

BILINGUAL INSCRIPTIONS ON THE STELE FROM LEMNOS*

The well-known stele from Kaminia on Lemnos (Fig. 1)¹ shows inscriptions both on its front and its right side. Most remarkably, it looks as if not all of the words forming lines of these inscriptions have been incised by the same craftsman because their writing is somewhat different in shape. On both sides, the most neatly written parts of the text would appear to be of earlier origin, while they also contain the most important information.

As is seen in figure 1, on *the front side* of the stele part of the text, *i.e.* five lines of letters, runs horizontally, while two lines run vertically at the left and one at the right side. All of the five horizontal lines of words are written from the left to the right, the second line from above excepted, which is written from the right to the left like in "boustrophedon" script. Probably, four of these horizontal lines have been originally incised, that is, from below to above, the first, third, fourth and fifth line, while the second line, due to its somewhat different style in lettering and deviating writing-direction, would appear to have been added later. The three vertical lines seem to have likewise been added by a later craftsman except for the upper part of the vertical line on the right. In general, the interpunctuation indicates which words should be combined and in which direction they should be read.

* We gratefully acknowledge the advice given by Prof. Hans Ariëns Kappers in shaping the manuscript and checking the interpretation of the inscriptions.

1, For pertinent literature see Massimo Pallottino, *The Etruscans*, London 1974, p. 246, n. 17.



Fig. 1
The stele from Lemnos (x in Fig. 2)

Successively, the four original horizontal lines on the front side can be read as follows from below to above, in combination with the upper word on the right vertical line:

sivai (1) -*sialchveis avis* (2) -*maras m av* (3) -*is aisthophan* (4)

We will deal later with the text of the second horizontal line from below and of the two vertical lines on the left and the rest of the vertical line on the right side.

The inscription on the *right side* of the stele consists of three lines of words. The first, most to the right in figure 1, runs from the left to the right, that is from the top of the stele to its bottom, while, just as in "boustrophedon" script, the second line runs from the right to the left, from the bottom of the stele to

its top. All of the letters of the third line, situated most to the left in figure 1, are written in reverse in comparison with those in the two other lines. Like the first line, this third one should be read from the left to the right, and like the second line, from the bottom to the top of the stele.

In our opinion, the text of the side of the stele was likewise incised by two different craftsmen in view of the style of the lettering. As shown by the interpunctuation, the larger parts of the first and the second line, which are quite neatly written, have been executed by another, and probably earlier craftsman, than, in the first line, the last word and, in the second, the two first words ("boustrophedon"!). The third line with its reversed letters has evidently been incised by the same, later, craftsman.

The earlier and neater inscription can be read as follows:

sivai avis sialchvis marasm avis (1)

sivai entesio arai tis hoke (2)

Comments on the text of the original inscriptions on the front and the lateral side of the stele

1. *Sivai* = Etruscan personal name of the warrior to whom the stele has been dedicated, possibly *Siva*, with dative-ending *-i*.
2. *sialchvis avis*, *avis sialchvis* = 30 years (cf. TLE 141: *avils cealchls*, TLE 98: *avils machs sealchls*).²
3. *maras* = 5 (cf. *macras*).³
4. *(-m)* = and (enclitic copula, just like in Hittite *-ma*, and in Lycian *-me*).⁴
5. *Aistophan* = Greek personal name with a Greek *o*, like in the rest of the inscriptions, instead of an Etruscan *u*. Perhaps the craftsman, Aistophan, who incised the inscription on the front side, realized that, if he would write his own name at the beginning of the line at the top, he would appear to be of greater significance than *Siva(i)* to whom the stele was dedicated. Therefore, he most tactically split off the word *avis* in the fourth line with *av-*, continued at the end of the fifth line with *-is* and wrote his own name aside in demonstration of his modesty.

2. Idem, p. 225, *s.v. avil*, p. 226, *s.v. ci*.

3. Idem, p. 229, *s.v. mac, mach*.

4. Ibidem, *s.v. -m, -um*.

6. *Sivai entesio arai tis hoke* = *Sivai*, or, *to Siva*, soldier from *entesios*, dative -o, derived from *entea*: "armour", cf. *entesiergos*, or, *with weapons, oh, i.e. o!*, let you pray, anyone, in any way whatever! The Greek dialect is, in any case, Ionian: *hoke!*

In the blank spaces originally left by the first craftsman practically the very same inscription was added at some later time, both in front and at the side of the stele. As can be seen in figure 1, the head of *Siva(i)* is pictured in the central space left between the horizontal and vertical enclosing lines of the secondary inscription at *the front side*. *Siva(i)*'s shield and his right hand holding a lance are also shown. The word *Sivai* has been incorporated into the later inscription, under the *S* of *Sivai* the first additional vertical line on the left begins with the word *oinravat*.

At *the lateral side* of the stele, the later, additional inscription forms part of the first and of the second line of words, while also the entire third line, carved in reversed letters, is of later origin (see above). The words added in these three lines should probably be read as follows:

*aomai(1)-rom har(..)gio(2)-anorevot othsive thianores egaisaik
oph seiagoh(3)*

The pair *oinravat/anorevot* makes the additional inscription on the front of the stele understandable for us:

*oinravat reka (1) -gi amirom thianores othsive (2a)-
ianores gaisaga m av (2) -seiagoh (3)*

Lines 1, 2 and 3 run vertically, 1 and 2 at the left and 3 at the right side of the stele, line 2a runs horizontally (see above), all lines should be read from left to right.

Comments on the text of the additional inscriptions on the front and the lateral side of the stele

1. *aomairom/amirom, har(..)gio/rekagi, anorevot/oinravat* = the Ionian sentence in Etruscan (?), probably without *entesi(o)*, because the warrior on the front side on the right of *Sivai* speaks for himself.
2. *Thianores* = Greek personal name.
3. *othsive* = 3rd plural or dual form from *uth-* = to give (vel simile).⁵

5. *Idem*, p. 233, s.v. *ut-, uth-*.

4. *Egaisaik/Gaisaga* = Etruscan or Carthaginian personal name.
5. *-m* = and.
6. *oph/av* = from (Indo-European, cf. Greek *apo*).
7. *Seiagoh* = Siagu, a town within the territorium of Carthage.

From the foregoing it would appear that the funeral stele from Kaminia, dedicated to the memory of Siva(i), was first sculptured and incised by an Ionian craftsman, called Aistophan, in the tradition of the Avle Feluske and the Avle Tite stelae from, respectively, Vetulonia and Volterra. It was he who executed the neatly lettered inscriptions on the front and the right side of the stele. Afterwards Siva(i)'s companions Thianores and Gaisaga/Egaisaik from Siagu added the somewhat less professional inscriptions, Thianores mentioning himself even twice on the front side, his friend showing himself more modest on the right side. Probably, this is the story of these texts which may be considered bilingual in more than one respect indeed! The original Ionian inscription informs us that Siva(i) must have died in a foreign country. Such was the consequence of a soldier's life c. 600 B.C. (Fig. 2)!

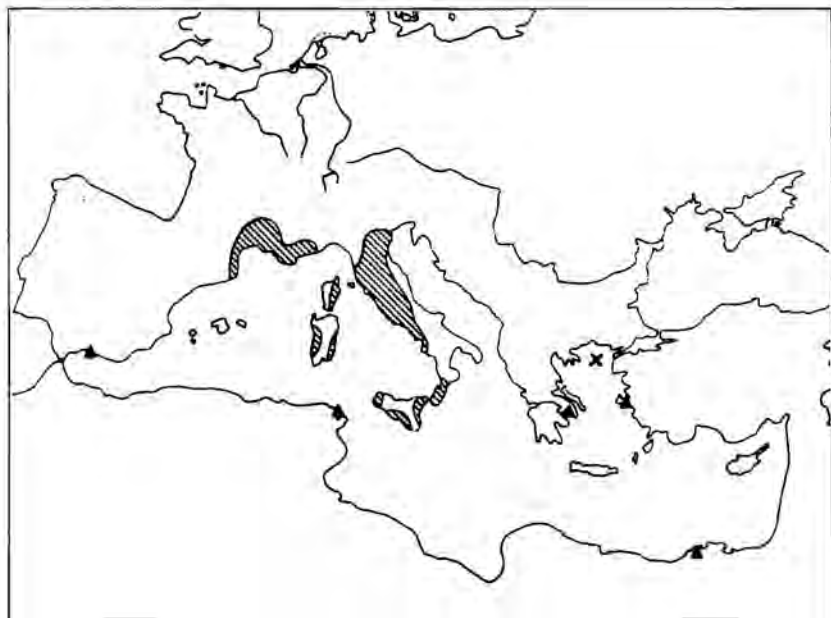


Fig. 2
Distribution (▲) of Etruscan bucchero (▨) in the Mediterranean,
c. 630 - 580 B.C.