

ASLI SARAÇOĞLU – MURAT ÇEKILMEZ

A GLADIATOR STELE FROM TRALLEIS

aus: *Epigraphica Anatolica* 43 (2010) 57–58

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## A GLADIATOR STELE FROM TRALLEIS<sup>1</sup>

The inscribed stele discussed in this article was found on the western necropolis of Tralleis during the excavation campaign in 2007<sup>2</sup>.

Stele of coarse-grained white marble. Height 31.3 cm; width 30.5 cm (above) and 29.4 cm (below); thickness 7.5 cm (max.); height of the letters varying from 1.2 to 1.4 cm. There is a hole just over the figure that follows the outline of the helmet closely. Back side is roughly worked. This stele is now in the Aydın Museum.

The gladiator depicted within a rectangular recess is a Thrax standing on the left, whose weight is resting on the right foot and the left leg is moved and slightly bent at the knee. The upper part of his body is naked. He wears a wide-brimmed crested helmet (*galea*), an armband (*manica*) on his right arm, a loincloth (*subligaculum*), a belt (*balteus*) and long greaves. In his



left hand he carries a small square shield (*parma*), while he holds a short curved sword (*sica*) in the right hand lowered vertically. The gladiator's face is completely covered by the helmet and the shield. The right lower corner of the scene is occupied by a bird perched on a small altar. The laurel motif in the upper left corner and a palm branch (*palma*) on the right symbolize a victory of the gladiator. Over the profile at the bottom there is the following inscription:

Σπεῖκλος Στράτωνι  
μνείας χάριν.

“*Speiklos (made this) for Straton, in memory*”.

The name Σπίκλος (from Latin *spīculus*, “sharp, pointed”) is also attested in *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris* II, 207 (Tomis, 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. A.D.), a funerary inscription probably for a gladiator<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Prof. A. Yaylalı, the head of the excavation at Tralleis during the years 2006–2008, for his kind permission for publication and Prof. W. Blümel for his kind advice.

<sup>2</sup> For a preliminary report on the Tralleis excavations see A. Yaylalı, 30. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, Ankara 2008, 3 pp. 7–40.

<sup>3</sup> I. Stoian (ed.), *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae II. Tomis et territorium*, Bucureşti 1987, 207: Πανθία Σπίκλω ἰδίῳ ἀνδρὶ μνήμης χάριν (= LGPN IV, s.v. “Σπίκλος?”).

Pfuhl–Möbius studied similar types of stelai from different areas of Anatolia under the *Thrax* (*murmillo*) group<sup>4</sup>. Similar compositions, with some other additional decorations, are seen on gladiator stelai both from Tralleis and some other centers in Anatolia<sup>5</sup>. Our stele, for instance, may be compared with the stele of a *Thrax* Ἀρόξιος ὁ καὶ Ἀνταῖος Δαλδιανός discovered in Thyateira (Late Imperial Period)<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, the figure of the gladiator Istros on a plaque from Tralleis may serve as a good instance for this group of gladiators<sup>7</sup>.

Comparisons of similar examples with the relief on our stele lead one to think of a period in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. In fact, such a dating is also supported by the excavation stratigraphy.

### Özet

Makalede, Tralleis antik kentinin Batı Nekropolis alanındaki 2007 yılı kazı çalışmalarında bulunmuş olan yazıtlı bir mezar steli tanıtılmaktadır. Stelin dörtgen biçimli bezeme alanı içinde, *Thrax* tipinde bir gladyatör sağa dönük biçimde betimlenmiştir. Gladyatörün başında ucu kıvrık geniş bir miğfer (*galea*), sağ kolunda bir bant (*manica*), üzerinde bir önlük (*subligaculum*)



ve bir kemer (*balteus*) ve ayaklarında uzun tozluklar görülmektedir. Gladyatör, sol elinde bir küçük kalkan (*parma*) ile, sağ elinde ise ucu kıvrık küçük bir kılıç (*sica*) tutmaktadır. Sahnenin sağında bir palmye dalı ve üzerinde bir kuş olan küçük bir sunak; sol üst köşesinde ise bir çelenk betimlenmiştir. Palmye dalı ve çelenk onun başarılarını simgelemektedir.

Figürlü sahnenin alt kısmındaki yazıtta ölen gladyatörün ve steli yaptıran kişinin adı belirtilmiştir. Yazıtın çevirisi şu şekildedir:

“*Speiklos, (bu steli) Straton’un anısı için (yaptırdı)*”.

Benzer örneklerle yapılan karşılaştırmalar ve stratigrafik veriler stelin olasılıkla İ.S. 2. yüzyıla ait olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Aydın  
Aydın

Aslı Saraçoğlu  
Murat Çekilmez

<sup>4</sup> E. Pfuhl – H. Möbius, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs*, 301–302, nos. 1237–1244.

<sup>5</sup> Pfuhl–Möbius, *op.cit.*, Tralleis (no. 1237 = F. B. Poljakov, *Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa* I, 102, no. 101); Thyateira (no. 1240 = *TAM* V, 2, 1043), Smyrna (nos. 1241–2 = G. Petzl, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* I, 175, nos. 408–9) and Kyzikos (no. 1244 = E. Schwertheim, *Die Inschriften von Kyzikos und Umgebung* I, 10, no. 22).

<sup>6</sup> Pfuhl–Möbius, *op. cit.*, no. 1240, Taf. 185 (= *TAM* V, 2, 1043).

<sup>7</sup> L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l’Orient grec*, 167–168, no. 151; Pfuhl–Möbius, *op. cit.*, no. 1237, Taf. 185 and F. B. Poljakov, *loc. cit.*