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HONORIFIC STATUE BASE FOR THE DEMOS OF THE MYLASEANS AT EUROMOS

ABUZER KIZIL, LINDA TALATAS AND DIDIER LAROCHE

The new discovery of an inscribed base (Fig. 1) for a bronze statue at the foot of the temple of Zeus Lepsynos¹ at Euromos promises to shed more light on the relations between the ancient city of Euromos and the nearby city of Mylasa.



Figure 1: Statue base in its restored position. Photo: L. Talatas.

¹ The research for this paper was carried out with the permission of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

This article focuses on the statue base, but the chronology of the temple will need to be discussed in a later publication, as several elements indicate that the temple predates the Roman Imperial period.

Architect D. Laroche and archaeologist Dr. L. Talatas discovered the monument during the inventory of the temple blocks (catalogue no. 576), among a deposit created by Prof. Dr. Ümit Serdaroğlu's restoration work in 1970. The stone was turned over in a position which was hiding most of the inscription.

The large reorganization campaign of the architectural elements of the temple led in September 2019 by Doç. Dr. Abuzer Kızıl, Euromos excavation director, enabled the identification of the monument, and its replacing in its original position, very close to its finding spot.

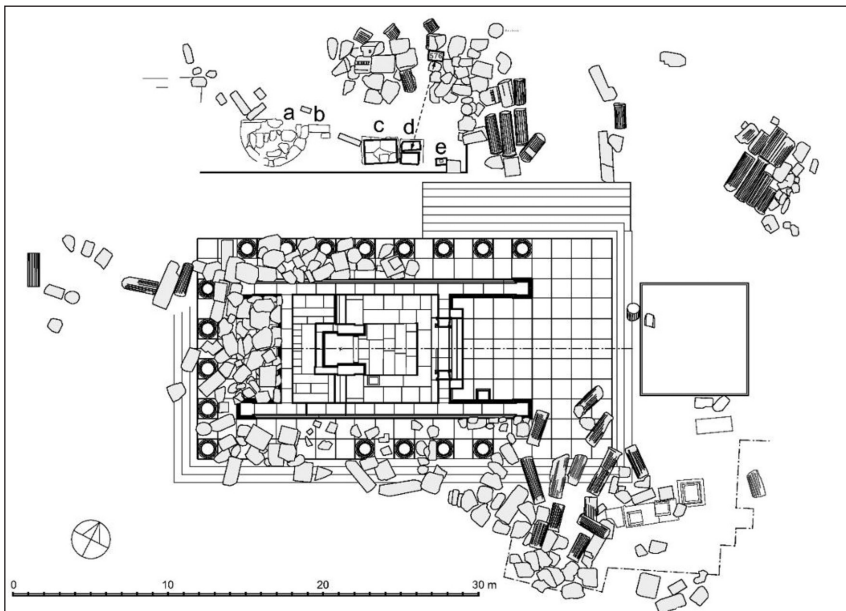
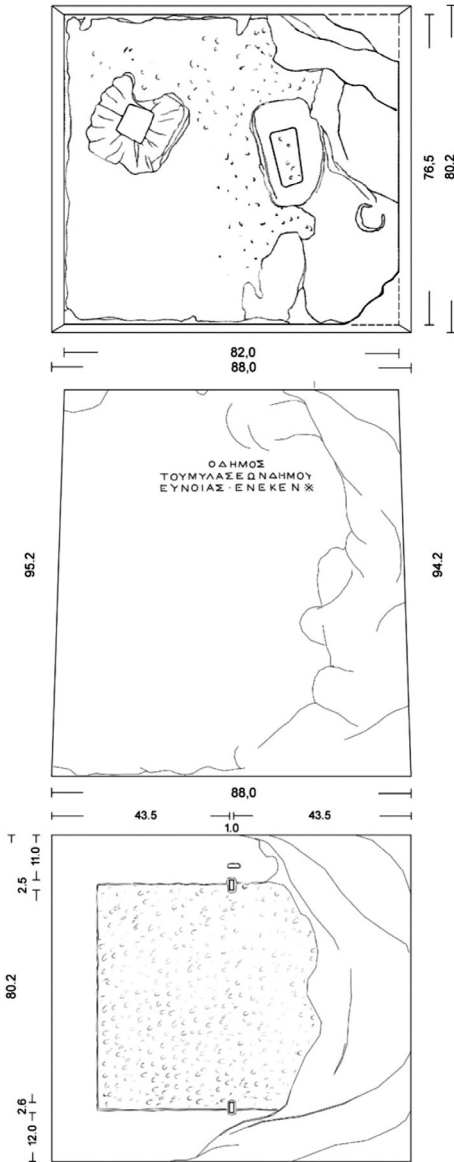


Figure 2: Situation of the monument, North of the Temple. Author: D. Laroche.

1. Description of the monument

The statue base is set to the north of the temple, at the foot of the terracing wall that ran along that side of the building (Fig. 2). It was the 4th of a series of five monuments (Fig. 2: a, b, c, d, e) placed along the W-E access road, where one first sees a semi-circular exedra, two rectangular bases, the base that is the object of our study and, at last, a base for a stela (Fig 2).



The almost square foundation (151 x 155.8 cm) of our base was found *in situ*, and the lower part of the base was made of two blocks forming a straight exedra on the front (Fig. 2).

These blocks were attached with two clamps and to form a rectangle (114 x 121.2 cm). The exedra's bench is resting on lion feet and its external sides are decorated with floral patterns. Two clamp marks, a pouring channel and a perimetric trace found on the laying bed enabled us to draw the association between the two blocks and our base.

The plinth of the statue base (Fig. 3) is a parallelepiped block, with a slight truncated cone-shape, 94.7 cm high on average. Horizontal dimensions are 88.0 cm (on the front part) x 80.2 cm at the base, 82 x 76 cm on the upper surface.

The clamp marks underneath the block correspond to those on the upper face of the *in situ* block on top of which it used to stand. The upper face of our block shows two roughly trapezoidal mortises on which the soles of a bronze statue were attached.

Figure 3: Drawing of the plinth supporting the statue. Author: D. Laroche.

Unlike the other bases surfacing at the sanctuary of Euromos, this base presents no moldings on its plinth. It is made of local marble and its height indicates that the statue was standing at the level of the temple terrace, which could explain the lack of ornaments on the plinth, which was conceived as an extension of the terrace and, for this reason, shouldn't be interpreted as a bench for sitting, but rather as a symbol associated with the statue set on the base.

2. The inscription: transcription, translation and a few remarks

An inscription was meticulously engraved high up on the front of the block and centered, approximately in *stoichedon* style (Figs. 4–5). The letters were about 1.7 cm high with line spacings of 1.7–1.4 cm.

The *alphas* are broken-barred² and lettering suggests a dating in the 2nd or 1st century BC.



Figure 4: Inscription: photograph. Photo: L. Talatas.



Figure 5: Inscription: squeeze by L. Talatas. Photo: L. Talatas.

² Carless Unwin 2017, 146, notes that the shift towards the broken-barred alpha at Euromos appears to date to the early stages of the second century BC.

The inscription is complete and in a very good condition. It reads:

ὁ δῆμος
 τοῦ Μυλασέων δήμου
 εὐνοίας · ἔνεκεν ※

Translation:

The demos, for the goodwill of the demos of the Mylaseans.

The offering *Demos*, implying the local demos of the Euromeans, sets a bronze statue to honor the neighboring *Demos* of the Mylaseans as a reward for their goodwill (εὐνοία).

The meticulous and symmetrical layout indicates the importance of this inscription, and the breathing pause marked by a middot between the words “εὐνοίας” and “ἔνεκεν” brings emphasis to the solemnity of the sentence.

The final character (※) corresponds to Aristarchus of Samothrace’s *asteriskos*³. A similar punctuation mark was found in a few other occurrences in Caria from the Archaic period onward – similar signs are found in Euromos⁴, but also at Miletus and Magnesia, for instance.⁵ Here, it likely comes at the end of the inscription to bring emphasis to its importance and solemnity.

The dedicant and the reason for erecting this monument are stated in the inscription; the nature of the statue, however, is not stated. Other honorific inscriptions found in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor often use the accusative form to indicate whom the statue represented – and it was almost inevitably the person or deity honored in the inscription. On our base, however, what we have

³ McNamee 1992, 9.

⁴ The same sign is found on an inscription on a long statue base from Euromos dated from 1–4 AD but the sign was not mentioned in the publications about the inscription; Blümel 2018, 52–54, no. 116.

⁵ A civic calendar of Miletos, dating from the end of the 6th century BC uses both ※ and : multiple times as punctuation marks, and while the three dots are used as commas between items listed, the *asteriskos* marks an important stop between sentences: Rehm, *Milet* I.3, 31 a–b, 162–164, 401–404 / CGRN 6. In Magnesia, ca. 30 BC, an asterisk made of 3 lines is reminiscent of the sign and used recurrently in a decree in honor of the *tamias* of the *prytaneis* of Ptolemais: SEG 28.95 / Hesperia 47, 292–295, pl. 79. We warmly thank Jan Mathieu Carbon for helping us make these analogies.

is not a false accusative: the genitive (τοῦ Μυλασέων δήμου) indicates that the statue was set to commemorate the goodwill of the Mylaseans, but unlike other dedication with an almost parallel phrasing that use the accusative⁶, it likely did not depict a personification of the demos, but of a deity. It could have been, for instance, a statue of Zeus, who was the patron god in both Euromos and Mylasa.

3. Comments and interpretations

While the styling suggests a dating in the Hellenistic period, it is difficult to place it in a more precise time frame at this stage, which limits the amount of information that could have been gained in the drawing of the relations between the cities of Euromos and Mylasa.

A *sympoliteia*⁷ occurring sometime in the 2nd century BC is the main known event in the history of these cities – and Euromos would already have expanded to a composite city by the end of the 3rd century BC, having absorbed other nearby settlements in the Euromean plain. We also know from Polybius⁸ that, after the end of the *sympoliteia*, Mylasa took the cities of Euromos by force, an event that can be dated to 167 BC.

Our inscription does not explicitly mention the *sympoliteia*, but its link with the event might be implied and the statue set on the base could be celebrating or confirming the historical union between the cities. We prefer, however, to leave this point in the hands of historians.

The cuttings on the top of the base indicate that it likely supported a male statue, slightly over life-size (about 20% larger than a man), poised on one leg, with the left foot solidly anchored, while only the tip of the right foot was fixed to the base. Aside from its size and its public character, the strategic placing of the statue also points to its important character. Indeed, it was set just in front of

⁶ Cf. IG II² 3443 + EM 4959, 49/8: “[ὁ] δήμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων / [τ]ὸν δήμον τὸν / Λακεδαιμονίων / εὐνοίας ἔνεκα” or ID 1777, 122/1: “τὸ κοινὸν Βερυτίων [...] τὸν δήμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων ἀρέτης ἔνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας”

⁷ LaBuff 2015, 112–117, “Mylasa and Euromos”; Gabrielsen 2000, 169–171; Reger 2004, 164–169. For epigraphical evidence on the relations between Mylasa and Euromos, see Blümel, *I.Mylasa 102*; Robert 1978, 515 and two fragmentary inscriptions found in Errington 1993, 15–31.

⁸ Polybius, 30.5.9; 30.5.10–16

a little retaining wall at the feet of the temple, and the top of the base would align with the lower of the three steps just below the level of the temple columns. The statue would therefore appear as if it was standing in front of the temple, thus adding a sacred dimension to its affirmed pose.

One can easily imagine a statue of Zeus poised on one leg, the other slightly bent at the knee, maybe holding a double axe and a staff, his Carian attributes. Indeed, Zeus is honored as the local god at the temple of Euromos as well as at Mylasa; his importance at the regional level would therefore make him the best candidate to watch over the good relations between the two cities. In the absence of an explicit identification of the statue in the inscription, we should however remain cautious and not exclude other possibilities.

To the right of our statue base, a larger rectangular monument (Fig. 6: c), thus far assumed to be a statue base could, in fact be an altar – which could have been used in relation to this statue. The base of a stele – possibly a decree, lays to the left of the base. It therefore appears as if the succession of monuments along the retaining wall north of the temple was an honorific way where political dedications were set before climbing the steps leading to the main altar, to the east, and to the entrance of the temple. The placing of this statue and of the presumed altar next to it can also arguably be considered the most visible in the sanctuary – which is a recurring condition stated for the setting of important decrees in sanctuaries.

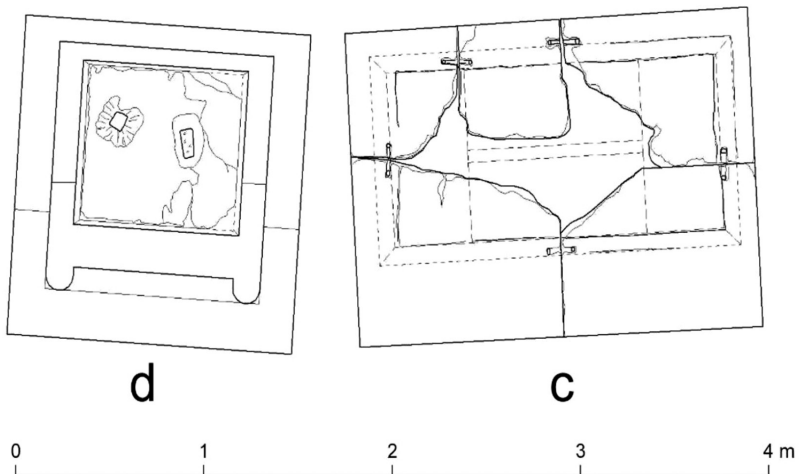


Figure 6: The base (b) and the monument to its West (c). Author: D. Laroche.

Further archaeological excavations in the area north of the temple are therefore crucial in order to better identify and find the relations between the various monuments set along the way leading to the temple's entrance and to the main altar.

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