A Lycian-Greek bilingual funerary Inscription from Tlos

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§ 1. *Introduction*

The acropolis of Tlos which limits the city's western border is the settlement center in the Classical Period, of which archeological remnants are dispersed around[1] (Plate 1). The earliest buildings are typified by the dynastic residence complex and the wall surrounding it. The necropolis which spread over the northern and eastern slopes of the acropolis with big and stylistic ruck-cut tombs and *sarcophagi* began to be formed in the same period.[2] The slopes of the acropolis have turned almost into a cemetery during the Hellenistic period. As a result of the Hellenistic urbanism the city started to construct new buildings and particularly the eastern slope is fulfilled by *bouleuterion* and *prytaneion* as well as *stadion*. Thus, the acropolis became a special part of the city where public buildings and tombs coexisted, and it is continued to be employed with the same buildings in the Roman time without any change.[3]

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1. Korkut (2016: 88–94).
2. Korkut and Özdemir (2019: 225–226); Korkut (2016: 94–102).
3. Korkut (2018: 165–183).

Plate 1

Rock-cut tombs built in the typical Lycian style among the funerary buildings, which survived so far, constitute the most crowded group.[4] These tombs stand out with their round-beam flat roof structure that imitates the wooden house architecture of the Lycian region and flamboyant façade arrangement divided into panels. Some of the rock-cut tombs in the necropolis have temple facade with triangular pediments, depending on the tomb owner's preference. The earliest examples of this group date back to the early classical age.[5] In addition to the rock-cut tombs, which were generally carved into the natural rock, there are also some examples where the facade arrangement shaped with the appliqué technique is preferred. Grave entrances are closed mostly with a sliding door. Some of these, stand still *in situ*. The inner arrangement of the tombs, which were formed sometimes by a single *kline*, or by two *klinai* in the shape of L, or by three *klinai* in the shape of U where burials were placed on, has not any regular plan. The pits inside the tomb store irregularly remains from previous burials and gifts presented to dead. The

4. Korkut and Özdemir (2019: 225–226).
5. Korkut, Uygun and Özdemir (2017: 19–31); Korkut and Özdemir (2019: 226–227).

inner walls of the tombs are plain without any relief and painted decoration. Plaster remains were found in some examples, but it was due to the repair works and covering cracks on the wall. The nail slots found on the wall were used for hanging the gifts presented to the dead and for the construction of beds made of wood. It is observed that the inner part of the rock tombs witnessed new modifications in latter periods. Some burial beds made of bricks were constructed as a *kline* in the Roman period. The only burial practice inside the tombs is recognized as body lying on *kline* and no kind of traces for a cremation is attested so far.

The rock-cut tombs and *sarcophagi* documented at Tlos bears mostly Lycian or Greek inscriptions.[6] Some of them have no inscription. A group of the rock-cut tombs with inscriptions in the Lycian language records a series of *formula* for the use of tombs and for the violations against the tomb itself and deceased. A money payment for legal obligations like surveillance of the tomb and granting of the burial site was organized by an institution called *miñti* in the Lycian language, which interfered also for the punishment of tomb vialators.[7] The tombs were continued to be used during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, replacing the Lycian language with the Greek. Archaeological materials unearthed in the excavations proved that a rock-cut tomb was used for a long period of approximately 600 years.

A series of finds dating to the early classical period and onwards were unearthed in the landfill soil inside the building complex of the parliament on the eastern slope of the acropolis, which consists of two different spaces, during the excavation and documentation works. Small portable artifacts such as ceramics, coins, oil lamps, bone and metal tools, arrow-spearheads, glass, and metal objects for wooden construction are frequent in number among these finds. These were thrown down from the rock tombs in the upper code after the construction of the fortification in the early Byzantine period. The ancient city was abandoned in the early Christian period and a new settlement area surrounded by walls was established on the slopes, mostly to the south of the acropolis. It is moreover seen that some part of facade arrangements of the rock tombs in appliqué technique were dragged into the building complex of the parliament. Jamb, lentil and architrave blocks are among these pieces.

An architrave block with a length of 183 cm, a thickness of 40 cm and a width of 60 cm has been found during the excavations in the south part of the parliament building in 2021 (Plate 2). The lower part of the block is animated with three stage

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6. Işın and Yıldız (2017: 85–108); Tekoğlu (2017: 63–68).
7. Christiansen (2019: 166–168).

wide moldings which were rotated also to the sides. The upper part of the block is formed in the shape of *hyperthyrion,* which animated with glyphs from below. It is typical form in the Lycian rock-cut tombs. The lower part of the block, which is placed on the upper part of the rock tombs like an architrave, is generally empha- sized by the extension of the round wooden roof beams. The arrangements with glyphs appear frequently on the rock tombs with triangular pediments but the top of the present architrave block has been cut neatly and it indicates that any triangu- lar pediment was not arranged in the construction of the tomb. This makes it excep- tional among the rock tombs at Tlos.

Plate 2

Our search in the necropolis showed that the architrave block belonged to the rock tomb numbered 18.30, located on the upper level of the building complex of the parliament (Plate 3). The bedrock texture, where the tomb was built, is de- formed because of natural effects, and illegal excavation attempts have caused great damage especially in the facade. The facade arrangement of this tomb is

therefore not known exactly, except its appliqué technique. However, the areas where the block for the facade arrangement were placed are still visible on the bed-rock (Plate 4). As can be seen from the facade opening measuring 1.80 x 2.28 m, a single-panel facade arrangement must have been used in this tomb. There is an arrangement with two *klinai* placed in the form of "L" in the tomb chamber measuring 2.27 x 2.46 m (Plate 5). It is estimated that a third *kline* could not be worked due to the deep crack observed on the bedrock surface in the north of the burial chamber. The measures of the *klinai* are 200 cm long, 75 cm wide and 87 cm high. There is also an inclination in the general plan of the tomb due to the structure of the bedrock. There has been a shift especially from the east-facing door towards the south. The lower row of jamb blocks, which measures 75 cm long and 35 cm wide, is placed on both sides of the threshold stone, on which the sliding door slot is installed.

Plate 3

Plate 4

Plate 5

A bilingual inscription in Lycian and Greek was incised on the last two moldings of the architrave block (Plate 6). The bilingual inscription is parallel to each other. The Lycian version has a typical funerary content while the Greek version is a short text including only the tomb owner's name and his attributive.
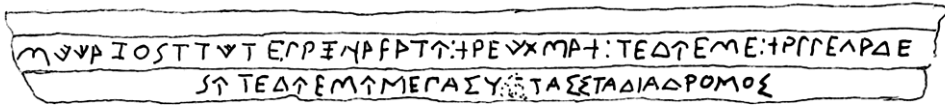

Plate 6

§ 2. *Definition of the inscription*

The Lycian and Greek versions have a separate paleography.

Non-angular Ｍ. This kind of mu formed with curved stroke on inner and outer edges is an exceptional one. It is obvious that it is not an adoption of the Greek mu which is slightly slanting in the Greek version. Nasalized alpha (Ｗ) in the form of the V sign with two small oblique bars placed inside on the right oblique stroke. Ｖ in the form of the V sign with oblique bar placed inside on the right oblique stroke. Regular alpha (Ｐ) with straight angles but the horizontal stroke is often slightly oblique; alpha with straight bar (A) in the Greek version. S-shaped sigma (Ｓ) but the upper part is oblique; slanting sigma in the Greek version. Ｅ with short middle bar and curved upper bar; epsilon with equal bars in the Greek version. Ｐ with curved upper bar; pi with slightly short bar at left. Ｆ with curved upper bar. Ｎ with oblique strokes. Regular ↑ with detaching vertical stroke. Δ, Λ, Ο and Ρ are standard shaped; +, Ξ, Ι and Τ are incised with straight strokes.

§ 3. *Text*

Mãxazusttã-ti: prñnawate: Hrixm̃mah:tideimi:hrppi-ladi
se-tideime Μεγάσυστας σταδιάδρομος

§ 4. *Translation*

Lycian version
"Mãxazusttã, son of Hrixm̃ma, built it for wife and children".
Greek version
"Megasystas, the stadium-runner".

§ 5. *Comments*

The bilingual inscription gives immediately the equivalence of Mãxazusttã with Μεγάσυστας, which is registered as a proper name in Greek[8] or in old Persian, or in one of the ancient Iranian dialects.[9] The morphological composition of Μεγάσυστας seems to include μέγα(ς)- and -συστάς < συνίστημι in Greek, but their combination and use as a proper name is very exceptional and it is documented only in two inscriptions from Telmessos in Lycia dated to the Roman period.[10] The Iranian counterpart of Μεγάσυστας seems to be *Baga-zušta* in the ancient Iranian dialects which is attested as *Bgzšt / Bgzwšt* in Aramaic and *Ba-ga-'-zu-uš-ta-'* in Babylonian.[11] The dialectal *Bagazušta* is identical with the old Persian *Baga-dušta* which is recognized as *Ba-qa-du-iš-ta / Ba-ka-du-iš-da* in Elamite[12] and Μεγαδόστης in Greek.[13] A series of proper names beginning with *baga-* in the old Persian and ancient Iranian dialects are translated into Greek through μεγα- like Μεγαβάτης, Μεγάβαζος, Μεγάβυζος, Μεγαδάτης, Μεγαδόστης, Μεγάπανος, Μεγάσιδρος, Μεγαφέρνης, or through μαγε- like Μαγεδάτης, or through μαγα- like Μαγαφέρνης, or βαγα- like Βαγαπάτης and Βαγαδάτης.[14]

While the phonetic correspondence of the old Persian *baga-* stands for μεγα-, μαγα- μαγε-, and βαγα- in Greek, Lycian has only two forms like *maga-* and *mãxa-*. It is doubtful if the Lycian *maxa-*, non-nasalized, attested as a proper name in N 310,2[15] and identified with *Μαγας*,[16] enters to the same category, but it seems likely that the Lycian proper name *Maxa,* is borrowed from the ancient Anatolian ono-mastic repertory originated in Kibyratis.[17] The component *maga-* can be seen in *Magabata* in N 310,2[18] which can be identified with Μεγαβάτης or Βαγαπάτης deriving from the old Persian *Baga-pāta*.[19] It is a point of discussion whether the Lycian counterparts *maga-* and *mãxa-* for the old Persian *baga-* comes through the

8. *LGPN* V B, 276.
9. KPN § 886 c and *IPNB* V 5A, 255.
10. *TAM* II 15 and 16.
11. Tavernier (2007), 4.2.310; *IPNB* V 5A, 254–255, nr. 211.
12. Schmitt (1988: 408).
13. Benveniste (1966: 117).
14. Bailey (1988: 403–404).
15. Neumann (1979: 26–27).
16. Melchert (2004: 98).
17. Corsten (2019: 34–40); *KPN* § 848.2.
18. Neumann (1979: 26–27).
19. Neumann (2007: 189).

direct contact with the Persian language, or through the Greek influence. The Lycian counterpart of the compounded proper names formed by μεγα- in Greek is not frequent. A single example of this is *Mexistte* attested in TL 27,1 which is identified with Μέγιστος[20] or Μεγίστης.[21] Onomastic attestations are not sufficient to suggest the Greek pre-component μεγα- and derivations entered into Lycian through the Greek uses.

The Lycian language share *b > m* replacement with Greek for the proper names beginning with *b* in the old Persian language, or in the ancient Iranian dialects.[22] The Greek counterpart of the old Persian "g" is constantly *gamma* in the Greek proper names while Lycian has "g" and "x". The nasalization of *alpha* in *mãxa-* seems to be phonetically baseless, if it does not deal with hypernasalization.[23] The nasalised final ending of the proper name in nominative is not common, but not exception. A similar case can be seen with Ñturigaxã in TL 77,2a. The final *-ti* is separated as reflexive particle in our analysis.

Father's name is recored as *Hrixm̃mah*, genitive of *Hrixm̃ma,* attested already in TL 89.1 and 90.1 and 2.[24]

While the Lycian version of the bilingual inscription has no title for *Mãxazusttã*, the Greek version defines him as σταδιάδρομος, "stadium-runner". It is the first and unique documentation of this title in the whole Lycian epigraphy including the inscriptions from the Graeco-Roman period. The construction date of the Tlos stadium is unknown, but some archaeological remains may imply that it can be dated to the late Classical and early Hellenistic period. On the basis of the present archaeological and epigraphic documentation it can not be surely suggested if he was a local, or interregional, or even international athlete.

20. Neumann (1967: 32–33); Neumann (1969: 395); Neumann (2007: 202); García Ramón (2013: 66).

21. Adiego (2020: 49); Neumann (2007: 202). D. Schürr identifies it with Μεγασθήνης, pointing out in a personal communication, 17/12/2021, "but I think that the Iranian names with Baga- were first Hellenized with Mega- and then this form Lycianized. Likewise Greek Megasthenes were Lycianized as *Mexisttêne-* (cf. *Herikle* for Herakles), in spite that Megasthenes was a rare name". For a segmentation of *mexisttẽnẽ* see also Goldstein (2014 [2016]: 112).

22. Schmitt (1982: 381).

23. Jenniges-Swiggers (2000: 112).

24. Borchhardt, Eichner, Kogler, Pesditschek and Seyer (2004: 15–52).

§ 6. *Litterature*

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