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SOME LATE ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM SIDE

Abstract: This article presents five late antique inscriptions found in Side in the last few years. The first inscription concerns the construction of the Arcadian Forum consecrated by a governor. The second and third inscriptions refer to construction work in the main street, mentioning the name of a pater civitatis, Georgius. The fourth one was set up in honour of Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. The last one records donations by Conon and Modestus, two lectors of a church.

Among the new epigraphic material found during excavation work in the two colonnaded streets and during the restoration of the theatre there are several inscriptions from the late Roman period. They can be categorized into three groups: building inscriptions (no. 1–4), one honorific inscription (no. 5) and a donation. Only one inscription commemorating donations by Conon and Modestus, two lectors of a church, comes from outside the city. It was brought to the Side Museum from the ruins of Karaevli Mahallesi near the village Taşağıl. These ruins lie only some 10 km to the east of Aspendos, which suggests that the small settlement belonged not to Side but to her rival on the Eurymedon.¹

1. Arcadian Forum

A profiled basis found near the Nymphaion during clearing work at the city gate. The inscription cannot be reconstructed completely, as the right half of the stone is missing.

H: 1.65 m; L: 0.53 m; D: 0.5 m; LH: 0.06–7 m.

τὸν φόρον τούτον?
2 Άρκαδι[ακόν τὸν ε]ν-πώνυ[μον τοῦ δεσ]-
4 πότου [τῆς οίκουμε]-
νης Ἀρ[καδίου, . . . .]
6 Οὐίκρ[ιος ? -ca.7-]
ό λάμ. [Ζνθ. -ca.7-]
8 τη αύ[------ca. 10----]
καθίσε[ρωσεν].

[...] Vicerius, the glorious [governor], dedicated the Arcadian Forum named after the emperor of the inhabited (world) Arcadius, to his [fatherland?].

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¹ I thank to Ülkü Izmirligil, Arif Küşükçoban and Leyla Gültekin for their kindly help in Side and to Mustafa Adak, who permitted me to publish the inscriptions. He and Johannes Nollé are preparing the remaining epigraphic material for the next issue of Gephyra.
The letters are typical of the 5th century: lunar sigma and epsilon; the omega is written in minuscule; phi, rho and epsilon were carved taller than other letters.

L. 1: Here the Greek word φόρος is used for the Latin “forum” The restoration τον φόρο[ν τουτον] fills the 7–8 letter gap quite satisfactorily.

L. 6: Dated to the mid 2nd century AD by Clemens Bosch, an inscription from Ancyra mentions a certain Flavius Vicerius Aphrodisius who offered his vows to Isis. In our inscription “Vicerius” may be the name of the governor who consecrated the forum. Perhaps the previous line contained an abbreviated nomen gentilicum (e.g. Flavius).

L. 7: ό λάμ(πρότατος) [άνθ(ύπατος) ................] | ό λάμ(πρότατος) | τη αύ[τού πατρίδι]. An abbreviation mark for λαυ(πρότατος) is engraved over the “M”.

The forum was consecrated by a governor who was probably of consular rank (λαμπρότατος). As for the governor’s title, ανθύπατος seems most convenient, as its number of letters exactly fits gap, while the other candidates (κόμες or ἡγέμων) are too short. This restoration is also suitable for the status of the province, which seems to have kept its consular status at least until the reign of Justinian.

A similar inscription from the same city area in Side reads: τόν φόρον τὸν Ἀρκαδιακὸν τὸν ἐπώνυμον τοῦ δεσπότου | τῆς οἰκουμένης. However, the inscription was presented by Bosch as unfinished.

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3 For Vicerius (Vicerius, Vicirius) s. W. Schulze, Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen (Berlin 1904), 102.

4 In Notitia, which belongs to 5th century, Pamphylia was listed as a consular province under the diocese of Asiana (Notitia Dignitatum, Or. 1); Hierocles 679.1. However, in the meantime, Leo I established several new military command posts under a comes (Cod. Just. 12.59.10), amongst which were Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycaonia and Isauria, possibly established against the wide-ranging Isaurian bandity that threatened the security of the Taurus regions, see: A. H. M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey (Oxford 1964), p. 224; H. Brandt, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft Pamphiëns und Pisdieß im Altertum (Bonn 1992), pp. 197–198.

Some Late Roman Inscriptions from Side

ished inscription might have been erected between 402 and 408. The present inscription too belongs to the reign of the eastern emperor Arcadius (AD 383–408). It was set up after 395 when he assumed sole rule of the eastern empire. Perhaps we can date the inscription even more precisely. In 404 AD Roman forces under the command of Arbazicus beat the Isaurians. Zosimus reports that thanks to the Roman victory the Pamphylians were rescued from the Isaurians, who used to plunder the Pamphylian Plain from their hiding places in the Taurus mountain range. Perhaps the forum was built when after the Roman victory the situation in the area had calmed down.

Both forum inscriptions were discovered in front of the nymphaion near the city gate, which supports Arif Müfid Mansel’s view that the Arcadian Forum may have been built in the paved area between the city gate and the nymphaion. Consequently, Clive Foss seems to have been mistaken in his opinion that the unfinished inscription was moved there from some other place, e.g. the Roman agora near the theatre where he believes the Arcadian Forum was.

2. Georgius, a pater civitatis

Profiled white marble column-base erected in front of a Byzantine workshop on the south side of the main street, some 75 m west of the Grand Gate, now in the garden of the Side Museum.

Inv: C–4.

H.: 0.33 m; Br.: 0.40 m; T.: 0.37 m; Bh.: 0.04 m.

† ἐπὶ Γεώρ-
2 γίου τοῦ λογ(ιοτάτο)ου
σχο(λαστικοῦ) κ(αί) πατρός
4 ίνδ(ικτιόνι) ζ’ †

Under Georgius, the most eloquent scholasticus and father (of the city). 6th year of the current indication.

L.2 λογιοτάτου = λογιωτάτου; A above T, O above X indicate the abbreviated words.

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6 Nollé, ibid. p. 487.


9 C. Foss, Attius Philippus and the Walls of Side, ZPE 26 (1977), 179 fn. 25 (= Foss, History and Archaeology of Byzantine Asia Minor [Aldershot 1990], VIII).
In Side, there are two more inscriptions from the fifth to sixth centuries AD, attesting two different πατέρες, Theodorus and Fronto. The official position of πατήρ τῆς πόλεως is known from the mid 5th AD century onwards. The "fathers" of a city mostly dealt with the construction work, though they were also concerned with erecting statues or even setting up game boards. So, this inscription (together with no. 3) indicates to some construction or conversion work in the main street. In order to be a scholasticus, a title which appears in texts from the 4th century onwards, Georgius must have received thorough legal training. His title of λογιώτατος, which is a very rare, is identical with the widespread epithet ἐλλογιώτατος (eloquensissimus) customarily attached to scholastici and patres. Charlotte Rouéché, emphasizing that this is a professional qualification rather than an official honour, considers this title to be more or less equivalent to today's "Dr." or "M.A." She therefore believes that the cities patres enjoyed a remarkable degree of independence and must have been prosperous.

On the basis of the shape of the letters and of the title πατήρ τῆς πόλεως, the inscription can be dated to the mid 5th century or early 6th century.

The inscription is quite similar to the inscription corrected below (no.3), and presumably this Georgius is identical with Georgius in no. 3.

3. Nollé, I. v. Side 164a revised

A column-base of white marble, found in the main street near no. 2. Now in the garden of the museum.

Inv: C–1. 
H.: 1.23 m; L.: 0.84 m; D.: 0.75 m; Lh.: 0.06–0.08 m (stigma: 0.12 m).

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10 For detailed information on πατήρ τῆς πόλεως see: Ch. Rouéché, A New Inscription from Aphrodisias and the Title πατήρ τῆς πόλεως, GRBS 20 (1979), 173–185; Ch. Rouéché, Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity (London 1989), 76–80.


13 For instance, in Aphrodisias their responsibilities can be better understood through inscriptions. For building work in Aphrodisias see Rouéché 1989, nos. 38, 42, 43, 44, 61, 85, 86, 87 and for statutes no.62, even for game boards nos. 68–69. And for other inscriptions and legislative texts in various places see: Rouéché 1979, pp. 176–182.

14 Lampe (Patristic Lexicon) defines σχολαστικός as one who has passed through the σχολή τῶν γραμμάτων, one with a general education or advocate, lawyer; cf. Rouéché 1989, p. 76.


17 Rouéché 1989, 77.

18 Rouéché 1979, 184.

19 Considering the indictio given as 6, we might have the possible options of years 453, 468, 483, 498, 513, 528 and 543.

Nollé’s reading:

[ άνενεώ- ]
[θη ἡ στοά ?]
ἐπὶ . [ . . . ]-
2 γίου τοῦ λ[ο]-
γιοτά. σχο. καὶ
4 πατρός
ινδ. ζ’

According to Nollé the inscription had two more lines at the beginning. He suggested Pelagius for the name of πατήρ and filled the gap before the ending ...γιου in second line with Πέλα.

In the light of the new inscription I don’t see a necessity for the additional first two lines. It is perfectly possible to read the letter after ἐπὶ as Γ. For this reason, I suggest:

ἐπὶ Γ[εωρ]-
2 γίου τοῦ λ[ο]-
γιοτά(τοῦ) σχο(λαστικού) καὶ
4 πατρός
ινδ(ικτιόνι) ζ’

*Under Georgius, most eloquent scholastic and father (of the city).
6th year of the current) indiction.*

L.2–3 λογιοτάτου = λογιωτάτου; Alpha over Tau (✝) and omikron over chi (✗) indicate the abbreviated words λ[ο]γιοτά(του) σχο(λαστικοῦ) of line 3.

L. 4: πατρός means πατήρ τῆς πόλεως or Lat. *pater civitatis*.

For the commentary see the previous inscription.

The fact that both inscriptions were found in the colonnaded street and Georgius renovated at least some of the columns suggests that this street underwent some modification by the time of his ministry.

4. An honorific inscription for Helena, mother of Constantine the Great

White marble statue-base found in the scene area of the theatre, now in the agora in front of the theatre.

A profile on the left-hand side. The reverse was left rough. The inscribed face was cut vertically, possibly for a different purpose. It shows features of a late antique inscription (letter style, such as cornered sigma; βέτα is carved narrowly.

The inscription consists of four lines.
Inv.: P. 215.
H: 1.65 m; L: 0.85 m; D: 0.95 m; Lh: 0.06 (3rd line)–0.09 m (1st line).

The glorious metropolis of Sidetans (honoured) Helena Augusta, mother of the Augustus, the empress ...

This is the third honorific inscription in Side for Helena, mother of Constantine the Great.20 Like the two other inscriptions, this inscription had not been erected before 18th September 324 when the Battle of Chrysopolis in which Licinius was defeated was fought (at that time Side was under the control of Licinius). The inscription was probably set up between 324 and 328/329 AD. During this period Helena went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326/327 before she died in 328/329 AD. On her journey Helena is said to have visited Side.21

5. Donations of Conon and Modestus

White marble block, now in the garden of Side Museum. Its reverse shows ornamented palm branches. The stone was probably a parapet slab in previous usage.

Finding spot: Karaevli Örenyeri near the village Taşağıl, some 10 km east of Aspendos.
H: 38 cm; L: 107 cm; D: 10.5 cm; Lh: 2.3–2.6 cm.

εὐχὴ Κονων—

εὐχὴ Μοδέστου

2 νος άναγνώ—

άναγνώστου, νό(μισμα) α´


21 ibid. 322 pp.
Vow of lector Conon, 1 solidus – Vow of lector Modestus, 1 solidus.

L.3 νόμισμα was abbreviated as Ν, examples of this abbreviation can be found in Side and elsewhere.\(^{22}\)

An inscription from Klazomenai provides an example of similar use of εύχη is in the same context (ύπέρ εύχης Πατ- - και] Ησυχίας συμ[βίου] νομίσματα δ[ύο]).\(^{23}\)

The position of ἀναγνώστης is the initial post towards becoming deacon, priest or bishop. It is the first step in the clerical *cursus honorum*.\(^{24}\) Their primary duty is all about reading liturgical lections, Scriptures etc. Their chief was called πρωταναγνώστης. These clerical officials were known from various inscriptions.\(^{25}\) These two lectors, Conon and Modestus, each donated one solidus to a church, to which this stone probably belonged and where it was probably exhibited.

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\(^{24}\) Lampe, Patristic Lexicon, pp. 99–100, s.v. ἀναγνώστης.

\(^{25}\) For ἀναγνώστης: Grégoire no. 148 (Samos); 226 (= I. v. Didyma 612); I. v. Ephesos 1285.18; TAM 4.1 374 (Nicomedia); C. Haspels, The Highlands of Phrygia (New Jersey 1971), p. 318, no. 50; p. 320, no. 54 and p. 339f. no. 108; Roueché 1989, no. 91 (Apheodisias); Şahin 2001, p. 151 (Pamphylia) and Lajtar 2003, p. 123–4 (=*SEG* 51 1820). For πρωταναγνώστης: Roueché 1989, 115 (Apheodisias); W. H. Buckler – D. M. Robinson, Sardis VII. Greek and Latin Inscriptions (Leyden 1932), p. 147f. no.188.
ÖZET

Side'den birkaç geç Roma Dönemi Yazıtı


Yazıların çevirileri şöyledir:

No. 1: ... *Vicerius, pek şanlı proconsul ... ismini efendimiz Arcadius’tan alan bu Arcadius Forumunu kutsadı.*

No. 2: *Pek belagatlı skolastik ve kentin babası Georgius nezaretinde, (içinde bulunulan) vergi döneminin 6. yılında (yaptırıldı/onarıldı).*

No. 3: *Pek belagatlı skolastik ve kentin babası Georgius nezaretinde, (içinde bulunulan) vergi döneminin 6. yılında (yaptırıldı/onarıldı).*

No. 4: *Sidiler’in ünlü metropolisi, Augustus’un (Büyük Constantinüs) annesi imparatoriçe Helena’yı onurlandırıldı.*

No. 5: *Lektör Conon’un adağı: 1 solidus. Lektör Modestus’un adağı: 1 solidus.*