

A New Epigram in the Uşak Museum: The Relief Stele of Maximus

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One of the meeting points of archaeological finds from the Lydian-Phrygian borderland is the Uşak Archaeological Museum. Some of the inscriptions of this museum were published between 1983-1991 by Ender Varinlioğlu. Having worked for many years, Prof. Ender Varinlioğlu finally completed his monograph (in print) which presents new inscriptions preserved and displayed in



the museum and discovered in the surroundings of Uşak and he compiled the already published material into a single museum corpus. Since Varinlioğlu has not been working in the museum for some time, I was invited by the museum directory of Uşak to record the newly acquired inscribed monuments and in this respect, I copied two inscriptions at the museum. One of them has recently been published¹ by the author and in this paper, I introduce another inscription which was not included in Varinlioğlu's corpus. The epitaph found its way to the museum through confiscation and was registered in the museum's inventory in 2013.

A gable roofed stele, carved from white marble, with three acroters, the one on the top with palmette, and on either side decorated with a half-palmette. Each gable wall is ornamented with scroll patterns starting from the side acroters and ending beneath the top acroter. The gable roof has a triangular pediment, and inside it is a low relief of hunting scene with a lion and a bull. The lion is depicted as bearing its left foreleg down on the bull's neck (fig. 1). Under this scene, on the lower part of the triangle, is carved a single line inscription giving the date. On the body of the stele, the right and left sides are delimited by columns which are decorated with simplified rinceaux coming out of a pot, on top of the body between the capitals the same ornament can also be seen. With this style of ornamentation and carving, the epitaph seems like a

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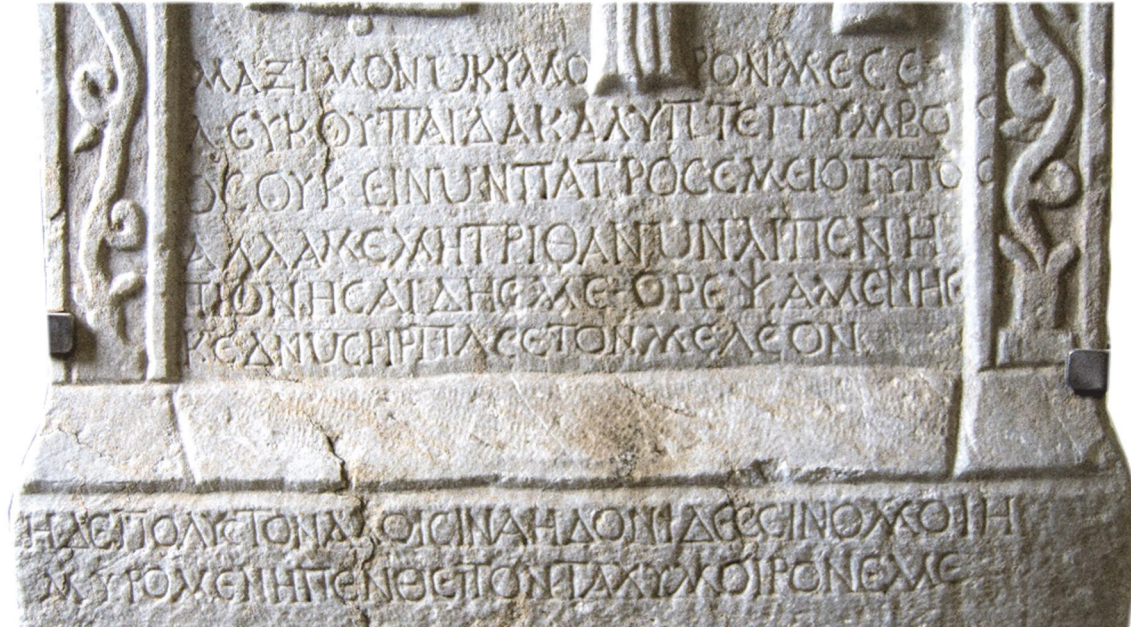
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¹ Kileci 2019.

facade scene of a temple. Between the columns and under the floral ornament between the capitals is carved another hunting scene, but this time a hound chases a rabbit. Beneath this scene is carved a centralized garland. Below the garland is carved a *diptychon*, inkwell set, and a roll of papyrus (fig. 3). Beneath these low-relief carvings, there is an eight-lined Greek epigram, of which last two lines are carved beneath the border of the facade. The lines of the epigram are tightly carved except for the first line; however, the letters are written meticulously and mostly in oval shape. The letter omega is written as U-shaped in all the lines (fig. 4-5).

Find spot: Unknown; Inv. no.: 2013/47; Dimensions: H.: 1.40 m; W.: 0.59 m; D.: 0.145 m; LH.: $\Delta = 0.015$, $\Omega = 0.02$ m; Date: October 18, A.D. 167 (Aktian Era).



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| <p>Ἔτους ρη΄ μη(νός) Δείου ζκ΄</p> <p>2 Μάξιμον ὠκύμορον με Σε-
λεύκου παῖδα καλύπτει τύμβος,</p> <p>4 ὃς οὐ κείν’ οὐτ’ πατὼς ἐμεῖο τύπος,
ἀλλὰ με μητρὶ θανῶν λίπε νή-
6 πιον, ἧς Ἄϊδης με ἴθ’ ῥεψαμένης
κεδνῶς ἦρπασε τὸν μέλεον.</p> <p>8 ἢ δὲ πολυστοναχοῖσιν ἀηδονίδεσσιν ὁμοίη
μυρομένη πένθει τὸν ταχύμοιρον ἐμέ.</p> | <p><i>In the year 198, on the 27th day of month Deios.</i></p> <p><i>Early dying me, Maximus,</i>
<i>child of Seleukos, covers this tomb,</i>
<i>which is not a relief stele of my father,</i>
<i>but (he) died and left me as a young boy</i>
<i>to my mother; Hades seized miserable me</i>
<i>after my mother raised me diligently,</i>
<i>Like the much wailing nightingales,</i>
<i>she weeps in sorrow for me who died young.</i></p> |
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4: KEINON lapis 6: OPEΨAMENHΣ lapis.

The inscription's lines form three accurate distiches:

verse 1	Μάξιμον ὠκύμορον με Σελεύκου παῖδα καλύπτει
verse 2	τύμβος, ὃς οὐ κείν' ου' πατρός ἐμεῖο τύπος,
verse 3	ἀλλά με μητρὶ θανῶν λίπε νήπιον, ἧς Ἀΐδης με
verse 4	ῥ' ἔρψαμένης κεδνῶς ἤρπασε τὸν μέλεον,
verse 5	ἢ δὲ πολυστονάχοισιν ἀηδονίδεσσιν ὁμοίῃ
verse 6	μυρομένη πένθει τὸν ταχύμοιρον ἐμέ.

L. 1: This line giving the date of the inscription is written on the bottom part of equilateral triangular pediment as Ἐτους ρρη' μη(νός) Δείου ζκ'. The first two digits of the year are hardly seen due to the slight damage to this part, and of the digits giving the day of the month, kappa, is poorly carved on the stone which makes it difficult to determine the exact date given in this line.

Though its findspot is unknown today, it must have been transported to the museum from somewhere within the borders of Uşak. It is known that the Sullan era (85 B.C.) was mostly used in Asia Minor, due to his being regarded as the new organizer². However, cities on the border between Lydia and Phrygia used the Aktian era (31 B.C.), e.g. Philadelphia in Lydia³. The type of this stele matches some inscriptions published by Varinlioğlu, which are dated according to the Sullan era⁴. Seeing that this inscription's find spot is unknown, the date corresponds either in the Sullan era to A.D. 113 or, in the Aktian era to A.D. 167. However, according to E. Pfuhl and H. Möbius the iconography of the rabbit-chasing scene of a hound (see fig. 2) is found on late-phrygian stelai, which symbolize the deceased and the soul⁵. Moreover, T. Lochman states that the motif of the bull and lion in the gable is seen after 160 B.C.⁶. And the fact that omega is carved on the epitaph as in U-form indicates that the inscription belongs to a much later time than a date of the Sullan era. Therefore, the inscription should have been brought to the museum from somewhere close but from Phrygia, from the border of Uşak-Kütahya, and that makes it more probable to date it according to the Aktian era. Since the Aktian calendar is known⁷, this tombstone's exact date is October 18, A.D. 167.

L. 2: The word ὠκύμορον is used in poetry, especially for children, demonstrating that the tomb owner passed away untimely⁸. G. Staab explains the usage of ὠκύμορος with the term Achill-

² Malay 1987, 30 see also fn. 54; Leschhorn 1993; McLean 2002, 173.

³ Herrmann 1972, 528; Malay 1987, 30 see also fn. 54; Leschhorn 1993, 338; McLean 2002, 173; Uzunoğlu 2019, 383.

⁴ For similar gable roofed stelai and dated according to the Sullan era, displayed now in the Uşak Archaeology Museum, see Hermann – Varinlioğlu 1984, 9 no. 5; Varinlioğlu 1990, 75 no. 24; 83 no. 34; 95 no. 46; cf. Pfuhl – Möbius 1979, 551 no. 2288. For gable roofed stelai with three acroters decorated with palmettes columnar bodies as here that are presented and dated according to the Sullan era, see Varinlioğlu, in print, no. 51-52; no. 57; no. 115-116; no. 155; no. 167-168; no. 223.

⁵ Pfuhl – Möbius 1979, 524.

⁶ Lochman 2003, 225; For the iconography of the lion see also *ibid.*, 210-211.

⁷ For more see Leschhorn 1993, 225-228.

⁸ Another word for untimely death is ἄωρος, “before her/his time”. For detail see Lattimore 1962, 184-187; Akyürek-Şahin – Uzunoğlu 2018, 38-39.

paradigm⁹. The origin of its semantic development lies in its application to Achilles, who was given a short but honorable life by the gods. In this verse-inscription it is probably emphasized that Maximus lived an honorable but short life.

παῖδα used here as meaning of “child/son” of Seleucus, see also below LL. 5-6.

L. 3: The letter Σ of τύμβος is carved on the profile.

L. 4: The initial vowel of ἐκείνων is lost (*aphaeresis*) and carved as κείνων¹⁰. However, there seems a mistake in carving κείνων also. It should in fact be singular - κείν' ὄν' - instead of plural, which points out the father (suggested by G. Staab). ἐμεῖο is the epic genitive form of ἐγώ. The letter Σ at the end of the line, which belongs to the word τύπος, is carved on the profile.

LL. 5-6: The grammarian Orion of Thebes (108.11 s.v. νήπιος), who lived in the fifth century A.D., explains the word νήπιος as “lack of speaking and babbling, like νῆ ἔπιος (lack of word)”, of which W. Pape (1914, 253) also mentions as ‘das Kind, das noch nicht sprechen kann’¹¹. Even in mythology, Heracles was an infant (*nepios*) during the time when Hera sent him to the serpents (Cass. Dio 73,7,2). According to M. Golden νήπιος is a common word in epic and later poetry which means ‘baby’¹². However, M. Beck states that this word “used to mean both baby and children of young age”¹³. Yet, it is seen in some epigrams that *brephos* and *nepios* are used synonymously¹⁴. It is seen both in Phrygia and Lydia, in Asia Minor. It is mostly used as an adjective to explain how small the child is¹⁵. But, in some inscriptions the age of the children (*nepioi*) can be recorded and varies from days to the age of sixteen years¹⁶. As for the child Maximus in our inscription we cannot determine how old he was when he died, but the reliefs, *diptychon*, inkwell set and papyrus roll (fig. 3), gives a point that he should be at a school age.

LL. 6-7: The initial of ᾠρεψαμένης is carved with an *omicron*, but it seems that it is tried to be transformed into *theta* with a possible notch (fig. 4-5).

Apart from the natural causes of the death, there are some divinities responsible for death, such as Moirai, Tyche, Ares, Hades, and daemons¹⁷ who are cruel, evil, violent, causing sorrow etc. Among them, Hades is either the god who seizes the person, or the place where the body is taken

⁹ Staab 2018, 85-89.

¹⁰ See Gignac 1976, 319.

¹¹ Cf. Beekes 2010, 1016-1017 s.v. νήπιος.

¹² Golden 2015, 12.

¹³ Beck 2014, 374.

¹⁴ VÉrillhac 1978, 221 no. 149; 223 no. 151.

¹⁵ Mendel 1909, 430 no. 433; TAM V,1, 135; 546; 701; 797; MAMA X, 169; 219; IV, 83; V, 28. See also Drew-Bear 1980, 946, 948. For other attested inscriptions see: MAMA X, 118; 316; MAMA X, App. III 91, 6; Collignon 1893, 269 no. 57; Lattimore 1962, 270; SGO I, 73 no. 01/18/99 = Teichiussa.

¹⁶ Age scale of *nepioi* according to the inscriptions attested before in ascending order: Peek 1955, 570 no. 1884: Menogenes was still holding his mother’s milk-giving breast when he passed away; Peek 1955, 236 no. 861: Eutychos lived only five days less than two months; Peek 1955, 475 no. 1590: Solon was six months; TAM V,1, 135: Atticus was three years old; a παῖς νήπιος (SGO V, no. 16/24/04) and Longeia was four (Peek 1955, 264 no. 956); SEG 35, 1165: Antelios was six; Peek 1955, 537 no. 1796: Gaius was almost seven; MAMA X, 219: a *nepios* was eight; SGO I, no. 04/07/03: Andronikos was eleven; Peek 1955, 380 no. 1090: Apollon was sixteen years and six months.

¹⁷ Lattimore 1962, 142-158.

to¹⁸. In this epitaph he is seen as the one who snatches the child away (*harpazein*) after his mother raised (*θρεψαμένης*) him¹⁹.

L. 8: For the adjective *πολυστονάχοισιν* in dactylic meter cf. Apollinaris of Laodikeia, *Metaphr. psalm.* 125,V,3. This adjective expresses how deeply she feels mournful about his son's death with the noun *ἀηδονίδεσσιν*, which is the dative plural case of *ἀηδονίς*²⁰. The nightingale is used as a metaphor in Greek literature and epigrams. A. R. Chandler separates this usage into five groups²¹. One of them is linked with the myth of Aedon who morphed into a nightingale because she unknowingly killed her son, Itys or Itylos, with her own hands and suffered from this²². So, when nightingale's song represents a lament, it is used with a verb of mourning, and generally symbolizes a female lamentation²³. Here is also seen as the lamentation of Maximus' mother. How deep her lament is, is expressed with the adjective mentioned above. It is because, as it is understood from the lines 4-5, she lost her husband before and now lost her son. The metaphor of weeping as Aedon is used in epigrams²⁴.

L. 9: *ταχύμοιρον* means quickly dying, short-lived and also has form of *ταχυμόριος*. This adjective has been only attested in inscriptions dated III. c. A.D. from Phrygia²⁵.

In conclusion, we have a large and ostentatious tombstone inscribed for a young boy. His father died before, and with his death the mother possibly became lonely in life. Therefore, she was devastated because of her loss, and the epigram points out her lament with the metaphor of the nightingales. As for the reliefs, *diptychon*, ink-well set, and papyrus role are carved most likely to symbolize that Maximus was a schoolboy. Since the relief of hound chasing a rabbit is a popular scene on the tombstones of Phrygia, the lion and bull relief in the gable is seen from 160 A.D., and the U-shaped *omega* is from a slightly later period, the epigram is to be dated according to the Aktian era, which further implies that this stele should have been brought to the museum from Phrygian borderlands.

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¹⁸ For examples see SGO V, p. 268-269 s.v. Hades; see also Vérilhac 1978, nos. 149-151.

¹⁹ For another example of a *nepios* whom Hades snatched away, see Peek 1955, 475 no. 1589.

²⁰ For more detail see Gignac 1981, 47 e.

²¹ Chandler 1934, 78-84.

²² Hom. Od. 19,518-524; Ant. Lib. 11. See also Chandler 1934, 78-79.

²³ Abbattista 2019, 22.

²⁴ e.g. SGO I, no. 01/20/39 = Milet; SGO II, no. 09/01/03 = Kios; Peek 1955, 165 no. 661; 599 no. 1938.

²⁵ LSJ, 1762 s.v. *ταχύ-μοιρον*; MAMA VI 275; X 87; MAMA VI List 151, 223; CIG 3857m; Ramsay 1897, 614 no. 522; 615, no. 528; 655, no. 575; and in Attica, see IG II² 13147.

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Uşak Müzesi'nde Yeni Bir Epigram: Maximus'un Kabartmalı Steli

Öz

Bu makale, Uşak Arkeoloji Müzesi yazıtlar salonunda sergide bulunan ve daha önce yayımlanmamış bir mezar stelinin ve üzerindeki epigramı konu edinmektedir. Dokuz satırdan oluşan mezar yazıtı, hatasız üç *distykhon*'luk bir epigramdır. Yazıt, Hades tarafından genç yaşta annesinden koparılan Maximus'a aittir. Mezar taşı oldukça süslü ve büyük olup, alınlığında aslan ve boğa motifi ile gövdesinde tavşan avı sahnesi, çelenk, *diptykhon*, kalemlik seti ve papirüs rulosu taşımaktadır. Buluntu yeri bilinmeyen stel 198 yılının Deios ayının 27. gününe tarihlidir. Stelin buluntu yerinin bilinmemesi ve Lydia ile Phrygia sınırlarından getirilen eserlerin sergilendiği Uşak Arkeoloji Müzesi'nde yer alması nedeniyle söz konusu tarih Sulla ya da Aktium *era*'sına göre tarihlenmelidir. Ancak, üzerindeki motiflerden tavşan-tazı av sahnesi, aslan ve boğa motifleri ile *omega*'nın U şeklinde yazılması Kütahya Bölgesi'nde sıkça karşılaşılan özelliklerdir. Bu stelin Kütahya ile Uşak arasındaki sınır bölgesinden gelmesi olasıdır. O bölgede Aktium *era*'sı kullanıldığı için bu stelin de bu eraya göre tarihlendiğini düşünmekteyiz.

Gövde üzerindeki kabartmalar ise vefat eden Maximus'un öldüğü yaşta henüz daha okul çağında olduğunu göstermek için yapılmış olmalıdır. Epigramın Türkçe çevirisi şu şekildedir:

198 yılının Deios ayının yirmi yedisi. Bu mezar beni, erkenden göçüp giden Seleukos oğlu Maximus'u saklıyor. Babamın değildir bu kabartmalı stel, zira (babam) öldü ve ardında beni anneme genç bir oğlan olarak bıraktı, ki ondan, beni özenle bakıp büyüten annemden koparıp aldı Hades beyhude yere. Çokça feryat eden bülbüller gibi ağlayarak yasımı tutuyor şimdi annem, genç yaşta ölen ben için.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Epigram, Uşak Arkeoloji Müzesi, Phrygia, Hades, bülbül, çocuk yaşta ölüm, *distykhon*.

A New Epigram in the Uşak Museum: The Relief Stele of Maximus

Abstract

This article introduces an unpublished tombstone with an epigram, on display at the Uşak Archaeology Museum. A funerary epigram of nine lines forms three lined accurate distiches. The mentioned tombstone is for a young child who was taken by Hades. His tombstone is large with artistic reliefs on it such as lion and bull motif in the gable; rabbit chasing scene, a garland, *dip-tychon*, ink-well set and papyrus roll on the body. The dated given on the stele is the 27th of Deios of the year 198. Since the findspot is unknown and the Uşak Archaeological Museum houses the archaeological finds from the Lydian-Phrygian borderland, the origin of the stele must be somewhere nearby, where either Sullan or Aktian era was used. Due to the scene of a hound chasing a rabbit mostly found in Phrygia, the lion and bull motif in the gable and the U-shaped omega, this stele is to be dated according to the Aktian era rather than the Sullan Era. As a result, we can say that the provenance of the stele must have been somewhere close to the Phrygian border. As for the reliefs on the body part, they point out that the deceased Maximus was at the age of a school-boy when he died.

Keywords: Epigram, Uşak Archaeology Museum, Phrygia, Hades, nightingale, death in childhood, *distychon*.



Fig. 1) *The relief in the gable*



Fig. 2) The reliefs on the body: a hound chasing a rabbit, and garland



Fig. 3) The reliefs on the body: diptychon, inkwell set, and a roll of papyrus



Fig. 4-5) Letters: theta carved as omicron, and U-shaped omega