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A Confession Inscription from the Sanctuary of Zeus at Twin Oaks Rediscovered

In memory of Hasan Malay (1948–2022)

ABSTRACT: In 2013, part of an inscribed stele was auctioned by the international auction house Bonhams. The surviving part of the inscription allows us to identify it with a confession inscription published in 2018 by Hasan Malay. However, Malay only published the text of the inscription based on a copy taken by other epigraphers, which did not record any other information about the stele. Based on the photo from the auction catalogue, above the inscription there is a relief depicting a woman standing next to an altar. In addition, the photograph allows us to make minor corrections to the edition of the text.

KEYWORDS: Auction, confession inscription, Zeus at Twin Oaks, Lydia.

Every year a large number of antiquities are sold by international auction houses and among them the inscribed stele that will be presented here, which originates from the sanctuary of Zeus of the Twin Oaks in Lydia.

The right half of this inscribed stele was auctioned in 2013 by Bonhams auction house.¹ It is a stele with a flat-topped pediment. In a recessed panel above the inscription a relief shows a woman standing next to an altar, partly preserved to her right. The female figure wears a long and pleated chiton with vertical pleats that covers her entire torso and is fastened with a belt under the chest. Over the chiton she wears a pleated himation that falls over the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder and part of the chest uncovered, while it wraps around the torso to the thighs and ends in the figure's left arm. The female figure's hairstyle is characterized by a bulky mass of hair, which covers her ears and opens out in the center and has parallel rectangular waves that are combed to the back of the skull, where they would have been gathered in a chignon. This hairstyle is typical of the early Severan period.² The fragmentary surviving hands of the woman extend to the right towards the altar, on which she was probably offering a libation or an object with her right hand.³ Part of the figure's footwear emerges from the chiton. H 59 cm, W 23 cm. Below the relief there is an inscription of 7 lines, engraved within guidelines that are visible on the right-hand edge.

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I am grateful to Professor Angelos Chaniotis (Institute for Advanced Study) for his comments and James Hua (Oxford) for proofreading the text. The abbreviations of epigraphic publications are those recommended by the Association Internationale d'Épigraphie Grecque et Latine (AIEGL).

¹ Bonhams, *Antiquities*, 1 May 2013, 76, lot. 106 W. Provenance indicated: 'UK private collection. Acquired at auction in London between 1985–1997'. Accessible at: <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/20668/lot/106/a-graeco-roman-marble-votive-stele/>.

² The coiffure of the female figure is similar to that of the Empress Julia Domna; see her bust in the Louvre Museum (Ma 1103) and her statue in the Antalya Archaeological Museum (inv. no. 3268). Cf. Inan – Rosenbaum 1966, 96, no. 83 (private portrait, Nicomedia), 174–175, no. 233 (Claudia Antonia Tatiane, Aphrodisias). See also Ögüş 2014, 139.

³ See e.g. Petzl, *Beichtinschriften* 12.

ΣΕΓΔΙΔΥΜΩΝ
 ΑΣΟΜΕΝΟΣΑΠΟ
 ΥΦΙΛΛΑΝΙΝΑΚΑ
 ΑΠΕΡΕΙΑΠΟΛ
 ΕΙΣΠΕΡΙΘΩΝΣΩ
 ΠΕΔΩΚΕΤΗΔΕ
 ΟΛΟΥΘΗΣΕΚΙ

The surviving part of the inscription allows us to identify it with a so-called confession inscription published in 2018 by Hasan Malay.⁴ Malay's publication was based on a copy of the inscription made by T. Drew-Bear and C. Naour, who discovered this and other inscriptions between 1978 and 1982 in Lydia.⁵ For this inscription, like others copied by Drew-Bear and Naour, only the text has been recorded, with no description of the monument or reference to the site of discovery. Malay's edition is as follows:

Μέγας Ζεὺς ἐγ Διδύμων
 Δρυῶν κολαζόμενος ἀπὸ
 παιδίου Ῥούφιλλαν, ἵνα κα-
 4 ταλούσαται ἱέρεια, πολ-
 λὰς κολάσεις περιθῶν σω-
 φροσύνην ἐπέδωκε· τῇ δὲ
 ἀληθείᾳ ἠκολούθησεν



The sanctuary of Zeus from Twin Oaks (Διὸς ἐγ Διδύμων Δρυῶν) in Lydia is the origin of another five confession inscriptions dating from the end of the 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century AD.⁶ Malay translates: “Great Zeus from Twin Oaks punished Rufilla, concerning a child (or “slave”), in order that she, as a priest [sic], proceeds to an ablution. After he had put on her many punishments, he helped her to prudence; she followed the truth”.⁷ Therefore, he assumes that the punishment of Rufilla consisted in the distress of her child or slave (cf. Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*, 85, ll. 2–4: κολα[σθεῖσα] | ἀπὸ τῶν [ὄφθα]λμῶ[ν ---]). With this punishment the god aimed to compel her to perform the ablution as a priestess. Angelos Chaniotis suggested that ἀπὸ παιδίου may have a temporal meaning and therefore the god punished Rufilla from childhood in order to perform the ablution as a priestess.⁸

Based on the photo of the inscription, the new edition of the text is as follows:

[Μέγας Ζεὺς] ἐγ Διδύμων
 [Δρυῶν κολ]ασόμενος ἀπὸ
 [παιδίου Ῥο]υφίλλαν, ἵνα κα-
 4 [ταλούσατ]αι ἱέρεια, πολ-

⁴ Malay 2018, 99–100, no. 2. See also *SEG* LXVIII 1030, *BE* 2019, no. 431, *AE* 2018, no. 1559, Petzl, *Beichtinschriften Suppl.* 126, Şahin – Öztürk 2021, 156–157, no. 178.

⁵ These copies came to P. Herrmann and with his death in 2002 to G. Petzl, who gave them to Malay.

⁶ Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*, 9 (191/192 AD), 10 (194/195 AD), 11 (263/264 AD), 12 (253/254 AD), Petzl, *Beichtinschriften Suppl.* 125 (202/203 AD).

⁷ Petzl, *Beichtinschriften Suppl.* 126 proposes another translation for ll. 6-7: ‘wahrhaftig (LSJ, s.v. ἀλήθεια I 2) aber folgte sie (sc. der σωφροσύνη)’.

⁸ *EBGR* 2018, 267, no. 62.

[λάς κολάσ]εις περιθῶν σω-
 [φροσύνην ἐ]πέδωκε· τῆ δὲ
 [ἀληθεία ἠκ]ολούθησε Κ.
 [-----]

The published photograph of this inscription allows two small corrections. First, in L. 2 we read κολασόμενος and not κολαζόμενος. This should not be understood as a future form, but as an irregular aorist form, as e.g. in two other confession inscriptions, which have ἐκολασόμην (for ἐκολασάμην; Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*, 5) and ἐκολάσοντο (for ἐκολάσαντο; Petzl, *Beichtinschriften*, 16). Second, in L. 7 the letter following the E of ἠκολούθησε is not a N, but a K, after which traces of two vertical lines (an H?) are visible. Therefore, the text continued in at least another line. As all the other inscriptions from the same sanctuary, this inscription too must have mentioned a date at the end of the text (see n. 7).

In the *editio princeps* Hasan Malay noted:

‘Considering that nobody would have the right of hiding new discoveries from scholars of epigraphy and history for about forty years, I have decided to publish here the – admittedly provisional – copies of five confession inscriptions and the lost lower part of the decree of Mysoi Abaitai (*SEG* 53, 1357) which are thus saved from being hidden for further decades – or even forever’.

Paying tribute to Malay’s effort to protect monuments from oblivion through their publication, I express the hope that this article will contribute to the repatriation of this stele.

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İkiz Meşeler’deki Zeus Tapınağı’na Ait Yeniden Ortaya Çıkan Bir Kefaret Yazıtı

Öz: 2013 yılında, yazıtlı stelin bir kısmı uluslararası müzayede evi Bonhams tarafından açık artırmaya çıkarılmıştı. Yazıtın günümüze ulaşan kısmı, onun 2018 yılında Hasan Malay tarafından yayımlanan bir kefarete yazıtıyla özdeşleştirilmesini sağlamaktadır. Ancak Malay, başka epigraflar tarafından alınan ve stel hakkında başka herhangi bir bilgi kaydetmeyen bir kopyaya dayanarak sadece yazıt metnini yayınlamıştı. Müzayede kataloğundaki fotoğrafa göre, yazıtın üst kısmında bir sunağın yanında duran bir kadın kabartması bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca fotoğraf, metnin edisyonunda küçük düzeltmeler yapma imkânı da sunmaktadır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Müzayede, Kefarete Yazıtı, İkiz Meşeler’deki Zeus, Lydia.