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A NEW HONORARY INSCRIPTION FROM ASSOS

Tolga ÖZHAN*

Abstract

This article aims to introduce a new inscription which is seen at the “western necropolis street” of the ancient city of Assos, during the short survey conducted at the site since 2006. Considering the find-spot of the inscription, the author considers that this is a posthumous honor to Heliophon, son of Zopyros, bestowed by the demos of the city of Assos. The deceased bears a theophoric name which is rarely attested in Greek epigraphy.

Keywords: Troad; Assos; demos; posthumous honor; epigraphy.

Öz

Assos’dan Yeni Bir Onurlandırma Yazıtı

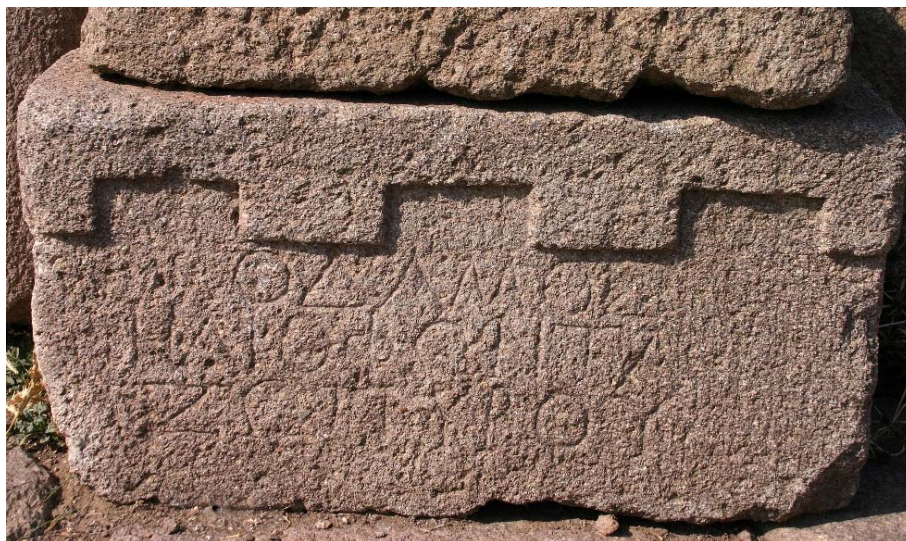
Bu makalede, 2006 yılından itibaren Assos antik kentinde sürdürülen yüzey araştırmaları sırasında “batı nekropolis caddesi” üzerinde görülmüş olan yeni bir yazıt tanıtılmaktadır. Yazıtın buluntu yerini göz önünde bulundurarak yazar, bunun Zopyros oğlu Heliophon’un ölümünün ardından Assos halkı tarafından ona bahşedilmiş olan bir onurlandırma olduğunu ileri sürer. Ölen kişi, Yunan epigrafisinde pek de yaygın olmayan theophorik bir isim taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Troas; Assos; demos; ölüm sonrası onurlandırma; epigrafi

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When a new excavation season at Assos in the south Troad (now Çanakkale Province, Turkey) began under the directorship of Professor Nurettin Arslan in 2006, I was granted permission to work on the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Assos.¹ Our short surveys conducted in the ancient city aimed to re-locate the known inscriptions in the field and to determine their current conditions. During these surveys, fortunately, we saw several new inscriptions, dating from the Archaic period to early Byzantine period, which were brought to light by archaeologists who carried out excavations at the site several years before 2016.²

The inscription presented in this article is one of those inscriptions seen in the “Western Street of Tombs” of the city. It is engraved on a rectangular block of trachyte. A *geisipodes* like ornament encircles all four sides on the upper rim of the block. The block measures 0.34 m high, 0.67 m wide, and 0.625 m deep. The height of the letters varies from 0.045 m to 0.05 m. Date: Roman Imperial Period.



2 ὁ δᾱμος
 Ἥλιοφῶντα
 Ζωπύρου

¹ On the excavation history of Assos from 1881 to 2009, see Arslan 2010. For the report of excavations conducted at Assos between 2006-2011, see Arslan – Rheidt 2013. Several excavation reports of Assos were published in *Kazı Konuçları Toplantısı (KTS)* since 2006, for the reports of recent excavations, see Arslan et. al. 2016; Arslan et. al. 2017.

² For the results of former excavations, see Serdaroğlu et al. 1990; Serdaroğlu – Stupperich 1992; Serdaroğlu – Stupperich 1993; Serdaroğlu – Stupperich 1996; Stupperich 2006.

1: δᾱμος is the Aeolic form of δῆμος.³

Translation: “*The demos (honored) Heliophon, son of Zopyros.*”

As the find-place of the inscription implies, this is an honor bestowed on Heliophon by the *demos* of Assos, after his death. The epigraphic *corpus* of the city provides two other posthumous honorary inscriptions found in the “Western Street of Tombs”. An inscribed marble slab belonging to a family grave informs us that the *demos* of Assos and Roman businessmen at Assos crowned a married couple, Hellenikos and Lollia Arlegilla, on account of their virtue and modesty.⁴ Another posthumous honor from Assos is survived on a marble stele on which the *demos* of Assos honored Quintus Lollius with a golden wreath and possibly with a number of images.⁵

Both names recorded in the inscription firstly occur in Assos. Heliophon is an uncommon theophoric name derived from the Sun god Ἥλιος,⁶ This name is also found at Amastris in Paphlagonia, in Lydia, and in Phrygia, at Ainos in Thrace, at Beroia and Kolindros in Macedonia, at Barion in southern Italy, and on Delos.⁷ Zopyros is a widespread name in Asia Minor, which is epigraphically attested from fifth/fourth century B.C. to the Byzantine period.⁸

³ See Blümel 1982: 238 §250. On the Aeolic dialect in the Troad, see Blümel 1996. Aeolic dialect was prevalently used in public and private inscriptions of Assos from the Archaic to Hellenistic period. Interestingly, even in the time of Augustus, we observe a small attempt to use the traditional dialect of the city in an architectural dedicatory inscription, see I.Assos 15 (cf. Blümel 1996: 10, 12).

⁴ I.Assos 14.

⁵ I.Assos 18.

⁶ For the theophoric names in Ἥλιο-, see Sittig 1911: 144-145. See also Bechtel 1917: 191; Mora 1994: 31. L. Robert (1963: 508) argues that the names Heliodoros and Heliadora, which were frequently attested in Cappadocia, may stem from an indigenous deity, possibly Cataonian Apollo.

⁷ Amastris and Lydia: LGPN VA s.v.; Phrygia: MAMA VII 401; Ainos, Beroia and Kolindros: LGPN IV s.v.; Barion: LGPN IIIA s.v.; Delos: LGPN I s.v.

⁸ See LGPN VA s.v. and VB s.v.

ABBREVIATED LITERATURE

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