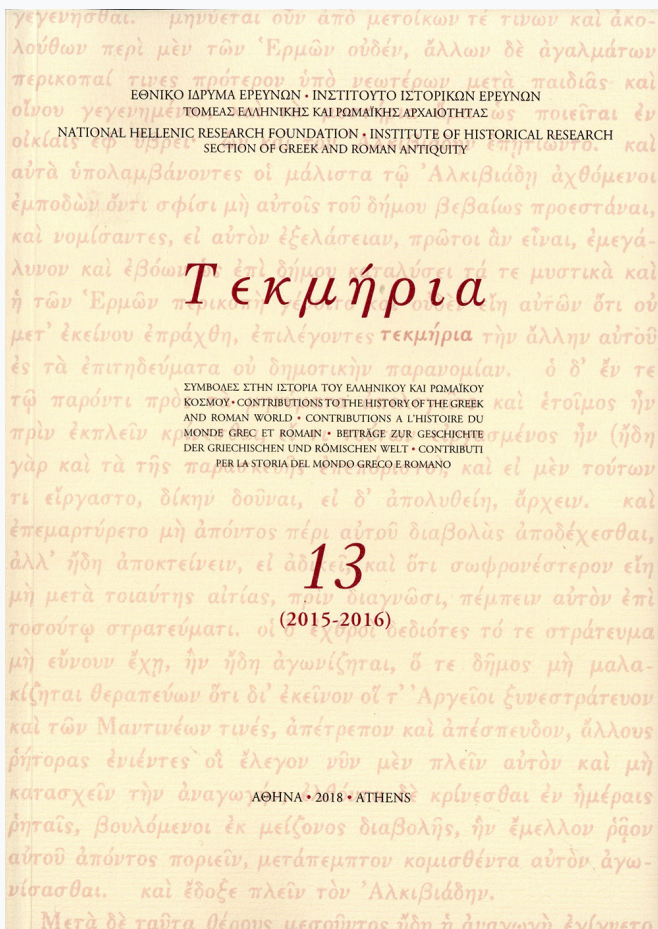


Tekmeria

Vol 13 (2016)

(2015-2016)



Two new gladiatorial monuments from Amphipolis

Pantelis Nigdelis, Anny Tzelepidou

doi: [10.12681/tekmeria.10788](https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.10788)

Copyright © 2017, Pantelis Nigdelis, Anny Tzelepidou



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Nigdelis, P., & Tzelepidou, A. (2017). Two new gladiatorial monuments from Amphipolis. *Tekmeria*, 13, 71–78. <https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.10788>

Two new gladiatorial monuments from Amphipolis

Unlike other Macedonian cities as Beroia¹ and Thessaloniki,² where a lot of gladiatorial monuments have come to light, until recently only one gladiatorial inscription was known from Amphipolis, namely the funerary epigram in memory of a certain Euchrous.³

In addition to Euchrous' epigram, two new funeral inscriptions should be added to the gladiatorial inscriptions of Amphipolis. The first⁴ was inscribed on a reused marble funeral stele, which was later used for a third time as the cover of a cist-grave (T9).⁵ The grave is part of a cluster consisting of nine

1. B. Allamani-Souri, *Επιτύμβιες στήλες και ανάγλυφα από τη Βέροια και την περιοχή της*, unpublished Diss., (Thessaloniki 2008) 203-209; P. Nigdelis and L. Stefani, "Νέα επιτύμβια μνημεία μονομάχων από τη Βέροια", *Tekmeria* 5 (2000) 87-107.

2. G. Velenis and P. Adam-Veleni, "Ρωμαϊκό θέατρο στη Θεσσαλονίκη", *AEMΘ* 3 (1989) [1992] 241-256.

3. J. Roger, *RA* 24 (1945.2) 51-53 no. 4; L. Robert, "Monuments de Gladiateurs dans l'Orient Grec", *Hellenica* 5 (1948) 77-78, no. 314 = *SEG* LV 672; W. Peek, *GV* 1732 = *SEG* XXIV 599. D. Hereward (*Palaeologia* XIV 1968, 140/2 n. 10, c. del. fig. 12 = *SEG* XXIV 607) falsely mentions the inscription as unpublished.

4. N. Amoiridou and D. Malamidou, "Ανασκαφική Έρευνα στο Ρωμαϊκό Νεκροταφείο της Αμφίπολης", *AEMΘ* 12 (1998) [2000] 79-80. The inscription is mentioned and discussed in: M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Bull'Épigr* 2001 no. 303; *SEG* XLIX 677; D. Malamidou, *AD* 52 B3 (1997) [2003] 840 (*SEG* LIII 591); D. Blackman, "Archaeology in Greece 2000-2001", *Arch.Rep.* 47 (2001) 100; P. Malama, "Νεότερα στοιχεία από το ανατολικό νεκροταφείο της Αμφίπολης", *AEMΘ* 15 (2001) [2003] 122; G. Touchais, S. Huber and A. Philippa-Touchais, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1999", *BCH* 124 (2000) 943-945; C. Mann, "Um keinen Kranz, um das Leben kämpfen wir!" *Gladiatoren im Osten des römischen Reiches und die Frage der Romanisierung* (Berlin 2011) 191 no 21.

5. According to Amoiridou and Malamidou, "Ρωμαϊκό Νεκροταφείο" 80 (see n. 4), the stele was used three times: first, as funerary monument during the Hellenistic period; second, as the grave monument of the gladiator Achilles; thirdly, as the cover of the grave (T9) of a local doctor.

burials excavated in a plot near the gate D of the city. As a silver denarius that is dated to the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161) was found in the T9, the year 161 is the *terminus ante quem* for the third use of the stone, thus we can safely argue that the inscription was engraved at least some years earlier.⁶ The dating of the inscription could be also supported by the paleographical evidence.⁷

The new stele bears a relief representing a gladiator in a shallow rectangular panel, twelve engraved crowns on the left-hand side and at the bottom, as well as an engraved palm branch (σπάδιξ) on the right.⁸ The scene on the rectangular panel resembles the relief of the funeral stele for the gladiator Sulpicius found in Beroia (EKM I, 387). The gladiator is depicted advancing to the right, thus he is classified in Robert's second category "le gladiateur combatant", i.e. a gladiator who is represented in combat carrying his defensive and offensive weaponry.⁹ The deceased appears as a heavy armored gladiator, namely a *secutor*,¹⁰ wearing a chitoniskos with short sleeves as well as a belt (*balteus*).¹¹ His left shin is protected by a greave (*ocrea*), while his right has a kind of protective lining. His right arm is wrapped in leather bands (*manicae*) and in that hand he holds a dagger. He also carries a shield (*scutum*) with his left arm and is equipped with a visored helmet and a metal crest.¹²

6. Amoiridou and Malamidou, "Ρωμαϊκό Νεκροταφείο" 78-79 (see n. 4) and Malamidou 840 (see n. 4).

7. The characteristic letters are: The three-bar sigma, the omega (with its lower part open) and the epsilon (squared, with its two horizontal bars of equal length and its middle smaller). An epigraphic parallel regarding the overall impression of its lettering is IGBulg IV 2304 (Kovačevo, 162 AD).

8. For representations of σπάδιξ see M. Carter, *The Presentation of Gladiatorial Spectacles in the Greek East: Roman Culture and Greek Identity*, Diss. (Michigan 1999) 98-103.

9. L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'Orient Grec* (Amsterdam 1971) 47.

10. On this category and the relevant armor see M. Grant, *Gladiators* (Great Britain 1967) 60.

11. For such belts worn by *secutores* see Grant, *Gladiators* 60 (see n. 10).

12. On helmets see B. Allamani-Souri, "Μονομαχικά Μνημεία στο Μουσείο της Βέροιας", *Αμνηστός. Τιμητικός Τόμος για τον Καθηγητή Μανόλη Ανδρόνικο* (Thessaloniki 1987) 38, no. B3.

Archaeological Museum of Amphipolis, Inv. No. MK Λ 144. Height 0.76 m.; upper width 0.26 m.; lower width 0.24 m.; thickness 0.076 m. Letter height 0.02 – 0.026 m. Line spacing: 0.01 – 0.012 m. (fig. 1).

Ζωσά-
ριν BEPE
Ἀχιλλῆ τῶ ἀνδρὶ
4 ἰδίῳ μνη(σ)μης
χάριν.
νικῶν ἑδ'

L. 4 MNHΣMHΣ lapis.

Achilles, the professional name of the deceased, belongs to the category of heroic names which owners of gladiatorial schools usually gave to their fighting personnel.¹³ Achilles was given the name possibly because of his speed and his martial ability.¹⁴ The selection of such names implies that the spectators were familiar with the Homeric Epics and their heroic context; moreover, this choice demonstrates the wider trend observed in gladiatorial monuments in the Greek East of depicting gladiators' combats like *μονομαχίαι* of Homeric Epics, in order to familiarize the Greek or Hellenized audience with Roman spectacle.¹⁵

Provided that Achilles did not die young, the comparison of his twelve victories, which are represented in the stele as twelve engraved crowns, to the achievements of other gladiators could suggest that he was an average athlete.¹⁶

The stele was erected in the memory of the deceased by his companion who bears the name Ζωσάριν, an abbreviated form of Ζωσάριον.¹⁷ As to the letters BEPE following her name, it is not clear to which word they belong to.

13. See Robert, *Gladiateurs* 298-299 (see n. 9) and G. Ville, *La gladiature en occident des origines à la mort de Domitien* (BEFAR 245, Rome 1981) 308; Mann, *Gladiatoren* 152-154 (see n. 4).

14. See Robert, *Gladiateurs* 297-302 (see n. 9) and Mann, *Gladiatoren* 152-153 (see n. 4).

15. Carter, *Spectacles* 295-296 (see n. 8); Mann, *Gladiatoren* 152-154 (see n. 4).

16. On the number of victories see Robert, *Gladiateurs* 294 (see n. 9); for Macedonia specifically see P. Nigdelis, *Επιγραφικά Θεσσαλονίκεια. Συμβολή στην Πολιτική και Κοινωνική Ιστορία της Αρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης* (Thessaloniki 2006) 235-236.

17. For the name Ζωσάριον and its abbreviated form in inscriptions found in Macedonia see *LGN IV* s.vv.

Since the engraver obviously committed a mistake and various restorations could be suggested,¹⁸ it would be preferable to leave the issue open.

*

The second funeral inscription again was found in a grave at Amphipolis, near the bridge over the Strymon River. Its gladiatorial nature is evident by the stereotypical formula $\pi\upsilon\gamma\mu\tilde{\omega}\nu$ and the depiction of the palm branch. The inscription is engraved on a white, coarse-grained, crystalline marble slab. The upper and right sides are broken. The rear and the left surfaces are roughly worked. The right forearm of a figure advancing to the left is depicted in a shallow recess. The figure holds in his hand an engraved palm branch ($\sigma\pi\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\tilde{\xi}$), thus it represents a gladiator “dans sa gloire”, who belongs to Robert’s first sub-category, namely the heavily armored gladiator.¹⁹

Archaeological Museum of Amphipolis, Inv. No. MA Λ 1077 = MK Λ 134. Height: 0.567 m.; width: 0.23 m.; thick: 0.075 m. Letter height: 0.03 - 0.039 m. Line spacing: 0.017 m. (fig. 2).

	XPH	ana-	[-ca 3-4-]
	AMA	gly-	[-ca 3-4-]
	ΘΩ	phum	[-ca 3-4-]
4	$\mu\upsilon\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ [$\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\nu$]		
	$\pi\upsilon\gamma\mu\tilde{\omega}\nu$ [v numerus].		
	Χαῖρε π[αροδῖτα].		

The inscription could be dated to the second or to the third century AD on the basis of the letter forms (namely the four-bar *omega*, the three-bar *sigma*, and the angular *theta*), the ligatures in ll. 1 and 5 as well as the square and angular forms of its lettering in general.²⁰

18. Taking into account that companions of gladiators were usually slaves, the word BEPE might denote her legal status. In that case, we could restore the transliterated form of the latin word *verna*, namely $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\rho\nu\alpha$ (a slave born in his master’s household). The term is also used as a proper name in Greek as e.g. in P. Pilhofer, *Philippi 2. Katalog der Inschriften von Philippi*, 2. Aufl. (Tübingen 2009) 220, no. 167 (Philippi, 2nd-3rd cent. AD). In either case, the cutter would have corrected his mistake by writing the right letter in color.

19. See Robert, *Gladiateurs* 47-49 (see n. 9).

20. For a similar overall impression of the lettering see SEG XXX 598 (Serres, 136

We could restore e.g. the name of the gladiator's companion as Χρησίμια or Χρήστη²¹ and the name of the deceased as Ἀμαράνθος, a name which was actually used for other gladiators.²² The latter is according to Robert's categorization a speaking name ("nom parlants") indicating the gladiator's intention to stay alive during the combat.²³

The formulaic expression πυγμῶν followed by a number designates the total number of combats in which he had participated during his career and corresponds to its Latin equivalent "pugnarum + number".²⁴

Pantelis Nigdelis

Prof. of Ancient History
School of History and Archaeology
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
pnigdeli@hist.auth.gr

Anny Tzelepidou

Phd Candidate in Ancient History
Department of History and Archaeology
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
tzelepidou@yahoo.gr

AD), *I.Leukopetra* 52 (208/9 AD).

21. For these names in Macedonia see *LGPN* IV s.vv.

22. Cf. *I.Tralleis* 10: [πυκτεύ]ωγ Βίχτωρ ἔθανον στα[δί][οις παρὰ] μοῖραν, νεικήσας μὲν π[άν][τας· —] ... ἔσχα τέ[[λος] θιότου χερσὶν φονίαις Ἀμαράντου | πά(λος) δ'.

23. Robert, *Gladiateurs* 299-300 (see n. 9).

24. Nigdelis and Stefani, "Ἐπιτύμβια μνημεῖα" 235 (see n. 1); Robert, *Gladiateurs* 16-19 (see n. 9).

Summary

This note presents two previously unpublished inscriptions from Amphipolis. Both of them are funerary monuments of gladiators (while the first is fully preserved, the latter has the upper and right sides broken), thus they enrich the sparse epigraphical evidence for the presence of gladiators at Amphipolis.



Fig. 1: The funerary stele of Achilles.



Fig. 2: The funerary stele of Amaranthus.