

Gladiatorial Monuments from Thyateira

Pınar ÖZLEM AYTAÇLAR* – Sevgiser AKAT ÖZENİR**

This study focuses on five gladiator monuments found in Thyateira, in the northeastern part of Lydia. The monuments are identical in both style and size and are similar.¹ All of them are altars of marble, with the depiction of a single gladiator advancing to the right on a raised plinth. The monuments form a group together with the five gladiator monuments previously found in Thyateira² and provide us with information about the importance and content of the gladiatorial fights in the city.

1. Grave monument of Antallos

Funerary altar of marble with projections on top, bottom, and sides. In the center is a relief of a heavily armed gladiator facing right on a platform. A little broken in the lower left corner. The gladiator wears a wide-brimmed helmet (*galea*) covering his face and neck, a rectangular shield (*scutum*) covering almost the entire body in his left hand, and a short sword (*gladius*) in his right hand. An apron (*subligaculum*) is attached to a wide belt (*balteus*) at the waist, and armour (*ocrea*) on his left leg. The clothing and weapons indicate that he belonged to the *murmillon* type.³

Date: Roman Imperial Period. Manisa Museum (Inv. no. 8367). Fig. 1.

H.: 104, w.: 45, th.: 28, l.h.: 3 cm.

* Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Özlem Aytaçlar, Ege Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Eskiçağ Dilleri ve Kültürleri Bölümü, Bornova/İzmir/Türkiye (paytaclar@yahoo.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4616-6765>).

** Res. Asst. Dr. Sevgiser Akat Özenir, Ege Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Eskiçağ Dilleri ve Kültürleri Bölümü, Bornova/İzmir/Türkiye (sevgiserakat@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8485-1309>).

¹ For similar examples, see Kontokosta 2008, nos. 4-21.

² 1) Monument of Araksios: Ἀρραξίῳ τῷ καὶ Ἀνταίῳ Δαλδιανῶ ἀνδρὶ ἰδίῳ μνείας χάριν. (Buckler 1913, 329, no. 21 pl. 1A; Robert 1933, 134 (= OMS III 1589); Gladiateurs, 220, no. 271; Pfuhl – Möbius, Ostgr. Grabreliefs II, 301, no. 1240 (pl. 185). 2) Monument of [Babid?]os: [Βαβιδ?]ος (Keil – Premerstein, Lydien II, 40, no. 73; [= Kontoleon 1889, 91, no. 12]; Robert, Gladiateurs 220, no. 268; Hellenica V (pl. VII. 5); Pfuhl – Möbius, Ostgr. Grabreliefs II, 297, no. 1218a; TAM V 2, 1040; Malay, Manisa Museum, 79, no. 203). 3) Monument of Eugrammos: Εὐγράμμος | οὗτος ἀπελύθη | ἔξω λούδου. (Keil – Premerstein, Lydien II, 40, no. 72; IGR IV, 1274; Robert, Gladiateurs 219-20, no. 267; Pfuhl – Möbius, Ostgr. Grabreliefs II, 300, no. 1235; TAM V 2, 1039; Malay, Manisa Museum, 79, no. 202.) 4) Monument of Pardalas: Παρδαλάς (Hicks 1889, 137, no. 13; Kontoleon 1889, 92, no. 13; Robert, Gladiateurs 220, no. 269, (pl. IX); Pfuhl – Möbius, Ostgr. Grabreliefs II, 297, no. 1218B; TAM V 2, 1041; Malay, Manisa Museum, 79, no. 201.) 5) Monument of Stephanos: Στέφανος (Robert, Gladiateurs 220, no. 270; Hellenica V, 99; TAM V 2, 1042; Malay, Manisa Museum, 80, no. 207.).

³ For similar altars of gladiators of the *murmillon* type, see Kontokosta 2008, nos. 5, 9, 13, 15, and 24 (figs. 6, 10, 14, 16, and 25).

Ἄνταλλος

“(Here lies) Antallos”

Ἄνταλλος is an uncommon name, with the majority of documented occurrences dating to the Hellenistic period. This inscription is the first epigraphic attestation of this name in Asia Minor. We find a female Antal(l)is from Kaisareia in Kappadokia (LGPN VC, s.v. Ἄνταλλίς). For other instances of this name, see LGPN I (one example from Samos), II (three examples from Athens), IIIA (notably, very well documented in Dalmatia, Illyria, and Sicilia with twenty six examples), and IIIB (four examples from Phokis and Thessaly) s.v. Ἄνταλλος.

2. Grave monument of Aias

Funerary altar of marble in the form of a rectangular prism, profiled at the top and bottom, with projections at the top, bottom, and sides. A heavily armed gladiator is depicted on a platform in the center of the front face. The gladiator wears a wide-brimmed helmet (*galea*) covering his face and neck, a rectangular shield (*scutum*) in his left hand, and a short sword (*gladius*) in his right hand. The gladiator also wears a knee-length apron (*subligaculum*) attached to a wide belt (*balteus*). There is an armband (*manica*) made of bands (*fasciae*) on his right arm, armour (*ocrea*) on his left leg, and a low knee brace on his right leg. As the clothes and weapons show, the gladiator was probably of the *secutor* type.⁴

Date: Roman Imperial Period. Manisa Museum (Inv. no. 8369). Fig. 2.

H.: 93, w.: 42, th.: 30, l.h.: 2.5 cm.

Αἶας

“(Here lies) Aias”

For Αἶας, which is among the heroic names that frequently selected by the gladiators, see Robert, *Gladiateurs* 299. Aias, another gladiator, is also found in a funerary inscription from Thasos. See Robert, *Gladiateurs* no. 55.

3. Grave monument of Kallidromos

Funerary altar of marble profiled at the top and bottom, with projections at the bottom, top, and sides. The left side of the altar is broken and missing. In the center, on a platform, is a relief of a gladiator with no clothes, holding a trident in his left hand and a dagger (*pugio*) in his right hand, which is not visible because of abrasion.

Date: Roman Imperial Period. Manisa Museum (Inv. no. 8370). Fig. 3.

H.: 104, w.: 40, th.: 33, l.h.: 3 cm.

Κυνηγός

Καλλίδρομος

“(Here lies) *venator* Kallidromos”

⁴ For similar monuments of gladiators of the *secutor* type, see Kontokosta 2008, 207, no. 7 (fig. 8), 212, no. 14 and 16, (fig. 15 and 17).

As the term κωνηγός shows, the gladiator is of the *venator* type, and fights with wild animals. For the meaning of the word, see Robert, *Gladiateurs* 321-322, with other examples. For the κωναγός with this sense, see I.Milet I, no. 314.

Καλλιδρομος was one of the names favoured by gladiators. For the examples in Asia Minor, see Robert, *Gladiateurs* 138, no. 89 (Ankara) and I.Kibyra 102.

4. Grave monument of Passareinos

Funerary altar of marble, profiled at the top and bottom, with projections at the bottom, top, and sides. The altar is divided into two parts and joined. On the top, there is a palmette-shaped ornament in two corners. On the altar, there is a relief of a heavily armed gladiator depicted as if he is going to lunge to his left on a platform projecting outwards. The armour and weapons representing the fighting style of the gladiator are carved in detail, although the relief is quite worn. On his head, he wears a wide-brimmed helmet (*galea*) covering his face and a rectangular shield (*scutum*) extending from the knee to the neck in his left hand. He has a short sword (*gladius*) in his right hand and a *manica* on his right arm. The gladiator wears an apron (*subligaculum*) attached to a wide belt (*balteus*) around his waist. Both feet of the gladiator are bare, the left leg is covered with bands (*fasciae*) and armour (*ocrea*), while the right leg is bare except for the low leggings. The helmet (*galea*) and heavy shield (*scutum*) indicate that he belonged to the *murmillon* type.

Date: Roman Imperial Period. Manisa Museum (Inv. no. 8368). Fig. 4.

H.: 105, w.: 44, th.: 31, l.h.: 2,5 cm.

Πασσαρεῖνος

“(Here lies) Passareinos”

Passarinus is the vulgar form of the Latin *cognomen* Passerinus, which is derived from the Latin word *passer*, meaning “sparrow”, see Kajanto 1982, 331. The name Passerinus was used for a race-horse famous for its speed. (*Martialis* 7,7,10; 12,36,12). Likewise, *PASSARINVS* was the name of a circus horse (see L&S Latin Dictionary s.v. *Passerinus*). Gladiators must have been so named because of their speed and agility. For another Πασσερεῖνος who was possibly a gladiator, see I.Smyrna 411; cf. Pleket, I.Mus. Leyden, no. 22, pl. 4.

5. Grave monument of Petraeites

Funerary altar of marble profiled at the top and bottom, with projections at the bottom, top, and sides. At the bottom, just below the inscription, there is an approximately rectangular plate, probably symbolizing an entrance. The altar is split in two at the center. The gladiator is depicted in a frame and moves to the right. He wears a helmet with a *galea*. In his left hand is a heavy shield (*scutum*) that covers almost the entire torso and extends from the neck to the knee, while in his right hand, there is probably a short sword (*gladius*). He wears an apron (*subligaculum*) attached to a wide belt (*balteus*) around his waist, and on his right arm is a banded armband (*manica*). Both feet are bare. The gladiator has very muscular legs; the left one is covered with bands (*fasciae*) and short metal armour (*ocrea*), and the right one only with low leggings. There is a palm leaf, which symbolizes his victory, in front of the gladiator.⁵ The gladiator is of the *murmillon* type.

⁵ The most important prize given to the gladiator who successfully won the fight was the *palma* (palm leaf), the symbol of victory and immortality. The success of the gladiator was measured according to these

Date: Roman Imperial Period. Manisa Museum (Inv. no. 8371). Fig. 5.

H.: 106, w.: 46, th.: 38, l.h.: 2.5 cm.

Πετραεΐτης

“(Here lies) Petraeites”

The altar is inscribed at the base of the front face, just below the plinth, with the name of the gladiator Πετραεΐτης. The etymology of the name has long been discussed. Some of the arguments are that this is an indigenous Anatolian name and derives from Men Petraeites, a deity worshipped in Lydia.⁶ As a personal name, however, we know of only one example of this name from Lydia: A Πετραεΐτης is attested in a funerary inscription from Ioulia Gordos.⁷ We have more examples of its use as the name of a gladiator. Apart from our inscription, there is a gladiator Παττραεΐτης in Telmessos⁸ and another one, on a column with agonistic graffiti in Iasos.⁹ We know a Petraites, a famous gladiator of the time of the emperor Nero,¹⁰ and this well-known Petraites was certainly the reason why the later gladiators chose the same name.¹¹

Interestingly, the gladiator monuments found in Lydia are concentrated in the city of Thyateira. This situation must have resulted from some developments that paved the way for gladiator fights to be organized in the city from an early period. First of all, the city of Thyateira is a settlement that has been in contact with Rome since the early periods. Roman businessmen were living in the city in the middle of the 1st century BC. In an inscription dating to 50/51 BC, we see the Roman *negotiatores* honouring Quintus Baebius Fuscus together with the demos.¹² In another example, a local association of leatherworkers honors the leader of the Roman community (κουρατορεύσαντα τοῦ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κονβέντου).¹³ There are other indications that the city was inhabited by a considerable Roman population engaged in trade.¹⁴ These Romans may have integrated elements of their own culture into the social life of Thyateira and must have influenced the existence of a well-developed tradition of gladiatorial combat in the city.

palmas. For the examples, see Robert, *Gladiateurs* 200, no. 215, pl. 10; Pfuhl – Möbius, *Ostgr. Grabreliefs* II, 296, no. 1202, pl. 182.

⁶ Rowell 1958, 21-22.

⁷ Τετραεΐτην in TAM V 1, 712; According to Rowell 1958, 21, “a P could have been restored instead of a T”; cf. Petzl 1999, 103.

⁸ TAM II, 107; cf. Robert, *Gladiateurs* no. 109: Ἑρμεί | Πατ|ραεΐτη|ς μετὰ τῶ|ν συν|κελ|λαρίων | μνήμης χάριν.

⁹ See Marmi erranti 7M: νίκη | Πετραΐτου | Ἥγησιου.

¹⁰ See Rowell 1958; cf. Petzl 1999, 103.

¹¹ Robert, *Gladiateurs* 297: “Souvent ces surnoms ont été choisis, sans égard à leur sens, parce qu’ils avaient été portés déjà par des gladiateurs célèbres, et cela nous pouvons rarement le reconnaître.”

¹² TAM V 2, 924: Ὁ δήμος καὶ | οἱ πραγματευόμε|νοι Ῥωμαῖοι ἐτεί||μησαν Κόϊντον | Βαίβιον Φοῦσκον | ἐπιεκῶς καὶ φι|λανθρώπως πα|ρεπιδημήσαντα.

¹³ TAM V 2, 1002.

¹⁴ See Hatzfeld 1919, 165-166.



Fig. 3



Fig. 2



Fig. 1



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

One of the most important factors in the introduction of gladiatorial fights into Greek cities was the Imperial cult. We can see that Greek cities, which established the Imperial cult from the time of Augustus, also included gladiator fights in the festivals of this cult in an early period. The most striking example of this situation is Aphrodisias. The city appears to have established close relations with Rome as early as the late 1st century BC. The Sebasteion, whose construction was completed in the first half of the 1st century AD, is an indication that the Imperial cult was established here at an early date. The gladiatorial fights belonging to the cult must have started from this date.¹⁵ Another example is the city of Aizanoi in Asia Minor, which is located in the inland of Asia Minor and relatively far from Rome. The city of Aizanoi kept its relations with Rome warm from the beginning and established the cult of “θεοὶ ὁμοβῶμοι” for Augustus and Livia.¹⁶ Aizanoi is a city where gladiatorial fights played an important role in the Imperial cult games, as evidenced by

¹⁵ See Kontokosta 2008, 190-229.

¹⁶ For the Imperial cult in Aizanoi, see Wörrle 2014, 439-512.

the gladiator monuments found in the city.¹⁷ The same should be true, for example, for Stratoni-keia or Kibyra, other cities notable for their wealth of gladiatorial monuments.¹⁸ Examples could of course be multiplied.

Thyateira can be considered one of the centers that hosted the Imperial cult from the early period. We have inscriptions that indicate that the city had an Imperial cult from the beginning. Firstly, we can consider the inscriptions that refer to Augustus as θεός or θεοῦ υἱός and are dedicated with him to θεὰ Πώμη.¹⁹ Xenon of Thyateira and M. Antonius Attalos Lepidas²⁰ are noteworthy as early high priests of the empire. Xenon was an *archiereus* who had received citizenship directly from Octavian and was honoured as the “first of Greeks”.²¹ Examples of the Imperial cult in the later period are, of course, more numerous.²²

In the city of Thyateira, the social and political basis for gladiatorial fights had been established from early times. Therefore, gladiatorial games must have developed, institutionalized, and prospered over time. We know from a gladiator inscription that there was a *ludus*, a gladiator school in the city.²³

The city of Thyateira appears as an important center for sporting events and gymnastic games from the beginning. The city had an athlete who won the Olympics in 8 BC.²⁴ There are numerous examples of agonistic festivals held in the city and inscriptions honouring the athletes who won these competitions. Coins are another source that gives us information about these agons.²⁵ The local festivals were the *Tyrimneia* in honour of Apollon Tyrimnaios and the *Asklepieia* in honour of Asklepios.²⁶ The city also hosted important festivals in honour of the emperors. *Hadrianeia* dedicated to Hadrianus, *Severeia* organized during the reign of Severus Alexander, and *Augusteia pythia* organized during the reign of Elagabalus in the 3rd century AD were the festivals celebrated in the city.²⁷ The *Augusteia pythia* was a very important event, equal in value to the games at Delphoi, in which athletes from all Greek cities were eligible to participate. One of the elements that prove Thyateira’s hosting of athletic competitions and public performances is the “athletes’

¹⁷ See Özcan 2022, 99-120.

¹⁸ See Berns – Ekinci 2015, 143-179, especially p. 156.

¹⁹ TAM V 2, 902, II.1-3; cf. TAM V 2, 903.

²⁰ TAM V 2, 934.

²¹ TAM V 2, 1098. For Xenon, see Chin 2023, 210.

²² For the Panhellenion and the cult of Hadrianus linked in a decree of Thyateira in Athens, see SEG 47, 163. For the example of Flavia Priscilla of Thyateira, the twice *archiereia* of Asia, see IGR IV, 1233. See also Kearsley 1986, 188, note 22.

²³ See above note 1, no. 3.

²⁴ Artemidoros of Thyateira was the winner of the Stadion race in the 193rd Olympiad. See Eusebius, *Chron.* 79.

²⁵ See Sarılar-Özdemir 2021.

²⁶ In the *Sebastea Tyrimnea* celebrated in Thyateira, sacrifices were offered to both gods and emperors. See IGRR IV, 1273 (II.10-11); 1270 (II.13-14) and Camia 2018, 111, note 9. For the inscriptions mentioning *Tyrimneia*, see TAM V 2, 983, 1010, 1011; for *Asklepieia*, see TAM V 2, 1013 and 1017.

²⁷ See TAM V 2, 1022, 1026 (*Hadrianeia*), 949, 1007-1009 (*Severeia*), 1018, 1019, 1022 (*Augusteia pythia*).

union”, the *Sympas Xystos*, whose existence we learned through inscriptions. We recognize this association from four inscriptions found in Thyateira.²⁸

Gladiatorial contests, which belonged to Roman culture, were spectacles that were quickly adopted in Greek cities. The presence of the Latin population in the cities or the hosting of the Imperial cult must have helped to establish this tradition in the cities. However, even if all these conditions had not been met, the gladiatorial spectacles themselves had quickly entered the Greek culture with the glamour they carried for the audience. For this reason, they became very popular, especially in large cities with Hellenistic Greek culture, such as Miletos, Ephesos, or Pergamon. Greek culture, which was not conservative in taking new elements from foreign cultures, was also skillful in making them “Greek” in a short time. Gladiatorial games may also have changed form to appeal to audiences in Greek cities.²⁹ Although we have no evidence that gladiatorial fights were incorporated into the traditional ἀγῶνες of the cities, we can assume that in places like Thyateira, where athletic competitions were well-established and important, they were received with greater enthusiasm and perhaps offered to audiences along with other sports.

Bibliography

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²⁸ For this association, see Robert, *Hellenica* IX, 26f.; cf. Tanriver 1996, 45f. For the inscriptions mentioning σύμπας ξυστός in Thyateira, see TAM V 2, 977, 984, 1097 and 1020. One of these inscriptions (TAM V 2, 1097) is the tombstone of Heleis, chief physician of the *sympas xystos*, and is interesting as the only example of an *archiatros* serving in an athletic association.

²⁹ For the “reinterpretation” of the gladiatorial games in the East, see Mann 2009, 272-297.

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Thyateira'dan Gladyatör Anıtları

Özet

Bu çalışma, Lydia'nın kuzeydoğu kesiminde yer alan Thyateira'da yapılan yüzey araştırmaları sonucunda bulunan beş gladyatör anıtına odaklanmaktadır. Tümü Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne ait olan ve şu an Manisa Müzesi'nde korunmakta olan anıtlar, mermerden yapılmış altarlardır ve üzerlerinde, sağa doğru yönelmiş tek bir gladyatör betimlenmiştir. Anıtlar, daha önce Thyateira'da bulunan beş gladyatör anıtıyla birlikte bir grup oluşturmakta ve kentteki gladyatör dövüşlerinin önemi ve içeriği hakkında bize bilgi vermektedir. Thyateira'da bulunan gladyatör anıtları, Lydia bölgesinde ele geçen gladyatör yazıtlarının önemli bir kısmını oluşturmaktadır. Bu durum belki de kentte gladyatör dövüşleri geleneğinin İÖ 1. yüzyıl gibi erken bir tarihe dayanıyor olabileceğini ve zaman içinde zenginleşerek çoğaldığını göstermektedir. Kentin, erken dönemden itibaren Romalı tüccarlara ev sahipliği yapmış olması ve İmparatorluk kültürünün buradaki varlığı, bir Roma geleneği olan gladyatör dövüşlerinin de kentte yaygınlaşmasına ön ayak olmuş olmalıdır. Kentte bir gladyatör okulu da (*ludus*) bulunduğunu gene yazıtlar aracılığı ile öğrenmekteyiz. Tarihi boyunca spor karşılaşmalarına ve halka açık gösterilere önem verdiği anlaşılan Thyateira kenti, gladyatör oyunlarını da erken bir dönemde benimsemiş ve sosyal hayatın bir parçası haline getirmiş olmalıdır.

Makalede yer alan yazıtların çevirileri aşağıdaki gibidir:

1. *Antallos (burada yatıyor.)*
2. *Aias (burada yatıyor.)*
3. *Kynegos Kallidromos (burada yatıyor.)*
4. *Passareinos (burada yatıyor.)*
5. *Petraeites (burada yatıyor.)*

Anahtar Sözcükler: Thyateira; gladyatör anıtları; Lidya; Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi; gladyatör oyunları.

Gladiatorial Monuments from Thyateira

Abstract

This study focuses on five gladiatorial monuments found during the surveys conducted at Thyateira in the northeastern part of Lydia. The monuments, all of which date to the Roman Imperial Period and are now preserved in the Manisa Museum, are marble altars depicting a single gladiator facing to the right. The monuments form a group with five other gladiatorial monuments previously found at Thyateira and provide information about the importance and content of gladiatorial fights in the city. The gladiator monuments from Thyateira constitute an important part of the gladiator inscriptions found in Lydia. This suggests that the tradition of gladiatorial fights in the city may date back to as early as the 1st century BC, and that it flourished and multiplied over time. The fact that the city was home to Roman merchants from the early period and the presence of the Imperial cult here must have paved the way for the spread of gladiator fights, a Roman tradition, in the city. We learn from the inscriptions that there was also a gladiator school (*ludus*) in the city. The city of Thyateira, which seems to have attached importance to athletic competitions and public performances throughout its history, must have adopted gladiatorial games at an early period and made them a part of social life.

Keywords: Thyateira; gladiatorial monuments; Lydia; Roman Imperial Period; gladiatorial games.