

GLADIATORIAL INSCRIPTIONS FROM STRATONIKEIA IN CARIA

The present study is part of a project, by means of which the steles are going to be exhibited in a gladiatorial showroom at Muğla Museum.¹

According to engineers of Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri at Yatağan, the steles, transported to Muğla Museum, were spotted in the course of mining for coal circa 40–50 metres north of a so-called Byzantine edifice (identified by a coin of that period) in the region of Börükçü, attached to the village of Yeşilbağcılar. That area is the necropole of Stratonikeia. All the steles seem to date back to the third century A.D. (For evidence on gladiatorial combats at Stratonikeia see I. Stratonikeia I, 303 (Panamara) and II, 1015, 1025.)

1. Droseros



Stele without pediment. Height: 98 cms, width: 64 cms, thickness: 19 cms, height of letters at bottom: 2.5 cms. The gladiator is depicted in 3/4 profile to the left. The stele is surrounded by a frame. There are six garlands on the right edge of the frame, eight garlands on the left edge, and three garlands within the frame. In total, the gladiator has won seventeen victories.

A small, round helmet and a breastplate, an oblong shield, a short sword and greave in the left leg point out that the gladiator is a *murmillio*.

Δρόσερος
πά(λος) γ'

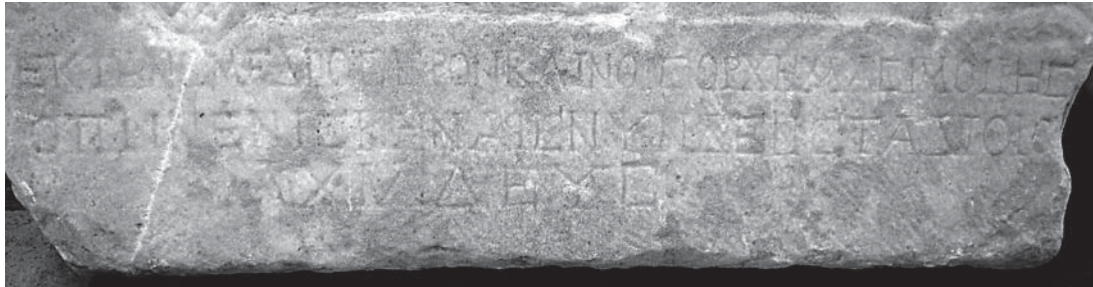
Droseros, of the third rank.

ἔκτανέ με Δρόσερον καινοῖς ὀρχήμασι μόιρης
ὁ πρὶν ἐνὶ σκηναίς, νῦν δ' ἐν σταδίοισ[ιν]
Ἀχιλλεύς

(The man who) killed me, Droseros, by new dances of the Moira (was) the man, who was first on the scene, but now in the stadium, Achilles.

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The six steles were briefly mentioned by F. Küçükçoban, 12. Müze Çalışmaları ve Kurtarma Kazıları Sempozyumu (2002) 255–256. From his photograph (262, Fig. 7) the names on three of the steles (nos. 4, 2, and 1 below) were read by C. Brixhe, Bull. ép. 2003, 481 and in Année épigraphique 2002 (2005) 1422 (summarized in SEG 52 [2006] 1113bis).



Stele of Droseros: inscription on the bottom

The name Δρόσερος (from δρόσος “dew”) is rare; its synonymous Δροσῖνος is attested as the name of gladiators: L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l’Orient grec* (1940), no. 188 (Kos) and I. Milet VI,2 no. 544.

2. Chrysos



Stele with pediment. There is a floral ornament in the pediment. Height: 91 cms, width: 58 cms, thickness: 16.5 cms. The gladiator is depicted in 3/4 profile to the left. Ten garlands mean ten victories. The gladiator’s armatura reveal that he is in the same class as Droseros, to wit, *murmillo*.

Χρῦσος
πά(λος) η΄

Chrysos, of the eighth rank.

“Noms qui contiennent de l’or ont plu aux gladiateurs” (L. Robert, *op. cit.*, 301, cf. also the following lemma: Χρυσόπτερος).

3. Chrysopteros

Stele with pediment, within which there is a floral ornament. Height: 83 cms, width: 60 cms, thickness: 21 cms. The gladiator is depicted in profile to the left except his torso, and wears weapons of a *murmillo*. The stele carries ten garlands.



Χρυσόπτερος
πά(λος) ε΄

Chrysopteros, of the fifth rank.

Χρυσόπτερος means “with wings of gold”.

4. Vitalis

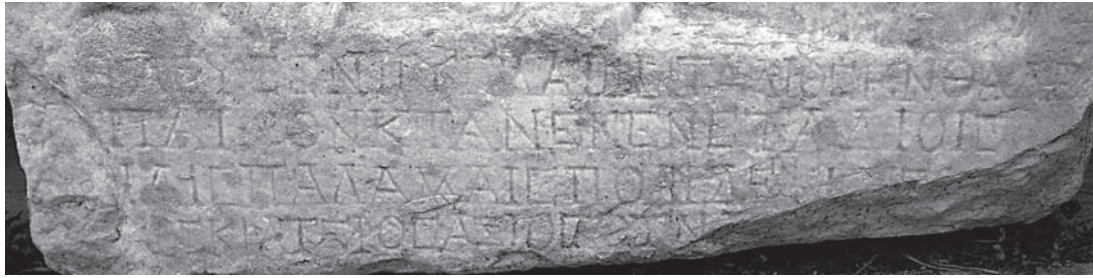


Stele without pediment. Height: 103 cms, width: 63 cms, thickness: 17 cms, height of letters at the bottom: 2 cms. The stele is surrounded by a frame.

The available number of garlands, symbolising victories, on and in the frame is fifteen. The gladiator, depicted frontally, holds a garland of his last victory in his left hand, and a palm branch in his right hand. It is clear that the palm branch was given to him after his last victory. The palm branch shows that Vitalis is a plurimarum palmarum gladiator. His helmet is of crest. His equipment is the same as that of Khrysopteros. The gladiator is of the type Robert, op. cit. no. 301.

Βιτάλις
πά(λος) α΄

Vitalis, of the first rank.



Stele of Vitalis: inscription on the bottom

- 4 [Ἵ]θρᾶσὺς ἐν πυγμαῖς Βιτάλιος ἐνθάδε
[κε]ῖται ὃν κτάνεν ἐν σταδίοις
[ἰδ]ίαις παλάμαις Πολυδεύκης [πὺξ ἀ]-
[γα]θός, κρατερός, ἄξιος οὐνό[ματος].

[Ἵ]θρᾶσὺς ἐν πυγμαῖς Βιτάλιος ἐνθάδε [κε]ῖται
ὃν κτάνεν ἐν σταδίοις [ἰδ]ίαις παλάμαις Πολυδεύκης
[πὺξ ἀγα]θός, κρατερός, ἄξιος οὐνό[ματος].

Vitalius, a brave man at boxing, lies here, whom mighty Polydeukes, good at boxing and worthy of his name, killed by his own hands in the arena.

L. 1: That Vitalis in the first line, and Vitalius in the third line of the inscription are inscribed is not due to a scribal error or abbreviation, but Vitalis is the stage name of the gladiator.

L. 3: ἐν πυγμαῖς ligatura.

L. 3: ὁ θρᾶσὺς ἐν πυγμαῖς Βιτάλιος; compare AE 1989: 647: ὁ θρᾶσὺς Βικτωρίνος; Robert, op. cit. 115, no. 56, l. 1: Ὀλυμπόν με καθορᾶς θρᾶσύν; 132, no. 81, l. 1: τὸν θρᾶσὺν ἐν σταδίοις ἰσορᾶς με νέκυν.

L. 4: ὃν κτάνεν at the beginning of hexameters, as often.

Ll. 5–6: Πολυδεύκης [πὺξ ἀγα]θός from the *Πιαδ Γ*, 237: πὺξ ἀγαθὸν Πολυδεύκεα.

5. Amaraïos

Stele with pediment, embellished by a rosette. Height: 94 cms, width: 60 cms, thickness: 13 cms. The gladiator is depicted in 3/4 profile to the left. He has won eight garlands. His class is that of a *secutor*.

Ἀμαραῖος
πά(λος) γ'

Amaraïos, of the third rank.



Stele of Amaraïos



Stele of Eumelos

6. Eumelos

The top of the stele is broken. Preserved height: 71 cms, width: 64 cms, thickness: 15 cms, height of letters: 2–3 cms. The gladiator is depicted in 3/4 profile to the left. Eumelos has nine garlands and he is a *retiarius*.



Stele of Eumelos: inscription on the bottom

Εὐμήλου τόδε σῆμα κραταιοῦ μονομάχοιο,
 ὃν πολλοὺς ὀλέσαντα ἐνὶ σταδίῃ ὑμείνῃ
 τῆλε κόνει παρέδωκεν ἔχ(ε)ιν μεροπήσιος
 4 αἰχμή.

This tomb belongs to Eumelos, the strong gladiator, whom, after he had killed many in close combat, from far distance a human spear gave into the possession of dust.

Özet

Makalede, Stratonikeia kentinin nekropolünün yer aldığı Börükçü mevkiinde bulunarak Muğla Müzesi'ne taşınan bazı gladyatör mezar taşları üzerindeki yazıt ve figürler ele alınmaktadır. Olasılıkla İ.S. III. yüzyıla ait olan bu yazıtlar şöyledir:

1. “Üçüncü kategoriden Droseros. Beni Kader Tanrıçası'nın oyunları ile, bir zamanlar sahnelerde, ama şimdi arenalarda olan Akhilleus öldürdü”.
2. “Sekizinci kategoriden Khrysos”.
3. “Beşinci kategoriden Khrysopteros”.
4. “Birinci kategoriden Vitalis. Boks müsabakalarında cesur bir adam olan Vitalius burada yatıyor. Onu güçlü ve iyi bir boksör ve adına layık Polydeukes arenada kendi elleriyle öldürdü”.
5. “Üçüncü kategoriden Amaraios”.
6. “Bu, güçlü gladyatör Eumelos'un mezarıdır. Yakın dövüşte birçok kişiyi öldürdükten sonra onu, uzaktan atılan bir mızrak toprağa düşürdü”.

Aydın

Murat Aydaş