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Epitaph of the *agrophylax* Synekdemios

Abstract: In 2002, during the field survey conducted under the auspices of the “TÜBA Cultural Inventory Project of the cities of Denizli-Aydın”, the survey team directed by Neşe Atik discovered a carved rock tomb at the ancient site of Ancin, located at the site of Karıncalıkaya in Soğukoluk, a village of the Çine district of Aydın. On the lower part of the carved rock, there is an inscription of 3 lines, which can be translated as “Greetings from the *agrophylax* Synekdemios”. The importance of this inscription derives from the mention of the office of *agrophylax*. As well as the offices of *orophylax*, *diognites* and *neaniskos*, all of whom were responsible for the security of rural areas from the Hellenistic period onwards, the offices of *eirenarches* and *paraphylax* (with their roots in the Roman period) have also been attested in Asia Minor. However, the office of *agrophylax*, who was probably responsible for the safety of cultivated village lands, has not previously been attested in Asia Minor.

Keywords: epitaph; *agrophylax*; Caria; security; rural areas.

During research in 2002 under the auspices of the project entitled: “Survey of the cities of Denizli-Aydın”, directed by Neşe Atik, an inscribed tomb was discovered at the site of Karıncalıkaya in Soğukoluk, a village of the Çine district of Aydın.¹ The owner of the tomb was probably an inhabitant of the nearby ancient settlement at Ancin, whose ancient name we do not know.² The nearest major settlement is the ancient city of Alabanda, located approximately 20 km. southwest of the site.³ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in antiquity the site of Ancin lay within the territory of Alabanda.

The ancient site at Ancin⁴ consists of a *necropolis* with a tower tomb of dressed stone (probably dating from the Roman period), sarcophagi and Carian-type tombs, as well as several unidentified buildings. In addition, a *postamentum*, a grind-stone and various ancient architectural pieces have been seen in the area.⁵

In addition to the ancient site at Ancin, there is also another settlement area within the district of the village of Soğukoluk, at the locality of Emirler, where the cultural layers were examined and pottery was found dating to the fourth or fifth centuries A.D. Furthermore, Kocaasar, which is also within the village of Soğukoluk, consists of a fortress with a settlement at its foot and a *necropolis* with Carian-type tombs.⁶ At the foot of the fortress there are also the ruins of a stepped building, probably of a square plan, which is likely to have been a *heroon*.⁷

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¹ Atik – Erdem 2004, 46 pl. 8 fig. 8.

² Atik – Erdem 2004, 43 and 46.

³ For the localisation of the settlement, see Marchese, Northern Caria, 38 fig. 13.

⁴ For the view of the settlement see Atik – Erdem 2004 pl. 7 fig. 48–50.

⁵ Atik – Erdem 2004, 43.

⁶ Atik – Erdem 2004 pl. 5 fig. 30.

⁷ Atik – Erdem 2004, 44–45.

The tomb on which the inscription discussed in this article is located presumably belonged to a resident of the nearby site at Ancin, rather than to an individual from the district of Emirler, or the Kocasar settlements. This tomb belongs to the group of Carian-type tombs, many of which have been found in this area. Therefore, the tomb type in itself is insufficient to serve as an indication as to the status of the owner of this tomb.

The inscription consists of three lines and is inscribed on a flat surface on the lower part of the bedrock. Measurements: H: 0,14 cm; W: 0,32 cm; Height of letters: 0,08–0,15 cm.



Χαίρετε | παρὰ Συνεκηδήμου | ἀγροφύλακος.

“Greetings from the agrophylax Synekdemios”

The inscription dates from the Roman period and is written with left-inclined letters that become larger towards the right hand side of the inscription. The inscription records that the tomb belonged to an *agrophylax* called Συνέκημος.⁸

2–3. The usage of the preposition παρὰ after χαίρετε with a person’s name in the genitive form in the meaning of “from” is very rare in funerary inscriptions. One known example is the funerary inscription of the *sakkoplokos* Τι. Cl. Dionysios from Alabanda,⁹ dated to the Imperial period: Χαίρετε | παρὰ Τι(βερίου) Κλ(αυδίου) | Δειονυσίου || σακκοπλόκου, which matches our inscription closely in terms of meaning.

The name Συνέκημος is a variant of Συνέκημος, which is widely attested in other epigraphical documents. Although it is seldom found in proper names, the combination εκδη- is epigraphically attested in some common nouns, adjectives and verbs where the letters εκδη- follow each other.¹⁰ The form ἔκηδικος of the adjective ἔκηδικος/η, the form ἔκηδεια of the common noun ἡ ἔκηδεια and the form ἔκηδικεῖν of the verb ἐκηδικέω are examples of this use.

3. From the Hellenistic period onwards, the word *-phylax* was employed to describe officials appointed by the city to protect both people and properties.¹¹ Generally, a prefix is added to define the sphere of the watchman’s duties: νυκτοφύλαξ¹² (= night-watchman), ἡμεροφύλαξ (= watchman), μαγδωλοφύλαξ

⁸ For the name of Synegdemios or Synekdemios see the entries in LGPN I–V. The name occurs mostly in mainland Greece: Athens/Attica (IG II² 2014. 2024. 2207); Korone/Peloponnesos (IG V,1 1398); Kerkyra (IG IX,1 853). Outside of Greece: Skythia Minor (IHistriae 200 = SEG 27, 368); Tanais/Black Sea (CIRB 1242. 1260. 1282); Rome (IGUR 958); Kyzikos/Mysia (CIG 3665), Kandyba/Lykia (TAM II,3 755), Idebessos/Lykia (TAM II,3 856) and is also known from Olympos (TAM II,3 1030. 1078).

⁹ Bean 1955, 52 nr. 1; BE 1958, 452; SEG 19, 657.

¹⁰ Threatte, Grammar I 580–581 and 586.

¹¹ RE XX.1 (1942), see “Phylakites”, 987–988 (Kießling).

¹² For more about the nyktoφύλαξ, see Hennig 2002, 281–285. For nyktoφύλακες in Asia Minor see: IEphe-sos 957 and 969; Amblada: Hall 1968, 78 nr. 25.

(= watchtower guard), *παραφύλαξ*¹³ (= guard/watchman), *εἰρηνοφύλαξ* (= guard of the peace), *ὄροφύλαξ*¹⁴ (= mountain guard) and *ἀγροφύλαξ* can be given as examples.¹⁵

Those who took on such tasks came from a wide range of social statuses, varying from slaves to local notables. In the case of the *agrophylax* Synekdemos, since his father's name is not given, he may have been a slave.

The analogous titles cited above suggest that the office of the *agrophylax* was meant to offer a form of protection which to date is only known from Egypt through papyrological evidence.¹⁶ It is hard to tell exactly what the extremely common word *agros* signifies here. However, *agros* was mostly used to mean "field", or a piece of cultivated land.¹⁷ Because of the prefix *agro-*, it seems likely that the *agrophylakes* were responsible for the security of fields. Probably they protected the territory and the produce of the villages. The data in our possession on the duties and jurisdictions of *agrophylakes* are limited to several papyri. In Egypt, they seem to have been elected yearly,¹⁸ and their commanders could carry the title of "great";¹⁹ they certainly regularly served in villages.²⁰ As demonstrated by the donation of an *agrophylax* named Peison towards the construction of a bath-house,²¹ these officials supported public works; they were in charge of the security of the villages²² and chased cattle.²³ Yet it is hard to say whether in Asia Minor the *agrophylakes* had the same duties as their Egyptian colleagues. For example, we know that the duties and authority of police forces in Egypt, where the geographic and socio-economic organization differed from other parts of the Mediterranean, were not identical to those of parallel police forces in Asia Minor. The same may apply to any comparison of the *agrophylax* in Asia Minor with those of Egypt.

It is hard to make precise comments concerning the nature of Synekdemos' duties as *agrophylax*.²⁴ His

¹³ This officer had a wide range of duties. As can be understood from MAMA IV 297, the elite normally held the office of paraphylax for one year.

¹⁴ Orophylakes, meaning "mountain guards", are attested from the Hellenistic period. See Robert – Robert, Amyzon 97 nr. 2 = SEG 33, 851 = BE (1984) nr. 418 = SEG 35, 1080 = BE (1987) nr. 293. These appear for the first time in the list of Amyzon's city officials in an honorary inscription dating to 321–320 B.C. From an inscription dating to the Roman Imperial period from Apollonia under Salbake in Caria, we learn that the orophylakes served not only under the paraphylakes but also under a neaniskarch (Robert – Robert, Carie no. 162). The orophylakes were common in Caria, probably because of its mountainous character. They are also known in Pisidia. The Orophylax Menelaos in Pisidia gave a votive offering to the God Men in 201 (?) A.D. (Sterrett, Journey 97 nr. 65; also see Milner, Survey 37). An obligant named Aurelios Trokondas from another Pisidian city Ormeleis (= Tefenni) offered a votive gift to the God Kakasbos on behalf of the orophylakes (IGR IV 897 = Milner, Survey 37 nr. 92). From another third century A.D. epigraphic document, found in Doğanhisar in the territory of Pisidian Antioch, we learn that Aurelios Patrokles and Douda built a tomb for their son Sousos who was killed by bandits while serving as orophylax (for the inscription see ISultan Dağı 230; see also Wörrle 1979, 96 n. 78). See further Wörrle 1979, 96–98; Robert – Robert, Amyzon 101–115.

¹⁵ For detailed information on this subject, see: Brélaz, Sécurité 90–145; 157–171; Öztürk, Kırsal 95–96; 151–155; 165–166; Sängler 2010, 101–102; 114.

¹⁶ SB V 12579, 6; P. Oxy. 3253, 12; CPR VII 16, 5; P. Oxy. 3420, 38, 31; P. Oxy. 3804, 241; SB V10926, 7; 12377, 19 and CPR IX 45, 16.

¹⁷ For the use of *agros*, see Schuler, Siedlungen 62–66.

¹⁸ P.Mil. 42 1.

¹⁹ P.Oxy. 16 r.5.

²⁰ P. Abinn, 49 11.

²¹ P.IFAO, 36 1.

²² P.Oxy. 16 2 16.

²³ P.Abinn, 49 11.

²⁴ It is seen that the office of ampelophylax, which can be compared to the office of *agrophylax* and is mentioned in İplikçiöğlü, Nord-Lykien I nr. 7, is responsible for the protection of the vineyards and is a public duty. However, this

duty might not have been an official one undertaken for the city, as Synekdemios may have worked in the service of an owner of private property.

Like the *orophylakes*, *diogmitai* and *neaniskoi*, all of whom were responsible for the security of the rural areas of cities from the Hellenistic period onwards, officials such as the *eirenarches* and *paraphylakes* seem to have their roots in the Roman period. As we have already said above, the office of *agrophylax*, who was probably responsible for the security of cultivated land, has not previously been attested in Asia Minor. Therefore the funerary inscription of Synekdemios from Caria is of some importance as showing for the first time the existence of this office of *agrophylax* outside of Egypt.

Abbreviated Literature

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|----------------------------|---|
| Atik – Erdem 2004 | N. Atik – Z. K. Erdem, Çine ve Nazilli (Aydın) İlçeleri Arkeolojik Kültür Varlıkları Envanteri 2000–2003, TÜBA 2, 2004, 41–66. |
| Bean 1955 | G. Bean, Epitaphs at Alabanda, Anadolu Araştırmaları 1, 1955, 52–55. |
| Brélaz, Sécurité | C. Brélaz, La sécurité publique en Asie Mineure sous le Principat (Ier–IIIème s. ap. J.-C.). Institutions municipales et institutions impériales dans l'Orient romain, Basel 2005. |
| Dmitriev, City Government | S. Dmitriev, City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor, Oxford 2005. |
| Hall 1968 | A. S. Hall, Notes and Inscriptions from Eastern Pisidia, AS 18, 1968, 57–92. |
| Hennig 2002 | D. Hennig, Nyktophylakes, Nyktostrategen und die παραφυλακή τῆς πόλεως, Chiron 32, 2002, 281–295. |
| İplikçioğlu, Nord-Lykien I | B. İplikçioğlu, Neue Inschriften aus Nord-Lykien I, Vienna 1992. |
| Marchese, Northern Caria | R. T. Marchese, The historical archaeology of northern Caria: A study in cultural adaptations, Oxford 1989 (BAR 536). |
| Milner, Survey | N. P. Milner, An Epigraphical Survey in the Kibyra-Olbasa Region Conducted by A. S. Hall, Ankara 1998 (BIAA Monograph nr. 24). |
| Öztürk, Kırsal | H. S. Öztürk, M.Ö. II. – M.S. IV. Yüzyıllarda Likya Pamfilya Bölgelerinde Kırsal Alan Güvenliđi, İstanbul 2006 (Unpublished PhD Thesis). URL: http://www.belgeler.com/blg/14z2/m-o-ii-m-s-iv-yuzyillarda-likya-pamfilya-bolgesinde-kirsal-alan-guvenligi-from-2nd-bc-to-4th-ad-centuries-security-of-rural-region-in-lycia-pamphylia-region . |
| Ramsay, Bishoprics | W. M. Ramsay, The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia I, Oxford 1895. |
| Ramsay, Geography | W. M. Ramsay, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, Amsterdam 1962. |
| Reinach 1908 | Th. Reinach, ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΝ, BCH 32, 1908, 499–513. |
| Robert, Hellenica XIII | L. Robert, Hellenica XIII, Paris 1965. |
| Robert – Robert, Amyzon | J. Robert – L. Robert, Fouilles d'Amizon en Carie, I: Exploration histoire, monnaies et inscriptions, Paris 1983. |
| Robert – Robert, Carie | L. Robert – J. Robert, La Carie II : le plateau de Tabai et ses environs, Paris 1954. |
| Sänger 2010 | P. Sänger, Zur Organisation des Sicherheitswesens im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien und Ägypten. Rezension eines neuen Buches und komparative Studie zur Eirenarchie, Tyche 25, 2010, 99–122. |
| Schuler, Siedlungen | Chr. Schuler, Ländliche Siedlungen und Gemeinden im hellenistischen und römischen Kleinasien, Tübingen 1996. |
| Sterrett, Journey | J. R. S. Sterrett, An Epigraphical Journey in Asia Minor, Boston 1888. |

does not allow us to make a comment regarding the character of the office of *agrophylax* mentioned in the above inscription.

Threatte, Grammar I
Wörrle 1979

L. Threatte, The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions I, Berlin 1980.
M. Wörrle, Epigraphische Forschungen zur Geschichte Lykiens III: Ein hellenistischer Königsbrief aus Telmessos, Chiron 9, 1979, 83–111.

Özet

Agrophylaks Synekdemios'un mezar yazıtı

2002 yılında, başkanlığını Neşe Atık'in yaptığı bir ekip, "TÜBA Denizli-Aydın İlleri Kültür Envanteri Projesi" kapsamında yürütülen yüzey araştırması sırasında, Aydın İli'nin Çine İlçesi'ne bağlı Soğukoluk Köyü Karıncalıkaya Mevkii'nde bulunan Ancin Öreni'nde kayaya oyulmuş bir mezar tespit etmiştir. Mezarın oyulduğu ana kayanın alt kısmında, traşlanarak düzeltilmiş alana kazınmış toplam üç satırdan oluşan bir mezar yazıtı bulunmaktadır. Yazıtın çevirisi "*Agrophylaks* Synekdemios'tan. Güle güle" şeklindedir. Yazıtın önemi metinde geçen *agrophylaks*'lık görevinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Hellenistik Çağ'dan itibaren kentlerin kırsal alan güvenliğinden sorumlu olan *orophylaks*, *diogmites* ve *neaniskos*'luğun yanı sıra; kökleri Roma Çağı'na dayanan ve yine kırsal alan güvenliği için teşkil edilmiş olan *eirenarkhes* ve *paraphylaks*'lık gibi memuriyetler Küçükasya'dan da belgelenen memuriyetlerdir. Muhtemelen ekili köy arazilerinin güvenliğinden sorumlu olan *agrophylaks*'lık ise, şimdiye kadar Küçükasya'dan bilinen bir görev değildi.

Anahtar sözcükler: mezar yazıtı; *agrophylaks*; Karia; güvenlik; kırsal alan.