

# ΛΑΒΡΥΣ

Studies presented to Pontus Hellström

Edited by

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*Abstract*

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This volume contains studies on Classical Antiquity presented to Professor Pontus Hellström on his 75th birthday in January 2014. The 41 papers cover subjects ranging from the Etruscans and Rome in the west, to Greece, the landscape of Karia, and to the Sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda. Many papers deal with new discoveries at Labraunda, but sites in the surrounding area, such as Alabanda, Iasos, and Halikarnassos are well represented, as well as Ephesos and Smyrna. Many architectural studies are included, and these examine both Labraundan buildings and topics such as masonry, Vitruvius, the Erechtheion, stoas, watermills, and Lelegian houses. Other papers deal with ancient coins, ancient music, Greek meatballs, and Karian theories on the origin of ancient Greece.

*Keywords:* Pontus Hellström, Labraunda, Karia, Ancient Turkey, sanctuary, Ancient Greece, Hellenistic, Roman, Hekatomnid, archaeological excavations

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# Gladiators in ancient Halikarnassos

by

*Jesper Carlsen*

The most up-to-date catalogue of amphitheatres in the Roman world lists a total of 190 such buildings, of which only two are located in the province of Asia Minor;<sup>1</sup> yet, the many theatres and *stadia* adapted for spectacles, including gladiatorial fights and animal shows, underline the enormous popularity of these bloody combats in the eastern part of the Roman Empire too.<sup>2</sup> This is also emphasized by the epigraphical evidence and monuments, which indicate that the gladiatorial games, animal shows, and public executions of convicted criminals were normally presented in connection with the imperial cult in the provinces.<sup>3</sup>

Recent decades have witnessed a strong scholarly interest in the gladiatorial contests in general, and those in Asia Minor in particular. New research and new finds of gladiatorial reliefs and inscriptions from the cities of Aphrodisias, Hierapolis, Mylasa, and Stratonikeia make it possible to establish the regional context of the gladiatorial combats and their performers in Caria. This paper will analyze the gladiatorial reliefs and inscriptions from ancient Halikarnassos, and will also include two new fragments of gladiatorial reliefs found in the city.<sup>4</sup>

## The published gladiatorial inscriptions and reliefs

In relation to the evidence in Halikarnassos of gladiators from the Imperial period, a dedication to Nemesis by the *retiarius* Stephanos is probably one

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<sup>1</sup> Golvin 1988: Cyzicus (no. 176) and Pergamon (no. 177). Strabo 6.4.649 indicates the existence of an amphitheatre at Nysa. See Golvin 1988, 263–264, for amphitheatres in the eastern provinces which are only known from written evidence. The few amphitheatres in the Eastern Mediterranean include e.g. Antioch ad Orontes and Corinth (Golvin 1988 no. 126). See also Welch 2007, 255–263.

<sup>2</sup> Golvin 1988, 239–245, lists 11 mixed buildings in Asia Minor: Aezani, Alinda, Aphrodisias, Axus, Cibyra, Ephesos, Hierapolis, Iasos, Magnesia ad Meandrum, Miletus and Priene. Further examples can be found in Lycia, Pamphylia and Psidia. See also Dodge 1999, 231–234.

<sup>3</sup> Robert 1940, 267–275; Price 1984, 89; Wiedemann 1992, 44–45; Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008, 192; Marek 2010, 622–624.

<sup>4</sup> Aphrodisias: Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008 (41 *stelae*); Hierapolis: Ritti & Yilmaz 1998 (24 entries), but see now Ritti 2011, 179–182; Mylasa: Rumscheid 2001 (8 entries); Stratonikeia: Aydaş 2006 and Staab 2007 (6 *stelae*) to which at least 5 inscriptions can be added: Robert 1940, 171–173 (nos. 164–168).

of the earliest examples.<sup>5</sup> According to Louis Robert, another fragmentary inscription (now lost) that had originally been placed on an architrave on a building mentions a Nemeseion temple in the city, which was inaugurated by a certain Jason, son of Nikanor, who “est peut-être un gladiateur; mais ce n’est nullement assuré”.<sup>6</sup> The inscription recorded a programme, but the preserved part mentions only a fight between two gladiators owned by a certain Asiaticos. The *murmillio* Smaragdos, who had won five matches and received a crown five times, had fought against the *thraex* Strenos. He had fought only once, but had been victorious and received a crown; however, the defeat in his second match was fatal.<sup>7</sup> Robert lists two other fragmentary inscriptions from ancient Halikarnassos in his gladiatorial catalogue from the Greek East, one of which also mentions Asiaticos, who owned Smaragdos and Strenos.<sup>8</sup> The last inscription to mention is another fragment of an architrave, but it records only the victims, σφαγέντων, and the gladiators.<sup>9</sup>

Fortunately, this epigraphic evidence of the gladiatorial battles in Halikarnassos during the Imperial period may be supplemented by a few reliefs. A gladiatorial relief in bluish marble from the 1st or 2nd century AD, now in the British Museum, depicts a single gladiator moving to the right (*Fig. 1*). An inscription situated on either side of his head names him as Hilaros, and the short sword, the oblong shield, and the helmet indicate that he had fought as a *secutor*.<sup>10</sup> A second relief from Halikarnassos, also in the British Museum, is made of coarse-grained marble. It is usually dated to the 2nd century AD and is the only preserved representation of female gladiators from antiquity (*Fig. 2*). The two gladiators stand facing each other. They are equipped in the same manner and have been identified as *provocatores*. They are bare-headed, but their helmets are depicted on either side of a platform, where the names of the female gladiators, Amazon and Achillia, are inscribed. The inscription ἀπελύθησαν above their heads indicates that they were released standing (*stantes missae*), and that their fight had been drawn.<sup>11</sup> The names Amazon and Achillia are surely professional names with allusions to Greek mythology. Achilles was a common name among male gladiators, but the Greek hero also fought against the Amazon queen Penthesilea.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> CIG 2663. Robert 1940, 182–183 (no. 179); Poulsen 2011, 429. See *eadem* for an overview of the material on the history of Halikarnassos during the early empire and late antiquity.

<sup>6</sup> Robert 1940, 42.

<sup>7</sup> CIG 2662. Robert 1940, 183–187 (no. 180); Ville 1981, 363–364. See *idem*, 318–325, and Carlsen 2011 on the chances of being killed in the arena. Ville 1981, 313–314, discusses the crowns.

<sup>8</sup> Robert 1940, 187 (no. 181).

<sup>9</sup> Robert 1940, 187–188 (no. 182).

<sup>10</sup> Smith 1900, 142 (no. 1116); CIG 6855e; Robert 1940, 188 (no. 183); Poulsen 2011, 429.

<sup>11</sup> Smith 1900, 143 (no. 1117); CIG 6855f; Robert 1940, 188–189 (no. 184); Coleman 2000; Brunet 2004, 164; Poulsen 2011, 429. Both reliefs from Halikarnassos in the British Museum were personal gifts to the British ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, from Sultan Abdul Medjid I. *Provocatores*: Junkelmann 2000, 19; Schäfer 2001, 256. There is no basis for the claim that, “there are a number of visual representations of female gladiators”: Wiedemann 1992, 112. The sex of the gladiators on a relief from Maastricht is uncertain, but they are probably male.

<sup>12</sup> Coleman 2000, 499–500; Schäfer 2001, 257.





*Fig. 1. The secutor Hilaros (British Museum).*

Female performers as gladiators and animal-hunters in Rome appear in the literary sources during the reign of Nero and the Flavian Emperors, Titus and Domitian, but they seem to have been rare and exotic.<sup>13</sup> A

<sup>13</sup> Iuv. 1.22–23; 6.246–267; Mart. *Spect.* 7–8; Suet. *Nero* 12.2; Suet. *Dom.* 4.1; Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.53–54; Tac. *Ann.* 15.32.3; Dio 61.17.3; 63.3.1; 66.25.1; 67.8.4. For overviews of female gladiators, see Briquel 1992; Schäfer 2001; Brunet 2004, and Coleman 2006, 69–87.

fragmentary inscription from Ostia attests that the local duumvir, Hostilianus, and his wife were the first to show female gladiators in the harbour city of Rome, in the middle of the 2nd century AD, although the expression *mulieres ad ferrum dedit* can indicate both female gladiators and the execution in the arena of women condemned to death.<sup>14</sup> The appearance of all female single combat in the arena was prohibited by Septimius Severus, but Tiberius had already banned the appearance of freeborn women under the age of twenty in the arena, as is clear from the *senatus consultum* of AD 19, which is known from a copy found at Larinum in central Italy.<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 2. The female gladiators Amazon and Achilla (British Museum Inv. GR 1847,0424.19).

The question is whether the relief from Halikarnassos commemorated a certain spectacle, and where the gladiatorial contest took place. The relief is not an epitaph, and Kathleen Coleman has rightly observed that “it marks an engagement that is worthy of commemoration both for the rarity of its outcome and for the fact that its protagonists were women.”<sup>16</sup> She suggests that the gladiatorial relief could have been displayed in the gladiatorial school to which Amazon and Achillia belonged, since the sponsor’s name is not mentioned. The relief may nevertheless have been part of a public monument with a series of reliefs depicting highlights from this particular show, a monument where the name of the sponsor

<sup>14</sup> *AE* 1977, no. 153: ... / *qui primus omnium ab urbe condita ludos cum / [...] et mulieres ad ferrum dedit* .... The inscription consists of three parts: *CIL* XIV 4616, *CIL* XIV 5381 and the fragment published by Cébeillac-Gervasoni & Zevi 1976, 612–620; Wiedemann 1992, 10; Fora 1996, 64–66 (no. 29).

<sup>15</sup> Dio 76.16.1; Levick 1983. On the legislation see Gardner 1986, 247–248.

<sup>16</sup> Coleman 2000, 495.



perhaps appeared in another part that is not preserved, as indicated by other gladiatorial monuments from Italy and Asia Minor.

One well-known example is the frieze from the 1st-century funerary monument of the freedman and *sevir* C. Lusius Storax from Teate Marrucinum in Italy. He was depicted on the pediment together with men wearing togas and the fighting gladiators in a frieze below him.<sup>17</sup> Parallels to gladiatorial monuments, consisting of several reliefs, have also been preserved in other places in Caria. A. Hrychuk Kontokosta has published nine fragments of a large gladiatorial monument with relief panels which was found at Aphrodisias. They depict not only different types of gladiators and animal fights, but also the execution of a convict, and it has been suggested that they may have embellished a tomb complex.<sup>18</sup> Other examples of such monuments with more panels of reliefs have been found at Ephesos, Alabanda and Smyrna.<sup>19</sup> The best preserved example, however, is a funerary monument that commemorates gladiatorial contests and *venationes* from the 3rd century AD, which was discovered during the excavations at the northern necropolis at Hierapolis in Phrygia. It consists of several gladiatorial reliefs and an inscription that mentions the organizers of the spectacle, who were priests of the imperial cult. The reliefs depict both animal fights and the different moments of the same gladiatorial fights, as indicated by the names of the performers inscribed above their images. The results of the engagements are also recorded, just as they are on the relief of the female gladiators from Halikarnassos.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, I tentatively suggest that it was originally part of a funerary or public monument, of which the other parts are currently unknown.

The unusual gladiatorial contest between Amazon and Achillia could have taken place in at least two possible locations in ancient Halikarnassos. The city possessed both a theatre and a stadium. The latter was located in the north-eastern part of the city in 1987, and inscriptions on the blocks of seats seem to date the construction to the late 1st or early 2nd century AD.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the stadium could not be excavated and we do not know if the building also included features to facilitate gladiatorial contests. Perhaps the best example of such an adaptation is the stadium in Aphrodisias, where an arena was built into the east end in the late 4th or early 5th century AD.<sup>22</sup> The theatre in Aphrodisias had been adapted to put on gladiatorial shows by the 2nd century AD, and the orchestra of the large theatre in Halikarnassos that was originally constructed in Classical times, but embellished and modified in the Hellenistic period, was at some point in the early empire converted in order to protect the spectators of the gladiatorial shows.<sup>23</sup> As the exact

<sup>17</sup> Clarke 2003, 145–152, and Petersen 2006, 60, with references.

<sup>18</sup> See Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008, 219–227, nos. 28–38. 200, n. 70.

<sup>19</sup> Ephesos: Grossschmidt 2002, 83–88. For Alabanda and Smyrna see Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008, 200 n. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Ritti & Yilmaz 1998, 445–486; Ritti 2011, 180.

<sup>21</sup> Berkaya *et al.* 2008, 150.

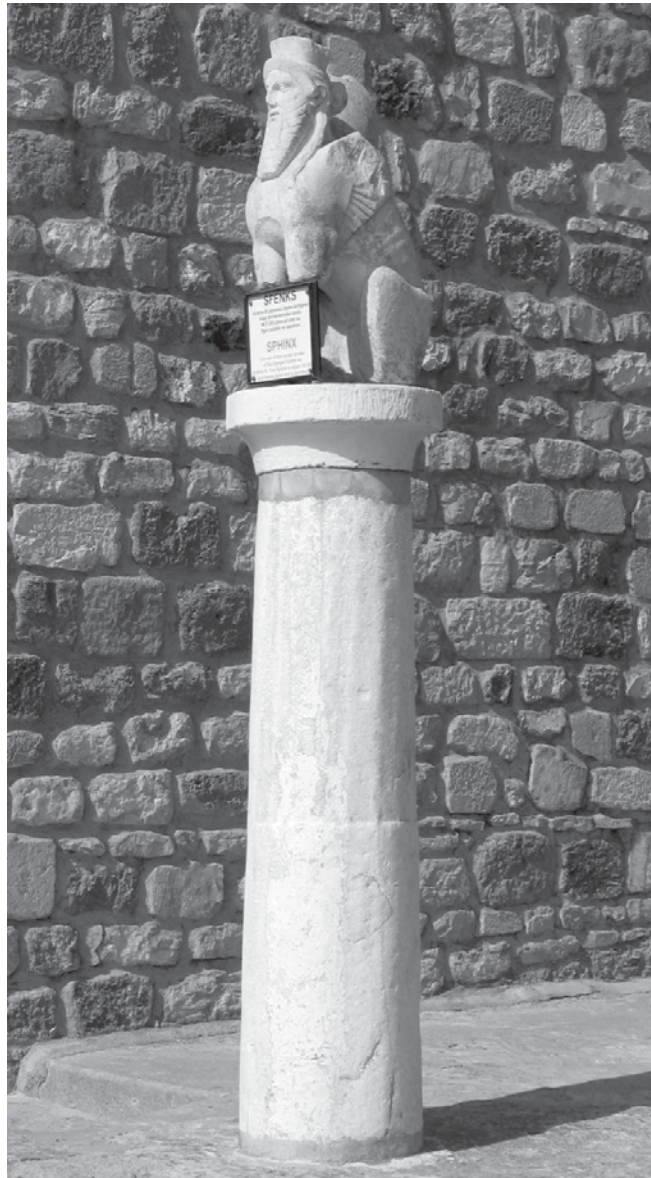
<sup>22</sup> Welch 1998; Smith & Ratté 2000, 225–226.

<sup>23</sup> Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008, 192. Unfortunately, the theatre in Halikarnassos has never been fully published, but see Alpözen 1990, 94–95, and Pedersen 2004, 147–149.

provenance of the relief in the British Museum is unknown, we cannot decide whether the gladiatorial contest between the two female protagonists took place in the stadium or the theatre.

## Two unpublished gladiatorial reliefs

The six gladiatorial inscriptions and reliefs discussed above were all recorded by L. Robert in his magisterial *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (1940), but now more evidence for gladiators in Halikarnassos has come to light. Two unpublished reliefs are preserved in the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. One is a small fragment of a relief in white marble, which was reused as a building brick in the walls of the Axe Tower. It depicts the hips, and two greaved legs of a gladiator (*Figs. 3–4*). He is holding an oblong shield on his left arm, and in his right hand is a sword. The preserved part of the fragmented relief is similar in many respects to the relief of Hilaros.



*Fig. 3.* Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. The Axe Tower, with gladiatorial relief (Photograph: B. Poulsen).





*Fig. 4. The gladiatorial relief in the Axe Tower (Photograph: B. Poulsen).*



*Fig. 5. The gladiatorial relief from Kislalik in Bodrum (Photograph: B. Poulsen).*

The second new relief (*Fig. 5*) was found more recently in the Kislalik area in Bodrum, the location of one of the eastern necropoleis outside the Mylasa Gate. The relief is made of a bluish marble, and the top was roughly cut with a dental chisel. At the top there is a clamp hole, which is perhaps related to the original function of the relief.<sup>24</sup> The back was roughly hewn with a pointed chisel. Only a small part of the relief is preserved. To the left, the right part of a rounded shield can be noted. To the right, there is a closed helmet with holes for the eyes, on top of a sword and a spear. Small parts of the remains of the relief to the right seem to indicate that other objects followed to the right. The round shield, the spear, and the closed helmet indicate the arms and armour of a *hoplomachus*, and the find-spot strongly indicates that the relief had been part of a funerary monument.

## Conclusions

The preserved epigraphical and archaeological evidence for gladiatorial contests in ancient Halikarnassos stresses the popularity and importance of these spectacles that probably took place either in the theatre or in the stadium of the town. The inscriptions attest to a *Nemesion* in the city, and we now have evidence for the most popular categories of gladiators in the Imperial period: *hoplomachus*, *murmilio*, *provocator*, *retiarius*, *secutor* and *thraex*. J. and F. Rumscheid suggested, on the basis of five gladiatorial reliefs from Mylasa, that there was a gladiatorial necropolis in the town.<sup>25</sup> There is no basis for such a claim in Halikarnassos as the majority of the gladiatorial reliefs seem to have formed part of elite funerary or public monuments. Unfortunately, the inscriptions do not contain any information on the gladiatorial troupes or their owners, with the exception of the otherwise unknown *Asiaticos*, but the material from Aphrodisias and Hierapolis confirms that the *familiae* included gladiators, beast hunters and condemned criminals, and was maintained by high priests of the imperial cult.<sup>26</sup> It may have been the same in Halikarnassos, although we only have scanty evidence of the imperial cult and civic festivals in the city in the early empire.<sup>27</sup> The relatively high number of gladiatorial monuments that can be found in many cities of Roman Asia Minor also suggest that the gladiatorial contests and animal shows played an important role in the well-attested fierce competition and rivalry between the provincial cities.

\* \* \*

<sup>24</sup> H. 0.41 m, W. 0.36 m, D. 0.22 m. Depth of the relief: 0.02 m.

<sup>25</sup> Rumscheid 2001, 131.

<sup>26</sup> See Roueché 1993, 61–64 nos. 13–15.

<sup>27</sup> See Poulsen 2011.

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