

TRIPOLIS AD MAEANDRUM  
I

TRIPOLIS ARAŐTIRMALARI

Editör / Editor  
BAHADIR DUMAN



YAYINLARI

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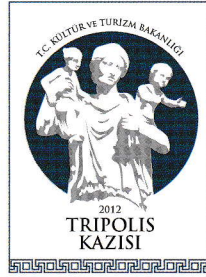
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# AN INSCRIBED ALTAR FROM TRIPOLIS AD MAEANDRUM

Francesco GUIZZI – Barış YENER\*

## ÖZET

Buldan ilçesi, Yenicekent mahallesi sınırları içerisinde yer alan ve 14. yy'a tarihlenen Büyük Tekke Türbesi'ni koruyan tel çitin içerisindeki, yaklaşık 1 km. mesafedeki Tripolis kentinden taşındığı düşünülen taş bloklar 2012 yılı çalışmalarında kayıt altına alınmıştır. Söz konusu malzemeler arasında belgelenen kare formlu mermer bir altar bloğu bu makalenin konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Altarın yan yüzleri üzerinde yer alan kyma recta profili üç tarafta anthemion kuşağı, bir tarafında ise asma dalı ile bezenmiştir. Kyma recta profili üstünde eğimli bir şekilde profillendirilen fascia üzerinde ise üç yan yüzde devam eden Grekçe yazıt, Tripolis kenti ve bu bağlamda tüm Lykos Vadisi'ndeki kültlere ait bilgi dağarcığımızı genişletirken, ele aldığımız bezeme öğeleri yazıtla desteklenerek M.S 1. yüzyılın mimari dekorasyon karakteri hakkında ipuçları vermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler;** Tripolis, Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi, Yazıt, Altar, Bezeme

Within the town of Buldan, in the garden of the Yenicekent Municipal Hall, there is a shrine, Büyük Tekke Türbesi, dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the time when the region went under the domination of the Turks. It is thought that all the blocks used for the construction of this building, which has an octagonal plan with its main walls rising on an octagonal base tambour and covered with a dome, were brought from the ancient city of Tripolis, located circa 3 km from the shrine<sup>1</sup>. During the detailed research carried out on the building and its surroundings by the Tripolis excavation team in 2012, one marble block that had apparently been reused in the building was taken into inventory and was documented. The block (23 x 73 x 73 inv. no. BTT.12.MR.05) in question is a complete square from the top and is in rather good condition except for the broken and missing part on one corner and some erosion seen on the surface of the block.

## DECORATION OF THE ALTAR

Barış YENER

The altar block begins with a kyma recta profile on the lower part, and after the slightly inclined fascia it ends with a thick and straight upper surface. The cyma recta profile is decorated with an anthemion band on three sides and a grapevine on one side. Apart from the inscription, the most important element to help with the dating is the decoration bands that can be followed on the kyma recta profile. Therefore other than the epigraphical analyses, style critique was also used for the dating. In order to separate the decoration bands, the faces of the block have been named as A, B, C and D in accordance with the inscription (see below).

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<sup>1</sup> Duman 2013, 187, fn. 36.

On the frieze arrangement bordered with closed corner palmettes on the A and B sides of the block, lotus flowers were placed alternately between open and closed palmettes. While on the non-inscribed D side there is a band of alternating open and closed palmettes.

The Lotus-Palmette bands that have a deep rooted past in the ancient decoration tradition, continued this way in the Early Imperial period and became a popular architectural decoration element used throughout the whole Roman Imperial period. Though the Lotus-Palmette bands on the A and B sides of the Tripolis altar are depicted in low-relief, the details are raised from the surface with sharp outlines increasing the contrast between the decoration bands and the surface. While the three-leafed lotus flowers seated on "S" shaped spirals, rise with a taller and more slender shape as separate goblets of leafs, the five-leafed palmettes have a more stubby shape with singular leafs and also rise from the same spiral. Although there is no direct relation between the lotuses and palmettes, the sepals of the lotus flowers that open up to either side cover the second leafs of the palmettes. Similarly, on the open-closed palmette band on the D side, the same relief features and palmette arrangement can be followed.

In contrast to the Tripolis Altar example, the Lotus-Palmette bands dated to the Augustus Period, such as the inner friezes of the Ara Pacis monuments dated to 13-9 BCE<sup>2</sup>, the column necks of the Roma-Augustus Monopteros on the Athens Acropolis dated to 20-19 BCE<sup>3</sup>, or on the cornice blocks of the Gaius and Lucius Monument in Ephesus dated to 12 BCE- 2 CE<sup>4</sup> have a more detailed and elegant workmanship under the influence of the densely felt classicism.

The undetailed workmanship and the flatness on the decorative elements as if they were cut with a knife seen on the A, B and D sides of the Tripolis altar pulls the date of this piece into the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Even though the decoration pattern of the palmette frieze found on the pediment sima<sup>5</sup> of the Augustus Temple in Antiochia in Pisidia, dated to the Augustus - Tiberius Period, seems to be close to the band on the D side of the Tripolis altar, it is clear that it was influenced by the classicism that dominated the beginning of the Julio-Claudian period. Similarly, the fine workmanship seen on the lotus-palmette frieze on the Eastern Base 5<sup>6</sup> of the Didyma Apollo Temple dated to the reign of Caligula (37-41 CE) by Gliwitzky, is a proof of the continuation of this influence. It is seen that in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, the palmettes become less natural and more schematic, and the liveliness of the figures start to disappear, as can be seen on the palmette frieze<sup>7</sup> of the Miletus Capito Baths dated to 47-54 CE.

Another example of a palmette frieze appears on the sarcophagus lid of Tomba Bella<sup>8</sup>, which bears importance because it was found in the nearby Hierapolis and this was also dated to the Julio-Claudian period. The open and closed palmette frieze that can be followed on the raking sima of the triangular pediment and on the cyma recta profile that surrounds the whole lid has a more compact palmette chain in comparison the A, B and D friezes of the Tripolis Altar and the palmette leafs are placed closer together. The space between the palmette leafs seen on the open palmette depiction of the D side is rather similar to the palmette frieze on the Side Vespasianus Monument dated to 71 CE<sup>9</sup>. Although the grapevine frieze on the D side does not have a great contribution the dating of the Tripolis Altar in regards to the decoration typology, the relief features follow the style of the other decoration bands.

As a result of the stylistic analysis of the Tripolis Altar, and with the contribution of the analogical evaluation of the decoration friezes, the altar has been dated to 60-70 CE.

<sup>2</sup> Moretti 1948, pl. 9

<sup>3</sup> Binder 1969, 58, abb. 72-76; Leslie – Shear 1997, 506, Taf. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Alzinger 1974, 20, abb. 10; Rumscheid 1994, I 6, II 19, Kat. 49, Taf. 41, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Rumscheid 1994, I 157, II 4, Kat. 13, 6- 7, Taf. 7, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Voigtländer 1975, 128 (1 c. CE.), Pülz 1989, 130 131, Lev. 2. 2 (Hadrianic); Gliwitzky 2005, 130 (Middle of 1 c. CE, Caligula)

<sup>7</sup> Köster 2004, 33- 42, 173, Kat. 6, Taf. 16, 1-4; 17, 1- 4. 6. 7; 18, 1. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Strocka 1978, 902-903, Abb. 14-15, Taf. CCVI; Romeo 2011, 198, Fig. 12. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Mansel 1962, 38-41, Abb. 13, 14; Köster 2004, 149, fn. 1108, Taf. 136, 1.

## THE INSCRIPTION:

A DEDICATION TO AN EMPEROR AND DIONYSOS BY A *THIASOS*.\*

Francesco GUIZZI

The inscription runs on the fascia below the upper molding (letters: 1,8 cm).

Side A (relief with marsh canes):

[[ - <sup>c.4</sup> - ]]III Καίσαρι καὶ Διονύσῳ οἱ . [- <sup>2-3</sup> -]

Side B (relief with grapevine branches):

[.]ουσσωνα ἱερῆ θιασεῖται καθιέρω[σαν]

Side C (relief with marsh canes):

[ - <sup>c.7</sup> - ]IIAIA ἐαυτῶν τὸν β[ωμόν (?)]

Side D (relief with marsh canes): not inscribed

Critical notes.

**Side A.** The left margin of the inscription is likely to have been erased. If this is the case, a *damnatio memoriae* seems probable and the name of Nero would be a good candidate. At the right margin it is possible to read OI, the article, followed by three or four letters. The traces seem to point to Y, whereas one would expect περί. Traces of E can be detected on the stone.

**Side B.** Only a letter is missing on the left. The most probable integration is the Latin cognomen Ruso attested in Phrygia, Lydia, Pisidia<sup>10</sup>.

**Side C.** The well readable sequence EAYTΩNTON starts before the middle of the fascia. On the left, some seven or eight letters are missing. Only scanty traces of them survive on the stone. Before EAYTΩN, stand two letters of triangular shape separated by a vertical stroke and preceded by two more strokes. One would expect ΠΑΡΑ. On the right, the traces of another letter are compatible with B.

I reconstruct the text as follows:

[[Nέρω]]γι Καίσαρι καὶ Διονύσῳ οἱ πε[ρὶ | 'P]ουσσωνα ἱερῆ θιασεῖται καθιέρω[σαν | - <sup>c.7</sup> - ] παρὰ ἐαυτῶν τὸν β[ωμόν (?)].

Translation.

The priest Ruso and the members of the religious guild (*thiasos*) dedicated to [Nero (?)] Caesar and Dionysos the a[ltar (?)] built (?) at their own expense.

The inscription presents itself therefore as a dedication of a *thiasos* to the Emperor and Dionysos. The association dedicated an artifact whose identity was probably indicated by the word in the lacuna at the end of face C. The block on which the inscription is carved must have been an integral part of the object itself.

**[Nero?] Caesar and Dionysos.** The association of the emperor to the cult of Dionysos becomes very popular beginning with Hadrian's rule. However, the cultic association between Dionysos and Roman rulers goes back to the late Republican age. So for instance, Marcus Antonius encouraged the cult of his person as *neos Dionysos*

\* I am grateful to Benedetta Bessi, who translated the text in English.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. *LGPNI*, V.A s.v., 392. Robert 1963, 41-42, on the latin origin of the name 'Ρούσων despite Sundwall's hypothesis. On Ruso of Laodicea Robert 1969, 309-312. The name Μούσων is also attested, but less probably to be integrated in the present text.

by the Greeks<sup>11</sup>. His presence in the area is well attested both by the literary evidence and the onomastic. The triumvir granted Roman citizenship to some prominent citizens of the local communities. Well known are the Antonii Zenones of Laodicea ad Lycum<sup>12</sup>, but the interest of the Roman ruler must have affected the area of Tripolis even more in depth, since one of the ancient names of the city, attested by Pliny (*NH* V 111) and by an inscription from Ephesus<sup>13</sup>, is Antoniopolis.

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE a Rhodian association worshipped Tiberius, associating him to Dionysus. The name of this association, *Dionysiastai Neronianoı* (Διονυσιασταὶ Νερωνιανοί), proves the connection. During his exile in Rhodes (6 BCE-2 CE), a few years before being associated to the imperial throne by Augustus (4 AD), Tiberius still carried the name of his father Claudius Nero. Later on, Caligula was worshipped as Liber Pater (and *neos Dionysos*) in Rome<sup>14</sup>, and Nero as Dionysus Eleutherieus in Athens (*IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 3176)<sup>15</sup>. Nero promoted the association of his cult to that of Zeus Eleutherios, but probably also appreciated being worshipped as the god of theatre and carefree joy. His cultural policy favored traditional elements while at the same time introducing innovations. As Cizek<sup>16</sup>, a scholar who has greatly contributed to the rehabilitation of Nero's character, has correctly underlined, the cult of Apollo in Nero's own religious policy plays a role similar to that this god has in Augustus' propaganda. However, in this case Apollo is charged with irrational characteristics which make him much more similar to Bacchus. Considering Nero's appreciation for theatre and its arts, it is likely to imagine that this ruler might have been associated with Dionysos, as it happens in Athens, in the theatre.

**Dionysos in the area of the Lycos Valley and the Meander's bight.** In this area, the cult of Dionysos developed at least since the conquest of Alexander the Great, who identified himself with the god, but became increasingly significant after the peace of Apameia, during the Attalid administration. Under the rule of Attalids, the god was worshipped with the epicleris of *Kethegemon* and had a dynastic character as well as mysteric connotations<sup>17</sup>. Both of these elements survived into the Roman era and further spreaded during the Imperial period. During this time the cult is attested both in Hierapolis of Phrygia and in the Lydian city of Philadelphia, neither of which is far from Tripolis. The text from Hierapolis is a votive offering to the god by a prominent citizen who served as the hierophant of Dionysos' cult. The role of the dedicant is an attestation of the mystery nature of the cult<sup>18</sup>. In Philadelphia too, a mystic association of Dionysos Kethegemon dedicated a statue to an outstanding member of the association, of the civic community as well as of the provincial organization of the imperial cult<sup>19</sup>.

The inscription from Tripolis does not present any element with explicitly mysteric Dionysian characters. The dedicants are associated to a *thiasos* led by a priest who has a name, or more precisely a Roman *cognomen*, Ruso. The onomastic element seems therefore to confirm that the local elite is involved in the cult of Dionysos and that the cult itself represents an effective tool to reinforce the connection between the imperial family and its subjects<sup>20</sup>. Summing up, this text offers an important contribution to our knowledge of the cults as well as of the society of a city, which is part of a wider regional context including the Lycos Valley and the area surrounded by the Meander's bight.

<sup>11</sup> On Antonius *neos Dionysos*: Fuhrer 2011, 276-281; Wach 2010, col. 77; Jaccottet, especially 202. On Antonius' Bacchanal in Ephesus (41 BC): Plut., *Ant.* XXIV 3: «when Antony made his entry into Ephesus, women arrayed like Bacchanals, and men and boys like Satyrs and Pans, led the way before him, and the city was full of ivy and thyrsus-wands and harps and pipes and flutes, the people hailing him as Dionysus Giver of Joy and Beneficent (Χαριδότην καὶ Μελίχιον)» (transl. B. Perrin).

<sup>12</sup> Robert 1969, 306-309 (the Lucii Antonii could have been granted the Roman citizenship by Lucius Antonius, brother of the triumvir, during his governorship of Asia in 49 BC).

<sup>13</sup> Habicht 1975, 64-91.

<sup>14</sup> Fuhrer 2011, 387, Wach 2010, col. 77; see Socrates Rhodius *FGrHist* 129 F 2 (=Athenaeus IV 147 e-148 d), 148 c-d: «He (scil. Antony) also gave orders to be proclaimed as Dionysus throughout all the cities. So too the emperor Gaius, who was called Caligula because he was born in an army camp, was not only referred to as a new Dionysus, but actually put on the full Dionysiac outfit, and went out in public and sat in judgment dressed that way» (transl. S.D. Olson).

<sup>15</sup> Kantiréa 2007, 138. On Nero's cult in Greece, Lo Monaco 2008, 43-71.

<sup>16</sup> Cizek 1982, 350-351; for the important role played by Cizek on the new approach in the study on Nero, Di Branco 2007, 26-40.

<sup>17</sup> See Miranda 2003, 165-176; Musti 1986, 105-126; see now Isler – Kerényi 2011, 433-446.

<sup>18</sup> Miranda 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Merkelbach 1988, 20.

<sup>20</sup> See Merkelbach 1988, 20-25, Miranda 2003, 166.

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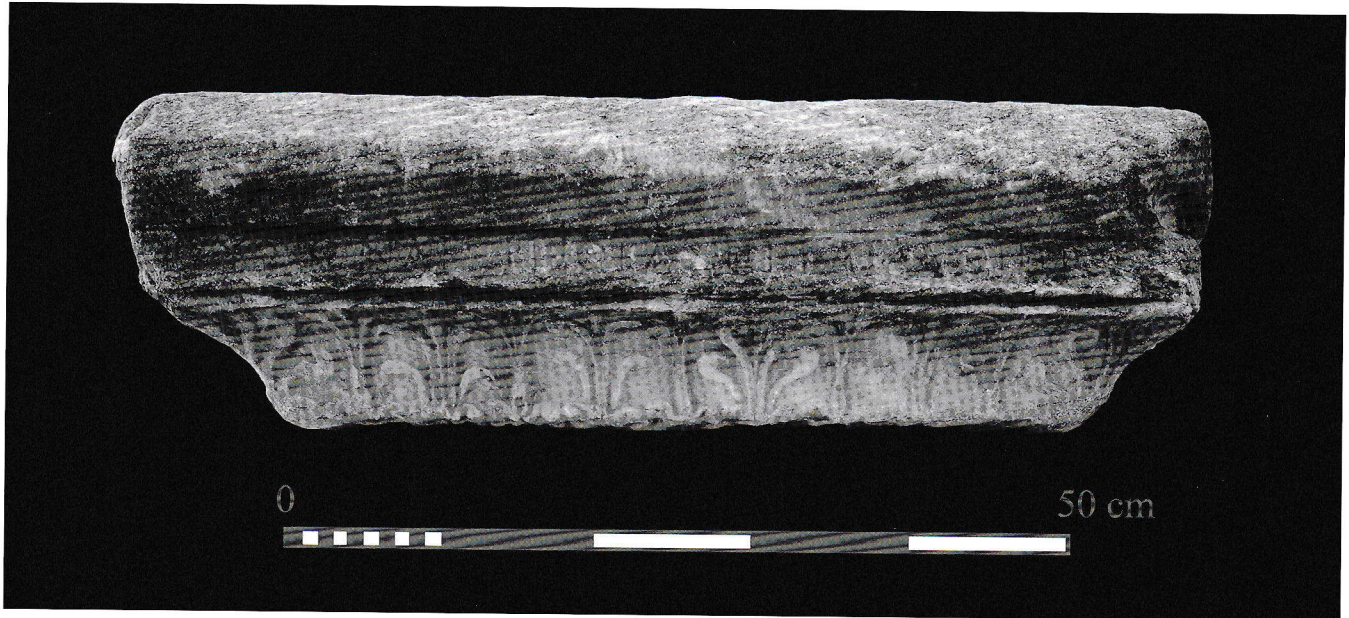


Fig. 1 Side B



Fig. 2 Side C

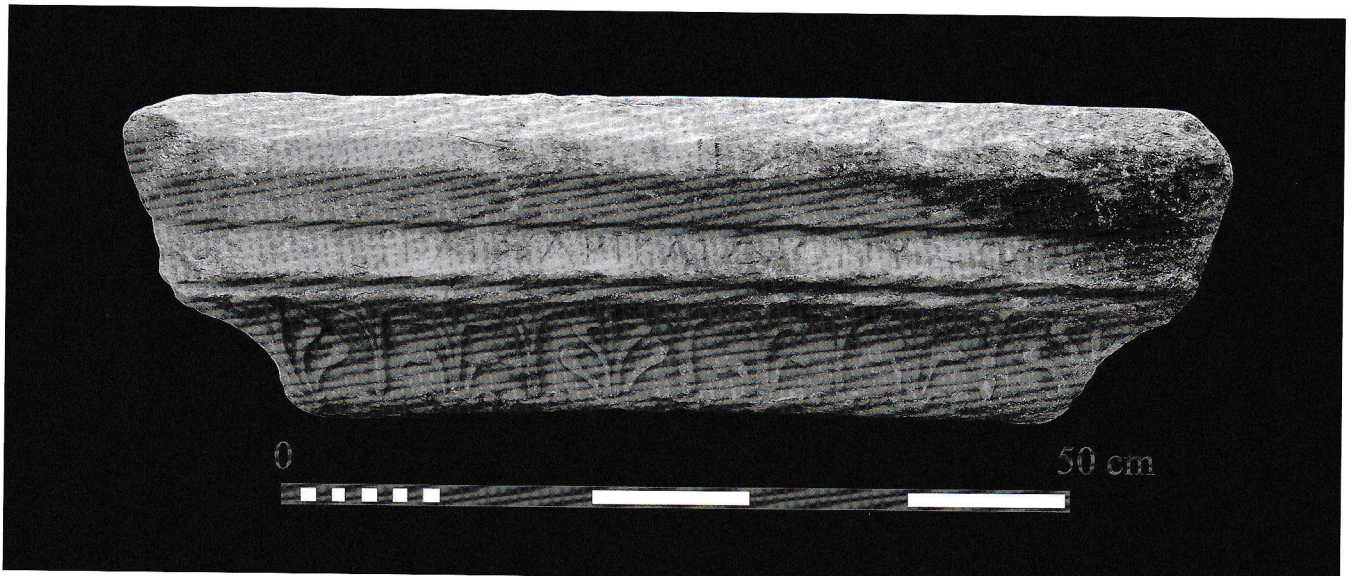


Fig. 3 Side A



Fig. 4