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## «With spiritual writings and Homeric words» : A Hypsistarian soothsayer in fourth-century Phrygia.

aus / from

**Chiron : Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts., 51 (2021). 355-384**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34780/I0eu-ekld>

**Herausgebende Institution / Publisher:**  
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

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DES DEUTSCHEN  
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INSTITUTS

*Sonderdruck aus Band 51 · 2021*



DE GRUYTER

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TIBOR GRÜLL

«With spiritual writings and Homeric words»  
A Hypsistarian soothsayer in fourth-century Phrygia

1. *Roman Phrygia: a unique epigraphic culture and religious environment*

People of the villages and small towns of Roman Phrygia are known to us thanks to an astonishing abundance of Greek and Latin inscriptions on stone, mostly votive and funerary monuments, and almost all dating to the later Roman Imperial and late antique periods. Roman Phrygia had a unique epigraphic culture in many ways.<sup>1</sup> PETER THONEMANN has argued that while a number of Phrygian cities were monumentalized during the Roman period, the Phrygian society ultimately remained decentralized, politically fragmented and primarily agrarian.<sup>2</sup> What is striking at first glance is the high proportion of beautifully crafted and ornamented tombstones (doorstones, funerary stelae and altars) with an astoundingly high number of metrical epitaphs written in Greek epic vocabulary even in the countryside. Most of these funerary monuments were erected in the second and third centuries C.E., which is completely in line with the peak of «epigraphic habit» throughout the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> It was unusual for funerary inscriptions to indicate religious status anywhere before the third century C.E., but in Phrygia they often reflect religious affiliations of the deceased, whether the individual was a worshipper of the Greco-Roman gods, or a member of the Jewish or Christian community. There were four deities that STEPHEN MITCHELL treats as fundamental to the people of Phrygia: Zeus (addressed with many bynames), the Mother Goddess (also called Kybele), and a peculiar twin-god called «Holy and Righteous» (Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος). Another surprising feature is that both Jews and Christians openly confess their religious affiliations before and after the Constantinian shift; in addition, naturally, also using the common symbols (menorah, ethrog, lulav – Christogram, fish, cross etc.) on their epitaphs. There were also sub-regions within this historical region of Central Anatolia where these religions coexisted rela-

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I would like to express my appreciation to Prof. Dr. RUDOLF HAENSCH and the anonymous editor for their constructive suggestions and useful critiques of this research work. This paper and the research behind it would not have been possible without the support of National Research, Development, and Innovation Office of Hungary (NKFI 135317).

<sup>1</sup> KELP 2013; MASSÉGLIA 2013; UNWIN 2020.

<sup>2</sup> THONEMANN 2013, 36f.

<sup>3</sup> MACMULLEN 1982; MEYER 1990.

tively peacefully. Although we encounter sporadic atrocities against Christians before Constantine, we do not hear of massive persecution on the part of the authorities. Relations between the Christian and Jewish communities were particularly good: «the boundaries between some Christians and some Jews may have been hazy; the communities may have been far less demarcated than has often been thought,» claims PAUL TREBILCO.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, at Acmonia the building (or restoration) of the Jewish synagogue was sponsored by Iulia Severa, daughter of Gaius, high-priestess and director of contests of the whole household of the Augustan gods.<sup>5</sup> The contact between believers and the interaction of religions are shown by the fact that certain formulae are also adopted in the funeral epigraphy. The best example of this is what has become known as the «Eumeneian formula». At Eumeneia (İşıkli) distinctive phrasing was used in the third century on more than one hundred gravestones (some of them dated between 246–274 C.E.), which ran ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν («[unauthorised users] will have to reckon with God»). This phrase was primarily popular among Christians, but there are numerous examples where we are unable to decide which monotheistic religion was behind the variation of this apotropaic formula.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Jewish inscriptions of Phrygia

In Phrygia a total of forty-seven Jewish inscriptions were found at thirteen sites, a relatively significant number.<sup>7</sup> Settlement of the Jewish community in Phrygia dates back to the time of Antiochus III (Jos. Ant. 12. 147), and the Phrygian Jews are listed among the participants of the first Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10).<sup>8</sup> According to the Talmud, Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach, who belongs to the second generation of Tannaim in the first century C.E., visited the Phrygian diaspora communities, which were famous for their wine production (bT Shab. 147b). A Jewish slave of Phrygian descent (γένει Φρυγίαν) named Sambatis (alias Athenais) was purchased in Alexandria in 151 C.E. (BGU III 887 = CPJ III 490). It is characteristic of the Jewish inscriptions in

<sup>4</sup> TREBILCO 1991, 167–190; TREVETT 1996, 208f.; TREBILCO 2004, 81; VOGEL 2018.

<sup>5</sup> ἀρχιέρειαν κα[ι] ἀγωνοθέτιν τοῦ σύνπαντος τῶν [θ]εῶν Σεβαστῶν, I.Jud. Orientis II 168 = MAMA VI 264 = PHI 270132. – Julia Severa's portrait is also common on coins issued in Acmonia, see TREBILCO 1991, 58–60.

<sup>6</sup> TREBILCO 2004, 66–68. One of its variations is δώσει λόγον τῷ Θεῷ («will give account to God»), popular around Nikaia (Iznik) and Ikonion (Konya). – Although A. T. KRAABEL argues that the Jewish usage of the formula antedates the Christian usage and thus the formula originated among Jews (KRAABEL 1968, 67, 112f.), in my view PAUL TREBILCO is right when concluding «it seems wisest to leave undecided that the formula was originally created by Christians or by Jews» (TREBILCO 2004, 83).

<sup>7</sup> I.Jud. Orientis II pp. 342–448, nos. 167–214 (Aezani, Acmonia, Amorium, Apamea, Appia, Dioclea, Docimium, Dorylaeum, Eumeneia, Hierapolis, Cotiaeum, Laodicea ad Lycum, Synnada). These texts are considered to be Jewish according to AMELING's classification.

<sup>8</sup> SCHALIT 1960; VAN DER HORST 2008.

Phrygia that while most Jews used Greek names<sup>9</sup> in the second and third centuries C.E. (although we can also find some exceptions, e.g. Samuel, Jacob, Judah, Deborah), funerary inscriptions clearly state that the deceased person was Jewish (Ἰουδαῖος). This phenomenon can be paralleled with the way Christians openly confessed their religious affiliation in the pre-Constantinian era.<sup>10</sup> Epitaphs also have open references to «curses written in Deuteronomy» (I.Jud. Orientis II 172–174, 213), but the term «sickle of the curse», which refers to Zech 5:1–4 LXX, also occurs twice (I.Jud. Orientis II 175–176). In Acmonia the curse formulas refer to the fact that the reader «knows the law of the Jews» (τὸν νόμον οἶδεν τῶν Εἰουδέων, I.Jud. Orientis II 179).<sup>11</sup> Although the Jewish origin of the εἰς τέκνα τέκνων curse-formula is disputed, the Old Testament flavour of this phrase is clear (cf. Exod 34:6–7).<sup>12</sup> We have seen above that there is a reference to the Jewish synagogue in Acmonia (I.Jud. Orientis II 168), where a Ionic capital decorated with a menorah has been found, and we are aware of a synagogue at Hierapolis (I.Jud. Orientis II 191). We also find an ἀρχισυνάγωγος, calling himself ῥαββί, in Docimium (I.Jud. Orientis II 184), and another one in Synnada (I.Jud. Orientis II 214). There was such a significant Jewish community in Hierapolis that one of the sarcophagus inscriptions mentions the «archive of the Jews» (ἐν τῷ ἀρχίῳ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, I.Jud. Orientis II 206, cf. II 43 in Ionia).

### 3. Christian inscriptions of Phrygia

Christian epigraphy in Phrygia has many special features, making it absolutely unique in the Roman Empire. Below I will examine the five most important characteristics of Christian inscriptions.

(1) The sheer number of Christian inscriptions: As ÉDOUARD CHIRICAT wrote, «one of the most striking and distinctive elements of the epigraphy of Phrygia is, without doubt, the large number of Christian inscriptions dating before the reign of Constantine».<sup>13</sup> One group of inscriptions comprises the «crypto-Christian» texts, a term coined by FRANZ CUMONT in 1895, which used a veiled language to denote

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Aurelius Alexandros (I.Jud. Orientis II 182); Artemon (I.Jud. Orientis II 188); Iason (I.Jud. Orientis II 190); Apphias and Iulianos (I.Jud. Orientis II 191); Tatianos (I.Jud. Orientis II 192); Tryphon (I.Jud. Orientis II 194) etc.

<sup>10</sup> GIBSON 1978.

<sup>11</sup> For the curse formulas see STRUBBE 1997; TREBILCO 1991, 60–69. Without exception, inscriptions referring to this originate from the middle of the third century, that is, after the Severan age (193–235 C.E.). TREBILCO argued that this formula could speak for both Jews and Gentiles, as the latter also knew, or had at least heard about, the «magical power» of the holy book of the Jews. One example of this is that T. Flavius Amphikles, who lived in Chalcis (Euboea) explicitly listed the curses of Deut 28:22: see JONES 1980, 377f.

<sup>12</sup> TREBILCO 1991, 69–74. – Biblical curse formulae were widespread in the Roman Empire, see GAGER 1999, 186f.

<sup>13</sup> CHIRICAT 2013, 198; see also MITCHELL 2014; CHIAI 2018; HUTTNER 2018.

their religious affiliation in the second and third centuries.<sup>14</sup> The most widely known example of these inscriptions is the funerary verse epitaph of Aberkios, bishop of Hierapolis, probably dating to the last decade of the second century C.E. (SEG 30, 1479).<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, this epitaph was so popular among the Phrygian Christians that a certain Alexandros quoted seventeen assorted lines from it in his own epitaph (IGR IV 694 = Steinepigramme III 16/07/02): «disciple of the chaste shepherd» (μαθητῆς ποιμένος ἀγνοῦ), «who feeds his flock of sheep» (ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας), «taught me [...] faithful writings» (με ἐδίδαξε [...] γράμματα πιστά), «I saw a people bearing the splendid seal» (λαὸν δ' εἶδον ἐκεῖ λαμπρὰν σφραγεῖσαν ἔχοντα), «everywhere I had associates having Paul as a companion» (ἔσχον συνομίλους Παῦλον ἔχων ἐπό[μην]). Needless to say, the «decipherment» of these subtle references is found in the New Testament. The «chaste shepherd» is Jesus Christ, who feeds his «flock of sheep», that is, the Christians themselves. The «faithful writings» are the books of the New Testament, and the «splendid seal» refers most probably to the baptism. «Paul as a companion» refers, of course, to the Pauline letters.

(2) Indication of Christianity – from allusions to open confession: The second group of early Christian inscriptions openly confess their religious affiliation. In the late third and early fourth century, we find a Christian group in the territory of Appia in the Upper Tembris valley, identifiable by their funerary inscriptions which describe themselves as erected «by Christians for Christians» (Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς).<sup>16</sup> On other epitaphs they simply call themselves Χριστιανός or Χριστιανή (GIBSON 1978, no. 32, p. 103; no. 33, p. 105), or simply carve a Christogram or a cross (GIBSON 1978, no. 31, p. 101) upon the funerary monument.

(3) Open confession of denominational affiliations: The third peculiarity of the Christian epitaphs of Phrygia is that some of them openly name the church communities to which they belong. Thus, we are informed that Eugenios was the presbyter «over the holy church of God of the chaste» (ὕπερ τῆς ἀγίας τοῦ θε(ο)ῦ ἐκκλησίας τῶν Καθαρῶν, SEG 6, 370 = Steinepigramme III 14/06/05), that is, in a Novatianist community, condemned by the mainstream orthodoxy as heretical.<sup>17</sup> Montanism, also called Cataphrygian heresy, or New Prophecy, was an ecclesiastical movement founded by Montanus that arose in Christian communities in Phrygia in the second century. According to the known history, Montanus, a recent Christian convert, appeared at Ardabau, a small village in the Mysian Phrygia, in about 156 C.E.<sup>18</sup> He fell into a trance and began to «prophesy under the influence of the Spirit». He was

<sup>14</sup> CUMONT 1895.

<sup>15</sup> A small selection from the extensive literature: GUARDUCCI 1971; WISCHMEYER 1980; M. M. MITCHELL 2008; THONEMANN 2012.

<sup>16</sup> CALDER 1955; GIBSON 1978.

<sup>17</sup> The Church of Rome declared the Novatianists following the letters of Saint Cyprian of Carthage to be heretical, see MITCHELL 1993, II 100–108. We know of one girl from the Novatianist church (Steinepigramme III 16/31/93D, Soa).

<sup>18</sup> TREVETT 1996, 15–25.

soon joined by two young women, Prisca, or Priscilla, and Maximilla, who also began to prophesy. The movement spread throughout Asia Minor. Inscriptions indicate that a number of towns were almost completely converted to Montanism.<sup>19</sup> After the first enthusiasm had waned, however, the followers of Montanus were found predominantly in the rural districts. WILHELM SCHEPELERN has already suggested that the letters Π Π on a fourth century Montanist epitaph from Dorylaeum stand for Πνευματικοὶ Πνευματικοῖς, and that this expression comprises a Montanist response to the orthodox Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς.<sup>20</sup> Besides this, some of the Phrygian Christians openly exercised the worship of angels, which Paul had already condemned in his letters (Gal 4:3; Col 2:18).<sup>21</sup>

(4) Pride in worldly goods and occupations: A further idiosyncratic feature of Phrygian Christianity is that they were noticeably proud of their occupation, material possessions, and wealth, just like their pagan neighbours.<sup>22</sup> Christian inscriptions, like those of the gentiles, are full of depictions taken from ordinary life. Viticulture was represented by pruning knives, axes, grapes and vine branches.<sup>23</sup> Cereal production (wheat and barley) is referred to by typical agricultural implements such as the plough, depicted either alone or with a pair of oxen yoked to it, together with the sickle, the winnowing fan and with the stimulus, usually a straight stick with a spike embedded at one end used by the ploughman to goad his oxen.<sup>24</sup> People living at the western edge of the Phrygian Highland around Axylon proudly call themselves «peasants» or «farmers» (γεωργός) in their epitaphs.<sup>25</sup> We can read on the tombstone of Poliathlios «You see an inscribed stone, my friend, take a good look, as this stone conceals Poliathlios, who was a farmer» (στήλην γραμματόεντα ἰσορᾶς, φίλε· ἀλλὰ νόησον | οὗτος γὰρ κατέχει Πολιάθλιον, ἦν δὲ γεωργός, SEG 1, 459 = Steinepigramme III 16/45/09, Klaneos, third century C.E.). The importance of arable farming is shown by the wheat sheaves and ears of grain depicted on the tombs, while the high status of animal husbandry is indicated by votive inscriptions περὶ or ὑπὲρ βοῶν, in which the concern for the most important property was manifested.<sup>26</sup> In the Upper

<sup>19</sup> TABBERNEE 1997; POIRIER 2004; TABBERNEE 2009; MITCHELL 2013.

<sup>20</sup> SCHEPELERN 1929, 80–82.

<sup>21</sup> The angel-cult in Asia Minor, which I do not want to enter in further detail now, has a rich literature, see e.g. SHEPPARD 1979; STUCKENBRUCK 1995; CLINE 2011; HORSLEY – LUXFORD 2016.

<sup>22</sup> On workshops of Christian stonemasons see JOHNSON 1994.

<sup>23</sup> WAELENS 1977, 281. Scholars argued that these representations could be religiously interpreted both as pagan and Christian, see W. M. CALDER, MAMA IV, p. xi; C. W. M. COX – A. CAMERON, MAMA V, p. xliif.

<sup>24</sup> WAELENS 1977, 283.

<sup>25</sup> HASPELS 1971, I 311 f., no. 37; I 314, no. 41; I 360, no. 135. – According to the anonymous reviewer of this article, the γεωργός may also indicate that the person was a member of the local ruling class, as farming was socially valued; therefore, such phrases cannot be considered to be purely occupational names.

<sup>26</sup> WAELENS 1977, 283 f.



Tembris valley, sheep farming was very significant, and animals are often depicted, although shepherds are less often referred to either pictorially or in words.<sup>27</sup> We read of a *major domus* named Damas in an epitaph written to his companion, Matrona, that «God gave him 10.000 splendid lambs» (μύρια μῆλα θεὸς πόρεν ἀγλά' ἔδωκεν, MAMA VII 239 = Steinepigramme III 16/45/07, Klaneos, fourth century C.E.). The limestone slab from a sarcophagus contains a funerary inscription in verse for Zeno and Aurelia None (MAMA XI 206, Axylon, Çeşmelisebil, fourth century C.E.). The epitaph begins with the Christians symbols A + Ω and goes as follows: «As you pass this funerary mound, learn, mortal, who lies buried (here): a wealthy man, Zeno, rich in lambs and rich in oxen (πολύρρηνον πολυβούτην). While still living, he constructed this tombstone for himself, along with his reverend wife, whom Jesus Christ provided for him, Aur(elia) None, a most exceedingly holy woman, an excellent nurse of the poor, blameless and wise.» The hexameter at lines 4–6 is based on the Homeric ἐν δ' ἄνδρες ναίουσι πολύρρηνες πολυβούται (Il. 9. 154, 296), with πολύρ(ρ)ηνον (cf. Od. 11. 257) employed for πολύρρηνα metri causa. The Homeric tag reflects the realities of wealth accumulation in this region.<sup>28</sup>

(5) Literacy and literary activity: The above quoted inscription takes us to the question of literacy in Phrygia. As THONEMANN has emphasized, rural Phrygia and Lycaonia produced an extraordinary quantity of Greek verse epigraphy in the third to sixth centuries, something completely unique in the Roman Empire.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, these inscriptions imitate, as closely as possible, the diction and vocabulary of the Homeric epics, their μουσικὰ ἔπεα, as an epitaph from Ikonion puts it.<sup>30</sup> As THONEMANN observed, «virtually every line of every epitaph contains a quotation, a half-quotation, or a pastiche of something from the Iliad or Odyssey». Thus we cannot ignore the fact that the cultural identity of the Phrygians was deeply rooted in the Homeric epics.<sup>31</sup> The Iliad and the Odyssey formed a kind of common cultural basis for the inhabitants of Phrygia, whether they lived in the city or in the countryside; whether they worshipped the ancestral Phrygian or Greco-Roman gods or belonged to one of the Christian denominations. Apparently, Christians in Phrygia and Lycaonia did not distance themselves from the Hellenized world around them and were acquainted with Greek culture, although this acquaintance was most often only superficial.<sup>32</sup> They quoted the Bible and classical literature together in the most natural way. Proof of this can be

<sup>27</sup> ROBERT 1949, 152–160; WAELENS 1977, 286f.

<sup>28</sup> In the Hellenistic period, the economy of this part of the western Anatolian steppe (the Axylon, or «treeless» region: Livy 38. 28. 4, with MITCHELL 1993, I 143–147) had been primarily dependent on large-scale grazing (ROBERT 1980, 257–307; ROBERT, OMS VII 19–38), but by the Roman imperial period sedentary cereal agriculture existed alongside sheep-rearing throughout the western parts of the plateau (MITCHELL 1993, I 148f.).

<sup>29</sup> THONEMANN 2014.

<sup>30</sup> CRONIN 1902, p. 349, no. 89. (Not included in Steinepigramme.)

<sup>31</sup> BACHVAROVA 2016; BERK 2016; ROSE 2021.

<sup>32</sup> DE HOZ – GARCÍA ALONSO – GUICHARD ROMERO 2000.

found in the inscription (Steinepigramme III 16/06/01) in which Gaios, who was a «good and holy man,» describes himself as someone «trained in the arts (lit. Muses)» (Μούσαις ἀσκηθεὶς), which meant not only literacy but the ability to write poetry,<sup>33</sup> as can be seen from the following lines: «I did not have much wealth or much property for my livelihood, but I worked hard and gained a modicum of learning» ([οὐ]κ ἔσχον πλοῦτον πολὺν | εἰς βίον, οὐ πολὺ χρῆμα, / γράμμασι δ' ἡσκήθην ἐκπο|νέσας μετρίοις<sup>34</sup>). He seems to have written for others as well: «This enabled me to assist my friends, as far as I was able, freely putting the ability I had at the disposal of all».

#### 4. Inscription of Zosimos, son of Patrikios and Domna

We have reviewed some of the specialties of Christian inscription culture above. One particular inscription is now examined in more detail, which, in addition to perfectly illustrating some of the above treated phenomena, has many unresolved problems.<sup>35</sup> Its text is as follows:

- (1) [Ζ]ώσιμος Πατρικίου καὶ Δόμνης γέ|νος ἐσθλόν,
- (2) πάτρης ἔντειμος ἔης κα(ι) ἐκ | λαοῦ Ὑψίστοις,
- (3) πνευματικαῖς γραφαῖς | καὶ Ὀμηρίοις [ἐ]πέεσσιν |<sup>5</sup>
- (4) γράψας ἐν πίνακι ὅσα χρήζουσι βροτοῖσι |
- (5) ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῶ σοφοῖσι τὸ μέλλο[ν] ὑπει[πώ]ν |
- (6) σὺν σεμνῇ ἀλόχῳ [...]μῖρι τῇ φιλοέργῳ |
- (7) ἐπ' ἄκος μεωσα (?) πέπλου[ς χα]ρίεντας ὕφην[ε]ν |
- (8) καὶ θρέψαν φίλα τέκνα, [τ]ὰ οἱ τυτθὰ προθάνοντο· |
- (9) κουρίδιον δὲ γάμον ὁμὸν λέχος ἀνφαγάπαζον |<sup>10</sup>
- (10) οἱ κα(ι) ἔτ[ι] ζῶσιν τεῦξαν τόδε σῆμα κλεενόν.

«Zosimos, son of Patrikios and Domna, a noble offspring, | an honoured (member) of his hometown, | and who is from the people of the Most High, | with spiritual writings and Homeric words | written on tables all that mortals needed, | (5) on folded tables foretelling the future to the wise. | With his respectable wife, the work-loving [...]miris, | who sewed wonderful peploi for a cure (?), | and (she) raised kind children, who died before (her) at an early age, | both equally embraced the marriage bed | (10) and they erected this remarkable tomb in their lifetime.»

<sup>33</sup> STAAB 2018, 39–48.

<sup>34</sup> «... I worked and practiced the skill of writing in verse» (MITCHELL).

<sup>35</sup> SEG 43, 945 = Steinepigramme III 16/41/09 (with photograph), Nacolea, Yapıldağ, inscription on a *tabula ansata*, destroyed.

On the Northern part of the mountainous Phrygian plateau, there was a small city sacred to the «Mother of Gods» called Metropolis (Kümbet).<sup>36</sup> It had an oracular shrine to Magna Mater with a considerable number of references to oracles on funerary epigraphy.<sup>37</sup> The inscription of Zosimos originates from ancient Nacolea (Yapıdağ), about five kilometres South-East from Kümbet, in the upper stream of the River Parthenios (Seydi Çayı). CAROLINE H. E. HASPELS wrote that the circa 1.6m wide *tabula ansata* («slab of tuff stone») was collected from the fields of Nacolea and «soon after that the stone was demolished for the construction of a new school building».<sup>38</sup> The valley was a fertile land in antiquity, with a large imperial estate. The funerary inscriptions testify to the importance of the production of cereals, cattle breeding, sheep farming and, of course, literary education. Many of these verses were composed in Homeric-style hexameters, and one – also from Nacolea – was written in perfect iambic trimeters by a peasant-poet (γεωργὸς ἀνὴρ) called Zotikos (Steinepigramme III 16/41/10), who «honoured his own homeland with sweet poems» (πατρίδα τὴν ἰδίαν γλυκίοις ἐπέεσσι προτεμῶν ἔσχεν, vv. 3–4), and, moreover, wished the tomb-robbers «to suffer the judgement of Pentheus and Tantalos» (κρίσιν πάθοιτο Πενθέος καὶ Ταντάλου).

#### 4.1. *Who was Zosimos?*

To turn back to our inscription, first we have to ask the question, who Zosimos, son of Patrikios and Dom(i)na, was. The name Zosimos is very common in the Greek world, it means «a living one» or «full of life»; but the mother's name – according to GREGOR STAAB – is typically Jewish.<sup>39</sup> However, the father's name Patrikios (Latin Patricius) – together with the mother's name Dom(i)na – could indicate higher social position as well. Such names are typical of the upper circles in the Roman East. Because of the expression ἐκ λαοῦ Ὑψίστοιο («from the people of the Most High») in the second line, REINHOLD MERKELBACH considered Zosimos and his family to be Jewish. Indeed, the name Most High God (Θεὸς Ὑψίστος) is the most common name-substitute for YHWH used as many as 800 times in the Septuagint, and occurs on Phrygian inscriptions as well.<sup>40</sup> The «people» (λαός) also play an important role on Jewish inscriptions

<sup>36</sup> HASPELS 1971, II 493 (map); ROBERT 1980, 257–299; Barrington Atlas: 62 E3.

<sup>37</sup> For the location of Metropolis see J. and L. ROBERT in BE 1972, no. 463.

<sup>38</sup> HASPELS 1971, I no. 40, pp. 313f.

<sup>39</sup> STAAB 2018, 59, n. 174: «der Name der Mutter, Δόμνα, könnte hier, wenn auch nicht generell, von seinem semitischen Ursprung (arab. Dumayna) her aufgefasst werden». The name Domna is listed in the lexicon of ancient Jewish names: ILAN 2008, 580. However, the anonymous reviewers of this article believe that we have no reason to assume its Jewish origin. In the online version of the LGPN, Δόμνα has 21 occurrences (in Greece and Asia Minor), with no detectable Jewish connection.

<sup>40</sup> Θεὸς Ὑψίστος is mentioned in the following Phrygian inscriptions: Steinepigramme III 08/08/13, Hadriani apud Olympum; Steinepigramme III 10/03/01, Amastris; Steinepigramme III 14/05/02, Arallea; Steinepigramme III 14/07/04, Iconium; cf. Ζηνὶ πανυψίστῳ, Steinepigramme III 16/44/01, Phytea. – STAAB 2018, 59 also takes it as a proof of Jewish origin, cf. MAREK 2018.

which frequently wish a «blessing on the people» (εὐλογία τῷ λαῷ). However, we find only two examples of this word on Phrygian Jewish inscriptions: the one is a fragmentary stone with the text τοῦ λαοῦ EYNKAIM [probably ΕΙΥΔΑΙΩΝ?] (I.Jud. Orientis II 181, Appia), while the other is a closing formula calling on grave destroyers to pay a fine «to the Jewish people» (τῷ λαῷ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, I.Jud. Orientis II 206). In his commentary, WALTER AMELING claimed that «Da λαός fast ausschließlich von der jüdischen Gemeinde gebraucht wird, könnte hier ein Ausstattungsstück aus einer Synagoge erhalten sein»,<sup>41</sup> but this is clearly a one-sided approach. Christians also called themselves «people» (λαός), whom God gathered from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14; Rom 9:25; Heb 4:9; 1 Pet 2:10). However, we can hardly claim that Zosimos was a Jew solely by referring to λαός Ὑψιστοιο. Among the 47 (allegedly) Jewish Phrygian inscriptions we find only *one* which refers to Ὑψιστος, and even this one is of uncertain provenance.<sup>42</sup> As a matter of fact, the cult of Θεός Ὑψιστος was very popular among the pagans as well, who, in addition, had religious societies under the name of ὑψιστάριοι around this time.<sup>43</sup> Θεός Ὑψιστος was a god in his own right, just like Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος.<sup>44</sup> The worshippers of Θεός Ὑψιστος were already widespread and well-rooted in the first and second centuries C.E. Many of these groups established close links to the Diaspora Jewish communities. They can be considered, at least from our historical perspective, as a serious competitor with early Christianity. Hypsistarians (Ὑψιστάριοι) remained prominent and identifiable at least until the fifth century C.E.<sup>45</sup> We are informed by Gregory of Nazianzus that his father had been a member

<sup>41</sup> W. AMELING, I.Jud. Orientis II, p. 387.

<sup>42</sup> CIJud II 769 = I.Jud. Orientis II 176. It is a fragmentary text consisting of only three lines. It contains the Eumeneian formula: [ἔσ]ται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν | Θεὸν τὸν Ὑψιστον («he will have to reckon with the Most High God»), and the Biblical allusion «sickle of the curse» (ἀρὰς δρέπανον) which is a common motif in the allegedly Jewish epitaphs going back to Zech 5:1 LXX. AMELING closed his commentary with the statement: «Weniger wahrscheinlich scheint mir die Erstellung des Textes durch einen Christen, doch auszuschließen ist wohl auch diese Möglichkeit nicht» (p. 375). However, as anyone can see, there is no positive evidence in favour of Jewish identification. – At the same time, almost half of the Jewish inscriptions (in 23 cases, which is 48 % of the total) refer explicitly to the ethnic and religious affiliation of the deceased, namely Ἰουδαῖος: I.Jud. Orientis II 179, 182, 187, 188, 191–195, 197–209, 212 (however, almost all inscriptions are from third-century Hierapolis, representing one important Jewish community that is relatively well documented).

<sup>43</sup> In recent decades an incredible amount of literature has appeared on the cult of Θεός Ὑψιστος; some more relevant to our topic: ROBERTS – SKEAT – NOCK 1936; BELAYCHE 2005; MITCHELL 1999, 2010; CHANIOTIS 2010a, 116–120.

<sup>44</sup> In Lydia and Phrygia the cult of Θεός Ὑψιστος emerged in regions where gods of divine justice, Ὅσιος, Δίκαιος, Ἥλιος and Νέμεσις, were widely worshipped (MITCHELL 2010, 184, cf. CHANIOTIS 2004). Inscriptions regarding the cult of Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος were published by MARIJANA RICL between 1991–2008. The two adjectives: Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος – referring both to God and men – can be found countless times side by side both in the Old and New Testament: e.g. Deut 32:4; Ef 4:24; Tit 1:8; Rev 16:5 etc.

<sup>45</sup> MITCHELL 2010, 197.

of one of these religious groups, which rejected idols and sacrifice but worshipped fire and lights; its members respected the Sabbath and Jewish dietary regulations, but were not circumcised, and they were called (by others) Ὑψιστάριοι.<sup>46</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, who doubtless also had direct acquaintance with the cult in Cappadocia, saw them as being very close to Christians, revering their god as Ὑψιστος and Παντοκράτωρ, but denying him the name of the Father (and thus being indifferent to the essential doctrine of the incarnation); consequently, they cannot be referred to as Christians.<sup>47</sup> MITCHELL lists three inscriptions from the Phrygian Hypsistarioi among which he also counts Zosimos' epitaph.<sup>48</sup>

Lines 6–10 of the epitaph refer to Zosimos' wife with the name ending in -miris. She is portrayed as a «capable wife» whose three virtues were weaving, raising children, and devotional love for her husband. We cannot claim that these are typical Jewish or Christian virtues, since Greco-Roman culture also highly regarded these virtues in wives. It is a well-known fact that Phrygian funerary reliefs – especially on the «doorstones» (Türsteine) of the Upper Tembris Valley – frequently represent material goods symbolizing personal attributes and qualities of the deceased. For women, the emphasis rests on wool-working and personal grooming. Women are usually depicted alongside objects such as spindles/distaffs, carding/weaving combs and wool baskets, as well as hair combs, perfume and cosmetic vessels, and long-handled mirrors, which reflects on the ubiquitous ideal of women in antiquity.<sup>49</sup>

#### 4.2. What texts did Zosimos use?

MERKELBACH failed to address the meaning of «spiritual writings» (πνευματικαὶ γραφαί) at the beginning of line 3, though this could also help us with establishing Zosimos' religious affiliation. The main question is: how should this phrase be understood? Taking 2 Tim 3:16, the term «spiritual writings» could also be easily explained as πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος («all Scripture is God-breathed» [NIV]; «all Scripture is given by inspiration of God» [KJV]; «all Scripture is inspired by God» [NLT] etc.). But this belief that Scripture was «breathed into by God» also perfectly expresses the view of the Jews about the Old Testament writings.<sup>50</sup> At first glance, the phrase «spiritual writings» suggests that Zosimos was most likely referring to the Bible. But we must not forget that the expression πνευματικαὶ γραφαί cannot be found expressis ver-

<sup>46</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 18. 5 = PG XXXV 990. See MITCHELL 2010, 196.

<sup>47</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii 38 (II 327 JAEGER) = PG XLV 482.

<sup>48</sup> A 53 (Amorium/Docimium, 170 C.E.), A 54 (Dorylaeum, 11 C.E.), A 55 (Nacolea, third–fourth century C.E.). This latter «inscription from Nacolea provides contemporary Anatolian evidence for «the people of the Highest God» ... who appear to be a similar group in Phrygia» (MITCHELL 2010, 196f.).

<sup>49</sup> MASSÉGLIA 2013, 99, cf. WUJEWSKI 1991, 10–20.

<sup>50</sup> In general: LEVISON 2019; in Philo: LEVISON 1995; in Flavius Josephus: BEST 1959.

bis in the Bible.<sup>51</sup> We also know that πνευματικός is the favourite expression of the Montanists as applied to the Holy Spirit.<sup>52</sup> An inscription from Dorylaeum (Eskişehir) in memory of a certain Mountana described her as a Χρειστιανὴ πνευματικὴ (MAMA V 122 = TABBERNEE 1997, no. 63). A Phrygian bishop is the «holder of the reins of the spiritual flock» ([ποιμ]νῆς πνευματικῆς ἄξιον ἡνίοχον, TABBERNEE 1997, no. 70); another Montanist bishop from Mysia was called πνευματικός (TABBERNEE 1997, no. 86); Iulia Euaresta in Rome «having been renewed by the spirit of Christ» (ἀνακαινιζομένη τῷ πν(εύματι) Χ(ριστο)ῦ, TABBERNEE 1997, no. 75). The Roman doctor Alexandros referred to himself as Χριστιανὸς καὶ πνευματικός (TABBERNEE 1997, no. 93), as did Francius from Clusium (TABBERNEE 1997, no. 95). But there is no mention of «spiritual writings» on the Montanist inscriptions.

Here we need to address the issue that with only one exception we find no metrical epitaphs, not to mention Homeric reminiscences, among the Jews of Phrygia. Although this single example was found in Phrygia (Apollonia Mordiaion/Uluborlu), it was composed by a non-Phrygian. Debbora was an immigrant who called herself «Antiochene» (Ἀντιόχισσα, MAMA IV 202 = I.Jud. Orientis II 180 = Steineprigramme III 16/62/02). According to MITCHELL this must refer to the Syrian Antioch, but LOUIS ROBERT even doubted the woman's Jewishness.<sup>53</sup> In any case, Debbora's epitaph is a four-line epigram written in dactylic distichs. However, the term «marriage-bed» (λέκτρον) used in the last line is poetic and frequently found in the Homeric epics, though without the adjective παρθενικός. Thus, Debbora's epitaph little resembles the style of typical Phrygian verse-inscriptions crawling with Homeric reminiscences. Judging by their epigraphic legacy, the Jews in Phrygia did not adopt the usual poetic style of Phrygian epitaphs. On the other hand, we cannot say that Jews living in Phrygian towns did not participate in the usual forms of education. Hikesios, alias Judas, from Hierapolis was «an honoured multiple victor in sacred competitions» (ἐνδοξοτάτου ἱερονίκου πλιστονίκου, SEG 49, 1814 = I.Jud. Orientis II 189, mid-second century C.E.).<sup>54</sup> According to AMELING's commentary, Hikesios was a winner in one of the locally-organised «sacred competitions» (ιεροὶ ἀγῶνες); that is, not in one of the Panhellenic games. AMELING, however, rightly claims in his commentary:

<sup>51</sup> Its closest relatives are the ἱερὰ γράμματα in 2 Tim 3:15 (so in Philo, Vit. Mos. 3. 39).

<sup>52</sup> The Holy Spirit was either called πνεῦμα or παράκλητος by the Montanists, see TABBERNEE 2001. – One of the anonymous reviewers of this article rightly raised the point that not all believers in spiritual powers were necessarily Montanists. Orthodox Christians contested the legitimacy of post-apostolic prophecy, but still revered the power of the spirit. So, not every epigraphic reference to πνεῦμα needs to be (or is likely to be) Montanist.

<sup>53</sup> MITCHELL 1993, II 8f.; ROBERT 1960, 411.

<sup>54</sup> MIRANDA 1999, 114–116. GRUEN's commentary highlights the same: «Whether his triumphs came in athletic or musical contests is unspecified. But that a man who carried the name «Judah» could enter – and win – numerous «sacred contests» (that is, consecrated to pagan deities) holds real significance. Not only were gymnasial games open to Jews, but they advertised their participation proudly in these pre-eminently pagan competitions» (GRUEN 2016, 129f.).

«Es ist nicht klar, ob Hikesios in gymnischen oder musischen Agonen siegte, aber die Probleme, die mit der Teilnahme an solchen Agonen für einen religiösen Juden verbunden waren ... hingen nicht von dieser Frage ab.»<sup>55</sup>

#### 4.3. Biblical and Homeric references on Phrygian epitaphs

In the Christian epigraphy of Phrygia – as was emphasized in the introduction – not only were metrical epitaphs frequent, but their language was also full of Homeric allusions. That notwithstanding, the Christian grave-poetry regularly quotes or alludes to the Bible as well.

Akakios, son of Metrodoros (SEG 15, 796 = 30, 1484 = Steinepigramme III 16/31/15, Ada Köy?, ca. 350 C.E.) was a Christian, although it is not easy to decide whether he was an orthodox one or belonged to one of the heterodox communities, most probably the Montanists.<sup>56</sup> The orthography of the epitaph is strongly italicized and full of poetic phrases and mythological allusions: e.g. ἐν βίοτοιο (l. 7–8; Hom. Il. 7. 104); δῆρις (l. 21; Hom. Il. 17. 158); πικραὶ γὰρ Μοῖραι ἴσους μίτους ἐπέκλωσαν (l. 11); ὅμοια Πρωτεσιλάου (l. 14–15); ἐκέλευσεν ἢ Πλουτεῖ (l. 23–24). At the same time, the text also refers to numerous Biblical passages, for instance, «Who did I fight with? Neither young, nor old» (δῆριν πρὸς τίναν ἔσχον; οὐ πρὸς νέον οὐδὲ γέροντα, l. 21–22). According to WILLIAM M. CALDER, in the background of this rhetorical question we most likely find the Sermon on the Mount: «Blessed are the peacemakers» (Mt 5:9),<sup>57</sup> and the «paying of wages» (μισθοὺς ἀντιλάβοιτε) may refer to several gospel parables and apostolic teachings (Lk 6:23, 10:7; 1 Cor 3:8 etc.). The phrase, «I have left the wicked world» (κακὸν κόσμον κατέλιπα, l. 25), is as if echoing 1 John 5:19: «the whole world lieth in wickedness» (KJV); however, in the Biblical verse we

<sup>55</sup> AMELING, I.Jud. Orientis II 189. He also refers to this Talmudic passage: «The Sages taught: [With regard to] one who goes to stadiums [*le'itztadinin*] [where people are killed in contests with gladiators or beasts], or to a camp of besiegers [*ulkharkom*] [where different forms of entertainment are provided for the besieging army], and [he] sees there [the acts of] the diviners and those who cast spells, [or the acts of the clowns known as] *bukiyon*, or *mukiyon*, or *mulyon*, or *luliyon*, or *belurin*, or *salgurin*, this is [categorized as] «the seat of the scornful»; and with regard to [such places] the verse states: «Happy is the man that has not walked [in the council of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful]. But his delight is in the Torah of the Lord» (Psalms 1:1–2). You learn [from here] that these matters bring a person to dereliction [of the study] of Torah, [since had he not sat in «the seat of the scornful,» he would delight in the study of Torah]» (bT AZ 18b, quoted from the William Davidson Talmud, the additions are in square brackets). In this and other Talmudic passages, however, the rabbis mention stadiums, amphitheatres and theatres but not gymnaseia. On the other hand, attending the gymnaseia was declared «customs contrary to the law» (παρὰ νόμους ἐθισμοὺς, 2 Macc 4:11) from the Maccabean revolt onwards, see HIMMELFARB 1998.

<sup>56</sup> CALDER 1955, 33 raises the possibility that Akakios was a Montanist, but then he prefers to be «safer» and treat him as an orthodox churchman.

<sup>57</sup> CALDER 1955, 32.



find the word πονηρός instead of κακός. The «seal» (σφραγίς) mentioned in line 26 is most certainly a reference to baptism, as in many other Christian texts,<sup>58</sup> and probably can be traced back to 2 Cor 1:22: «Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts» (KJV). The phrases «I got into Abraham's bosom» (Ἀβραάμ κ)όλοις τετύχηκα, l. 27) and «I dwell in Paradise» (Παραδίσοισι κατοικῶ, l. 27) are clear references to Lk 16:22<sup>59</sup> and Lk 23:43<sup>60</sup>. From a theological point of view, it is very interesting that in line 23–24 he seems to be unable to decide whether God will send him to the Underworld or to Paradise (ἢ Πλουτεῖ ἢ Παραδίξω). However, Hades (or Pluto) and Paradise are not necessarily mutually exclusive concepts, because both can be found in the Underworld.

We can give many other examples of Biblical references in Christian inscriptions of Phrygia. In the closing formula of Aurelios Ouales – that is, Aurelius Valens – the cobbler (MAMA VI 234) we find the somewhat mysterious expression «there is a great boundary» (ὁ ὅρος μέγας εἰστί), which to my mind refers to the parable of the poor Lazarus: «between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence» (Lk 16:26 KJV). The «great gulf» (χάσμα μέγα) actually means a chasm, but the writer of the tombstone probably did not remember the precise text of the gospel. In another epitaph from an unknown Phrygian site (MAMA VII 119) dedicated to the deacon Aurelius Papas, his wife Thecla, and his son Gaius, we find a text reminiscent of the words of the Penitent Thief who was crucified besides Jesus: «Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom» (Lk 23:42 KJV), but converted to the plural: μνησθῆς ἡμῶν κ(ύρι)ε ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλίᾳ σου.

Zosimos' inscription, on the other hand, contains neither direct nor indirect quotations or allusions from the Bible, nor any other signs of Christianity, but only Homeric references. At the same time his tomb inscription contains some clear Homeric allusions: (vv. 4–5) γράψας ... ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῶ, Il. 6. 169, which refer to the story of Bellerophon (see below); (v. 7) ἄκος i.e. «elixir», Od. 22. 481 etc.; (v. 7) πέπλου[ς χα]ρίεντας i.e. «wonderful peploi», Il. 6. 90, 6. 271; (v. 9) κουρίδιον λέχος i.e. «marriage bed», Il. 15. 39–40; (v. 9) ἀμφαγαπάω i.e. «embrace», Il. 16. 192, Od. 14. 381.

### 5. Bibliomancy among pagans, Jews, and Christians

Now let us take a closer look at Zosimos' activity as referred to in his epitaph. To quote his own words: «written on tablets all that mortals needed (χρήζουσι), on folded tables

<sup>58</sup> «The epitaph ends with a reference to the Seal of baptism, the passport to Paradise», CALDER 1955, 33.

<sup>59</sup> The phrase «Abraham's bosom» (κόλπος Ἀβραάμ) turns up in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple era, e.g. 4 Macc 13:17; Apoc. Zeph. 11:1–2; for the epigraphic sources see KAJANTO 1978.

<sup>60</sup> MACASKILL 2010, 71–74.



foretelling the future (τὸ μέλλον) to the wise (σοφοίσι).<sup>61</sup> More simply, he predicted the future to the people most probably from the Bible and certainly from Homeric epics. This form of divination was known as bibliomancy, which was equally practiced by pagans, Jews, and Christians all over the Roman Empire. Both the books of the Bible and Homer's epics were considered to be divinely inspired.<sup>62</sup> They were expected to be able to reveal hidden knowledge, and they were believed to be powerful texts, whose very power could be useful in resolving all sorts of problems in everyday life. A late antique veterinary treatise, for instance, says that certain equine illnesses can be healed through the application of a papyrus with a verse from the Iliad, whereas for other diseases one should use Psalm 47 instead.<sup>63</sup> Both biblical and Homeric verses were also used to produce magical amulets.<sup>64</sup>

According to the third-century historian Cassius Dio, two third-century emperors, Septimius Severus and Macrinus, received oracles through verses of Homer in the temple of Zeus Belus in the Syrian city of Apamea. The author only mentions the consultations and is not specific about their procedure (79. 8. 6, 40. 3, quoting Il. 8. 102–103). A papyrus, discovered in Egypt, contains a collection of 216 divinatory answers. The consultation of this instrument consisted in choosing one of them by three throws of a die, the sequence of which was relevant; that is, 1-1-2 was not equal to 2-1-1. In this system, called Homeromanteion, each answer was given by a verse from the Iliad or Odyssey, but what was actually used during the consultation was not the entire book of either poem, but the collection of 216 pre-arranged and unrelated verses, numbered from 1-1-1 to 6-6-6.<sup>65</sup> The dice-oracles were popular in Asia Minor (Lycia, Pamphylia, Pisidia and Southern Phrygia), and the method of divination was the same, as far as we can judge from the extant inscriptions.<sup>66</sup> However, the Homero-

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<sup>61</sup> As for the use of the phrase «to the wise», I quote MERKELBACH's opinion: «Er sagte den «Klugen» die Zukunft, vielleicht in verschlüsselter Form, die nur von den Klugen verstanden wurde.» To this we can also add that whoever showed an interest in the holy books could also be called wise, especially in light of the Phrygian funeral inscriptions, which markedly valued education and literacy in the deceased.

<sup>62</sup> WIŚNIEWSKI 2016, 557. – On the divine status of Homer's works: NAETHER 2010, 330f.; CHANIOTIS 2010b; KARANIKA 2011; DILLON 2017, 217.

<sup>63</sup> Codex Cantabrigensis 10. 3 and 5; cf. VAN DER HORST 1998, 175.

<sup>64</sup> Ps 90:1 (LXX) was most widely used for the production of amulets, but other psalms and, more rarely, other biblical verses were quoted as well (Mt 6:9–13; Jn 1:1; 2 Cor 10:4; 1 Tim 1:15–16; Heb 1:1; 6:2–4, 6:6–7; Jude 4–5, 7–8), WIŚNIEWSKI 2016, 557, n. 16.

<sup>65</sup> P.Lond. I 121 = PGM VII, TM 60204, cf. MALTOMINI 1995; COLLINS 2008. See also fragments of another oracular papyrus of a similar kind, dating from the second or third century in VOGLIANO 1948 and VOGLIANO 1952; P.Oxy. LVI 3831, third–fourth century C.E., cf. MEERSON 2018.

<sup>66</sup> One of the most interesting examples is the oracle from Antiochia ad Cragum, see NOLLÉ 2007, 181–210.

manteia may have worked «through dreams», as many epigraphic testimonies beginning with the Homeric word ὄραφ show.<sup>67</sup>

We have much less evidence for the divinatory use of the Bible in Jewish milieu. It is based on episodes coming from two different periods. The earliest evidence comes from the books of the Maccabees.<sup>68</sup> In 1 Maccabees, written in the late second century B.C.E., we read that the followers of Judas gathered in a place of prayer, fasted, and «opened the book of the Law to inquire into those matters about which the gentiles consulted the likenesses of their gods» (1 Macc 3:48 NRSV). This passage, which does not say what the consultants found in the book, is difficult to interpret. PIETER WILLEM VAN DER HORST thinks that it refers to the opening of the scroll at random, using a method analogous to the pagan practice of reading lots from Homer. This interpretation, however, is hardly acceptable. First, because it is far from certain whether this text describes a divinatory practice at all. If so, it strangely omits crucially important information, because it does not say what the consultants found in the book. They were certainly seeking some kind of advice, but this did not have to be an oracular consultation.<sup>69</sup> The second remark is technical in nature: it is very hard to imagine how to open a scroll at random.

The Christian practice of bibliomancy, however, was the opening of a book at random, which is acceptable, because the use of codex-form books was widespread among Christians as early as the third century C.E.<sup>70</sup> The method known to Augustine must have appeared in a group which used the book in codex format (*aperiri codicem*, to quote Augustine<sup>71</sup>). There is no doubt that the clergy was involved in diverse divinatory practices using books – this can be observed especially in the case of biblical codices with ἐμνηαία, or divinatory answers, written down between the lines of the biblical text and chosen by throwing a die.<sup>72</sup> The clerics also used specialized oracle-books.<sup>73</sup> The technique used to choose the answer in a Homeromanteion can also be found in Christian collections of divinatory responses, and the parallel of this complicated system is too close to be accidental.<sup>74</sup> The ticket-oracles which are found in martyrs' shrines in Egypt are so similar to those which are discovered in the pagan temples from the pharaonic period that the genetic link between them is almost certain.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>67</sup> CLUZEAU 2014, in which he also mentions in passing this Phrygian inscription (p. 170).

<sup>68</sup> VAN DER HORST 1998, 162f., cf. VAN DER HORST 2000.

<sup>69</sup> WIŚNIEWSKI 2016, 561.

<sup>70</sup> RESNICK 1992; SKEAT 1994; LARSEN – LETTENY 2019; cf. WIŚNIEWSKI 2016, 563, with a database.

<sup>71</sup> «As to those who read futurity by taking at random a text from the pages of the Gospels, although it is better that they should do this than go to consult spirits of divination, nevertheless it is, in my opinion, a censurable practice to try to turn to secular affairs and the vanity of this life those divine oracles which were intended to teach us concerning the higher life» (Aug. Epist. 55. 20. 37, translated by J. G. CUNNINGHAM).

<sup>72</sup> OUTTIER 1993; WILKINSON 2018.

<sup>73</sup> LUIJENDIJK 2014, 67–69. – On the *Sortes sanctorum*, see KLINGSHIRN 2002.

<sup>74</sup> WIŚNIEWSKI 2016, 567.

<sup>75</sup> VALBELLE – HUSSON 1998; cf. HUSSON 1997.

Finally, we can ask the question: how could Zosimos have prophesied from the holy books? This form of divination was primarily associated with members of the priesthood, both among pagans and Christians, and the act of divination was also tied to cultic sites (temples, sacred caves etc.), although this cannot be considered exclusive. There is no indication on Zosimos' epitaph that he might have been a priest, or a clergyman, or a «holy man» of his congregation, nor do we find any indication of his being attached to a holy place. However, we have also seen that bibliomancy may have been a somewhat mechanical activity if someone had manuals in their possession. Whoever turned to him for prophecy threw a die, applying certain numbers to which the appropriate verbs were retrieved from the manual. Another possibility is that the predictions were pre-written on πίνακες that were randomly taken out of a box, as we will see on the relief of C. Fulvius Salvis *haruspex* (see below). And, ultimately, it is also possible that he simply struck the holy books – following the typical practice of Christian divination – and used the verbs marked in them, but in this case he would have had to use a codex-form of book, not a scroll. However, this activity of Zosimos, and, what is more, his open confession of it, confirms that he was neither Jewish nor Christian, but a follower of a religion close to Jews and Christians alike, precisely in the manner we imagine a Hypsistarian. Although we are aware that both Christians and Jews practiced various forms of divination, this activity was manifestly interdicted by both the Old and the New Testament.<sup>76</sup>

#### 6. The question of writing material

It points to the relative high level of literacy in Phrygia that these prophecies were given by Zosimos «on a tablet» (ἐν πινάκι, v. 4) and «on a folded tablet» (ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ, v. 5). The πίναξ πτυκτός could also be a literary reminiscence from Homer: πέμπε δέ μιν Λυκίην δέ, πόρεν δ' ὃ γὰρ σήματα λυγρὰ, / γράψας ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ θυμοφθόρα πολλά (Il. 6. 168–169), i.e. «but he sent him to Lycia, and gave him baneful tokens, graving in a folded tablet many signs and deadly» (A. T. MURRAY), in the famous story of Bellerophon's letter.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the sheer number of representations of writing tablets on Phrygian funerary monuments clearly shows that the use of πίνακες could have been an everyday practice in this region.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> In the Old Testament: Lev 20:27; Deut 18:10–11; 1 Sam 28:8–9; Isa 8:19; in the New Testament: Acts 19:19; Apoc 21:8. Although prophecy is a cross-cultural phenomenon widely known in pagan (Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greco-Roman) cultures, it cannot be stressed enough that it is completely different from biblical prophecy, not so much in its external form, as in its origin, motivation, and spirituality.

<sup>77</sup> See BELLAMY 1988–1989, contra MILLER 1989; cf. PERNA 2007 (writing tablets in the Homeric epics).

<sup>78</sup> The scholarly literature most often associates this phenomenon with the education of men, in contrast to the representations of spindles, wool-baskets, mirrors, combs, perfume-bottles etc. which belong to world of women, see e.g. WUJEWSKI 1991, 20–25; MASSÉGLIA 2013, 99–102.

### 6.1. Basic types of writing tablets

On the Phrygian funerary monuments there are three basic types of writing tools and materials represented: the papyrus-scroll, the writing tablet and the pen holder.<sup>79</sup> The papyrus-scroll – which is less often depicted than the writing tablet – can be divided into two types: closed and open scrolls.<sup>80</sup> The latter can be open on one side (one-columned scroll)<sup>81</sup> or in the middle (two-columned scroll).<sup>82</sup> But the writing tablets show greater number and greater variety.<sup>83</sup>

There are one-sided tablets (often marked as a rectangle on the reliefs), open two-sided tablets (diptychs), and one peculiar type which is called «geschlossene[s] Diptychon mit Riemen» (closed diptych with strap) by WÆLKENS, and which he describes like this: «Das Diptychon hat einen Riemen zur Befestigung am Gürtel oder zum Festhalten» (the diptych has a strap with the help of which it could be attached to the belt or could be held).<sup>84</sup> This form is apparently a hinged diptych with a horn-like protrusion on one side,<sup>85</sup> or sometime with a handle-like thing hanging on one side<sup>86</sup> (figs. 1–2). These kinds of protrusion can be observed on the wall paintings of Pompeii – among others on the famous «portrait of Sappho» (fig. 3) –, also attached to papyrus-scrolls. More than a hundred years ago, THEODOR WIEGAND described this phenomenon, which he had observed on a grave-altar (bomos) at Thyateira (fig. 4 d, f):<sup>87</sup>

«Dieser Gegenstand ist für unsere Kenntnis des antiken Buchwesens sehr wichtig. Er ist ein einseitig aufgerolltes Buch, bei welchem der Teil rechts als der Rollenstab aufzufassen ist, der in eine hornartige Krümmung ausläuft; dies ist das aus den Schriftstellern und Dichtern bekannte, hier aber zum ersten Mal auf einem Denkmal erscheinende ... cornu des Rollenstabes» (This object is very important for our understanding of ancient books. This is a scroll rolled-up on one side, on which the right side must be understood as a hinge [Rollenstab] which protruded in a horn-like curve; this is the cornu of the hinge, known from writers and poets, but appearing here for the first time on a monument).

<sup>79</sup> E.g. WÆLKENS 1986, no. 364, pl. 54; no. 429, pl. 61; no. 786, pl. 99.

<sup>80</sup> WÆLKENS 1986, (closed scrolls:) nos. 33, 332; (open scrolls:) nos. 225, 238, 250, 253 (bis), 282, 285, 329, 335, 364, 369, 370, 391, 405, 409, 427, 429, 450, 452, 454, 535, 555, 785, 786 (in total 26). (This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

<sup>81</sup> E.g. WÆLKENS 1986, no. 452, pl. 67.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. WÆLKENS 1986, no. 347, pl. 50.

<sup>83</sup> WÆLKENS 1986, nos. 33, 223, 224, 226, 227, 231, 235, 237, 240, 241 (bis), 243, 250, 252, 253, 267, 276, 282, 283, 285, 296, 329, 332, 334, 335, 346, 347, 354, 355, 357, 364, 371, 390, 391, 393, 398, 400, 401, 405, 406, 409, 419, 434, 443, 448, 552, 689 (in total 47). (This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

<sup>84</sup> WÆLKENS 1986, 124, no. 296, pl. 45, Nacolea/Seyitgazi, first or second century C.E.

<sup>85</sup> E.g. WÆLKENS 1986, no. 226, pl. 33; no. 332, pl. 48; no. 405, pl. 63; no. 434, pl. 62.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. WÆLKENS 1986, no. 335, pl. 48; no. 347, pl. 50.

<sup>87</sup> WIEGAND 1911, 291 no. II 1.



Fig. 1. White marble stele with a metrical epitaph of Maximus (168 C. E.), Uşak Arkeoloji Müzesi.

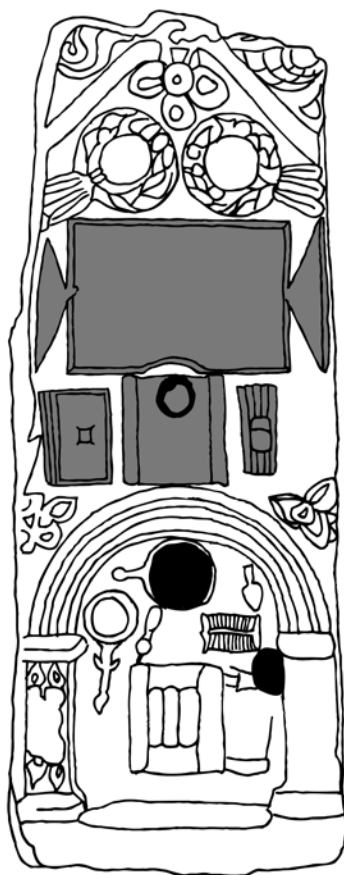


Fig. 2. Unscribed marble stele with writing tools (imperial period), Bursa Arkeoloji Müzesi.

WIEGAND was partly right, partly wrong. He was right when emphasizing that this is an important representation of an ancient book-form, but was obviously wrong when he thought it was a scroll, because on this image of writing materials we can see a star-shaped object, which is a lock. These kinds of lock can also be found on boxes, chests, and book-roll holders (*capsae*).<sup>88</sup> In my view, these are among the first representations of codices, and sometimes it is not even possible to decide whether these are codices composed of writing tablets, or books made of papyrus or parchment. Besides the usual forms of single tablets and diptychs we also find other types of tablets repre-

<sup>88</sup> HELLA ECKARDT has already identified it in archaeological material: «Securing and transporting documents – the archaeological evidence for *capsae librariae* revisited» (unpublished). I am greatly indebted to Prof. ECKARDT for making her article available to me.





Fig. 3. Woman with wax tablets and stylus (so-called «Sappho»).

Pompeii VI, *Insula Occidentalis*; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv.-no. 9084.

sented on Phrygian funerary monuments, such as the writing tablet with a rounded knob on its top edge or along its longer side;<sup>89</sup> a large-sized single-tablet;<sup>90</sup> or an extremely large *tabula ansata* (fig. 2).<sup>91</sup> It is very rare, however, that we see stitched tablets (πολύπτυχα) hanging from a strap like a purse or handbag, which is a very common motif on the funerary reliefs in the northern and western part of the Roman Empire.<sup>92</sup>

The πίνακες are usually identified as wax tablets (*tabulae ceratae*) in the scholarly literature. The word πίναξ does of course have the meaning of a wax tablet on

<sup>89</sup> WAELENS 1986, no. 33, pl. 3; no. 267, pl. 41.

<sup>90</sup> WAELENS 1986, no. 235, pl. 35.

<sup>91</sup> AKYÜREK ŞAHİN – UZUNOĞLU 2019, 271, no. 31.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. WAELENS 1986, no. 689, pl. 88.



Fig. 4 a–c. A grave-altar from Thyateira with representations of writing tools.  
 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale Berlin, Wiegand-Haus.

which the texts were written with a *stylus* (which is why it is sometimes also called a *stylus-tablet*). But there is one more possibility: *πίναξ* might also be a simple flimsy slate written on with an ink-pen.<sup>93</sup> ROBERT MARICHAL rightly divided writing-tablets into the categories of *tablettes de cire* (wax tablets) and *tablettes de bois* (wooden tablets).<sup>94</sup> The first designation he apparently applied to tablets which were hollowed out to be filled with wax; and the second, tablets with a flat surface which were intended to be written on in ink.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to wax-coated tablets that might well eventually be joined to form a codex and that were imported from afar into Britain, the ink-slates were intended for one-time use only and, once used, would be discarded

<sup>93</sup> Such slates were found in large numbers at Vindolanda (no. 58), Carlisle (no. 30), London (no. 28), and Vindonissa (no. 59), see HARTMANN 2015. – The word *πίναξ* simply means a board, and could have been used in many different ways, including for painted or inscribed *ex-votos*, see HAENSCH 2019, 57–59.

<sup>94</sup> MARICHAL 1992.

<sup>95</sup> BOWMAN – THOMAS 1983, 35–45.



Fig. 4 d–f. A grave-altar from Thyateira, details.  
 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale Berlin, Wiegand-Haus.

as refuse, therefore usually made of a common local wood.<sup>96</sup> Literary sources imply that these writing materials were used to make quick notes. Herodian refers to the list of proscribed persons drawn up by the emperor Commodus, the discovery of which led to his assassination (1. 17. 1). The part of the text in question is: λαβὼν γραμματεῖον τούτων δὴ τῶν ἐκ φιλύρας ἐς λεπτότητα ἡσκημένων ἐπαλλήλῳ τε ἀνακλάσει ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐπτυγμένων γράφει, ὅσους χρή τῆς νυκτὸς φονευθῆναι. According to ALAN K. BOWMAN, «[c]learly Herodian is talking of thin tablets made out of lime-wood which were folded face to face by being bent (ἀνακλάσει ... ἐπτυγμένων)».<sup>97</sup> These words amount to an accurate description of the wooden leaf tablets found at Vindolanda and elsewhere.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> HARAN 1996, 213.

<sup>97</sup> BOWMAN 1975, 244f.

<sup>98</sup> BENJAMIN HARTMANN collected all occurrences of writing tablets from 63 places in the Roman Empire, including Syria, Jordan and Egypt (HARTMANN 2015).



The Latin word most commonly used to refer to these kinds of notebooks is *pugillaria*. The fourth-century grammarian Charisius wrote: *pugillus est qui plures tabellas continet in seriem sutas*, and the phrase *pugillaribus codicibus* occurs on a second-century papyrus.<sup>99</sup> Some other items on *pugillaria* are perhaps worth noting briefly. Pliny the Elder used to work with a slave standing by him holding a book and notebooks (*libro et pugillaribus*) – the latter, presumably, being inexpensive working notebooks.<sup>100</sup> Pliny himself cites Homer to prove that the use of *pugillaria* was of considerable antiquity (*pugillarium enim usum fuisse etiam ante Troiana tempora invenimus apud Homerum*, NH 13. xxi. 69). It is impossible to be sure that Pliny has folded tablets in mind; Herodotus uses the term δίπτυχος in a context which makes it clear that this was a tablet of the stylus type; but there is one passage in the Iliad which looks as if it refers to tablets which were, strictly speaking, folded.<sup>101</sup> The Greek word πικτίον (‘tablet’) is evidently similarly derived, and Galen uses πικτίς for a notebook made from hide. In sum, we might say that although the evidence is far from consistent or conclusive, there is reason to believe that our ancient sources, in their references to *pugillaria*, envisage not only sets of stylus tablets but also wooden leaf notebooks of the type found at Vindolanda. Dio makes further mention of such tablets in a story about Ulpian Marcellus, governor of Britain in the reign of Commodus (72. 8. 2). We may remark the fact that Marcellus is said to have made use of them whilst campaigning in the north; this presupposes their presence on the frontier area, a fact which the finds at Vindolanda strikingly confirm.

## 6.2. The use of writing tablets in the Roman world

Although to date very few writing tablets have been found in the East,<sup>102</sup> the frequency of the depictions of the writing tablets on Phrygian funerary monuments shows that these were commonly used in this area as well. But what were they used for? Regarding the use of writing tablets, the most significant contribution to date has been made by ELIZABETH A. MEYER, who approached the issue from the aspect of sacred and profane law in Rome. The author rejects the common assumption that the *tabulae* were primarily used in the process of education claiming that out of the ca. 1000 surviving Latin wax-tablets only one had been used by a pupil: ‘yet even after its introduction, the schoolboy tablet in the Latin-speaking Roman world may be less common than supposed.’<sup>103</sup> In Roman literature we often see the *tabulae* in the hands of scribes and

<sup>99</sup> Charisius, *Ars grammatica*, GL 1. 97 ed. KEIL; P.Mich. 7. 439 = CPL 222, fragment of a testament, Thebais, 147 C.E.

<sup>100</sup> Plin. *Epist.* 3. 5. 15, cf. ROBERTS 1954, 171. Other references to *pugillaria* without any significant details in Suet. *Aug.* 39; Sen. *Epist.* 15. 6, 108. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Herod. 7. 139; Hom. *Il.* 6. 169 (cf. Euripides, *Iph. in Taur.* 727).

<sup>102</sup> Egypt: BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990; CAUDERLIER 1992; Crete: PAPASAVVAS 2003; Samos: KOPCKE 1967, 141, no. 31.

<sup>103</sup> MEYER 2004, 23.

poets, from which it was previously concluded that the tablets were for rough drafts. According to MEYER this assumption is probably wrong as well: «the *tabula* was not chiefly the Roman equivalent of a stenographer's pad or a spiral notebook». <sup>104</sup> In MEYER's view, the Roman *tabulae* were strongly associated with the ceremonial actions of magistrates, augurs, priests and *templa*. Romans venerated tablets and used them extensively in the legal context: for praetorial edicts, lists of judges, decurions, and members of the senate, as well as for treaties, laws, plebiscites, and decrees of the senate were all recorded on writing tablets. <sup>105</sup> Tablets also played an important role in the realm of Roman religion. Reading from tablets (*recitatio*) was characteristic of both Republican and Imperial ceremonial practice (prayers, curse-tablets, and the legal procedure of entering a charge). <sup>106</sup> Prayers were read *de* or *ex tabulis*. <sup>107</sup> The Arval brethren read and spoke their famous archaic *carmen* from mini-tablets (*libelli*). Sculptured images show people carrying *codicilli* (sometimes called *libri*) or *tabulae* in their hands while making sacrifices. According to MEYER, the carrying of a roll or *volumen* in art communicated literary talents and aspirations, and should point to high status (real or asserted), while *tabulae* and *codicilli* – if not specifically for prayer – are more likely to have conveyed a man's particular status as a magistrate. <sup>108</sup> In Roman Egypt, writing tablets (πιττάκια; ταβλία) were also widely used in legal procedures: attestations of the births of illegitimate but Roman children; slave manumissions; acceptances of inheritances and the like were written in Latin on wooden tablets. <sup>109</sup> In the Western provinces the place of papyrus in the hierarchy of writing materials as the ephemeral medium for drafts and letters was taken by «light» leaf-tablets made out of wood bark, as the finds at Vindolanda famously display. <sup>110</sup>

Although a comprehensive analysis of the writing tablets represented on the Phrygian funerary monuments has not yet been carried out, the academic literature to date tends to refer to these as references to education and literacy. <sup>111</sup> There is no indication that we can attribute a legal meaning to the representations of the writing boards in

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<sup>104</sup> MEYER 2004, 24.

<sup>105</sup> MEYER 2004, 26, with references.

<sup>106</sup> MEYER 2004, 74.

<sup>107</sup> MEYER 2004, 74–77.

<sup>108</sup> MEYER 2004, 77, n. 16.

<sup>109</sup> MEYER 2004, 171–176. – However, MEYER 2007, 331f. (App. 1) lists 19 school tablets found in Egypt.

<sup>110</sup> MEYER 2004, 176–179, with references. The Roman army camp at Vindonissa (in present-day Switzerland) produced hundreds of fragments of *tabulae*, at least fifteen of which were certainly legal documents of some sort; eighty-five more were letters of which now only the address survives, but in a high proportion of cases written over an original legal text now illegible. There are also eleven examples of letters on *tabulae* from Britain, two from France, three from the camp of Valkenburg in Holland, and five from Germany. Wax-tablets from Alburnus Maior in Dacia preserve sales with mancipationes, *bona fides* contracts with stipulations, a discharge of obligation (MEYER 2004, 177f.).

<sup>111</sup> MASSÉGLIA 2013, 110.

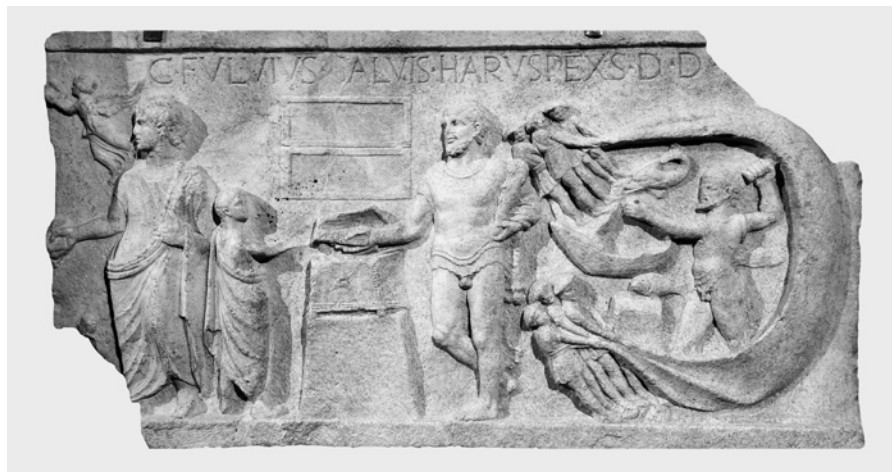


Fig. 5 a. Relief from the sanctuary of Hercules (80–61 B.C.E.), Museo Archeologico Ostiense.

this area. At the same time we need to examine the possibility that – in at least some special cases – they have a religious significance.

### 6.3. Writing tablets used in divination

Zosimos' prophecies were given «on a tablet» (ἐν πίνακι, v. 4) and «on a folded tablet» (ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ, v. 5). For the interpretation of these terms it is particularly important to take into account a travertine plate (1.45 × 0.71 m) found in the Temple of Hercules at Ostia (Tempio di Ercole, I.xv.5), which is commonly dated to 80–61 B.C.E. If the interpretation is correct, it could have been one of the oracular shrines dedicated to Hercules and issuing the «lots of Hercules» (*sortes Herculis*).<sup>112</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the bas-relief erected by Fulvius Salvis *haruspex* which depicts Hercules himself handing over to a boy a tablet on which four letters can be seen and interpreted as [S]ORT(es) • H(erculis) (fig. 5 a–b).<sup>113</sup> This tablet was taken out from an open box standing on a platform or altar, and in the background between the god and the boy we see a huge open diptych.<sup>114</sup> The huge diptych was identified by GAGÉ

<sup>112</sup> The Temple of Hercules at Tibur was also a prominent oracular shrine according to literary sources: see Stat. Silv. 1. 3. 79–80: *quod ni templa darent alias Tirynthia sortes, / et Praenestinae poterant migrare sorores*; Tib. 2. 5. 69–70: *quaeque Aniena sacras Tiburs per flumina sortes, / portarit sicco pertuleritque sinu*.

<sup>113</sup> CIL I<sup>2</sup> 3027; BOIN 2010, 260, n. 53. – BECATTI's widely accepted conjecture (AE 1941, 61) was rejected by BOIN who completed the text as [E]OPT(H) • H(ΦΑΙΣΤΟΥ), which is far from convincing.

<sup>114</sup> According to JEAN GAGÉ 1968 this relief was directly connected with the assassination of Commodus, but this is by no means certain; cf. KOLB 1972, 38–47; MOLINIER-ARBO 2012.



Fig. 5 b. Relief from the sanctuary of Hercules, detail.  
Museo Archeologico Ostiense.

as the *sors*, seeing the outstretched hand of Hercules as a «gesture de justification»;<sup>115</sup> but the plate in the hand of the god is certainly not a polypthich, but a wooden ink tablet, as BOWMAN rightly observed. WILLIAM E. KLINGSHIRN – referring to GIOVANNI BECATTI's research – came up with an interesting assumption:

«This scene illustrates the same divinatory moment depicted on the other monuments we have described: one lot among many drawn at the behest of a god. But there is a new element worth noting. At the top of the central scene hovers a large horizontal open diptych. This is apparently the same object that we see half-closed (and much smaller) in the hand of the toga-clad figure in the next scene to the left. It is unlikely to be an enlarged representation of the *sors* handed over by Hercules. That *sors* is a simple rectangular object. The diptych above should rather be thought of as an interpretation of the *sors*, written out on an ordinary writing tablet. It is the interpretation written on this diptych that the *togatus* is either giving or receiving in the scene to the left, in what is likely to be a representation of the final step in the divinatory process: the communication by the diviner to the inquirer of the meaning of the god's divinatory message. It may be that the figure wearing the *toga* is the *haruspex*, C. Fulvius Salvis, who dedicated the monument, but we cannot be certain whether he is giving or receiving the interpretation, that is whether he is the diviner or the inquirer. What is more important is that this moment is depicted

<sup>115</sup> GAGÉ 1968, 282; KLINGSHIRN 2006, 144f.; HAACK 2006, 54–58; CÉBEILLAC GERVAISONI – CALDELLI – ZEVI 2010, 115–117 (with bibliography).

on the relief at all. It seems to represent the new prominence that lot diviners had in Roman Italy by the beginning of the first century B.C.E., part of a larger process of religious change already underway.»<sup>116</sup>

Similarly famous in ancient Italy were the *Sortes Praenestinae*, whose miraculous origin was described by Cicero: *perfracto saxo sortis erupisse in robore insculptas priscarum litterarum notis* («when the stone was broken into pieces, the lots sprang forth carved on oak, in ancient characters»). Cicero only uses the word *sortes* (and, once, *tesserae*), and he also claims that the oak wood tablets (?) were stored in a box made from a sacred tree.<sup>117</sup> Such *tesserae* have been found in many places all over Italy.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, Zosimos' πίναξ and folded πίναξ which he used to distribute his oracles to the people should not necessarily be seen as wax tablets: they could also be *pugillares*; that is, wooden tablets. These thin, wooden leaves were usually used for divination and fortune-telling.<sup>119</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

Zosimos' metric epitaph is both unique and typical among Phrygian funerary inscriptions. Phrases like «honoured member of his hometown», praise for a loving wife, as well as Homeric phraseology itself can be considered as typical characteristic of the text. However, explicit reference to the writing tables, the practice of divination, and mention of «the people of Hypsistos» is so far unique in the context of Phrygian epigraphy. We have argued in this study that Zosimos was most likely neither Jewish nor Christian – Jews usually manifestly confessed their origin in the epitaphs, while Christians very often alluded to the Holy Scriptures in addition to quoting classic texts –, but attached himself to the Hypsistarians. Although we do not know much about this religious group, it is quite clear that they followed neither Jewish nor Christian religious precepts. He openly admits that he has made a divination by using «spiritual writings» (most probably the Bible) and «Homeric epics», foretelling the future for the people who turned to him in their need. We know, of course, that Jews and Christians also practiced divination, but we do not know of any tomb inscriptions where this is openly confessed. As for the writing tables mentioned in the verse, unfortunately there was no depiction of these on the relief. Though the reference to a «folded pinax» may have been merely one of various Homeric allusions – here referring to the famous case of Bellerophon's tablet –, it is much more likely that these were actually used as writing boards, whether in the form of wax (diptychs) or ink tablets.

<sup>116</sup> KLINGSHIRN 2006, 145; referring to BECATTI 1939, 41–51.

<sup>117</sup> Cic. Div. 2. 85–86.

<sup>118</sup> CHAMPEAUX 1990; BELFIORI 2019; cf., e.g. the archaeological record of a sanctuary at Barbarano Vicentino, near Padua, which yielded 17 such bronze tablets of a shape similar to the one depicted on the Ostian relief, as referred to by BOIN 2010, 260, n. 53.

<sup>119</sup> SANTANGELO 2013, 78f.

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Bestellungen nehmen alle Buchhandlungen entgegen.

*Verlag: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston*

*Externes Fachlektorat: Eva Hagen*

*Druck und Bindung: Beltz Grafische Betriebe GmbH, Bad Langensalza*

*Anschrift der Redaktion: Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des  
Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73b, 80799 MÜNCHEN, DEUTSCHLAND  
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