

# Tekmeria

Vol 19 (2025)

γεγενῆσθαι. μνηύεται οὖν ἀπὸ μετοίκων τέ τινων καὶ ἀκο-  
 λούθων περὶ μὲν τῶν Ἑρμῶν οὐδέν, ἄλλων δὲ ἀγαλμάτων  
 περικοπαί τινες πρότερον ὑπὸ νεωτέρων μετὰ παιδιᾶς καὶ  
 οἴνου γεγενημέναι τῶμας ἑλληνικῆς καὶ ρωμαϊκῆς ἀρχαιότητος ποιεῖται ἐν  
 οἰκίαις ἐφ' ἑρμῆς. **Τεκμήρια** καὶ  
 αὐτὰ ὑπολαμβάνοντες οἱ μάλιστα τῷ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ ἀχθόμενοι  
 ἐμποδῶν ὄντι σφίσι μὴ αὐτοῖς τοῦ δήμου βεβαίως προστάναι,  
 καὶ νομίσαντες, εἰ αὐτὸν ἐξελάσειαν, πρῶτοι ἂν εἶναι, ἐμεγά-  
 λυνον καὶ ἐβόων. **Τεκμήρια** ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν δήμον καταλύσει τά τε μυστικά καὶ  
 ἡ τῶν Ἑρμῶν περικοπή γένηται καὶ οὐδὲ εἴη αὐτῶν ὅτι οὐ  
 μετ' ἐκείνου ἐπράχθη, ἐπιλέγοντες τεκμήρια τὴν ἄλλην αὐτοῦ  
 ἐς τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα οὐ δημοτικὴν παρανομίαν. ὁ δ' ἐν τε  
 τῷ παρόντι πρό- **Τεκμήρια** καὶ ἐτοῖμος ἦν  
 πρὶν ἐκπλεῖν κρῖναι, πρὶν διαγνώσῃ, πέμπειν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ  
 γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῆς παρανομίας ἐπεπερισσῶς, καὶ εἰ μὲν τούτων  
 τι εἴργαστο, δίκην δοῦναι, εἰ δ' ἀπολυθείη, ἄρχειν. καὶ  
 ἐπεμαρτύρετο μὴ ἀπόντος πέρι αὐτοῦ διαβολὴς ἀποδέχεσθαι,  
 ἀλλ' ἤδη ἀποκτείνειν, εἰ ἀδίκησε καὶ ὅτι σωφρονέστερον εἴη  
 μὴ μετὰ τοιαύτης αἰτίας, πρὶν διαγνώσῃ, πέμπειν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ  
 τοσοῦτ' στρατεύματι. οἱ δ' ἐχθροὶ δεδιότες τό τε στράτευμα  
 μὴ εὖνουν ἔχῃ, ἣν ἤδη ἀγωνίζεται, ὃ τε δήμος μὴ μαλα-  
 κίζεται θεραπεύων ὅτι δι' ἐκείνου οἱ τ' Ἀργεῖοι ξυνεστράτευον  
 καὶ τῶν Μαντινέων τινές, ἀπέτρεπον καὶ ἀπέσπευδον, ἄλλους  
 ῥήτορας ἐνιέντες οἱ ἔλεγον νῦν μὲν πλεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ  
 κατασχεῖν τὴν ἀναγωγὴν, ἐλθόντα δὲ κρίνεσθαι ἐν ἡμέραις  
 ῥηταῖς, βουλόμενοι ἐκ μείζονος διαβολῆς, ἣν ἔμελλον ῥᾶον  
 αὐτοῦ ἀπόντος ποριεῖν, μετὰπεμπτον κομισθέντα αὐτὸν ἀγω-  
 νίσασθαι. καὶ ἔδοξε πλεῖν τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην.  
 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα θέρους μεσοῦντος ἤδη ἡ ἀναγωγὴ ἐγίνετο

## A New Honorific Inscription for Sabina from Lyttos

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doi: [10.12681/tekmeria.43819](https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.43819)

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### To cite this article:

Tsolakis, G. (2025). A New Honorific Inscription for Sabina from Lyttos. *Tekmeria*, 19, 239–248.  
<https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.43819>

## A New Honorific Inscription for Sabina from Lyttos\*

The epigraphy of the Cretan city of Lyttos is remarkably rich and continues to produce material of significant historical interest. This is particularly true since systematic excavations began in 2021 in the city's administrative center of the Imperial period. The 2024 season of the Lyktos Archaeological Project began with the discovery of a fragment of an inscribed base honoring Vibia Sabina, the wife of Emperor Hadrian, found in the area of the city's Sebasteion.<sup>1</sup>

Already during the Flavian period, and most consistently during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, the Lyttians commissioned honorific images, most likely bronze busts, in honor of the emperor and his family at least once a year, and quite possibly more frequently.<sup>2</sup> Although none of these images has survived –an over-

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\* I am grateful to Prof. Angelos Chaniotis (Institute for Advanced Study) for granting me permission to publish the epigraphic texts from the Sebasteion and for his invaluable guidance in the preparation of this article. My warm thanks go to Dr. Manolis Petrakis (University of Patras) for his kind assistance during the 2024 excavation season. My gratitude also extends to the anonymous readers and the editorial board of *Τεκμήρια* for their constructive feedback. I also wish to thank the Center for Hellenic Studies for the support and exceptional scholarly environment it provided during the preparation of this article.

1. The state of research in Lyttos before the start of the Lyktos Archaeological Project is presented in various articles in Galanaki, Chaniotis 2024. See especially Chaniotis 2024 and Rethemiotakis 2024. On the works of the Lyktos Archaeological Project, see Kotsonas, Sythiakaki, Chaniotis 2021; 2022; 2023. For the history of the archaeological research at Lyttos, see Kotsonas 2019.

2. For the practice of dedicating statues to the emperor, see Harrison 1993, 205-211, and Højte 2005, 104, 158, 180. On the imperial cult, the work of Price 1984 remains indispensable. Especially for Crete, see Baldwin Bowsky 2017 (A. Chaniotis, *EBGR* 2017, 14; *SEG* 67, 585), an inscription that records a decree or petition of the Cretan Koinon on various aspects of the imperial cult, together with the *subscriptio* of the emperor Tiberius. Also, see Baldwin Bowsky 2023, who collects the material evidence for the imperial cult on the island. On the occasion when the honorific images with their statue bases were erected, see Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, 32. While the erection of imperial images could occur on various occasions without fixed periodicity, in Lyttos during the first quarter of the second cent. A.D. such dedications for the emperor and his family followed a regular –at least annual–

life-size marble statue of Trajan found in 2021 does not belong to this group,<sup>3</sup> their inscribed statue bases attest to the continuation of this honoring practice. The honorific inscriptions follow a fixed formula: they start with the emperor's name and full titulature. When a female member of the imperial family was honored, the inscription also noted her relationship to the emperor. In most instances, the honoree's name appears in the accusative. Notably, a deviation occurs in the honorific inscriptions for Trajan, where the emperor's name appears in the dative in all but three cases.<sup>4</sup> As part of the titulature, the inscriptions record the ordinal number of the emperor's tribunician power and consulship. Each text concludes with the expression "the city of Lyttians" in the nominative, followed by the name of the *protokosmos* who supervised the erection of the statue (διὰ πρωτοκόσμου).

Prior to the beginning of the new excavation in 2021, numerous honorific inscriptions for Trajan, Hadrian, and members of their family were already known. Fourteen were erected in honor of Trajan during his reign, four for his sister Marciana, three for his niece Matidia, and three for his wife Plotina.<sup>5</sup> Under Hadrian, six inscriptions were dedicated to the emperor, two to his wife Sabina, and one to his sister Paulina.<sup>6</sup> Two of those inscriptions, one for Hadrian and one for Sabina, were found *in situ* during the excavation conducted by Giorgos Rethemiotakis in 1984, outside the eastern wall of the building he interpreted as the *Bouleuterion* of Lyttos, in the area he identified as an "anteroom". According to the excavator, the *Bouleuterion* and its "anteroom" together formed part of a larger complex of Roman times associated with the imperial cult.<sup>7</sup> More pieces of this peculiar mosaic

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schedule. See Chaniotis 2025, for discussion of occasional cases, prompted by a decree from Aphrodisias concerning the funding of the imperial cult.

3. The statue is briefly noted in the preliminary archaeological report. See Kotsonas, Sythiakaki, Chaniotis 2021, 231-232.

4. Cases in accusative: *I.Cret.* I xviii 18 and 32-33. On the use of dative in honorific inscriptions, see Højte 2005, 22-23 and 45.

5. Trajan: *I.Cret.* I xviii 17-19, 21-23, 27-30, 32-33, 39, 50. Marciana: *I.Cret.* I xviii 25, 35, 37-38. Matidia: *I.Cret.* I xviii 20, 26, 36. Plotina: *I.Cret.* I xviii 24, 31, 34. Chalkiadakis 2020 correctly identified *I.Cret.* I xviii 50 as an honorific inscription for Trajan based on the reference [τῷ τῆς | οἴκουμέ[νης | κτ[ίστη, a phrase attested only in inscriptions for Trajan in Lyttos, but his attempt to restore the name of the *protokosmos* is not compelling.

6. Hadrian: *I.Cret.* I xviii 40-42; *SEG* 40, 777a (cf. 42, 810); 37, 753 (cf. 42, 811); 42, 812. Sabina: *SEG* 40, 777b (cf. 42, 813) and 36, 815bis (cf. 42, 814). Paulina: *I.Cret.* I xviii 43.

7. See Rethemiotakis 1984, 61-65. One of these six inscribed statue bases for Hadrian had been found by Rethemiotakis in 1981, prompting the excavation of the building later identified as the *Bouleuterion*.

have come to light since the summer of 2021, when the “anteroom” to the east of the council hall was investigated. In addition to two honorific inscriptions on revetment plaques –one for Trajan and one for Plotina–, eight more inscribed statue bases were unearthed inside the Sebasteion, four for Hadrian, two for Sabina, and two for Paulina.<sup>8</sup> The newly discovered inscribed statue bases, together with the cuirassed statue found east of this room, led to its identification as a *Sebasteion*, a space dedicated to the worship of the emperor.<sup>9</sup>

The inscription presented here was discovered by the excavation team on top of the geomat placed over the excavated area of the Sebasteion for its protection during the winter. It appears that an unknown individual from a nearby village, perhaps wishing to avoid the bureaucratic process of formally reporting the find, deliberately deposited the inscription in the Sebasteion for the excavation team to find it in the next season. Although the fragmentary state of preservation does not in itself allow a certain identification of the monument, the content of the inscription makes clear that it is an honorific statue base.

Fragment of an inscribed statue base made of local stone (titanolithos). The base is broken on all sides, and only part of the pillar shaft is preserved; both its upper and lower moldings are missing. The fragment was recorded among the stray finds under inventory number B0.02.01.2. The lettering is characteristic of Hadrianic inscriptions from Lyttos: nearly all letters bear serifs; *alpha* has a straight central stroke; *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega* are lunate. Dimensions: height: 10 cm; width: 19 cm; length 39.5 cm; letter height: 1.9-2.8 cm (fig. 1).

[Σαβεῖναν, Αὐτο]-  
[κράτορος Τραϊανοῦ]  
[Ἀδριανοῦ Σεβα]-  
4 [στοῦ] Καίσα[ρος γυ]-  
[ναί]κα, Λυττίων<sup>v</sup>  
[ἡ πό]λις ἐπὶ πρ[ωτο]-  
[κόσμ]ω Μενοί[τα]  
8 [Ἰσχω]γο[ς].

6-7. Either ἐπὶ πρ[ωτοκόσμ]ω, with Doric genitive, or ἐπὶ πρ[ωτοκόσμ]φ. For Doric genitive in Imperial times, see *I.Cret.* I xxiii 41 (Peek, *GVI* 1553), first cent. A.D. For ἐπί + dative, see *I.Cret* I v 9 (A.D. 98-117), IV 300 (A.D. 180-182).

8. Kotsonas, Sythiakaki, Chaniotis 2021, 229-230; 2022, 270-273; 2023, 214-216. One of the statue bases found during the 2023 excavation season joins with Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, no. 3 (cf. 42, 812).

9. Kotsonas, Sythiakaki, Chaniotis 2021, 231-232 and 2022, 252-253.

“To Sabina, the wife of Emperor Trajan Hadrian Augustus Caesar, the city of the Lyttians, when Menoitias son of Ischon was the *protokosmos*”.

Only four inscriptions in honor of Sabina are known from Crete, all of which were found in Lyttos.<sup>10</sup> Three inscriptions were erected during the tenures of the *protokosmoi* Eunous, son of Quintus, Apollonides, son of Kleumenidas, and Akestimos, son of Menoitios, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth tribunician terms of Hadrian, respectively, and can thus be securely dated to A.D. 123/124, 124/125, and 125/126.<sup>11</sup> The fourth inscription<sup>12</sup> is dated to the reign of Hadrian, prior to A.D. 129, when the emperor received the title Ὀλύμπιος. Hadrian's titulature is the same in the new text, which therefore can also be assigned to the period before A.D. 129. The years of known *protokosmoi* can be excluded: T. Flavius Kournios (A.D. 121-122), Eunous, son of Quintus (A.D. 123-124), Apollonides, son of Kleumenidas (A.D. 124-125), and Akestimos, son of Menoitios (A.D. 125-126). Since the inscription was more likely erected in the period before 128 than in the short interval between A.D. 128 and 129, I do not restore the title Σεβαστή (*Augusta*) in l. 1, which, according to literary sources, Sabina was granted in A.D. 128.<sup>13</sup>

In imperial titulature more generally and in particular in that of Hadrian (*Imperator Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus*), Καῖσαρ usually precedes Σεβαστός. This is not the case, however, in the present text, where Σεβαστός appears before Καῖσαρ. The order of the emperor's titles suggests that the inscriber treated Σεβαστός as an epithet rather than a formal title. This sequence, Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος instead of Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ, is attested only in the two complete inscriptions from Lyttos honoring Sabina and does not appear in those for Hadrian himself or for Paulina. Yet, this peculiar order is attested in a large number of Greek and Latin inscriptions, especially in the case of inscriptions for Augustus, so it would

10. See n. 6 above.

11. These inscriptions are: 1) Tsolakis forthcoming, no. 5; 2) Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, no. 4 (*SEG* 36, 815bis); 3) Tsolakis forthcoming, no. 8.

12. Chaniotis 1986 (Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, 5; *SEG* 40, 777b).

13. Based on two inscriptions from Olisipo (*CIL* II 4992, dated to A.D. 121/122) and Perge (*AE* 1965, 211, dated to A.D. 119-122), Eck 1982, 226-228, suggested that Sabina received the title *Augusta* earlier. Contra Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, 33-34. On the unofficial use of Σεβαστή as part of her imperial nomenclature by provincial communities before she officially acquired the title, see Chaniotis, Rethemiotakis 1992, 33-34; Chaniotis 2003, 341. See Tsolakis forthcoming on the new epigraphic evidence from Lyttos, which sheds further light on the attribution of title *Augusta* to Sabina.

not necessarily have seemed out of the ordinary to contemporary readers.<sup>14</sup> In general, the inscriptions of Lyttos adhere closely to the official titulature. The only notable deviations, aside from the aforementioned case, are the use of the unofficial title ὁ τῆς οἰκουμένης κτίστης for Trajan, which appears exclusively in the epigraphic corpus of Lyttos and is not attested elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> and the use of ἄριστος in an honorific inscription again for Trajan, prior to the emperor's official acquisition of this title in A.D. 114.<sup>16</sup>

Following the Roman conquest of Crete, the administration of Cretan cities was heavily influenced by Roman institutions. Thus, the traditional college of *kosmoi* was reduced to four annually appointed members, one of whom was in charge of them as the *protokosmos* and eponymous magistrate of his city.<sup>17</sup> In the overwhelming majority of the inscribed statue bases from Lyttos, the *protokosmos* responsible for erecting the base and the image is named with the phrase διὰ πρωτοκόσμου (“through the *protokosmos*”), indicating that the commission took place under his supervision. In this inscription, however, Menoitias deviates from the standard construction with διὰ + genitive and instead employs the preposition ἐπί + genitive (with the dialect form πρωτοκόσμῳ) or dative (see app. cr.) to denote time, i.e., “under the term of”. This choice perhaps reflects an archaizing tendency. While the temporal use of ἐπί with the genitive or dative is attested elsewhere in Roman Crete, it is unique within the epigraphic corpus of Lyttos of the same period.<sup>18</sup>

Μενοΐτας, son of Ἰσχών, whose name can be plausibly restored in ll. 7-8, is already known from an unpublished inscribed statue base found *in situ* at the Sebasteion in honor of Paulina, emperor Hadrian's sister.<sup>19</sup> Although the new inscription is of unknown provenance, it is nearly certain that it was set up in the Sebasteion. The name Μενοΐτας is fairly common, with over 50 attestations, and

14. E.g., see *IG* VII 2711 (Caligula); *I.Aphrodisias* 2007 12.11 (Nero); *IGR* III 209 (Hadrian); *IG* IX 1, 1005 (Septimius Severus). The number of Latin examples exceeds that of Greek inscriptions.

15. *I.Cret.* I xviii 17, 19, 21-23, 27-30, 32-33, 39, 50. On the “unofficial titles” or “unofficial titulature” of the emperors, see Frei-Stolba 1969; Chaniotis 2003; and Bönisch-Meyer 2021.

16. *I.Cret.* I xviii 19, dated to A.D. 107. See Kienast 2004, 123.

17. Sanders 1982, 12-13; Chaniotis 2004, 106; Pałuchowski 2005a.

18. See van Effenterre, van Effenterre 1985, 174 n. 51; Pałuchowski 2005a, 30-31; 2005b, 427-429; 2007; Fadelli 2020, 618 n. 75; Tsolakis forthcoming, no. 10.

19. See Tsolakis forthcoming, no. 10.

occurs also for two Cretans.<sup>20</sup> An alternative form of the name, Μενοίτιος, is attested as the father of the Lyttian *protokosmos* of 125-126.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, the name Ἰσχωὺν is quite rare, with only two attestations, both from Crete.<sup>22</sup>

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20. Cf. *I.Delphinion* 38, a list of new citizens from Crete, in which two individuals with the patronyms Μενοίτου and Μενο[ίτα] (g.2.1.9 and ff.2.1.5) are attested.

21. SEG 37, 753.

22. Zografaki, Apostolakou 2009, 515 no. 8 (SEG 59, 1072) (Olous; late third / early second cent. B.C.) and *I.Cret.* I vii 15 (Chersonesos; first cent. B.C.). See *LGPN-Ling*, s.v. Ἰσχωὺν on its etymology.

### Summary

The present article publishes a new honorific inscription for Sabina, wife of Hadrian, from the Cretan city of Lyttos. The text of the fragmentary statue base, inscribed in the years just before or during the 120s A.D. and found in the Sebasteion during the 2024 season of the Lyktos Archaeological Project, is only partially preserved. Nevertheless, it reveals unusual features in Lyttian honorific practice, including the sequence of Hadrian's titles and the use of ἐπί with genitive / dative, and adds to the small corpus of Cretan inscriptions for Sabina. The article further contributes to the discussion of Sabina's acquisition of the title *Augusta* and to the practice of the imperial cult in Lyttos.



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Fig. 1. Honorific inscription for Sabina (photo by the author;  
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