

Hair Dedication in Caria: An Inscribed Blade from Stratonikeia

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AN INSCRIBED BRONZE BLADE belongs to the private collection of Ms. Berna Oğuz in Izmir. This artefact was purchased by her at the beginning of 2017 and registered at the Museum Directorship of Izmir on 9 March 2017 with the inventory no. 416 (*fig. 1*).¹ It was said by the owner to have been found in a tomb in Alabanda, ca. 38 km. northwest of Stratonikeia (map 1).

This fine and slim object, a slightly bent bronze blade (length 82 mm., height 30, thickness 1.2–1.7; *fig. 2*), was probably used as a razor to cut hair, to judge from similar archaeological finds dating from the Roman Imperial period, or even earlier.² Its probable wooden handle would have disappeared. It has two sides (A-B) inscribed inversely: points are used to shape letters of two different short Greek texts, three lines on the side A and five on the side B.

Height of the letters ca. 5 mm. Sigmas are lunate, indicating rather the end of the Hellenistic period or the beginning of Roman imperial times (*c.* second-first century B.C.E.), amongst other clues based on onomastics and religious context (see below).

¹ We would like to thank Ms Berna Oğuz for permission to publish and for the photographs. We also thank our colleagues Professors Kent Rigsby, David D. Leitao, and Claude Brixhe for their remarks. We are grateful to the anonymous peer-reviewer of the paper for his/her critical reading, evaluation, and input in our manuscript. We also thank Dr. Sami Patacı (Ardahan) and Dr. Gülseren Kan Şahin (Sinop) for their help with the figures.

² G. C. Boon, “‘Tonsor humanus’: Razor and Toilet-knife in Antiquity,” *Britannia* 22 (1991) 25, *fig. 3b*.



Map 1. Western Asia Minor
Underlining indicates the local archaeological museums
(by S. Patacı, 2018)

Side A (*fig. 1.a*):

Παιόνιος
Διονυσίου
Ἱεροκωμ(ήτ)ου.

Paionios, son of Dionysios from Hierokome.

L. 1: the left *hasta* of Π is shorter than the right one (which is regularly shorter in Hellenistic inscriptions); the fourth letter is omicron, though we expect omega, the normal personal name Παιώνιος; the nu shows a right *hasta* not fully descended.

L. 3: the fourth letter is a suspended omicron; after the mu, the carving causes hesitation, but surely it is an abbreviation before the final genitive OY.

The shape of the letters on side A indicates a Hellenistic date, ca. second century B.C.E., earlier than the *ductus* visible on side B of the blade. Παίωνιος was a common name in Caria, for example attested in Panamara in upper-class families who supplied priests to the sanctuary.³ The patronym Διονύσιος is of course very frequent. Hierakome is the well-known deme of Carian Stratonikeia,⁴ frequently attested (and most often abbreviated IE) in the inscriptions of Lagina and Panamara.



Fig. 1: Inscribed blade from Stratonikeia (© Berna Oğuz, 2017)

³ *I.Stratonikeia* 174. Otherwise see *LGN V.B* 338: the name Παίωνιος is attested during the second century B.C.E. in Stratonikeia (and during the first century B.C.E. in this city), Miletos, Iasos, Mylasa, and Olymos; but also in Koliorga in 31 B.C.E. We could find few occurrences during the imperial period. For Ionia, Lydia, and Troas see *LGN V.A* 353.

⁴ Concerning the historical geography of Stratonikeia see n.6 below.



Fig. 2: Inscribed blade, side views (© Berna Oğuz, 2017)

Side B (*fig. 1.b*):

Στρατοκλήης
 Θέωνος τοῦ
 Στρατοκλείου
 Κολιοργεύς
 ν(εανίσκος) ἐ(ν) Κ(ομυρίοις).

Stratokles, son of Theon, son of Stratokles, from Koliorga,
 young man at the Komyria.

The demotic/ethnikon Κολιοργεύς gives us a precise geographical and historical context for this object: Koliorga is a well-attested site close to Stratonikeia.⁵ According to P. Debord, Koliorga was a city during the fourth century B.C.E. like Hierakome of side A) and became a civic deme of Stratonikeia, i.e. a part of its territory, under Seleukid rule in the third century B.C.E.⁶ During Hellenistic and Roman times, the demotic

⁵ L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen* (Heidelberg 1984) 276, no. 552; Ç. Şahin, “A Carian and Three Greek Inscriptions from Stratonikeia,” *ZPE* 39 (1980) 211–212, no. 3 [*AE* 1997, 1467; 2001, 1910].

⁶ P. Debord, “Essai de géographie historique sur la région de Stratonicee,”

Κολιοργεύς is repeatedly attested in the dedications and other inscriptions carved in the famous sanctuaries of Hekate at Lagina⁷ and of Zeus Panamaros at Panamara,⁸ both in the territory of Stratonikeia.

Most of the dedications discovered in those sanctuaries were made by people bearing classical Greek and Macedonian names. On side B of this blade, we find Stratokles, son of Theon, son of Stratokles, a patronym and a papponym, so that we can observe a traditional Greek social practice of a man bearing the name of his grandfather. A person called Στρατοκλής is known in Lagina as father of Tiberius Flavius Diokles, in connection with the two mentioned sanctuaries, while another also in Lagina is the father of the high priest Menandros.⁹ The name Θέων appears at least once in Lagina in a dedication to Hekate during the first century B.C.E., and later in Koliorga (first-second century A.D.).¹⁰

in M.-M. Mactoux and E. Gény (eds.), *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque II* (Besançon 1994) 107–121, esp. 110–113; and M. Ç. Şahin, *The Political and Religious Structure in the Territory of Stratonikeia in Caria* (Ankara 1978). Cf. M. Ç. Şahin, *I.Stratonikeia* 1030; J. and L. Robert, *Bull.épigr.* 1981, 520; P. Gauthier, *Bull.épigr.* 1998, 397; R. van Bremen, “The Demes and Phylai of Stratonikeia in Karia,” *Chiron* 30 (2000) 389–401 (cf. *SEG* L 1125 and 1126); P. Gauthier, *Bull.épigr.* 2002, 382; P. Gauthier and C. Brixhe, *Bull.épigr.* 2005, 437.

⁷ E.g. *I.Stratonikeia* 659: regularly with an abbreviation as Κο(λιοργεύς), e.g. *I.Stratonikeia* 681.

⁸ E.g. *I.Stratonikeia* 123. Panamara was first identified by French scholars in 1886, whose evidence was mostly based on epigraphy. H. Oppermann, *Zeus Panamaros* (Giessen 1924), describes for the first time the priesthood, three festivals, as well as minor rites associated with Zeus Panamaros. See also T. Drew-Bear and T. Schwertfeger, “Zur Topographie und Epigraphik von Panamara in Karien,” *ZPE* 36 (1979) 195–196.

⁹ *I.Stratonikeia* 664 and 524. See also, in Panamara, *I.Stratonikeia* 15 and 193 (dedication carved under the “familial” priest Tiberius Flavius Menandros, son of Stratokles, from Koliorga, in Hadrian’s reign); cf. A. Laumonier, “Recherches sur la chronologie des prêtres de Lagina,” *BCH* 62 (1938) 267). For attestations of the name Στρατοκλής in Caria see *LGN* V.B 390; for other examples in Anatolia, V.A 411.

¹⁰ *I.Stratonikeia* 510 and 1431. For attestations of the name Θέων in Caria

The abbreviation NEK in line 5 seems to be intended for a known purpose. In order to propose its expansion, we need to decide the use of this blade. First, we of course thought of a tool in religious ritual, which quickly was recognized as a razor used to cut hair. Then we logically connected the object to the well-known tradition concerning the cult of Zeus Panamaros:¹¹ some young men used to offer and dedicate their hair to the divinity in his most sacred area called the *Komyrion*, very probably on the occasion of the *Komyria* festival.¹² Given this documented ritual context, we propose to expand the end of the abbreviation as ἐ(ν) Κ(ομυρίους).¹³ The first letter has probably to be expanded

see *LGPN* V.B 200; for other examples in Anatolia, V.A 219.

¹¹ See for instance Oppermann, *Zeus Panamaros*; P. Roussel, “Les mystères de Panamara,” *BCH* 51 (1927) 123–137, esp. 136, where the author thinks that most of epigraphic documents date from the second century A.D.; P. Debord, “Religion et société: les fêtes d’Hécate et de Zeus à Stratonicee de Carie,” in J. Dalaison (ed.), *Espaces et pouvoirs dans l’Antiquité de l’Anatolie à la Gaule. Hommages à Bernard Rémy* (Grenoble 2007) 239–250 (cf. *SEG* LVII 1105); R. van Bremen, “La communauté de Panamara entre Rhodes et Stratonicee de Carie: autour de la date d’un décret des Panamaréens dans le Fonds Louis Robert,” *CRAI* 2008, 1405–1420; N. Belayche, “La vie religieuse dans les cités de l’Anatolie romaine. 2. Stratonicee de Carie,” *Annuaire de l’Ecole pratique des hautes études* 116 (2009) 161–169, and “‘Un dieu est né...’ à Stratonicee de Carie (*I Stratonikeia* 10),” in C. Batsch and M. Vartejanu-Joubert (eds.), *Manières de penser dans l’Antiquité méditerranéenne et orientale. Mélanges offerts à Francis Schmidt* (Leiden 2009) 193–212.

¹² G. Deschamps and G. Cousin, “Inscriptions du temple de Zeus Panamaros. La consécration de la chevelure,” *BCH* 12 (1888) 479–490; M. Girone, “Una particolare offerta di chiome,” *EpigrAnat* 35 (2003) 21–42, with an inventory of the dedications (cf. *SEG* LIII 1263); D. D. Leitao, “Adolescent Hair-growing and Hair-cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece: A Sociological Approach,” in D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (eds.), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives* (London/New York 2003) 109–129 (cf. *SEG* LIII 2231). See for Panamara *I.Stratonikeia* 405, 412, 417, 428, 434, 444–445, 449–450, 483, 489–491, 545, 1263, 1414.

¹³ The formula is very frequent in the inscriptions of Panamara: see for example *I.Stratonikeia* 42 for a hair dedication, but also 183, 185, 192. We should also however consider ἐ(ν) Κ(ομυρίω), which is less frequent (203, 207, 311).

ν(εανίσκος): the word is well attested in Panamara for a hair dedication,¹⁴ and in Caria we know for example νεανίσκοι in Apollonia Salbakè and Kaunos.¹⁵

This inscribed blade was probably consecrated in Panamara at the Komyrion, on the hill of Bağyaka located ca. 12 km. south-east of Stratonikeia,¹⁶ between the second century B.C.E. and the second century A.D. The name of the divinity is not engraved on the blade, on the one hand because we can read the abbreviation NEK, on the other because the ritual object could have been put in a stele-box including the offered hair and covered by a stone plate bearing the detailed dedication, or put in a tomb.¹⁷ The ritual oblation was performed by men coming mainly from local civic elites, closely connected with the priests of Zeus Panamaros and Hekate, a fact generally confirmed by their traditional Greek and Macedonian names inherited from Classical and Hellenistic times. The young men, as *neaniskoi/neoi*, may have been primarily concerned, but regularly fathers, brothers, or other male family members were associated to the ritual:¹⁸ that is why it is not surprising to find a blade inscribed for two different persons, probably coming from the same family using the same blade on two different occasions (side A: end of Hellenistic period; side B: beginning of Roman imperial times). One may find sometimes *threptoi*¹⁹ or slaves as dedicants, but very

¹⁴ *I.Stratonikeia* 412.1–2, κόμαι ν[εανίσ]κων.

¹⁵ L. and J. Robert, *La Carie* II 162; Chr. Marek, *I.Kaunos* 139.III.C.14. On the νεανίσκοι see notably G. Sacco, “Sui neaniskoi dell’età ellenistica,” *RivFil* 107 (1979) 39–49; E. Cantarella, “‘Neaniskoi’. Classi di età e passaggi di status nel diritto ateniese,” *MEFRA* 102 (1990) 37–51; R. van Bremen, “Les *neoi* dans le monde hellénistique,” *ACF* 112 (2013) 864–866.

¹⁶ Cf. A. Laumonier, “Archéologie carienne,” *BCH* 60 (1936) 324–327, and *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958) 221–227.

¹⁷ For a description of the suggested device (“petit coffret de pierre, ayant la forme d’une stèle”) see Deschamps and Cousin, *BCH* 12 (1888) 479–480.

¹⁸ See for example *I.Stratonikeia* 449, 456, 474.

¹⁹ See *I.Stratonikeia* 409 and 473.

probably in the sphere of upper-class families.²⁰

Because of the features briefly described here, we shall argue for assigning the initial oblation ritual to ancient Carian religious practices, which later made sense for the Greco-Macedonian communities who ruled over Stratonikeia's territory and populations from the third century B.C.E. into Roman imperial times, thanks to an adaptation to Greek *rites de passage* concerning young men, and to the ephebic education. The civic elites of Stratonikeia, conservative and jealous of their power, maintained this ancient ritual for their families during the Roman imperial era, as they were accustomed to hold priesthoods διὰ γένους.²¹

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²⁰ Cf. S. Dmitriev, *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford 2005) 170.

²¹ *I.Stratonikeia* 193, 194, 1316.