

HASAN MALAY – FUNDA ERTUĞRUL

A DEDICATION TO THE RIVER-GOD HARPASOS FROM BARGASA IN
CARIA

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The dedicatory altar presented here has been confiscated by a gendarme team at Koyuncular, a village in the Harpasos valley. The dealers in antiques who kept the stone reported that they found it in the bed of the river Akçay (or Bozdoğan Çayı), the ancient Harpasos¹, one of the southern tributaries of the middle Maeander river. The inscription, which would date to the imperial period, has to be attributed to the ancient city of Bargasa (Haydere)² in the neighbourhood of Koyuncular, the find-spot.

Description: Marble altar with mouldings above and below. The inscription is engraved on the upper moulding. In the field between the mouldings is the representation of a nude man



(Bargasos? [see below]) facing right. He wears a helmet (*galea*) with crest and holds a dagger (*pugio*) in his right hand and a small round shield (*parma*) in the left. In the right lower corner is the depiction of a curving snake (Hydra) with many heads. Height 0.61, width 0.45, thickness 0.29; letter-height varying between 0.012 to 0.03 m. It is now in the Aydın Museum (Inv. no. 2012/112).

Φλάβιος Οὐλιάδης [θε]ῶ
Ἀρπάσω κατὰ ὄναρ ἀν[]

1 Φλάβιος for Φλάβιος = Flavius. 2 ἀν[έθηκε(v)] or ἀν[έστησε(v)].

According to (a command in) a dream, Flavius Ouliades set this up to the (river-) God Harpasos.

* The authors wish to thank G. Petzl for his kind help and advice for interpreting the representation on the stone and Y. Akkan, the vice director of the Aydın Museum, for his kind permission to work on this item.

1 On the river Harpasos and the valley see notably L. Robert, *A travers l'Asie Mineure* (1980), 355–363.

2 For the city Bargasa in the Harpasos valley see L. Robert, *op. cit.*, 368–72; P. Briant – P. Brun – E. Varinlioğlu, *Une inscription inédite de Carie et la guerre d'Aristonikos*, in A. Bresson – R. Descat (eds.), *Les Cités d'Asie Mineure* (2001), 241–259 (SEG 51, 1495); P. Debord – E. Varinlioğlu (eds.), *Cités de Carie: Harpasa, Bargasa, Orthosia dans l'Antiquité*, 2010, 121–228; W. Blümel, *EA*, 30, 1998 (actualized in 2012), 166 with note 13.

The name Οὐλιάδης is widespread in Caria. For its Greek origin (οὔλειν, “to be healthy”), its variants (Οὔλιος, Ὀλιος, Οὐλίαις, Οὔλις), for their derivation from the epithet of Apollon Οὔλιος (“healing god”) and for the possible Hellenization of the Carian name Ὑλιατος as Οὐλιάδης see O. Masson, *Le culte Ionien d’Apollon Oulios, d’après des données onomastiques nouvelles*, *JSav* 1988, 173–183 (= O. Masson, *Onom. Gr. Sel.* 3, 23–31), cf. *SEG* 38, 1996bis.

This is the first dedication to the river-god Harpasos who is known from some coins of Harpasa where the god is depicted in the standard form of river-gods: he is reclining and holding reed and *cornucopia*³. As a result of a communication with the river-god Harpasos in a dream, Flavius Ouliades was requested to dedicate an altar. He may have promised this after having prayed for a good harvest or protection (for himself or his animals?) from flooding or falling down from the steep slopes or cure from its healing waters⁴.

The scene depicted on the front side of the altar is difficult to interpret. The figure on the right seems to represent a kind of Hydra, the mythological water-serpent with many heads. This monster dwelt in a swamp of Lerna in Argolis and was killed by Heracles as the second of his Twelve Labours. This victory of Heracles over Hydra was interpreted already in antiquity as the hero’s deed of cultivating the Lernaean swamps by drying them up⁵.

In our relief Hydra is attacked not by Heracles but by a fully-armed warrior. The Harpasos valley, with a zone of sand where numerous arms join the river Harpasos, was comparable to Lena⁶. The relief of the warrior standing against Hydra may symbolize a “cultivating” of Harpasos’s waters – comparable to Heracles’s deed. We know that the hero *ktistes* of Bargasa, Bargasos, was a son of Heracles and Barge⁷ and that some coins of Bargasa show Heracles’s head and also the hero leaning on his club; and perhaps the hero Bargasos on horseback⁸. One would therefore suppose that the scene on our altar may be a representation of a local myth telling about Bargasos’s fight against the ravaging river with many arms, as his father (Heracles) had done in the Argolid, so that the river turned into a beneficial deity, the recipient of our dedication.⁹

Özet

Makalede, Bozdoğan’ın Koyuncular köyünde Jandarma tarafından müsadere edilen yazıtlı bir adak sunağı incelenmektedir. Sunağın ön yüzünde iki satırlık bir Grekçe adak yazıt ve onun

3 See e.g. F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen* I, p. 131.

4 Compare the poem recording thanks to the river Meles, “the Saviour who has freed me from every disease and evil”: ὕμνω θεὸν / Μέλιτα ποταμόν, / τὸν σωτήρᾶ μου, / παντὸς μὲ λοιμοῦ / καὶ κακοῦ / πεπαυμένον (G. Petzl, *IvSmyrna*, 766 = R. Merkelbach – J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 1, no. 05/01/02).

5 For the myth see *LIMC*, s.v. Herakles with illustrations, cf. also J. March, *Cassell’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (2001), s.v. “Hydra of Lerna”.

6 See L. Robert, *op. cit.*, 368: “... bande de sable où divaguent les nombreux bras de l’Harpasos”.

7 See Steph. Byz., s.v.: Βάργασα, πόλις Καρίας, ἀπὸ Βαργάσου τοῦ υἱοῦ Βάργης καὶ Ἡρακλέους (see also L. Robert, *op. cit.*, 362–4).

8 See L. Robert, *op. cit.*, 371f.

9 According to Steph. Byz., s.v. Bargasa, Bargasos was persecuted by his half-brother Lamos, son of Omphale and Heracles. Our relief may perhaps show an episode of that persecution so that Lamos set the Hydra-like monster at Bargasos.

altında çıplak bir savaşçı yer almaktadır. Bir kalkan ve bir bıçak tutan bu miğferli savaşçı, önündeki çok başlı bir yılan ile savaşır durumdadır. Antik devirde Harpasos olarak adlandırılan nehrin yatağında bulunduğu dikkate alınır, eserin Haydere köyünde lokalize edilen Bargasa antik kenti ile ilişkilendirilmesi gerekmektedir. Yazıtın çevirisi şöyledir:

“Flavius Ouliades bu adağı, rüyasında (tanrıdan) aldığı bir emir gereğince (Nehir Tanrısı) Harpasos’a sundu”.

Eser, adını yalnızca Harpasa kenti sikkelerinden bildiğimiz nehir tanrısı Harpasos’a sunulduğu bilinen ilk adak yazıtıdır. Yazıttan anladığımız göre, nehir tanrısı Harpasos bir rüyasında Flavius Ouliades’e görünerek kendisine bir adak sunmasını emretmişti. Anlaşılan, adak sahibi bir zamanlar belki iyi bir hasat vermesi veya sellerden koruması veya suları ile şifa vermesi yönünde dua etmiş ama dileği yerine gelince adağını sunmayı ihmal etmişti.

Altarda savaşçının önünde görülen yaratık, mitolojide Hydra adı verilen çok başlı dev bir su yılanıdır. Efsaneye göre, Argolis’deki Lerna bataklığında yaşayan bu dev yılan Herakles tarafından öldürülmüş ve böylece Lerna bataklığı kuruyup verimli topraklara dönüşmüştü. Ancak elimizdeki sunaktaki çok başlı yılanı saldıran kişi Herakles değil, silahlı bir savaşçıdır. Bu savaşçı olasılıkla Bargasa kentinin efsanevi kurucusu (*ktistes*) olan Bargasos’u temsil etmektedir. Bargasa kenti sikkelerinde tasviri yer alan kurucu-kahraman Bargasos, efsaneye göre Herakles’in bir oğluydu. Bu nedenle, elimizdeki altarda tasvir edilen savaşçının, karşısındaki çok başlı dev su yılanı (Hydra) ile savaşan Bargasos olması olasıdır. Bu doğru ise, kurucu-kahraman Bargasos, bir zamanlar babası Herakles’in Argolis’de yaptığı gibi, çok kollu ve yıkıcı Harpasos nehrine karşı bir mücadele vermiş ve böylece bu nehir çevresine iyilik saçan bir Nehir Tanrısı olarak tapım görmeye başlamıştı.

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