "the Romans made the temple famous" ("ἐπιφάνες δ' ἐποίησαν Ῥωμαῖοι τὸ ἱερόν") may imply that the sanctuary was not as celebrated to begin with. Even in ancient times there was much puzzlement about the Phrygian origins of Pessinus. The question arises whether the age-old sanctuary may not have been an Attalid fabrication, perhaps to legitimize the Hellenistic sanctuary and its benefactors.<sup>27</sup> It has been claimed that Cicero's (*Har. Resp.* XIII, 28) comment, which states that the temple of Pessinus was held in deep devotion by Persians and Syrians ("quae Persae, quae Syri") from past generations, likely reflects the generally high status of Phrygian Meter in Anatolia rather than the historical eminence of a shrine in Pessinus.<sup>28</sup>

We know from Strabo (XIII, 2, 6) that Pessinus was not the first place where Pergamon put efforts in monumentalizing the ancient cult of the Mother. The earliest known Greek-style cult building for Kybele was erected by Philetaerus on the wild and inhospitable mountain top known as Aspendos (modern Mamurt Kale in Jümd Dağ, due south of modern Kınık) between the Caicus and Hermus valleys, about 20 km southeast of Pergamum.<sup>29</sup> The dedication of the building is without dispute; three *epistylon* blocks are inscribed with: "ΦΙ | ΛΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ ΑΤΤΑΟΥ ΜΗΤ | ΡΙ ΘΕΩΝ."<sup>30</sup> The budding Attalid kingdom may have been in need of a status symbol to legitimate its power over the indigenous peoples, and by tying its own destiny to the renowned goddess this was more easily attained. The Doric *prostylos* temple at Mamurt Kale marked a new era in which cult buildings of Meter were integrated in the Greek architectural repertoire.<sup>31</sup> However, cultic continuity with the palaeo-Phrygian past was still guaranteed by the traditional character of the location, i.e. on a desolate mountain peak dotted with rocky outcrops.<sup>32</sup> Dozens of terracotta idols representing Kybele with traditional attributes (mural crown, *polos*, flanking lions, etc.) were dispersed around the temple.<sup>33</sup> Some of these are clearly archaic, which betrays that the mountainous site was chosen in view of a pre-existing cult of the Mother.<sup>34</sup> An important question brings us back to Pessinus: did the Attalids adopt the same strategy of topographic and cultic continuity in Pessinus for the erection of the Pessinuntine sanctuary?

This question will be addressed below, but for now, it should be noted that the temple of the Mother of the Gods at Pessinus still existed when Strabo was writing, i.e. in the early Augustan period. The fact that

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Possibly, his father Attalus I may already have had an alliance with the Gauls. HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 51-52.

<sup>27</sup> Compare with TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 708-709; and G. TSETSKHLADZE, Pessinus: gorod-khram Velikoi Bogini Materi Kibeli (Pessinus in Central Turkey, Temple City of the Great Mother Goddess, Kybele), in *Aristeas* 3, p. 65-77.

<sup>28</sup> ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 192 n. 10.

<sup>29</sup> A. CONZE / P. SCHAZMANN, *Mamurt-Kaleh. Ein Tempel der Göttermutter unweit Pergamon*, Berlin, 1911. C. MAREK, *Geschichte Kleinasiens in der Antike*, Munich, 2010, p. 269. The historical significance of the sanctuary is discussed in E. OHLEMUTZ, E., *Die Kulte und Heiligtümer der Götter von Pergamon*, Würzburg, 1940, p. 140; HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 284-285; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 210-211. Another extra-urban sanctuary of Meter, known as Kapıkaya, lies about 5 km northwest of Pergamon. It consists of a small grotto with a natural spring, a stepped altar and several niches carved into the rock (ROLLER, *idem*).

<sup>30</sup> CONZE / SCHAZMANN, *Mamurt-Kaleh* [n. 29], p. 10; HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 285.

<sup>31</sup> On the putative reforms of the cult of Kybele by the Attalids, see LANCELOTTI, *Attis* [n. 16] p. 49 n. 173.

<sup>32</sup> On the temple at Mamurt Kale being the first Greek-style temple of Kybele, see DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e Tombe* [n. 1], p. 196-199.

<sup>33</sup> CONZE / SCHAZMANN, *Mamurt-Kaleh* [n. 29], Taf. XI-XII; HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 284; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 210.

<sup>34</sup> CONZE / SCHAZMANN, *Mamurt-Kaleh* [n. 29], p. 11-12; HANSEN, *The Attalids* [n. 21], p. 285; ROLLER, *In search of* [1], p. 210.

Pessinus was considered to be one of the “greatest emporiums” in Asia Minor may have been related to its famous shrine (Strabo XII, 5, 3).<sup>35</sup> In the fourth century the sanctuary was still in existence, as it was reported by Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII, 9, 5) that Emperor Julian (355-363 AD) visited the ancient “shrines” (“*delubra*”) of the Mother Goddess, probably during his journey from Constantinople to Antioch in 362 AD.<sup>36</sup> The use of the plural form of “*delubrum*” is interesting, as it shows that there may have been several sanctuaries of Kybele in Pessinus and its *chora*. Perhaps, the Phrygian cult places of old co-existed with the Attalid sanctuary. It is not at all clear whether the latter was situated near the Phrygian sacred areas or a physical part of the former. Regarding Strabo’s comment on the Attalid sanctuary, while H.L. Jones (1928, n. 10) translates the verb “κατεσκεύασται” as “built up”, Devreker supposes the correct translation is “enlarged”.<sup>37</sup> The implication is that the temple was not a new construction replacing the Early Phrygian sanctuary, but rather an expansion with a *temenos* and porticoes in white marble. It is, however, unlikely that the true meaning of this verb is “enlarged” as there are no parallels and the common translation for “to enlarge” is “αύξάνειν”.<sup>38</sup> It is therefore plausible that the Attalid sanctuary constituted an autonomous entity, physically independent from the Early Phrygian shrine(s), which may not have been very important outside Pessinus.

Although the priests had lost much of their privileges by the late first century BC, the sanctuary endured and seemed influential enough to attract individuals seeking to increase their political power.<sup>39</sup> The temple had fallen prey to political machinations during the so-called Brogitarus affair (58-56 BC) (Cicero, *De Har. Resp.* XIII, 28).<sup>40</sup> The Roman politician Publius Clodius Pulcher had sold the temple and its lands to Brogitarus, tetrarch of the Galatian Trokmoi, who had sacked the sanctuary and disrupted the rites. After these events, the sources turn silent, but nothing suggests that the sanctuary was damaged or dishonored in the early imperial period.<sup>41</sup> There is no compelling reason to assume that a new sanctuary to Kybele was built in the Augustan or Tiberian period.

Although the Pessinuntine cult was in neglect halfway the fourth century AD (Ammianus Marcellinus XXII, 9, 5), the ultimate fate of the sanctuary is yet a mystery. The sanctuary may have been given up around the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century AD, much like the Corinthian temple in sector B, which, according to archaeological (numismatic) data, fell in ruins around this time.<sup>42</sup> This should probably be seen as a symptom of a process well underway.<sup>43</sup> The steady advance of Christianity in

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<sup>35</sup> Strabo XII, 5, 3.

<sup>36</sup> S. MITCHELL, *Anatolia, Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor II. The Rise of the Church*, Oxford, 1993, p. 89. Cf. Libanius, *Orationes* XII, 87; XVII, 17.

<sup>37</sup> J. DEVREKER / H. THOEN / F. VERMEULEN, The Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus and Its Predecessors: A Revision, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 3, p. 127-144, part. p. 125-127; STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 234.

<sup>38</sup> S.C. WOODHOUSE, *English-Greek Dictionary. A Vocabulary of the Attic Language*, London, 1910.

<sup>39</sup> Strabo XII, 5, 3.

<sup>40</sup> ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 296; STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 250-251 T44.

<sup>41</sup> WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 69.

<sup>42</sup> One particular indicative find was a coin dated to 383/392 AD (Theodosius I), found on top of a foundation wall of the temple. A. VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site at Pessinus. The Genesis, Development and Taphonomy of a Roman Temple in Central Asia Minor in Light of its Phrygian-Hellenistic predecessors and Byzantine afterlife* (Monographs on Antiquity 7), Leuven, Chapter 9.

<sup>43</sup> The depiction of Kybele on coin issues from Pessinus decreases significantly from the second century AD onwards, in favour of goddesses such as Demeter, Artemis and Athena. While the coin types from the Deiotaros era (63-41 BC) listed by Devreker refer exclusively to Kybele (10 out of 10 coin types); this is decreased to only 33 % in the first century AD (2 out of 6 coin types) and 8.7 % in the period from Trajanus to Caracalla (98-217 AD) (17 out of 195 coin types). J. DEVREKER, Les monnaies de Pessinonte, in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les fouilles*

the fourth century AD set in motion the downfall of many pagan temples in Asia Minor, which were either deconsecrated, destroyed or converted to Christian churches. According to the Codex Theodosianus (XVI), the last decade of that century introduced the legalization of such neglect, even though the destruction of pagan buildings proper was discouraged by law until 435 AD.<sup>44</sup>

### 3. Nineteenth century explorations

The French explorer Charles Texier, passed by the Ottoman village of Ballıhisar in 1834 and correctly identified it with Pessinus.<sup>45</sup> Although Texier only stayed for a day, he produced a detailed plan of the site (Fig. 6). Even though his plan is often regarded as a hypothetical, hasty interpretation rather than an exact representation of archaeological reality, the depicted concentrations of monumental architectural remnants seem mostly accurate.<sup>46</sup> For example, the location of his “*basilica*” is exactly where the Late Roman *basilica* was excavated in the 1990s (trench L) (Fig. 4).<sup>47</sup> Taking the location of the theatre -which remains today as a hollow in the slope (sector G)- as a reference, the excavated Sebasteion (sector B) seems to correspond with the area where Texier situated a temple complex, which he labeled “*Temple de la Mère des Dieux*,” believing strongly that the ‘observed’ temple complex was the one built by the Attalids of Pergamon.

The depicted complex is a hexastyle temple with a large *krepis*, much like the excavated building in sector B, but otherwise it shows many anomalies with archaeological reality, even though his verbal description of the marble temple terrace wall fits the Severan situation of the excavated sanctuary rather well. The plan depicts a south-north oriented peripteral *hexastyle* temple with an *opisthodomos* on a large Greek style *krepis* (Figs. 4 & 6). It stands centrally in the back of a rectangular square surrounded by porticoes with adjoining rooms, which, according to Texier, is the “*temenos*” Strabo speaks of.<sup>48</sup> The temple in sector B was framed by a *temenos* as well, yet it lacked rooms, *stoai*, or a fourth side in front of the temple (as this is where the theatre lay). Much like Texier’s archaeologically improbable ‘reconstruction’ of the sanctuary, the reference to the Mother Goddess is arbitrary and instigated by Pessinus’ historical fame as

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*de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973. I. A. Texte, Bruges, 1984, p. 173-190. Cf. A. COŞKUN, Der Ankyraner Kaiserkult und die Transformation galatischer und phrygisch-galatischer Identitäten in Zentralanatolien im Spiegel der Münzquellen, in A. COŞKUN / H. HEINEN / S. PFEIFFER (eds.), Repräsentation von Identität und Zugehörigkeit im Osten der griechisch-römischen Welt, Frankfurt am Main, p. 173-211, part. p. 193. Cf. M.*

ARSLAN, Pessinus ve Tavium sikkeleri, in *Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, 2005 Yıllığı*, Ankara, 2006, p. 125-181.

<sup>44</sup> The Codex Theodosianus on laws involving religion paints a bleak image for pagan temples in the later fourth and fifth century AD. Between 391 AD and 435 AD a series of laws called for the punishment of worship or sacrifice at pagan temples (391 AD), the destruction of pagan temples in rural areas (399 AD), the dismantlement of pagan altars (407 AD), the removal of temples leading to pagan devotion (415 AD) and the final demolition of any remaining pagan temples and shrines (435 AD) (CT 16.10/11/16/19/20/25). However, several laws were passed in 399 AD to halt the destruction of precious pagan buildings (CT 16.10.15 & 18). Such laws may have been an answer to spontaneous dismantlement by local initiative. This may have happened in Pessinus. Compare with R. BAYLISS, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (British Archaeological Reports International Series 1281), Oxford, 2004, p. 116-120; p. 124-129; K.L. NOETLICH, *Die gesetzgeberischen maßnahmen der christlichen Kaiser des vierten Jahrhunderts gegen Häretiker, Heiden und Juden*, unpublished dissertation, Cologne, 1971, p. 176; H. LEPPIN, *Theodosius der Große*, Darmstadt, 2003, p. 124-125, 249 n. 58.

<sup>45</sup> C. TEXIER, *Description de l'Asie Mineure faite par ordre du gouvernement français de 1833 à 1837: Beaux-arts, monuments historiques, plans et topographie des cites antiques*, I, Paris, 1839, p. 163-170, pl. LXII.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the compass on Texier’s map is rendered upside down.

<sup>47</sup> J. DEVREKER / F. VERMEULEN, Pessinus (Pessinonte) 1992 : preliminary report”, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 4, p. 67-81, part. p. 67-73, fig. 5, 6, 8.

<sup>48</sup> TEXIER, *Description* [n. 45]

host of the acclaimed sanctuary. Texier mentions the Attalid character of the temple, but it is unknown on what basis his argument rests, all the more since he refrains from referring to any decorated architectural elements. Furthermore, he notes that he could not find evidence of any capitals revealing the order of the temple.

On 17 September 1835, William J. Hamilton visited the site accompanied by an old Armenian selling coins.<sup>49</sup> He describes a temple in the centre of the village that resembles the cult building excavated by the Ghent team; “Near the village “ he watched “*the front of a temple standing on a rustic basement with six or seven fluted columns facing the S.W.*” The adjective “rustic,” although somewhat vague, seems an appropriate term to describe the sturdy limestone foundations of the excavated temple. The only obvious discrepancy might be the orientation, as the excavated structure is built along an east-west axis. However, Hamilton may have seen a part of the lateral south flank of the temple instead, or even have been confused about the orientation, as was the case with his French predecessor.

Georges Perrot, well known for his reconstruction of the bilingual *Res Gestae* on the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, was in Ballıhisar on 16 June 1861. Without realizing it, he describes and illustrates three *peristasis* foundation piers of the excavated temple foundations: “[...] *sur le plateau, s’élèvent trois piliers en calcaire grossier, dont trois assises de 0,60 m de hauteur subsistent encore. Ces piliers sont 1,20 m de large et laissent entre eux des passages de 0,90 et de 1 m. Peut-être y avait-il là une entrée de l’édifice.*”<sup>50</sup> Perrot had confused the space between the foundation piers with the entrance of a building, an error that was also made by P. Lambrechts, the first director of excavations, who, in the excitement of discovery, faultily believed that the square foundation pillars constituted a palaeo-Phrygian building, i.e. Midas’ shrine of Kybele.<sup>51</sup>

During his two-day visit on 20 and 21 August 1864, J. Van Lennep examined the foundations of a temple “*standing considerably above the ground*” at the northeast end of the village.<sup>52</sup> In view of the location, this cannot concern the temple excavated by Ghent University. He also describes the excavated temple to the south of the village, in the spot where Texier thought to have found the Attalid sanctuary of Kybele: “*One building stood on a slight eminence nearest the village. It was very nearly of a square form, and several stones had a representation of boys supporting garlands made of bunches of grapes. It was perhaps, a temple dedicated to Bacchus, and cornices and fluted and plain pillars lie all about it. Every slight rise in the soil seems indeed to have been taken advantage of in order to erect upon it some public building.*” The garland block depicted by Van Lennep is identical to the frieze blocks of the excavated temple. It is interesting that he keeps away from connecting the temple to Kybele, and suggests a dedication to Bacchus instead, which is plausible in light of iconography (the Eros figures), which has little to do with the cult of the Mother.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> W.J. HAMILTON, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia; with Some Account of Their Antiquities and Geology*, London, 1842.

<sup>50</sup> The measurements comply with those of the excavated temple in sector B. G. PERROT, *Exploration archéologiques de la Galatie et de la Bithynie, d’une partie de la Mysie, de la Phrygie, de la Cappadoce et du Pont, exécuté en 1861 et publiée sous les auspices du Ministère de l’instruction publique*, Paris, 1872.

<sup>51</sup> P. LAMBRECHTS, Rapport sur la première campagne de fouilles à Pessinus (août-septembre 1967) in *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 16 (2), 1968, p. 113-131.

<sup>52</sup> A.J. VAN LENNEP, *Travels in little-known parts of Asia Minor*, II, London, 1870., p. 212-213.

<sup>53</sup> Texier may not have seen the Eros figures.



When Carl Humann visited Ballihisar on 27 June 1882, joined by Alfred von Domaszewski, he produced a rudimentary plan of the site (Figs. 4 & 7).<sup>54</sup> Three ruin areas are depicted, the south being the area of the excavated temple. Texier's localization of the sanctuary of Kybele is not accepted without doubt, although he assumes that it is located in one of these three areas: "Auf welchem der drei Ruinenfelder man den Tempel der Magna Mater zu suchen hat, ist durchaus unbestimmt." During a survey of the village on 7 November of 1965, Kurt Bittel noticed robust walls with a variety of architectural elements on Humann's southern ruin field (Fig. 4). It is in this location that Bittel pinpoints the temple of Kybele, inciting P. Lambrechts of Ghent University to start excavations in Pessinus two years later.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. The excavated temple in sector B

##### 4.1. Archaeology

The temple, of which only the foundations have remained *in situ*, faces west and was built on a terrace that eradicated large parts of the third and second century Hellenistic citadels (Figs. 2 & 3). The scattered marble debris of the superstructure allowed the building to be reconstructed as a Corinthian hexastyle temple set on a disproportionately large stepped *krepis* (Fig. 8).<sup>56</sup> The temple of the Mother of the Gods depicted by Texier, represents a hexastyle with a large *krepis* as well, but unlike the temple in sector B, it features an *opisthodomos*, a north-south orientation, a dipteral front and a much shorter *pronaos* (Figs. 4 & 6). It is possible he based his plan partly on the temple in sector B, while adding some aspects of his imagination to fill in the gaps. When Texier referred to the Attalid character of the complex, he may have had the specific nature of the masonry of the foundation walls in mind; on account of Humann's 1835 report, the foundation pillars must have been at least partly above ground in 1834. The masonry that makes up the terrace walls and temple foundations is conceived in an earthquake-resistant technique in which courses interlock by way of vertical protrusions. This type of masonry, regardless of some discerned variation, is attested in various forms in several prestigious Hellenistic building complexes all over Pergamum covering a period of roughly 160 years (300 BC-140 BC).<sup>57</sup>

Only a minority of the ceramic finds in the foundations is Hellenistic, whereas a remarkable majority of the datable pottery falls into the reign of Augustus.<sup>58</sup> Ceramics from workshops near Pergamon (Çandarlı) are dominant. The *skyphos* with vertical ears dated to 1-15 AD, is the most frequently attested type.<sup>59</sup> Two

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<sup>54</sup> C. HUMANN / O. PUCHSTEIN, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien ausgeführt im Auftrag der kgl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1890, p. 30.

<sup>55</sup> K. BITTEL, *Beobachtungen in Pessinus* in AA 82, 1967, p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> WAELKENS, *The Imperial sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 44-48.

<sup>57</sup> W. RADT, *Pergamon. Geschichte und Bauten einer antiken Metropole*, Darmstadt, 1999, p. 56, 117, 159-168, 180-186, 262, abb. 10, 67, 127, 131, 205. Compare with DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e tombe* [n. 1], p. 197: "Esula dal mio compito per mancanza di spazio il precisare le evidenti similitudini nel trattare la muratura a Pessinunte nel trattare la muratura a Pessinunte e a Pergamo."

<sup>58</sup> For the main ceramological studies, see H. THOEN, La céramique du temple, in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973. I. A. Texte*, Bruges, 1984, Brugge, p. 142-163; J. DEVREKER / G. DEVOS / L. BAUTERS / K. BRAECKMAN / P. MONSIEUR, Fouilles archéologiques de Pessinonte: la campagne de 2000, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 10, 2002, p. 131-144, part. p. 140-143.

<sup>59</sup> THOEN, *La céramique* [n. 58], p. 156; J. DEVREKER / H. THOEN / F. VERMEULEN, *Excavations in Pessinus: the so-called Acropolis. From Hellenistic and Roman cemetery to Byzantine castle*, Ghent, 2003, p. 71.

diagnostically relevant lamp fragments belong to the type Loeschcke 1A. They were identified as Tiberian by Thoen, but a reevaluation of the evidence suggests a late Augustan date.<sup>60</sup>

In 2008, a careful examination of the stratigraphic sequence of the temple construction trench was undertaken.<sup>61</sup> For this purpose, an east-west profile was dug near trench B3, parallel to the south *euthynteria* foundation of the temple. A layer of marble chips on top of the levelled *stratum* of the temple terrace was located on the same level as the *euthynteria*. This was identified as the site where stonecutters finalized the marble blocks for the temple. The levelled *stratum* underneath yielded an abundance of Augustan pottery containing several pieces of Augustan Rhodian *amphorae* and one *dolium* sherd of type Haltern 89.<sup>62</sup>

The architectural ornaments breathe the classical conservatism of the Augustan period. The carved stars of the cornice coffers, a petrification of painted ceiling stars in Classical Acropolis architecture, seems to reflect the inclination of Augustan building programs to link classical, Attic architecture (e.g. the Parthenon) to contemporary sacral design, as is the case, for instance, with the Caryatids in the Forum of Augustus at Rome (Fig. 9).<sup>63</sup> The stylistic analysis of the temple decoration positively points to a pre-Tiberian, late Augustan date for the construction of the temple superstructure, especially in view of the striking lack of Tiberian decorative features. Examples of clear pre-Tiberian features are found in the Lesbian *cymae* (stemless intermediate leaves), *ovoli* ('welded' entities of the eggs and their frames) and bead-and-reel astragals (the complete lack of strings) of the Pessinuntine temple carvings.<sup>64</sup> Key elements of the temple's relief decoration exhibit strong parallels with the Temple of Augustus and Roma in Ancyra (2-14 AD) and the Sebasteion at Antiochia ad Pisidiam (begun under Augustus; completed under Tiberius according to stylistic analysis).<sup>65</sup> Moreover, by comparative analysis of the plan and ratios of the temple at Pessinus with other temples, I demonstrate in my forthcoming monograph that the cult building was strongly influenced by pseudodipteral design, with the Ancyran Sebasteion as one of the most influential models.<sup>66</sup>

The total picture, arising from the combined archaeological evidence, suggests a late Augustan date for the construction and inauguration of the temple, although completion in the first five years of Tiberius' reign remains a possibility.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> As our lamps feature channels between the wick-hole and the discus, they should be dated to the Augustan rather than the Tiberian period. D. BAILEY, *Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum, II Roman Lamps made in Italy*, London, 1980, type A groups I and II; nr. 71 cat. 32-33.

<sup>61</sup> J. DEVREKER / A. VERLINDE / L. BAUTERS / W. DE CLERCQ / P. MONSIEUR, Archaeological excavations in Pessinus (Turkey): the 2008 campaign, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 18, p. 141-156, part. p. 149.

<sup>62</sup> These Haltern dolia are often found in military contexts. Since they often came with legions, it is likely that they are import. Cf. B. R. TAHAR, La céramique gallo-romaine à Amiens (Somme). I - La céramique gallo-belge, in *Revue archéologique de Picardie* 3-4, 1985, p. 143-176, part. p. 170.

<sup>63</sup> P. ZANKER, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Translated from German by A.C. SHAPIRO, Ann Arbor, 1990, p. 64, 256-258, 298.

<sup>64</sup> For a more elaborate discussion, see VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 5.

<sup>65</sup> For the date of the temple at Ancyra, see COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177; S. MITCHELL / D. FRENCH, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Ankara. Vol. I: From Augustus to the End of the Third Century AD*, Munich, p. 150. For Antiochia ad Pisidiam, see WÄELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], 48; S. MITCHELL / M. WÄELKENS, *Pisidian Antioch: the site and its monuments*, London, 1998.

<sup>66</sup> VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 4.

<sup>67</sup> The traditional chronology (25-35 AD) of the temple is too late. The decoration of the temple provides a solid *terminus ante quem* for a pre-Tiberian date. VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 5. Moreover, most of the pottery is late Augustan while none of the potentially later pottery can be identified as exclusively post-Augustan.

#### 4.2. Epigraphic and numismatic indications

Since 1972, it has been suggested by the excavators that the unearthed temple complex is a sanctuary of the Roman imperial cult, that is a Sebasteion, rather than the famous temple of Kybele.<sup>68</sup> The idea hinges on the discovery of an official honorary inscription found in 1969 near the temple mentioning the ‘Σεβαστηνῶν Τολιστοβογίων Πεσσινουντίων’, in addition to an indirect reference in the Galatian priest list on the Temple of Augustus and Roma in Ancyra to the introduction of the imperial cult in Pessinus during the early imperial period.<sup>69</sup> A now lost Flavian honorary inscription from Sivrihisar mentioning a ‘Tib. Claudius Heras’ who was ‘*sebastophant of the temple in Pessinus, having been the first priest [in this function]*’ (σεβαστοφάντην τοῦ ναοῦ ἐν Πεσσινούντι ἱερασάμενον πρότον), attests to the existence of a temple (*naos*) where the emperor was worshipped in Pessinus during the Flavian period.<sup>70</sup> An indication of the prominence of the Imperial cult in Pessinus and its *chora* is revealed by a dedication to the emperor on a -now lost- marble architrave from the Turkish cemetery in Sivrihisar.<sup>71</sup> According to Devreker, this stone might have belonged to the Roman temple at Pessinus.<sup>72</sup> However, such

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Compare with K. Strobel who sees no reason to exclude a late Augustan/early Tiberian date for the erection of the temple. STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 208, n. 9.

<sup>68</sup> In a first preliminary report, Lambrechts suggested that the temple was dedicated to Kybele. See P. LAMBRECHTS, *Rapport sur la première* [n. 51]. However, as soon as an early Imperial date was proposed, he argued that the temple may well have been dedicated to the emperor. Cf. P. LAMBRECHTS / J. STRUBBE / M. WAELKENS / G. STOOPS, *Les fouilles de Pessinonte: le Temple* in *AC* 41, 1972, p. 156-173., 159, n.1.; P. LAMBRECHTS, *De zevende opgravingskampanje van RUG te Pessinus (Turkije)* in *De Brug* 4, 1973, p. 301-312, part. p. 310.

<sup>69</sup> See STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 30 nr. 16 (=inventory nr. P69 B 158). LAMBRECHTS et al., *Les Fouilles* [n. 68], p. 156-173; WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 32], p. 67-72; S. MITCHELL, *Anatolia, Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor I. The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule*, Oxford, 1993., p. 104 n. 30.

<sup>70</sup> The inscription is likely Flavian. Strubbe dates it erroneously to the reign of Marcus Aurelius. For criticism on Strubbe's chronology, see COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 184 n. 32; A. COŞKUN, *Von Anatolia bis Inscriptions of Ankara: Zwanzig Jahre Forschungen zum antiken Galatien (1993-2012)*, in *Anatolica* 23, 2013; and S. MITCHELL, *The Imperial Cult in Galatia from Claudius to Trajan*, in E. WINTER / E. SCHWERTHEIM / F. BILLER (eds.), *Vom Euphrat bis zum Bosporus. Kleinasien in der Antike. Festschrift für Elmar Schwertheim zum 65. Geburtstag*, 2008, Bonn, p. 471-483. It is argued that the function of ‘sebastophant,’ which was important regarding processions within the Imperial mysteries, was introduced after the erection of the Imperial temple. Cf. STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 31-34 nr. 17. Mitchell finds that the formula implies that the temple was a branch of the provincial Imperial cult. MITCHELL, *Anatolia* [n. 69], p. 116. This view is rejected by Strubbe who thinks the cult was municipal: J. STRUBBE, *The Imperial cult at Pessinus*, in L. DE BLOIS / P. FUNKE / J. HAHN (eds.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Fifth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 BC-AD 476)*. Münster, June 30-July 4, Leiden/Boston, 2006, p. 106-121., part. p. 116-119. Both J. Süß and B. Burrell are skeptical of Mitchell's thesis as well. J. SÜSS, *Kaiserkult und Urbanistik. Kultbezirke für römische Kaiser in kleinasiatischen Städten*, in H. CANKIK / K. HITZL (eds.), *Die Praxis der Herrscherverehrung in Rom und seinen Provinzen*, Tübingen, p. 249-281, part. p. 263-265; B. BURRELL, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors*, Leiden, 2004, p. 171. Coşkun believes that the cult was a branch of the temple in Ancyra, but without a temple of its own; instead, an imperial statue may have been set up in the sanctuary of Kybele (donated by M. Lollius in 8 AD): COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177, 184 n. 31.

<sup>71</sup> STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n. 10], p. 40 nr. 32; it reads “Αὐτοκράτορι Κάϊσα[ρι Σεβαστω -]” and has the following dimensions: h.: 18 cm; w.: 110 cm; d.: 27 cm. This architectural element would have been too small for the temple entablature.

<sup>72</sup> DEVREKER, *L'histoire* [n. 22], p. 20 n. 106.

an attribution should be discarded on account of discrepant dimensions regarding the registered architectural elements.<sup>73</sup>

Obviously, all this merely proves that a temple, which took part in the imperial cult, existed somewhere at Pessinus in the Flavian period.<sup>74</sup> As there is no direct epigraphic link to the excavated building, the Sebasteion theory has received its fair share of criticism.<sup>75</sup> In Italian scholarship the conviction emerged that the temple in sector B was in fact part of the Attalid sanctuary of Kybele.<sup>76</sup> Such a thesis, however, also rests on shaky foundations.

One of the most important inscriptions involving the formative history of early Imperial Galatia is carved in the left-hand *anta* of the Temple of Augustus and Roma in Ancyra.<sup>77</sup> It has been pivotal in the historical interpretation of our temple as it may contain clues to its cult and inauguration, provided that its chronology is correct and compatible with the archaeologically established date. The heading of the text declares that it concerns a list of Galatians “*who were priests of Augustus and Roma.*”<sup>78</sup> Then follows a list with the names and benefactions of twenty local leaders in addition to the names of the four *legati Augusti pro praetore* (Metilius, Fronto, Silvanus and Basila) under which they held office.<sup>79</sup> The priests acted as *euergetai* and provided large public banquets and large-scale animal sacrifices (hecatombs) while financing gladiatorial combat and *venationes*.<sup>80</sup> There is scholarly consensus that the governors were present as supervisors during the local celebrations financed by the priests.

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<sup>73</sup> Compare with WAELKENS [n. 4], *The Imperial Sanctuary*, p. 70 n. 227.

<sup>74</sup> Compare with the strong reservations of S.R.F. PRICE, *Rituals and power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor*, Cambridge, 1984, p. 268, cat. 112; WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4] p. 68; B. BURRELL, *Neokoroi* [n. 70], p. 171. MITCHELL, *Anatolia* [n. 69], p. 104 n. 30.

<sup>75</sup> Barbara Burrell finds it problematical that the provincial offices, the chief priesthood and headship of the festival in the Heras-inscription are not unequivocally connected to a temple in Pessinus. Also, Pessinus never held the title of ‘*neokoros*’. BURRELL, *Neokoroi* [n. 70], p. 171. Coşkun regards the gladiatorial games and the statue gifted by M. Lollius (8 AD) as events that marked Pessinus' incorporation in the Galatian Imperial cult. He notes that the games were celebrated at the same time as in Ancyra, and, like Mitchell, that the cult at Pessinus was probably a local branch of the provincial cult. The imperial statue may have been set up in the sanctuary of Kybele where it then served as the main attraction pole of the new cult, but (according to Coşkun) no temple was built. COŞKUN *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177, 181, 184 n. 31, 32.

<sup>76</sup> De Francovich views the excavated temple as a construction from the third century BC, completely ignoring the ceramic evidence produced by Thoen in the process (cf. n.58). His main argument rests on Texier who, regarding the temple ruins, observed: “... *il porte tous les caractères de l'architecture des Attales, telle qu'on la retrouve à Pergame et dans les autres lieux de leur domination.*” Pensabene acknowledges that the marble superstructure of the temple exhibits Augustan features, but attempts to attach his view to De Francovich' thesis nonetheless. This hinges on the tenuous view that the *cella/pronaos* served as a small temple with a *pronaos in antis* in the second century BC, before it was replaced with a larger temple with a *krepis* in the Tiberian period. According to Pensabene, the earlier *antis*-temple is in fact the Attalid temple of Kybele. P. PENSABENE, *Non stelle* [n. 8], p. 132-133. This contradicts all observations of stratigraphy and pottery. It has been claimed by Waelkens that the construction of a second temple of Kybele in the early Imperial era would be illogical, even more since Strabo (XII, 5, 3) testifies that the Hellenistic sanctuary was still in use during this period. However, this might not be regarded as a convincing argument since we do not know what happened to the sanctuary after Strabo made his writings public. WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 68-69.

<sup>77</sup> MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 10-11.

<sup>78</sup> OGIS 533.

<sup>79</sup> MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 144.

<sup>80</sup> Gladiatorial combat and wild-beast hunts were forms of spectacle that were firmly entwined with the dynamics of the Imperial cult as they could showcase Roman power more tangibly than any other form of entertainment. MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n.65], p. 14, 144.

As the inscription from Ancyra has been fundamental in the identification of our temple as a Sebasteion, it is vital to establish its correct chronology. Until recently it was agreed that the list of priests referred to a period between 19 AD and 39 AD, straddling the reigns of Tiberius (14-37 AD) and Gaius Caligula (37-41 AD).<sup>81</sup> However, new numismatic analysis disclosed that governor T. Helvius Basila, the last mentioned *legatus*, did not enter office in 35/36 AD but much earlier, i.e. in 12 AD.<sup>82</sup> This allows a recalculation of the chronology of the other names on the inscription, which yields the year 5/4 BC for the term of the first priest.

Two priests who may have been Pessinuntines, in particular M. Lollius and Q. Gallius Pulcher, were originally believed to have served in 31/32 AD (under governor Silvanus) and 35/36 AD (under governor Basila). However, according to the new chronology they held their office under the reign of Augustus.<sup>83</sup>

Below I have rendered the text by Bosch.<sup>84</sup>

vacat [Επὶ] Σιλουανο[ῦ]  
 [Λολ]λιος δημοθοινίαν ἔδωκ[εν]  
 [ἐν Π]εσσινοῦντι, μονομάχων [ζεύγη]  
 κέ καὶ ἐν Πεσσινοῦντι ἰ, ἥλ[ιψεν]  
 τὰ δύο ἔθνη ὅλω τῶ ἐνιαυτῶ ἄγα[λμα]  
 ἐν Πεσσινοῦντι ἀνέθηκεν.

<sup>81</sup> H. HALFMANN, Zur Datierung und Deutung der Priesterliste am Augustus-Roma-Tempel in Ankara, in *Chiron* 16, 1986, p. 35-42; W. LESCHHORN, Die Anfänge der Provinz Galatia, in *Chiron* 22, 1992, p. 315-336; S. MITCHELL, Galatia under Tiberius, in *Chiron* 16, 1986, p. 17-33.

<sup>82</sup> This was convincingly argued by Coşkun who based his observations on the substantial revision of Grant's (1950, 44) original dating of Basila's Galatian issues by A. BURNETT / M. AMANDRY / P.P. RIPOLÈS, *Roman Provincial Coinage, vol. 1 (part 1-2). From the death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius*, 2006 (originally 1992; reprint of 1998 revision), London, p. 545. A. COŞKUN, Das Edikt des Sex. Sotidius Strabo Libuscidianus und die Fasten der Statthalter Galatiens in Augusteischer und Tiberischer Zeit, in *Gephyra* 6, 2009, p. 159-164. There is also new epigraphic evidence from Perge, which confirms the new interpretation that Basila should not be placed under Tiberius and Gaius Caligula: S. ŞAHİN (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Perge*, 1999, Bonn, p. 22, Taf. VIII. Even though the inscriptions suggest otherwise, the editor did not oppose the traditional Tiberian date. However, Şahin has now accepted the revised chronology. Cf. A. COŞKUN, Bibliographische Nachträge zu den Fasten der Provinz Galatien in augusteischer und tiberischer Zeit, in *Gephyra* 9, 2012, p. 124-127, part. p. 125-126, n. 9. Cf. MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 145-147. The new chronology solves the paradox of Amyntas, who was recorded on the list to have donated the lands of the Sebasteion in Ancyra. As this occurred in 22/23 AD according to the former chronology, it would yield an extremely late date for the construction of the temple (assuming that the mentioned "Sebasteion" can be identified with the temple). See BURRELL, *Neokoroi* [n. 70], p. 167.

<sup>83</sup> MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 145-147, 149.

<sup>84</sup> E. BOSCH, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Ankara in Altertum*, Ankara, 1967, p. 35-49, nr. 51.

*Under Silouanos. (8/9 AD)*

*[M. Lollius: he gave a public banquet in Pessinus, gladiatorial games of twenty-five pairs (of gladiators in Ankyra) and of ten (pairs) in Pessinus, he donated olive oil to both tribes for the whole year and he dedicated a divine statue in Pessinus.*

vacat Ἐπὶ Βασιλᾶ

Κόιντος Γάλλιος Πούλχε[ρ δημοθοινίας]

δις ἔδωκεν καὶ ἐν Πεσσινοῦν[τι]

ἑκατόνβην ἔθυσεν, ἔλαιον ἔθηκ[εν τοῖς]

δυ[σ]ὶν ἔθνεσιν δι' ὅλου τοῦ ἑνιαυτοῦ.

*Under Basila. (12/13 AD)*

*Kointos Gallios Pulcher: he gave public banquets twice and offered a hecatomb at Pessinus, he donated olive oil to both tribes for the whole year.*

As public banquets, and especially gladiatorial games are frequently associated with the Imperial cult, the significance of these events and their new Augustan chronology for the Sebasteion in Pessinus may be of importance.<sup>85</sup> Strubbe regarded the donation of the *agalma* and gladiatorial games by Lollius as part of the celebrations that marked the completion and dedication of the Imperial temple, whereas Mitchell and Waelkens interpret the event as the introduction of the cult and the banquet and hecatomb of Pulcher as indicative of the formal completion of the building (thereby assuming it took another 5 years for the statue to be inaugurated and placed in the temple *cella*).<sup>86</sup>

Whatever the exact date, the revised chronology of the Galatian *fasti* certainly provides a better fit with the recently established (late) Augustan character of our temple, provided that the donations of Lollius and Pulcher had anything to do with its erection. The same is true for the temple in Ancyra, of which there is a growing consensus that the decorative features can be dated on stylistic grounds between 15 BC and 5 AD.<sup>87</sup> Based on the modified chronology, it has been credibly argued that the Ancyran temple was completed in 14 AD, shortly before the death of Augustus and 18 years after the Imperial cult had been introduced in 5/4 BC.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. n. 103.

<sup>86</sup> STRUBBE, *The Imperial cult* [n. 70], p. 112-113; WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 69-70; MITCHELL, *Anatolia* [n. 69], p. 103-104. Coşkun believes the cult was introduced during Lollius' celebrations, but without a temple construction project. COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177, 184 n. 31.

<sup>87</sup> MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 149.

<sup>88</sup> COŞKUN, *Das Edikt* [n. 82]; COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177, 177; MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 149-150.

A series of coins of Basila dated to 14-17 AD, depicting for the first time a hexastyle temple on the reverse might be interpreted as either the temple in sector B (provided it is the Sebasteion), or the temple in Ancyra.<sup>89</sup> It has been claimed that the portrayal of Tiberius' portrait on the obverse side might be indicative of the dedication of the temple.<sup>90</sup> An identification with the Pessinuntine building seems appropriate in light of its archaeologically established chronology. Moreover, the coin features six columns on the front, unlike the temple in Ancyra, which features eight columns.<sup>91</sup> However, such pragmatic reduction of the amount of columns was a regular practice; temples with four or six columns constituted the most popular schemes, without necessarily complying with reality.<sup>92</sup> Keeping in mind the disproportional design of the temple *krepis*, it is striking that the *krepis* on coin type RPC 3548 is exceptionally high, showing a relative ratio that has more in common with the *cella* : *krepis* and *krepis width* : *height* ratios of our temple (Fig. 8). The disproportion between *krepis* and *cella* is not present in Ancyra, as it is a larger pseudodipteral temple with a proportionally corresponding large *krepidoma*. If the depicted *krepis* intended to evoke reality, the 14-17 AD coin type might have depicted the peculiar *krepis* design of the Roman temple at Pessinus. All this, of course, remains speculative.

It is now accepted that the temple in Ancyra was completed and inaugurated in 14 AD, shortly before the death of Augustus.<sup>93</sup> It is possible that the temples in Ancyra and Pessinus were constructed simultaneously, although the building in Ancyra was started about ten years earlier. My main argument for this hypothesis stems from the fact that, in addition to clear decorative parallels, my mensural analysis of the temple yielded very subtle yet unambiguous planimetric design aspects, which are present in both temples. It is likely that the architect at Pessinus exchanged ideas with the designer at Ancyra (on the condition that they are not the same person), given the expert subtlety of the similarities. An inauguration around 15 AD, may well have been possible, especially in view of ceramic and stylistic analysis. Therefore, the new coin type might have celebrated the completion and dedication of the new Imperial temple even though in that case it is unclear what the role of Basila was.<sup>94</sup> The introduction of temple

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<sup>89</sup> The mint(s) of these coins are generally attributed to Pessinus, although Tavium is also a possibility. BURNETT / AMANDRY / RIPOLÈS, *Roman Provincial Coinage* [n. 82], p. 543-544, nrs. 3548-3549 = COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 180, 201 Abb. 3-4. It is improbable that the *hexastyle* temple on the coins of Helvius Basila represents the old sanctuary of Kybele since the cities in Asia Minor of the Imperial era commonly depicted Roman temples on their coins rather than buildings from the past. STRUBBE, *The Imperial cult* [n. 70], p. 111.

<sup>90</sup> COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 180.

<sup>91</sup> E. Dandrow believes that the coin type represents the Imperial temple at Pessinus: E. DANDROW, *The Coinage of Pessinus: Iconography, Civic Identity and Roman Power*, in G. TSETSKHLADZE (ed.), *Pessinus 2009-2011 Final Report*. (BAR International Series), Oxford, 2013. So does MITCHELL, *Anatolia* [n. 69], p. 103-104. Burnett et al. (1998/2006) find it possible that the temple is the one excavated in Pessinus, although they are skeptical as later coins of the Galatian koinon depict a 'similar' temple. It is alleged that these later coins "*must surely depict the temple at Ancyra.*" This doubt is warranted, although there is no reason to assume that later coins could only have depicted the temple at Ancyra. BURNETT / AMANDRY / RIPOLÈS, *Coinage* [n. 82], p. 545. In addition, Burrell feels that the temple might just as well have portrayed the temple in Ancyra, even though some of the coins were minted at Pessinus. BURRELL, *Neokoroi* [n. 70], p. 171.

<sup>92</sup> Die-engravers were permitted artistic liberties. The temples on the coins are displayed with sometimes two, sometimes four, usually six and rarely eight columns. A reduction in the number of facade columns was a standard artistic convenience. T. DREW-BEAR, *Representations of temples on the Greek Imperial coinage*, in *AJN* 19, p. 27-63, part. p. 27; PRICE, *Rituals* [n. 74], p. 180; BURRELL, *Neokoroi* [n. 70], chapter on *Methodology*, p. 168, 171; STRUBBE, *The Imperial cult* [n. 70], COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 180.

<sup>93</sup> COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 177; MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n.65], p. 150.

<sup>94</sup> He may have been responsible for the erection of the temple or the minting of the coins. It is also possible that his portrayal served merely as a chronological reference. DANDROW, *Coinage* [n. 91]. However, Mitchell and French

imagery in the iconography of coins may reflect the decline of the theocratic character of Pessinus in favour of an identity, which was centered on the Imperial cult.<sup>95</sup>

#### 4.3. The Hellenistic citadel(s)

There are other objections to be made on the topic of the views of the mentioned Italian scholars, i.e. that the excavated temple was the Attalid shrine of the Mother. Stratigraphically, the excavated temple could not have been Hellenistic, as its foundations are erected in a terrace, of which the construction partly destroyed the late Hellenistic citadel that preceded the temple complex (Fig. 2). A proconsular *cistophorus* from Phrygian Laodicea found underneath a limestone pavement bordering the courtyard of the citadel yields a 56/53 BC *terminus post quem* for its last renovation.<sup>96</sup> The citadels were clearly residential and strategically conceived, although the military character was toned down in favour of fashionable colonnaded features in the later first century BC. It has been suggested –although without much substantiation- that these buildings were once part of a cult area.<sup>97</sup> However, since the walls of the citadel cut through Late Phrygian ritual depositions, the ritual character of (parts of) the locale was given up at this stage (cf. infra). Pottery, architecture and faunal remains strongly attest to the residential character of the complex and the fact that the area was never used as a cult area in the Hellenistic period.<sup>98</sup> Also, the layout and finds (e.g. wall paintings in the First Pompeian Style) indicate that the complex was inhabited by prominent people, perhaps even the ruling *dynastai* of Pessinus. Therefore, the building of the temple may not only have been a product of Roman-style *tabula rasa* urbanism, but also a clear –perhaps symbolical- breach with the past of the site. The promontory, which was once the locus of political power, morphed abruptly into a sacred area.

#### 4.4. The stairway-theatre

It is also imperative to interpret the meaning of the ritual theatre in front of the temple. According to Cicero (*De Haruspicum responso* 20-24), the games for the Megalensian festival were traditionally held on the Palatine in front of the temple of Kybele (erected in 191 BC) in the very sight of the Great Mother (“*in ipso Matris Magnae conspectus*”). Although they were not shaped as a *cavea*, it is alleged that the steps in front of the Palatine temple were designed to provide an area in which people could stand and

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argue that governors supervised the public events organized by the Galatian priests. Basila’s role in the introduction of the cult and the erection of the temple is plausible. MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n.65], p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> DANDROW, *Coinage* [n. 91].

<sup>96</sup> BMC 25, 287. See VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 2.

<sup>97</sup> J. DEVREKER / G. DEVOS / L. BAUTERS / K. BRAECKMAN / A. DAEMS / W. DE CLERCQ / J.

ANGENON / P. MONSIEUR, Fouilles archéologiques de Pessinonte: la campagne de 2001, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 11, 2003, p. 141-156, part. p. 144; PENSABENE, *Non stelle* [n.8], p. 94-95, 99-100; STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 208-209.

<sup>98</sup> The ritual function of the Hellenistic complex in B6 was rejected firmly in VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], part. p. 116, 119. Also see B. GRUWIER / A. VERLINDE, Preliminary archaeozoological report on sectors B6 and B6d in the sanctuary area, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 18, 2010, p. 157-162, in which the residential character of the Hellenistic complex is deduced from archaeozoological evidence.



watch the Ludi Megalenses.<sup>99</sup> Pensabene accepts this as proof of his hypothesis that the Pessinuntine theatre-temple is a Roman renovation of the Attalid sanctuary.<sup>100</sup>

Granted, the temple on the Palatine, erected in 191 BC, has a large staircase projecting from the podium, but it is very broad and recedes backwards on the sides, creating a very awkward viewing experience. Hence, it is not at all equipped like the staircase in Pessinus, which is winged with spectator seats above a high podium thereby creating a *cavea* ideal for viewing spectacles (Figs. 3, 10 & 11). Regardless of the situation in Rome, theatres in front of temples were never a feature of temples of Kybele in Anatolia.<sup>101</sup>

The spectator seats of the 'stairway-theatre' did not reach all the way down to the *orchestra* (Figs. 3, 10 & 11). Instead, there is a podium of about 1.35 m above the *orchestra* level, effectively creating a raised podium and a deep-set *orchestra*. At the foot of the northern podium, there is a 0.36 m high marble plinth moulding, which seems to have supported a marble parapet, which was already missing upon discovery. The abrupt termination of tiers of seats at the top of a podium, leaving the *orchestra* in the form of a sunken arena (*conistra*) is a quintessential aspect of gladiatorial theatres in the imperial period. The phenomenon seems to have been firmly linked with gladiatorial spectacles and wild beast combat (*venationes*).<sup>102</sup> In the Greek world, this podium feature is often the result of a pragmatic adaptation to Roman spectacles, rather than an original concept. The *auditoria* of Hellenistic theatres were traditionally arranged in a manner that the seats came down to the level of the *orchestra*. In view of gladiatorial combat, however, such a configuration was neither safe nor practical.<sup>103</sup> A rather lively image is painted by Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40 AD-ca. 120 AD) (*Or.* XXXI, 121) who complained that the front-row seats of the Athenian theatre of Dionysus were sporadically spattered with blood while many gladiators were killed among the thrones of the priests.

The Hellenistic theatre of Stratonicea in Caria received a parapet around the *orchestra* during the Augustan period, when the Sebasteion cult building was built behind the *cavea*, resulting in a theatre-temple as in Pessinus.<sup>104</sup> However, most theatres that were built from the Augustan period onwards received a sunken *conistra* on the drawing board.<sup>105</sup> The dual function of theatre and arena often influenced their design.<sup>106</sup> Since the epigraphic study on gladiators by Louis Robert (1940) it is widely accepted that in the Roman east, gladiatorial combat was exclusively linked to the imperial cult. This brings to mind the donations of Lollius in 8/9 AD, which may be directly linked to the erection of our gladiatorial theatre (and therefore, the temple).<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1] p. 274.

<sup>100</sup> PENSABENE, *Non stelle* [n. 8], p. 83, 135.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 61-67.

<sup>102</sup> W.B. DINSMOOR, *The Architecture of Ancient Greece*, New York, 1950, p. 318.

<sup>103</sup> E.R. GEBHARD, *Protective devices in Roman theatres* in J. WISEMAN, *Studies in the antiquities of Stobi*, II, Beograd, 1975, p. 43-63, part. 43.

<sup>104</sup> I.H. MERT, *Der Theaterkomplex von Stratonikeia* in C. BERNS et al., *Patris und Imperium. Kulturelle und politische Identität in den Städten der römischen Provinzen Kleinasien in der frühen Kaiserzeit: Kolloquium Köln, November 1998* (BABesch Supplement Series), Leuven/Paris/Dudley, Mass., 2002, p. 187-203., 190 abb. 7-8.

<sup>105</sup> J.-C. GOLVIN, *L'Amphithéâtre Romain, Essai sur la theorization de sa forme et de ses fonctions*, Paris, 1988, p. 239.

<sup>106</sup> GEBHARD, *Roman theatres* [n. 103], p. 46.

<sup>107</sup> The staging of gladiatorial shows constituted a monopoly of priests of the Imperial cult in the eastern provinces, which is confirmed by later inscriptions from Ancyra. MITCHELL / FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ancyra* [n. 65], p. 13. L. ROBERT, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*, Paris, 1940, p. 135-139; 270-280; PRICE, *Rituals* [n. 74], p. 88-89, 106-107, 116; F. MILLAR, *The Greek world and Rome (introduction)* in S. MACREARY / F.H. THOMPSON (eds.), *Roman Architecture in the Greek World*, London, 1987; M. CLAUSS, *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult im*

From Augustus onwards, axially aligned theatre-temples, of which the roots lay in Republican Italy, were often conceived to serve the cult of the emperors, as they were very suitable for the gladiatorial combat that came with it. The phenomenon is known from Africa, Italy, the Iberian peninsula, Gaul and Asia Minor.<sup>108</sup> The Sebasteion in the shape of a theatre-temple at Carian Stratonicea, which has an epigraphically corroborated Augustan date, may have served as the model for Pessinus.<sup>109</sup>

#### 4.5. The colonnaded square

Regardless of epigraphic and numismatic considerations, there are quite a few reasons to view the temple complex in sector B as a Sebasteion. The stairway-theatre was conceived as an arena; therefore, the concept of the Imperial cult was ingrained in the initial architectural concept. Recent findings have made the arguments behind Burrell's reservation that the *orchestra* of the theatre was too small for gladiatorial combat (as it was backed up by the square) expire. In the old view, which envisioned a Claudian date for the erection and a Late Roman date for the destruction of the colonnaded square (sector H), the square was an embedded part of the temple complex (Fig. 12).<sup>110</sup> However, this hypothesis failed to explain why the square was situated south of the shared longitudinal axis of theatre and temple, or even why it was built in limestone (although with *stucco lustro*) rather than marble.<sup>111</sup> The conventional date was recently thoroughly revised as carbon dating and the analysis of pottery and wall paintings adorning the *stoai* have made very clear that the square was built roughly around 120 BC and burned down about 80 BC.<sup>112</sup> By the time the stairway-theatre was built, the area of the square had already been covered with soil, forming an open field, level with the *orchestra*, which may have allowed for the construction of additional wooden seating and a periodical enlargement of the arena.

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römischen Reich, Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1999, p. 333-334; STRUBBE, *The Imperial Cult* [n. 70], p. 109-110; H. DODGE, *Amphitheatres in the Roman East* in T. WILMOTT (ed.), *Roman Amphitheatres and Spectacula: a 21st-Century Perspective. Papers from an international conference held at Chester, 16th-18th February, 2007* (BAR International Series 1946), 2009, p. 29-45, part. p. 32; VERLINDE, *Monumental Architecture* [n. 3], p. 128.

<sup>108</sup> E.g. Montegrotto (Augustan); Tergeste (Augustan); Iol-Caesarea (25-15 BC); Augusta Raurica (70-80 AD); Aventicum (80-100 AD); Augusta Emerita (16-15 BC); Stratonicea (Augustan). Iol: P. GROS, *L'Architecture Romaine du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire I. Les Monuments publics*, Paris, 1996, p. 291; Tergeste: M. VERZÁR-BASS, *Il teatro romano di Trieste*, Rome, 1991; Montegrotto: F. SEAR, *Roman Theatres. An Architectural Study*, New York, 2006, p. 177; Augusta Raurica: T. HUFSCHMID, *Theatres and Amphitheatres in Augusta Raurica*, Augst, Switzerland, in T. WILMOTT (ed.), *Roman Amphitheatres and Spectacula: a 21st-Century Perspective. Papers from an international conference held at Chester, 16th-18th February, 2007* (BAR International Series 1946), Oxford, 2009, p. 105-117, part. p. 105, 107; Aventicum: J. SÜSS, *Kaiserkult und Stadt. Kultstätten für römische Kaiser in Asia und Galatia*, Univ. Dissertation [Mikrofiche-Ausg.], München, 1999, p. 125; Augusta Emerita: A. PIZZO, *Las Técnicas constructivas de la arquitectura pública de Augusta Emerita, Mérida*, Madrid, 2011, p. 281, 283; Stratonicea: I.H. MERT, *Der Theaterkomplex* [n. 104], p. 187-203.

<sup>109</sup> MERT, *Der Theaterkomplex* [n. 104].

<sup>110</sup> WAELKENS, *The Imperial Sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 39.

<sup>111</sup> VERLINDE, *Monumental Architecture* [n. 3], p. 121.

<sup>112</sup> Three crucial carbon dates were obtained from the charred timber samples in the fire layer to the east of the *stoa* (trenches B7 and B8): KIA-36460: 281 calBC; KIA-36461: 221 calBC; KIA-30332: 294 calBC. The median dates are earlier than the actual destruction of the square due to the so-called "old wood effect". Yet they prove the Hellenistic nature of the structure. VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 122, 125, 127, 130-131, figs. 19, 25-26; VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 3.

The short-lived structure in sector H could be restituted as a *quadriporticus* with a Rhodian peristyle ('*peristylon rhodiacum*'), i.e. with a monumental Ionic colonnade to the north, and lower Doric colonnades in the three other wings (Fig. 5).<sup>113</sup>

The view of P. Pensabene that the Hellenistic *quadriporticus* in sector H should be identified with the white marble stoa of the Attalid sanctuary ('στοαίς λευκολίθοις') should be rejected based on recent evidence.<sup>114</sup> Provided that Strabo's observation about the use of white marble was correct, this *limestone* building could obviously not have been the *stoa* of the Attalid sanctuary.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the destruction layer of the *quadriporticus* yielded dozens of *alabastra*, which had burst into many pieces during the fire, indicating that they contained oil at the time of their demise. In addition to this, the architectural typology, the water supply system in the eastern corners, and the vicinity of a Hellenistic palace and a river, renders strong evidence that this monumental building was a *palaestra* rather than a site of worship.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4.6. Synnaoi theoi?

The theory of "temple-sharing" in which the deified Roman emperor shared the temple with Kybele as *synnaos theos* has been suggested before for the temple complex at Pessinus.<sup>117</sup> It was certainly common practice as it reinforced the divine status of the ruler and made clear that the emperors were not competing with the traditional pantheon.<sup>118</sup> A double cult would explain the gladiatorial nature of the theatre and why Pessinus was never mentioned as a '*neokoros*,' but not why the original location of the previous sanctuary had been abandoned. Topographical continuity had always been a decisive factor for sanctuaries of the

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<sup>113</sup> This building therefore serves as a model of Vitruvius' definition of a Rhodian peristyle (*De arch.* VI, 7, 3). Notable influential models for the colonnaded square in sector H were the Gymnasium of Eudemos in Miletus (late third century BC) and the Hellenistic Temenos for the Attalid Ruler Cult (also late third century BC). See VERLINDE, *Monumental Architecture* [n. 3], p. 121, 123-124, figs. 16-17.

<sup>114</sup> PENSABENE, *Non stelle* [n. 8], p. 110.

<sup>115</sup> Pertaining to Strabo's 'στοαίς λευκολίθοις', 'λίθος λευκός' was idiomatic for 'white marble.' Even plainly 'λίθος' would have sufficed to refer to white marble. R. GINOUVÈS / R. MARTIN, *Dictionnaire méthodique de l'architecture grecque et romaine, I. Matériaux, techniques de construction, techniques et forms du décor*, Paris/Rome, 1985, p. 30 n. 138, 37 n. 169, 281. Compare with Pausanias X, 16, 3 on the white marble (*lithos leukos omphalos*) from Delphi.

<sup>116</sup> *Palaestrae* were typical annexes of Hellenistic palaces. VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 127. A small limestone altar, inscribed with the word 'ΚΟΣΜΟΥ', was found in the northern area of the inner square. However, originally, the artefact served as a pedestal; it was only used as an altar during the Byzantine era, when early Christians occupied the ruins of the colonnaded square. VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 3.

<sup>117</sup> P. LAMBRECHTS, De zevende opgravingskampanje van RUG te Pessinus (Turkije), in *De Brug* 4, 1973, p. 301-312, part. p. 310-311; WAELEKENS, *The Imperial sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 67-68; COŞKUN, *Ankyraner Kaiserkult* [n. 43], p. 184; K. TUCHELT, Bemerkungen zum Tempelbezirk von Antiochia ad Pisidiam, in R.M. BOEHMER / H. HAUPTMANN (eds.), *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde Kleinasien. Festschrift für Kurt Bittel*, Mainz, 1983, p. 501-522, part. p. 504-505, 507, 517, 521-522. Tuchelt based himself on the so-called cellar feature which was dedicated to the worship of Kybele, as in the temple of Zeus at Aezani or the temple of Augustus at Antiochia ad Pisidiam, yet in Pessinus there is no subterranean vault. Although two walls constitute a small space (w.: 1.2 m) underneath the *toichobate*, they serve a purely constructional purpose. VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 4.

Moreover, a subterranean temple space does not indicate additional worship of Kybele; recently, the excavators of Aezani have argued that instead of a shrine, the cellar constituted a storeroom for crops from the temple domains. K. RHEIDT, *Aizanoi und Anatolien. Neue Entdeckungen zur Geschichte und Archäologie im Hochland des westlichen Kleinasien*, 2010, Mainz.

<sup>118</sup> D. STEURNAGEL, Synnaos theos. Images of Roman emperors in Greek temples, in J. MYLONOPOULOS (ed.), *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*, Leiden/Boston, 2010, p. 241-255.

Mother in Anatolia. Here, however, we have the opposite situation. Furthermore, if the temple was dedicated to the Mother, it is odd that the distinctive votive idols characterizing her sites of worship all over Anatolia are not accounted for. Such idols were dispersed in great amounts in Hellenistic Gordion, and around the Pergamene temple at Aspendos; where some predate the Hellenistic sanctuary revealing Phrygian roots and a cultic link.<sup>119</sup> Yet in Pessinus, besides a small marble head of a Hellenized female, found in the ruins of the *quadriporticus* (sector H) and currently kept in the Museum of Eskişehir, decades of excavations and surveys yielded no female figurative *terrecotte* or stone idols.<sup>120</sup> Most of our information about the cult of Meter is provided by epigraphic data without any direct topographic link to the valley of Pessinus.<sup>121</sup> All this suggests that the temple was an innovative creation, supplanting the fortified residence of the Hellenistic age, and probably dedicated to a new divinity, perhaps the emperor, as the inauguration of a new era in which Pessinus was no longer a temple state.

### 5. Pessinus in Phrygian and Hellenistic times

A Phrygian cultic deposition was attested near the temple in association with Phrygian pottery and an animal skeleton. It concerns a Phrygian *fibula*, found in a pit dug into the virgin soil, directly outside of the southeast corner of the later temple *krepis*.<sup>122</sup> *Fibulae* were certainly among the most frequent offerings in Phrygian sanctuaries.<sup>123</sup> The only other traces of Phrygian cult activity in Pessinus were uncovered 5 to 10 m to the west of the rear side of the *krepis* (Fig. 2). Two ritual depositions with dozens of pots in Late Phrygian tradition (Phrygian grey ware, red-slipped jars with white panels depicting running animals, trefoil *oinochoe*) and the skeleton of a young horse were placed in respectively a hearth (B2-24) and a pit (B5a-25), both dug in the virgin soil.<sup>124</sup> Charcoal from the hearth provided a calibrated median radiocarbon age of 393 BC.<sup>125</sup> Overall, given the long lifespan of the typology that our fragments constitute, they are likely to be dated between 400-300 BC. So both stratigraphically and chronologically, these features, which did not belong to any walls or monumental structures, are the oldest traces of

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<sup>119</sup> For Hellenistic marble and terracotta statuettes of Meter in Gordion, see ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 189-192, figs. 49-51.

<sup>120</sup> I. CLAERHOUT / J. DEVREKER, *Pessinus. Sacred City of the Anatolian Mother Goddess*, Istanbul, 2008, p. 69. For the absence of idols in Pessinus, see the remarks by ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 192. If the temple is a Sebasteion, the absence of imperial statues may be explained by the extensive marble recuperation of the site by the Byzantines and Ottomans.

<sup>121</sup> Some evidence alludes to cult rituals. We learn about the existence of the otherwise unknown *Attabokaoi*, a group who was responsible for the rituals surrounding the mysteries of the goddess. Other evidence honor individuals involved with the cult. STRUBBE, *The Inscriptions* [n.10], p. 31-36; nrs. 17-18. See ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 341-342.

<sup>122</sup> P. LAMBRECHTS 1968, De tweede opgravingskampanje van de Gentse Universiteit te Pessinus (Turkije), *De Brug* 12, p. 280-291, part. p. 287, Pls. 1, 11-12; WAELKENS, *The Imperial sanctuary* [n. 4], p. 38-39; I. CLAERHOUT / J. DEVREKER, *Pessinus. An archaeological guide*, Istanbul, 2008, p. 98.

<sup>123</sup> O. W. MUSCARELLA, King Midas of Phrygia and the Greeks in K. EMRE, M. MELLINK, B. HROUDA, N. ÖZGÜÇ (eds.), *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, Ankara, 333-44.

<sup>124</sup> The pottery is identical to that of the Yassihüyük Stratigraphic Sequence 4 (550-300 BC) in Gordion. J. DEVREKER / F. VERMEULEN, Archaeological work at Pessinus in 1993, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 3, 1995, p. 113-124, part. p. 115, 117; Devreker et al. 1995, 133-134, Fig. 4; Henrickson 1993, 116; parallels for this polished Phrygian pottery are found in the Eskişehir-Afyon -Konya region, Midas City, Gordion, Ankara and Bogazköy. VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 2.

<sup>125</sup> KIK-322/Utc-3314: 2310 ± 80 BP; 68.2% probability: 508-208 calBC; 95.4% probability: 750-174 calBC; mean date: 393 calBC; OxCal v4.1.7 Bronk-Ramsey 2010; atmospheric data from Reimer et al. 2010.

Phrygian activity in the excavated parts of Pessinus. Their position, on the top of the promontory to the east of the modest Late Phrygian houses (B6-371/330; L.19-21, L.23, 27, 28) which are scattered along the slope and near the Gallos river bed, may implicate that they belonged to the non-monumental cult annex of one of the earliest pre-Hellenistic settlements in the valley of Pessinus.<sup>126</sup> In fact, no other traces of Phrygian occupation have been attested in the whole of Pessinus. This is not merely a reflection of the fact that only a small area of the city has been excavated, as surveys did not yield any concentrations of Phrygian pottery in the outskirts and other parts of the valley.<sup>127</sup> The earliest hints of full-fledged occupation of the valley bottom belong to the second century BC, and even then, the presence is rather modest compared to the multitude of traces of Late Hellenistic and Roman activity.

In the third century BC, the modest (presumed) cult annex was built over with a large citadel building, which was built for strategic and perhaps symbolic reasons. Its thick meandering perimeter walls and bastion features, along with its strategic location, rule out any religious function. It is likely that this building, which was enlarged during the late second century BC, was the heavily symbolic locus of power of the *dynastai* ruling the temple state.<sup>128</sup> In the last quarter of the second century BC, the emergence of a second citadel, an enlargement towards the Gallos of the first fortress, in addition to a *palaestra* at the foot of the promontory, coincide with the first burials in the *necropoleis* on the plateaus.<sup>129</sup> The (Late) Phrygian, pre-Hellenistic population did not seem to use the plateaus for burial purposes (Fig. 4). The *nucleus* of the town and its population was much smaller during the pre-second century and it is probable that the earlier burial grounds were laid out on the lower grounds of the valley. Everything changed in the second century BC. Population was booming, material culture changed significantly and imports, especially from Pergamon, started to dominate local production. The second century BC is the era in which Pergamon was starting to leave its stamp on the Pessinuntine valley: material culture such as wall paintings (in the *palaestra* and second citadel), architecture (esp. the *palaestra*) and pottery all bear the mark of the Attalid city.

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<sup>126</sup> A detailed plan of the Phrygian structures will appear in VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Pl. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Recent excavations and ground surveys in Ballıhisar by the University of Melbourne led to similar results: Phrygian/Middle or Late Iron Age ceramics are very rare to completely absent, while there is a substantial increase in the amount and range of Hellenistic material. See G. R. TSETSKHLADZE, Pessinus in Phrygia: Brief preliminary report of the 2010 field season, in G. R. TSETSKHLADZE (ed.), *The Black Sea, Paphlagonia, Pontus and Phrygia in Antiquity: Aspects of Archaeology and Ancient History* (BAR International Series 2432), Oxford, 2012, p. 293-327 (appendix 1), part. p. 304, 307-311; G. R. TSETSKHLADZE, Pessinus in Phrygia: Brief preliminary report of the 2011 field season, in G. R. TSETSKHLADZE (ed.), *The Black Sea, Paphlagonia, Pontus and Phrygia in Antiquity: Aspects of Archaeology and Ancient History* (BAR International Series 2432), Oxford, 2012, p. 330-356, part. p. 337-338.

<sup>128</sup> VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 116-119.

<sup>129</sup> Strobel's adoption of a third century BC date for the first burials is not tenable anymore (STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 208). It is based on a wrong identification of diagnostic pottery. A recent evaluation of the alleged oldest grave contexts (II.13a & II.33) from the eastern necropolis sheds a different light on the presumed sudden increase of population during the third century BC. Pertaining to incineration grave II.13a: Waelkens dated the tomb to the third century BC based on a Hellenistic round lamp with upright nozzle (P 67 A 110). M. WAELKENS, La Nécropole de l'Est, in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les Fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973 I A. Texte*, Bruges, 1984, p. 55-76, part. p. 62-63. This artefact is the earliest what the cemeteries is concerned. However, recent study (DEVREKER / THOEN / VERMEULEN, *The excavations* [n. 59], p. 86) based on new information demonstrates that the lamp belongs to a later series, for which a general date between the first century BC and the first century AD seems obvious. Some lamps in the British Museum are very similar to the ones in Pessinus. A striking parallel from Ephesus has been dated by Bailey 1975 (Q 158) to a period between the late first century BC and the early first century AD.

All this implies that the temple state of Pessinus widened its horizon only by the second century BC. It became a bustling city and ‘*emporium*’ (cf. Strabo XII, 5, 3) under the watchful eye of Pergamon, with an expanded population and trade. Pergamene commitment in Pessinus was likely the cause of this spectacular growth. The erection of the sanctuary likely occurred sometime before the second century BC.

## 6. Alternative locations in the Pessinuntine valley?

Two hundred meters to the southeast of the temple, underneath the northwest corner of the Excavation Research Center (sector F), overlooking the modern bridge near the entrance of the village, a large south-north oriented ashlar wall protrudes from the slope (Fig. 4). Its large, but untidily stacked ashlars have been commonly associated with a Late Roman date, but based on ashlar walls in Gordion, an early Phrygian date could easily be proposed as well.<sup>130</sup> It is in this spot that Humann located the field of ruins to the northeast of the later excavated temple area (Fig. 7). It should be reminded that Van Lennep described the foundations of a temple standing above the ground in the northeast part of the village. The massive structure must have belonged to a building of considerable size, perhaps a temple.

About 300 meter southwest from the temple complex in sector B, in the riverbed right before the Gallos takes a sudden turn to the southeast, there is a concentration of large cornice blocks and a monumental *anta* capital (Figs. 4 & 13). During the Melbourne excavations of 2009, it was discussed off the record amongst archaeologists how this spot may hold the remains of the sanctuary of Kybele. It is indeed here that Texier located his monumental “agora” complex, more specifically a *quadriporticus* with a porticoed hemicycle in the rear (Fig. 4 & 6). The front of this so-called “agora” was connected to a large colonnaded street. The colonnaded *cardo* of Pessinus was excavated during the 1970s to the west and northwest of sector B, but it is unclear whether it extended so far south.<sup>131</sup> In any case, I am confident that this area did not serve as the setting for the sanctuary of the Mother Goddess. In the early third century AD, the northeast extremity of the *cardo maximus*, which served as a canal during floods, was elaborated with new quay walls, in addition to a monumental arched gate (sector D2) (Fig. 4). The decoration and design of the arch cornices are strikingly similar to those found southwest of sector B.<sup>132</sup> Hence, rather than the temple of Kybele, there was probably a second arched gate in the south of the valley.<sup>133</sup> Possibly, these monumental gates may have defined the extent of the urban *nucleus* of Pessinus in the Severan period.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 709; G.K. SAMS, *Gordion: Exploration over a Century* in L. KEALHOFER (ed.), *The Archaeology of Midas and the Phrygians. Recent Work at Gordion*, Philadelphia, 2005, p. 10-21.

<sup>131</sup> WAELKENS, *Le Système d'Endiguement du Torrent* in J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les Fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973. I.A. Texte*, Bruges, p. 77-141.

<sup>132</sup> Only the coffers are worked a bit differently but this could have been due to a span of several years separating both building projects. Other than that, *anthemia*, *ovolo* and *acanthus* decorations all display the same workmanship. Furthermore, both buildings make use of diagonal modillions for the corner geison, a phenomenon which only becomes fashionable in the second century AD. See A.H. DETWEILER, *The Triumphal Arch (Jerash)* in C.H. KRAELING (ed.), *Gerasa. City of the Decapolis*, New Haven, 1938, p. 73-83, 117-124, part. 78 n. 19. Cf. J. DEVREKER / M. WAELKENS, *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte 1967-1973 I B. Illustrations*, Bruges, 1984, p. 80, figs. 142-143.

<sup>133</sup> This was first suggested by WAELKENS, *Le Système* [n. 130], p. 96. Compare with PENSABENE, *Non stelle* [n. 8], p. 128-130, fig. 29 who briefly discusses *geison* 69.5 in this context.

<sup>134</sup> VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 8.

## 7. The *chora* of Pessinus and the Early Phrygian sanctuary

Given the very modest, non-monumental character of pre-second century BC Pessinus, it is rather doubtful that the valley of Ballıhisar served as the locus of the renowned Early Phrygian sanctuary of Kybele.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Early Phrygian cult of Kybele was commonly located in rocky, high and desolate settings and accommodated by open-air complexes with rock-cut stepped altars, simple niches and, more rarely, architectural facades carved in the rock.<sup>135</sup> Even by the Early Hellenistic period, when Philetærus of Pergamon (r. 281-263 BC) ordered the erection of the Temple of Kybele near Pergamon, these conventions were still respected as the sanctuary was sited on an uninhabited mountain top (Mamurt Kaleh, Yünd Dağ; ancient Aspordenos) beyond the immediate vicinity of the city.<sup>136</sup> It is my view that it is perhaps ill-advised to search for the Early Phrygian or even the Attalid sanctuary of Kybele in the village of Ballıhisar or the Pessinus Valley. The enclosed, low altitude location of the Pessinuntine valley would have served as a particularly atypical and unsuitable locale for the cult of the Mother. Given that the Dindymos Mountain, which is the Arayit Dağı bordering Ballıhisar to the east, is the mountain range associated with the Goddess herself (as in her *epitheton* “*Dindymene*”), it may be of better judgment to look for the lost temple in the eastern region of Pessinus’ *chora* (Fig. 1). There are two sites, Tekören and Hamamtepe, in the *chora* of Pessinus with remains of Early Phrygian cult activity (rock-cut features such as stepped altars and libation basins); they are located at the foot of the Dindymos and outside of an 8 km radius of the Pessinuntine valley (Fig. 14).<sup>137</sup> Near Dinek (about 8 km to the northeast of Ballıhisar and 6 km to the southeast of the ancient Pessinuntine marble quarries of İstiklalbağı), two undated ‘Pergamene’ palm capitals were detected, which may perhaps indicate that the Attalids were sponsoring building activity outside of the political centre of Pessinus, using the resources of the local quarries, which were already modestly exploited in Hellenistic times (Fig. 15).<sup>138</sup>

In any case, these typical Phrygian extra-urban cult settlements lost some significance in the Early Hellenistic period, when the valley of the Gallos, perhaps because of its strategic advantage, was chosen as the new centre, which may then have become the political and administrative hub of the new temple state.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> There is no building or sacred precinct that can be convincingly identified as a sanctuary of the Mother Goddess in any Phrygian settlement. However, extra-urban sanctuaries were abundant. DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e Tombe* [n. 1], p. 27-43; VASSILEVA, Further considerations on the cult of Kybele, in *AS* 51, 2001, p. 51-63, part. p. 53, 55, 58; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 78, 211; M. MUNN, *The Mother* [n. 1], p. 75-76, 229; S. BERNDT-ERSÖZ, *Phrygian Rock-cut Shrines. Structure, Function, and Cult Practice*, Leiden/Boston, 2006; STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 209.

<sup>136</sup> CONZE / SCHAZMANN, *Mamurt-Kaleh* [n. 29].

<sup>137</sup> See J. DEVREKER / F. VERMEULEN, Phrygians in the Neighbourhood of Pessinus (Turkey) in H. THOEN (ed.), *Studia Archaeologica, Liber amicorum J.A.E. Nenquin*, Ghent, 1991, p. 109-117; STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 211-213; TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n.9], p. 707-710.

<sup>138</sup> VERLINDE, *Monumental architecture* [n. 3], p. 113-114, 116, figs. 4-5; VERLINDE, *The Sanctuary Site* [n. 42], Chapter 10.

<sup>139</sup> Compare with D. KRSMANOVIC / W. ANDERSON, Paths of the Dead - Interpreting Funerary Practice at Roman-Period Pessinus, Central Anatolia, in *Melbourne historical journal/the amphora issue* 40 (2), p. 58-87, part. p. 68.

## 8. Discussion

The boom of Pergamene marked material culture and architecture and the sudden rise in population in the second century BC, demonstrates that Pessinus and its temple was a purely Hellenistic fabrication.<sup>140</sup> It cannot be disassociated from the Attalid dynasty who used the temple state as a bridgehead and buffer against the menacing Seleucids, and the temple, which it founded as a means of legitimization. The role of king Midas in the first temple can simply not be accepted as fact, as it was all too common for ancient authors to link all things Phrygian to the semi-legendary king.<sup>141</sup> A closer look at Strabo XII, 5, 3 may offer the key to the dilemma: the temple was Attalid and built in the third century BC; it was the first temple of Kybele at Pessinus as it became famous only when the Romans got involved in 205/204 BC. Diodorus mentions that the Phrygians erected altars and performed yearly sacrifices, while speaking of a costly temple built at a “later” time. The context of the sentence implies that “ὕστερον” designated a time after the Phrygians gave up their cultic traditions in open-air. This time was most likely the Hellenistic era, when Philetærus built the first Greek-style temple to Kybele. Hence, Midas is not necessarily linked to the erection of the temple, but rather to the founding of the cult.<sup>142</sup> Midas’ involvement with the erection of the temple was merely a product of the canonized history of Pessinus, which was perhaps produced by the Romans and/or Attalids.<sup>143</sup> It is more likely that Midas took part in erecting altars and funding yearly sacrifices, especially as there was no architectural tradition of Early Phrygian freestanding temple buildings; archaeology in Phrygia has still yielded no examples.<sup>144</sup> The type of monumental Early Phrygian sanctuary that one would expect in a Pessinuntine context, would have been similar to the façade of the rock-carved Midas Monument (with inscriptions dedicated to Midas) in Yazılıkaya, which is dated to the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>145</sup> Another possible outlook can be found at the Palaeo-Phrygian site of Steunos at Aizanoi. There was a cave there, consecrated to Meter Steunene, in which a statue of the goddess stood.<sup>146</sup> The pre-Hellenistic cult of the Mother at Pessinus likely took place near a cave, a series of rock-cut altars with libation basins, a rock-cut niche, etc. However, such type of monuments are absent within

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<sup>140</sup> Compare with DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e Tombe* [n. 1] and ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 192-193, who regard Pessinus and its sanctuary as a purely Hellenistic phenomenon with no significance in the Phrygian era.

<sup>141</sup> TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 709. ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 246; VASSILEVA, *the cult of Kybele* [n. 134], p. 51-63, part. p. 55.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. VASSILEVA [n. 134], *the cult of Kybele*, p. 52. The author’s reading of the text inclines her to link Midas with the celebrations surrounding the cult, yet not to the temple. Compare with Arnobius (*Adversus Nationes* 2.73) who describes Midas as the first to establish worship of the Mother without making any reference to a temple. Most Greek sources credit him with the establishment of the goddess’s rites, but not the temple in Pessinus. Other Phrygian kings likely played a critical role in the cult of the goddess and were sometimes honored jointly with her. The name of Midas is probably used as a *pars pro toto* for other Phrygian dynasts. ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 111, 246.

<sup>143</sup> On the manipulation of history by the Attalids, a family of low origins, as a means of political justification, see KOSMETATOU, *The Attalids of Pergamon*, in A. ERSKINE, *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, Oxford, 2003, p. 159-174, part. p. 166-173.

<sup>144</sup> DE FRANCOVICH, *Santuari e tombe* [n. 1]; ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 63-117; VASSILEVA [n. 134], *the cult of Kybele*; STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 209, TSETSKHLADZE [n. 9], *Notes*, p. 709.

<sup>145</sup> M. J. MELLINK, *Temples and high places in Phrygia*, in A. BIRAN (ed.), *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*, Jerusalem, p. 96-104, part. 99; M. VASSILEVA, *The rock-cut monuments of Phrygia, Paphlagonia and Thrace: a comparative overview*, in G. TSETSKHLADZE (ed.), *The Black Sea, Paphlagonia, Pontus and Phrygia in Antiquity. Aspects of archaeology and ancient history* (BAR International Series 2432), Oxford, 2012, p. 243-252.

<sup>146</sup> M. J. REIN, *Phrygian Matar: emergence of an iconographic type*, in M. J. VERMASEREN / E.N. LANE (eds.), *Kybele, Attis and related cults: essays in memory of M.J. Vermaseren*, Leiden, 1996, p. 223-237, part. p. 237.



the 8 km radius of Ballıhisar. Only the granite outcrops of the Dindymos to the east, northeast and southeast have the traditional setting of the Phrygian cult.<sup>147</sup>

It has already been argued that ancient authors were confused about the origins of the city, and perhaps it is no coincidence that we only have one original source referring to an Early Phrygian sanctuary, being Theopompus. It has also been alleged that folklore reality and ritual context, as observed by the Greeks, may have influenced narratives, which later associated king Midas with Pessinus.<sup>148</sup> The ritualized connection between Midas and the temple may have become part of such narratives.

The status of Pessinus, claimed to be the oldest and most significant Phrygian shrine of the Mother Goddess, was probably no cult place of great antiquity.<sup>149</sup> There is little that suggests that there was a major shrine before the involvement of the Attalids, who increased the prestige of the Pessinuntine cult beyond the limits of Phrygia, when the significance of earlier cult centers such as Midas City and Gordion was considerably reduced. Its prominence was largely owed to Pergamene support, which was instigated by the need to deal with the local Galatian tribes, which controlled the area.

If the Early Phrygian sanctuary, whatever its outlook, was only of local importance (as implied by Strabo who claims the Romans made the sanctuary famous), or even a Hellenistic fabrication, then the sanctuary of the Attalids must have been built in the third century BC, most probably by Attalus I, who may have had opportunities to access Pessinus. Then, it is no coincidence that this king was mentioned as the escort of the Romans to Pessinus in their quest for the *baetylus*. The moral authority of the king to serve as an arbitrator between the temple state and Rome drew on his involvement in the erection of the illustrious sanctuary, in which he followed the model of his predecessor Philetaerus who build a Greek-style sanctuary on a mountain top near Pergamon. By building the sanctuary and endorsing the new temple state Attalus I could employ Pessinus as a buffer and bridgehead in Central-Asia, and associate the rule of Pergamon over large parts of Asia Minor with the sanction of the Great Mother. Within such a logic, it was strategically wise to aggrandize the past of Pessinus, literally by monumentalizing its open-air sanctuaries to a full-fledged temple and connecting these with Midas. Much like the mythological narrative pertaining to Meter, the sanctuary of Kybele, may have been a purely Hellenistic phenomenon.<sup>150</sup> That the temple was not located in what is known as Pessinus, but rather in its *chora*, is perfectly plausible as this was common practice.<sup>151</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

Much as king Midas himself, the Early Phrygian sanctuary may have been semi-legendary. The Hellenistic sanctuary of the Mother was the only sanctuary with translocal fame, and when construction works were under way in the valley during the Hellenistic and Roman period, it was likely left well enough alone. Unlike Gordion, Pessinus had little importance before the second, and especially the third

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<sup>147</sup> STROBEL, *das Phrygische Kultzentrum* [n. 9], p. 210-218. Compare with the remarks of Roller who finds a discrepancy in the fact that Pessinus lay in a valley. ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 67.

<sup>148</sup> VASSILEVA, *the cult of Kybele* [n. 134], p. 53.

<sup>149</sup> ROLLER, *In search of* [n. 1], p. 192, 269, 341.

<sup>150</sup> VASSILEVA, *the cult of Kybele* [n. 134], p. 52.

<sup>151</sup> TSETSKHLADZE, *Notes* [n. 9], p. 709-710.

century BC. The renowned Phrygian shrine, which was worshipped by all the kings of Asia and Europe, is very likely a product of a reshaped past, fabricated in the Hellenistic period in order to legitimize the rule of new powers, such as the Attalids (who sought legitimization of their rule and a bridgehead to the east), the Romans (who had tied their destiny to Kybele at the end of the third century BC) and the “*parvenu*” *dynastai* of the temple state who had acquired the privileged role of vassals to Pergamon and direct beneficiaries of the revenues of the temple lands. What followed was the spectacular expansion of a modest Late Phrygian settlement, in the vicinity of the sanctuary, which probably lay outside of the valley, near the Dindymos, where previously all significant worship of the Mother had taken place. The example of Philetaerus’ temple has demonstrated that cultic continuity of topography was a vital factor in the choice of location during the Hellenistic era. The valley offered no topographic link with the past, but was perfect for creating a political satellite city of the temple lands. The valley had great potential in protecting the citadel of the priests, which was built in the third century BC on a strategic promontory with excellent view on the valley entrance to the north. The emergence of citadel architecture likely coincided with the erection of the sanctuary, perhaps by Attalus I.

The temple in sector B at Ballihisar unlikely served the cult of Kybele given that votive gifts related to her cult as well as topographic continuity in cult practice are significantly absent. A shared cult of Kybele and Theos Sebastos is doubtful for the same reasons. The late Augustan date of the temple, yielded by its pottery and carvings, is interesting in light of new architectural trends that trickled down from the west.

My identification of the temple cult is based mainly on the observed gladiatorial facilities and architectural layout. The temple complex was part of an early Imperial trend in the west and Africa, in which the axial combination of a theatre and a temple was employed for *sebasteia*. This development had already reached Anatolian soil by the Augustan age, more specifically in Caria. The temple in Pessinus may have found an apt model in its young predecessor at Stratonicea, as it was (also) a Sebasteion. The introduction of gladiatorial games and an imperial statue in Pessinus in 8 AD might have happened together with the beginning of the cult in the city of Kybele, and marked the initiation of the construction of the Sebasteion, which was designed for such games.