

A DEDICATION OF THE PRAESES DYSCOLIUS FROM LAODIKEIA ON THE LYKOS

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THE city of Laodikeia¹ on the western border of the ancient region of Phrygia is located some 6 km to the northeast of Denizli and remains within the borders of Eskihisar, Goncali, Korucuk and Bozburun Quarters (old villages) affiliated to the provincial centre.² Located in the middle of the Lykos (Çürüksu) Valley, this important city was established by the Seleucid King Antiochus II (261-246 BC) and named after his wife Queen Laodice in the midst of the 3rd century BC (261-253 BC).³ According to the ancient sources (Plin. *nat.* v 105; Strab. XII 8, 16), the Hellenistic city was located on an ancient holy settlement called Diospolis and Rhoas.⁴

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¹ The excavations in the Ancient City of Laodikeia, carried on since 2003, have been led by Prof. Dr. Celal Şimşek on behalf of the Pamukkale University, with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey and with the decision of the Council of Ministers.

² As more than one Laodikeia was established in the Hellenistic Period, the city was distinguished by the river next to it and called Laodikeia *ad Lycum* (Laodikeia on the Lykos). See W. Ruge, s.v. *Laodikeia*, in *RE* XII 1, 1924, 722; J. des Gagniers, *Introduction historique*, in J. des Gagniers - P. Devambeze - L. Kahil - R. Ginouviès, *Laodicée du Lycos. Le Nymphée. Campagnes 1961-1963*, Québec-Paris 1969, 1; G. Traversari, *La situazione viaria di Lodicea alla luce degli itinerari romani*, in *Laodicea di Frigia I*, Roma 2000, 11; G. Weber, *Die Flüsse von Laodicea*, *MDAI(A)* 23, 1898, 178-195, 178-179; V. Sevin, *Anadolu'nun Tarihi Coğrafyası I*, Ankara 2001, 203.

³ W.M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Oxford 1895, 32; B. Head, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Phrygia*, *BMC, Greek Coins*, London 1906, lxxiii; Id., *Historia Numorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, London 1911, 678; Ruge, s.v. *Laodikeia*, cit., 722; de Gagniers, *Introduction*, cit., 1-2; C. Texier, *Küçük Asya, Coğrafyası, Tarihi ve Arkeolojisi*, Cilt II, (Çev. K.Y. Koprıman), Ankara 2002, 383; G. Bejor, *Per una ricerca di Laodicea ellenistica*, in *Laodicea di Frigia I*, cit., 15-23, 15-16; G.E. Bean, *Turkey Beyond The Maeander. An Archaeological Guide*, London 1980², 213; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor, to the end of the third century after Christ*, Princeton 1950, 127, 986-987, n. 23; J.G.C. Anderson, *A Summer in Phrygia: I*, *JHS* 17, 1897, 396-424, 409-410; *MAMA* VI, p. x; K. Belke - N. Mersich, *Phrygien und Pisidien*, *TIB*, 7 (DAWW 211), Wien 1990, 323.

⁴ Texier, *Küçük Asya*, cit., 383-384; Head, *Catalogue*, cit., lxxiii; Ruge, s.v. *Laodikeia*, cit., 722; Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics*, cit., 35; de Gagniers, *Introduction*, cit., 1; Belke - Mersich, *Phrygien und Pisidien*, cit., 323; Bean, *Turkey Beyond The Maeander*, cit., 213. Diospolis means 'the city of Zeus' and the principal god of the city was Zeus Laodiceus. Rhoas was an ancient Anatolian name. Potteries, flint, and obsidian instruments dated to the Late Chalcolithic Period - the Early Bronze Age were found at the end of our excavations at Asopos Hill I-II in the west part of the ancient city (see C. Şimşek, *Laodikeia (Laodikeia ad Lycum)*, İstanbul 2007, 33, 55; Id., *2007 Yılı Laodikeia Antik Kenti Kazısı*, in 28. *KST I*, Ankara 2007, 455-478, 455-456, Image 2; Id., *2007 Yılı Laodikeia Antik Kenti Kazısı*, in 30. *KST II*, Ankara 2009, 409-436, 409-411; Id., *2009 Yılı Laodikeia Antik Kenti Kazıları*, in 32. *KST III*, Ankara 2010, 447-474, 447-450). In addition, our finding of black-slipped pottery, obtained in the west of the city (4th century BC), and of coins, dated to the 4th century BC, during the excavations of the Northern Necropolis allows us to verify the information provided by Plinius. On the other hand, the necropolis area of the

It held a strategic position at the intersection of the main roads connecting Western, Central and Southern Anatolia. The most important incomes of the city derived from trade, particularly textiles.⁵ Founded in conformity with a Hippodamian plan,⁶ the ancient city was surrounded by rivers on three sides: the Lykos (Çürüksu) flowed to its northeast, the Kapros (Başlıçay) flowed to its southeast, and Asopos (Gümüşçay) to its southwest-west.⁷ The ancient city was established on a high natural platform bordered by these rivers (FIG. 1). The city flourished between the 1st and the 3rd centuries AD, and its second zenith was during the rapid spread of Christianity in the region between the 4th and the 6th centuries AD. The city, which became the capital city of Phrygia in the second heyday, was also a centre of Christianity, as demonstrated by the fact that it had one of the most ancient Seven Churches of Anatolia.

After several destruction events the city was moved to the Denizli-Kaleici to the south and to the wetlands on the skirts of Babadağ (Salbakos), such as Hisarkoy and Asartepe, following the last major earthquake during the reign of Emperor Focas (602-610 AD).⁸

In the campaign of 2007, the archaeological team of the University of Pamukkale (Denizli), directed by Prof. Dr. Celal Şimşek, found the imprint of an inscription on the ground of the southwest *stoa* of the so-called Temple A (FIG. 2). The monument bearing the text, namely a base supporting a statue, was reused during the Byzantine empire and got lost afterwards.

The base (surface 49 x 69 cm) had moldings at the bottom. On the inscribed face the letters are carved on four lines that occupy only one third of the superior part.

Letters (4,5 cm, interlinear space 3,5 cm): *alpha* with broken bar, *theta* with central bar cutting the circle in two, four bars *sigma*, *omega* with separate bar at the bottom.

Writing is not accurate. Circular letters have irregular shape and dimensions.

Early Bronze Age was first determined on the western bank of River Asopos during the excavations in 2010; slipped and unpainted vessel sherds with geometric red ochre paint decorations, dated to the Early Chalcolithic Period, were discovered there. So far, the finds belonging to the earliest settlements of the Lykos Valley have been unearthed in this area.

⁵ The excavations carried on in Laodikeia for eight years have demonstrated that trade connected with marble, live animals, wine and food products was significant, along with textile.

⁶ The *insulae*, divided by cross streets, on both sides of Suriye Avenue are 42x51m in dimension.

⁷ The Rivers Asopos and Kapros join the River Lykos in the north beneath Korucuk Quarter. Later on, River Lykos joins the Great Meander River near Sarayköy Town in the west.

⁸ C. Şimşek, 2003 Yılı Laodikeia Antik Kenti Kazısı, in 26 KST 1, Ankara 2005, 305-320, 310, 312-313; Id., 2004 Yılı Laodikeia Antik Kenti Kazısı, in 27. KST 1, Ankara 2006, 419-434, 420-424, 426; C. Şimşek - A. Ceylan, Laodikeia'da Tespit Edilen Bir Deprem ve Diocletianus'a İthaf Edilen Bir Yazıt (Lykos Laodikeia'sı), «Archivum Anatolicum» 6, Sayı 1, 2003, 147- 163, 155; C. Şimşek - M. Büyükkolancı, Laodikeia Antik Kenti Su Kaynakları ve Dağıtım Sistemi, «Adalya» 9, 2006, 83-103, 91. One of the greatest impacts on this move is the fact that the plain cities in Western Anatolia were exposed to the Sassanid raids as of the 5th century AD and to the Arab raids as of the 7th century AD.

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- 1) Asopos I-II
- 2) House A
- 3) House A East Street
- 4) Temple A
- 5) Temple A East Street
- 6) Stadium
- 7) Laodikeia's Church
- 8) North Theatre's Church
- 9) East Necropolis
- 10) Centre Church

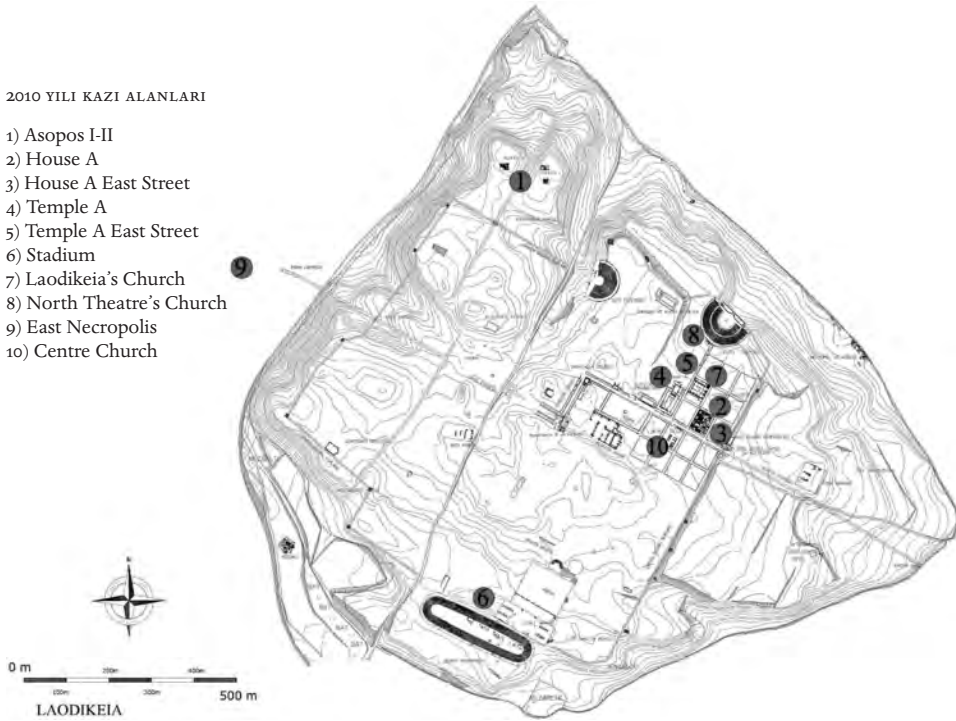


FIG. 1 - Laodikeia's map.

ΗΓΕΜΟΝΩΝΟΧΑΡΙΣΤΟΣ
 . ΜΟΥΠΕΡΙΚΑΛΛΕΣΑΓΑΛΜΑ
 ΑΡΤΕΜΙΔΟΣ ΑΣ
 ΑΝΘΕΤΟ ΔΥΣΚΟΛΙΟΣ

Ἡγεμόνων ὄχ' ἄριστος
 [ἐ]μοῦ περικαλλές ἄγαλμα
 Ἀρτέμιδος [...].ας
 ἄνθετο Δυσκόλιος.

Ἡγεμόνων ὄχ' ἄριστος | [ἐ]μοῦ περικαλλές ἄγαλμα
 Ἀρτέμιδος [...].ας | ἄνθετο Δυσκόλιος.

Dyscolius, by far the best of the governors, dedicated the wonderful statue of me, Artemis (?).

The text is an elegiac distich: the first two lines form the hexameter, the last two the pentameter. Each line represents a colon; each colon is a sense-unit. Two syllables are missing at line 3 (in the first colon of the pentameter).

The inscription is a dedication. The language shows Homeric and archaic expressions, such as *och'aristos* in line 1 and *perikalles agalma* in line 2.

L. 1: we will return to the term *hegemon* later in order to check if it has a technical or a generic meaning.



FIG. 2 - Laodikeia, Temple A (view from South).

ὄχ' ἄριστος: the adverb ὄχα is used only as an intensive of the superlative ἄριστος. The expression is well attested in the Homeric poems, e.g. in the invocation to the Muse at the end of the Catalogue of the Ships (*Ilias* II 761), introducing the brief 'Catalogue of the horses'.⁹

περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα: the formula is attested in archaic dedications, some of which preserved in literary

texts (Hdt. v 60 f.). The term *agalma* refers to the statue: it commonly entails the dedication to a deity. The meaning of 'votive offering' descends from the original sense of the word, that indicates an 'object to be offered to a deity'.¹⁰ The formula is always placed in the clause of the hexameter.¹¹

The dedication fits into the general pattern of the speaking object, widely attested in archaic inscriptions as well as in Late Antiquity. Three inscriptions from Aphrodisias attest a similar formula. Nrr. 17 and 18, «which were clearly intended to be read as part of a sequence of texts, indicate that Helladius was responsible for building or restoration of the Hadrianic baths, which seem to have been the focus of a good deal of activity throughout the late Roman period for the archaic, or at least archaizing, flavour»: ¹² both use the pronoun in crasi with the conjunction: καὶ μὲ.

L. 2 begins with the personal pronoun [ἐ]μοῦ. The goddess Artemis alludes to her statue and quotes her own epithet, which is not preserved. It ends with -as, and can be integrated Πυθίας, as attested in Didyma. If the author of the epigram, presumably the same person that dedicated the votive offering, was to be identified with a pupil – or a friend – of the philosopher Iamblichus, there would be no surprise if he showed a special veneration for Pythian gods (see below). The length of the lacuna, hardly comprising four letters, and metrical reasons make the integration Ἐφεσσίας more difficult to accept: specifically, the number of syl-

⁹ On Homeric Formula, see J. Russo, *The Formula*, in I. Morris - B. Powell (Eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Mnemosyne Suppl. 163), Leiden-New York-Köln 1997, 238-260. On the use of Homer and Homeric quotations by Greek intellectuals since the time of the so-called Second Sophistic, especially in the field of the rhetoric, see J.F. Kindstrand, *Homer in der Zweiten Sophistic* (Studia Graeca Upsaliensia 7), Uppsala 1973.

¹⁰ M.L. Lazzarini, *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica* (MAL ser. VIII 19.2), Roma 1976, 95-98.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹² Ch. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (hereafter abbreviated ALA and quoted from the updated on-line edition), <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/ala2004/narrative/sec-II.html#II.35>.

lables (three) and the synalephe at the end of the colon of the pentameter would create a verse of a low-level by comparison with the others. Nevertheless, the discovery of a statue of the Ephesia, nearby the place in which the impressed inscription was found, might lead us to prefer this epithet.

A letter, preserved in two different papyri, attests the genitive of the name Dyscolius (*Dyscoli*), with all likelihood the name of a governor or a high official of Syria in the years 317-324. Our text shows beyond doubts that the correct name was Dyscolius, not Dyscolus as proposed by both editors of the above mentioned papyri. The authors of the *PLRE* spelt the name correctly, at the same time indicating two persons bearing that name. The second one is the «dedicatee of a book by,



FIG. 3 - The imprint of the inscription of Dyscolius.

and presumably disciple of, Iamblichus 1», quoted by Stobaeus (*ecl.* iv 5, 74 f.). The authors of *PLRE* add that «he (i.e. Dyscolius 2) might be identical with Dyscolius 1, particularly since the fragment of Iamblichus cited by Stobaeus concerns the qualities of a good ἄρχων» (*PLRE* I, p. 275). The identification of both Dyscolius 1) and 2) fits well into the context of Syria under the reign of the emperor Licinius. Iamblichus taught many pupils in Apameia or, as J. Vanderspoel suggested, «at a resort named Daphne near the head-waters of the Jordan». ¹³ One of Iamblichus' pupils bears the name Iulianus. Following on the footsteps of Vanderspoel, he might be identified with Iulius Iulianus, the maternal grandfather of the future emperor Julian. Iulius Iulianus became the *praefectus praetorio* of Licinius. After his defeat at Chrysopolis in 324, Constantine became master of the East, but he confirmed the *praefectus praetorio* in his office as a sign of appreciation of his administration. Iulius Iulianus shared the interest in philosophy and culture with many high officials of his time. As Pierfrancesco Porena noted, Constantine fos-

¹³ J. Vanderspoel, *Correspondence and Correspondents of Julius Julianus*, «Byzantion» 69, 1999, 396-478, p. 444, see also p. 445: «Here (i.e. at Apamea), or at Daphne, or both, the philosopher taught many pupils, including [...], Dyscolius, [...]».



FIG. 4 - The imprint of the inscription (detail).

bureaucracy, educated at the 'neo-platonic' school of Iamblichus and good versifier, in similarity with the figure of other cultivated prefects.¹⁵

The authors of *PLRE* claimed that Dyscolius held the office of «? governor of Syria ? a. 323», rejecting the hypothesis of Roberts and Turner, who considered Dyscolius the *praefectus praetorio per Orientem* in the period between 317 and 324.¹⁶ A letter of Vitalis, the *rationalis* of the Hermopolite, preserved in two copies and addressed to two different officials, *i.e.* Achillius, probably the *praeses* of Syria, and Delphinus, possibly a high official of Egypt, confirms the higher position of Dyscolius in the imperial administration.

It is safe to assume that he occupied a higher office, as he might have been the governor of a more important province or even the vicarius of the *praefectus praetorio per Orientem*.

The text from Laodikeia confirms that Dyscolius took part in the administration of the empire in a relevant position. He bears the title of *hegemon*. Even though the title appears in a poetic context, it seems safer to interpret it in the technical sense of *praeses*, instead of considering it as simply referring to a high official.

¹⁴ See P. Porena, *Trasformazioni istituzionali e assetti sociali: i prefetti del pretorio tra III e IV secolo*, in R. Lizzi Testa (a cura di), *Le trasformazioni delle élites in età tardoantica*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Perugia, 15-16 marzo 2004 (Saggi di Storia Antica 28), Roma 2006, 325-356.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 348, n. 49: «Costantino, divenuto signore dell'Oriente, valorizzò uomini come il prefetto Iulianus e come Sopatro, allievi di Giamblico, e, probabilmente, esponenti di rilievo delle aristocrazie cittadine orientali. E valorizzò altre figure di prefetti del pretorio colti: il potente Ablabius che fu autore di gustosi epigrammi, pur non provenendo da una famiglia della nobiltà cittadina».

¹⁶ C.H. Roberts - E.G. Turner (Eds.), *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*. IV. *Documents of the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods (Nos. 552-717)*, Manchester 1952, 113, n. 623, and the historical discussion, pp. 104-107.

tered the career of some cultivated members of the eastern urban *élite*.¹⁴

Our Dyscolius was probably a member of this *élite*, sharing its cultural interests. As our dedication proves, he venerated the old gods. If we may identify him with both the high official, attested in the two papyri already mentioned (*PLRE* 1), and the dedicatee of the book of Iamblichus (*PLRE* 2), he perfectly incarnates the image of a member of the imperial

The place in which the ‘ghost-base’ was discovered, that is, within a temple dedicated to the cult of the emperors, furthermore, favors the hypothesis of a dedication made by a high official.

Again, a parallel is to be found in Aphrodisias, where an honorary epigram for a governor, whose name was Helladius, records the same title.¹⁷ As Roueché puts it, «Helladius therefore probably held office in the early or middle fourth century».¹⁸

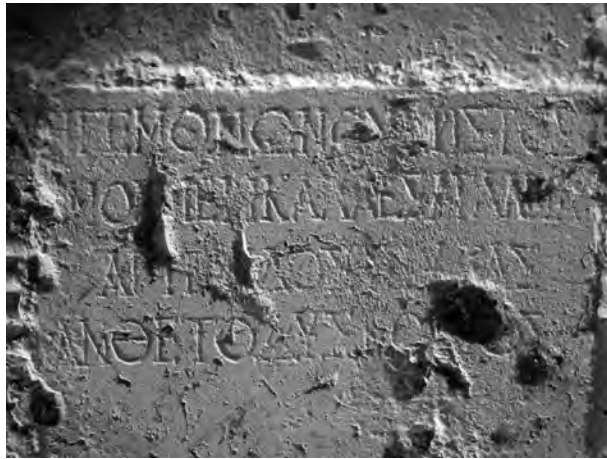


FIG. 5 - The imprint of the inscription (specular).

The date of Dyscolius is hard to define, due to the absence of any mention of the province in which he held his office. We do not know if he administered the province of Phrygia or the joint province of Phrygia and Caria.

Recent findings in Temple A at Laodikeia revealed the name of another governor who held the office of *praeses Frygiae* under the reign of Diocletian, namely Septimius Dionysius.

At the state of our evidence, it is impossible to put Dyscolius within a sequence with the other *praeses* mentioned in the unpublished Laodikeia's inscriptions. Septimius Dionysius dedicated a base to (Maximianus) Herculus. But other fragmentary inscriptions attest at least another dedication, possibly addressed to the Iovius Diocletian. He held the office of *praeses Frygiae* under the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, but the mention of plural *Iovii and Herculii* probably refers to the tetrarchs. This indicates that the date of Septimius Dionysius' office must be placed after the institution of the tetrarchy in 293. This being the case, Phrygia and Caria did not belong to a united province at least after 293. Following the hypothesis of Roueché, one might date the division slightly after 301.

Dyscolius' office did not take place later than the last persecutions of the Christians in the East, under Maximinus Daia (313), or in the last years of the reign of Licinius (before 324). The dedication to a pagan deity by a high official is inconceivable after the final victory of Constantine on Licinius in 324. This date has already been considered as the *terminus ante quem* for other relevant documents mentioning Dyscolius, such as the letters attested in the Strasbourg Papyrus and in the Rylands Papyrus quoted above.

¹⁷ «The other benefactor who appears to be dateable to this period is Helladius, clearly a governor – ἡγεμῶν – of Caria», Roueché, *ALA*, <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/alaz004/narrative/sec-II.html#II.35>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Dyscolius' dedication seems to confirm the polemical reaction of Rudolf Haensch¹⁹ to the groundless statements of Roueché, who claimed that «it is highly likely that Aphrodisias was the capital of the joint province of Caria and Phrygia, established in the 250s».²⁰

The new findings in Laodikeia show beyond any doubt the relevance of the city and make it a suitable candidate to the role of a main administrative center of the province.

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ABSTRACT

In the 2007 excavation campaign of Laodikeia on the Lykos, the archaeological team of the University of Pamukkale found the imprint of an inscription on the ground of the southwest *stoa* of the so-called Temple A. The text is an elegiac distich which accompanied a dedication of a statue of Artemis erected by Dyscolius, a high official of the eastern administration of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Constantinian Era.

KEY-WORDS: Dyscolius, governor, Late Antiquity, Laodikeia on the Lykos, Artemis.

¹⁹ R. Haensch, *Capita provinciarum. Statthaltersitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Mainz am Rhein 1997, 297, n. 199.

²⁰ Roueché, *ALA*, <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/alaz004/narrative/sec-II.html#II.3>.

NOTE CRITICHE