

Different Grave Types from Northeastern Phrygia

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Since 2014, an epigraphic survey, conducted in northeastern Phrygia, today's eastern part of the Eskişehir Province in Turkey, revealed a number of fifty inscriptions.¹ A part of this area belonged to the Choria Considiana, an imperial estate located in the province of Galatia between the ancient cities of Midaion and Akkilaion in the west, Gordion in the east, Iuliopolis in the north and Colonia Germa in the south. Within the research area, the ancient villages of Akreina and Phyle were apparently part of another estate, belonging to the Roman senatorial family of the Plancii, which was situated to the east of Choria Considiana. Our case studies, the necropoleis of Çalçak and Gürleyik were located in northern Choria Considiana. A newly found inscription indicates yet another estate in the surroundings of the village of Otluk belonging to a veteran and his son.²

The fifty inscriptions, which have been discovered in Mihalıççık County so far, are mostly dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The majority of these inscriptions are epitaphs. In general, status, wealth, origin, citizenship, careers, family relations and age were regularly recorded in epitaphs. The use of portraits and depictions of the deceased in various appearances on tombs and grave markers was a common reflection on the social life and social values of the communities in Phrygia. Here, grave and votive monuments are especially idiosyncratic when compared with those from other regions. They frequently display agricultural and other tools, and thus show the Phrygians' rural occupations and way of life. Grave monuments from Phrygia, the so-called doorstones in particular, have been studied by several scholars.³ Though already studied based on published evidence from Phrygia,⁴ the new evidence from our survey will allow to confirm or modify opinions formed so far. The 'doorstone' tradition was common practice for grave monuments in Phrygia. However, the typology of grave monuments with a door façade among other decorations, changed through the Roman Imperial period. This paper questions whether the 'doorstone' tradition was common practice for funerary monuments in our survey area. Also, it asks whether there was any impact of other burial practices and grave monuments observed in the Roman Imperial period.

Taking case-based evidence into account, the paper focuses on three necropolis areas in the villages of Dinek, Otluk and Gürleyik in northeast Phrygia which offer grave monuments still on site including grave altars (bomoi) and stelai of Roman Imperial time, among them several door stelai. Twenty-eight funerary monuments are attested in these necropolis areas. Spolia in the villages also confirm some other grave monuments. All the evidence with or without architectural context needs to be classified in terms of typology and chronology and then evaluated with respect to find context, style and social identity. Employing epigraphical data as well as archaeological records, the aim of the paper is to identify social settings in northeast Phrygia concentrated on burial practices and variation in grave monuments.

With reference to the above-mentioned cases, four grave types are documented: grave altars, grave stelai with pediment, grave stelai with pediment and door motif, grave stelai with architectural pediment and pillar stelai. Based on current evidence it seems that both grave stelai with and without door motif were favoured within our survey area. However, this preference varied in the three cases examined in this study. In general, grave stelai with pediment or decorated kyma seem to be locally produced by resident stonemasons throughout our survey area. Nonetheless, further stylistic analysis should be undertaken to reach certainty.

Notes

¹ Güney 2016; Güney 2018a.

² Güney 2018b, see also Güney (forthcoming).

³ Waelkens 1986; Lochman 2005; Masségliá 2013; Kelp 2015.

⁴ Kelp 2013; Masségliá 2013.

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