

A TRAPEZOPHOROS WITH EROS FIGURE FROM AFYONKARAHİSAR ARCHEOLOGY MUSEUM (TABLE SUPPORT)

AFYONKARAHİSAR ARKEOLOJİ MÜZESİ'NDEN EROS FİĞÜRLÜ BİR TRAPEZOPHOROS (MASA AYAĞI)

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ABSTRACT

The Eros *Trapezophoros* (Table Support) belonging to the Roman Imperial Period, which is located in the Afyonkarahisar Museum, was brought to the museum by purchasing, and no comprehensive study has been done on it.** The fact that such an important material or subject has not been evaluated leaves the evaluation of the economic and social structure in the region incomplete. *Trapezophoros* dated to the Roman Imperial Period is one of the important furniture examples showing the aesthetics and luxury of the Roman Imperial Period life in Afyonkarahisar. In this direction, the work in the museum was discussed and tried to be introduced. Eros' right arm is missing from the shoulder; the right foot is missing below the knee. A stylistic, typological and iconographic evaluation of the work has been made and it is considered appropriate to date it to the Late Antonine - Early Severan Period. When Eros *Trapezophoros* is evaluated with other comparative examples, it is understood that this work belongs to the Dokimeon workshop.

Keyword: Eros, Trapezophoros, Roman Imperial Period, Phrygia, Afyonkarahisar, Dokimeon

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ÖZET

Afyonkarahisar Müzesi'nde yer almakta olan Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne ait Eros *Trapezophoros* (Masa Ayağı) müzeye satın alma ile kazandırılmış olup, üzerine kapsamlı bir çalışma yapılmamıştır. Böylesine önemli bir malzemenin ya da konunun değerlendirilmemiş olması bölgedeki ekonomik ve sosyal yapının değerlendirilmesini eksik bırakmaktadır. Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne tarihlenen *Trapezophoros*, Afyonkarahisar'daki Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi yaşantısının estetik ve lüksünü gösteren önemli mobilya örneklerinden biridir. Bu doğrultuda müzede bulunmakta olan eser ele alınmış ve tanıtılmaya çalışılmıştır. Eros *Trapezophoros* sağ kol omuzdan itibaren; sağ ayağın dizden aşağısı eksiktir. Eserin stilistik, tipolojik ve ikonografik bir değerlendirilmesi yapılmış olup, Geç Antoninler - Erken Severuslar Dönemi'ne tarihlendirilmesi uygun görülmektedir. Eros *Trapezophoros* diğer karşılaştırma örnekleri ile değerlendirildiğinde, bu eserin Dokimeon atölyesine ait olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eros, Trapezophoros, Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi, Frigya, Afyonkarahisar, Dokimeon

INTRODUCTION

Afyonkarahisar has hosted many civilizations from the Neolithic Period to the Roman Imperial Period. This city has carried many cultures, beliefs and traditions and created an important synthesis of civilization. Afyonkarahisar has been located in the settlement area since the Neolithic Period. From the 2nd millennium BC, the Hittites began to dominate in Anatolia (Mermerci, 1979, p.160 vd). During the time of Muşşili, a great expedition was organized to Arzava and during this expedition, Afyonkarahisar had a great importance. With the collapse of the Hittites, new political forces began to emerge in Anatolia and the Phrygians came at the beginning of these political forces (Sevin, 1999, p.188; Sams, 2008, p.49). Phrygian domination and settlement areas are seen in Anatolia in the 8th century BC (Bilgin, 2018, pp.21-43). Not only political dominance, but also a new culture, beliefs and traditions began to emerge in the region. With these beliefs and traditions, important cult areas were formed in Afyonkarahisar. After the destruction of the Phrygians, Lydians dominated the southern part of Afyonkarahisar from the 6th century BC (Sevin, 2007, p.195). With the collapse of the Lydian Kingdom, Afyonkarahisar and its surroundings came under Persian rule (İlaşlı, 2004, p.58). When Alexander the Great entered Anatolia and started his advance on the Persians, many cities spontaneously opened their doors to Alexander the Great. During the Hellenistic Period, some ancient cities within the borders of Afyonkarahisar today benefited from this process. Cities such as Kelainai (Dinar), Synnada (Suhut), Prynnessos (Sülün), Amorium (Emirdağ-Hisarköy) and Dokimeon (İschehisar) have experienced important developments (Drew-Bear, 2001, p.97).¹

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, the struggle for the division of the lands among his generals began; The Phrygia Region was given to Antigonos (Gönçer, 1971, p.141). After the Battle of Ipsos in 301 BC, the Phrygian Kingdom was shared between Seleucus and Antigonos (Mansel, 1995, p.466). Later, Phrygia came under the rule of the Kingdom of Pergamon (Magie, 2001, 4 et al; Rostovtzeff, 1998, p.554). King of Pergamon Attalos III leaving his kingdom to Rome with a will, Roman domination was established in the western part of Phrygia after 120 BC, Phrygia was in the province of Asia. The biggest obstacle for the Romans in Asia Minor in the 1st century BC was Mithradates VI Eupator (Arslan, 2007).

Along with the Pax Romana provided by Augustus, there was peace and abundance in Phrygia from the 1st century AD until the end of the 2nd century AD. During this period, the Phrygia Region and many cities

located here were in wealth and abundance (İlaşlı, 2004, p.59; Drew-Bear, 2001, p.97). We can count cities such as Synnada, Apameia, Amorium and Dokimeion among them (Gönçer, 1971, pp.158-160). After the end of the 2nd century AD, peace was broken both in Rome and in Anatolia; The Phrygia Region underwent administrative and administrative changes at the end of the 3rd century AD (Potter, 1998, p.270; Dmitriev, 2001, p.468; Anderson, 1932, p.31). Some cities in Phrygia were connected to Pisidia and Galatia. Pisidia, the city of Apameia; Amorium, Orkistos and Pessinus are connected to Galatia. During this period, Synnada was the most important center of Phrygia; Pessinus became the capital of Galatia Secunda (Mitchell, 1993, p.19).

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

The Eros Statue¹ (Figs. 1-6) stands naked on a profiled rectangular base and has a support behind it. The right front and side parts of the pedestal are missing. Right arm from shoulder; the right foot is missing below the knee. The left end of the *chlamys* was found broken, and then it was glued by the museum experts. Back support is missing. The piece is broken from the root of the nose to the right wing and tip. There are bruises and abrasions on his face. On the upper left side of the pedestal; On the right side of *chlamys* and on the left hip of Eros, only the paw parts remained. The back of the work is rough. The figure of Eros rests on the support behind it in high relief. There is a support column in the form of a tree stump at the back. These evaluations make it possible to evaluate the work in the figure relief “*Trapezophoros*” (Anadolu, 1987; Anadolu, 1991; Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993; Dinç, 2021, p.288).

Eros is depicted standing on the pedestal and naked. The head is turned to the right. The face is round and plump; The mouth is small and closed and the lips are thick. The eyelids are given thickly and the pupils are embroidered. The hair is in small curls and extends to the nape, covering the ears. Left leg is fixed, right leg is mobile. Due to body movement, the left hip is slightly protruding and curved. Waist and groin transitions are indicated by deep lines. Looking from the knees up to the shoulders, it is understood that the trunk reflects the “S” stance. Eros has the appearance of a slightly chubby child with his full body in the arms, legs and waist area. The breasts are made quite full and the waist thinness is not given. Especially his chubby, soft and loose flesh juvenile body is very well worked out. Eros is dressed in *chlamys* and is clipped on the right shoulder and lies adjacent to the back support. *Chlamys* left the right shoulder exposed and covered the left shoulder and arm. *Chlamys* draws deep folds parallel to each other. *Chlamys* contains various fruits.

¹ Afyonkarahisar Archeology Museum Inventory No: 1876; height 87 cm, width 37 cm, depth 30 cm.

On the upper left side of the pedestal; An animal must have been depicted on the right side of the *chlamys* and on the right hip of Eros, with only paw parts remaining. Traces of rough workmanship can also be seen on the parts of the work, the back part of which was left coarser, on the back of the garment. The work was studied entirely as a relief; however, when viewed from the front, it gives the impression of a free-worked sculpture with its meticulous appearance. Although it is difficult to estimate how high the support at the back rose above the figure's head, the upper part of the support should have been rising above Eros's head compared to the fully preserved examples.

located at the back of the pedestal, and a figure is added to the front. Often the column is complemented by a headboard to make the rectangular table more durable. It must have been formed in this sense in the circular area on the broken part of the Eros table support. Tables with legs in an enclosed space are often mounted in front of a wall to prevent tipping (Philips, 2008, p.253, figs. 3-4). The height of the table supports is about one meter, and their widths and depths are also close to each other. The area where the top of the table supports will sit on the table floor is clear. On some table supports, they have preserved the protrusion that will pass into the table floor (Anadolu, 1991, p.71).

Figure 1-2: Front and back view / *Önden ve arkadan görünüm* (B.E. Sönmez).



MARBLE TRAPEZOPHOROS AND FUNCTION

With the above-mentioned definition of Eros, it is understood that the piece, which consists of a figure carved in relief on the façade of a tree stump-shaped support, was carved as a table support made of marble to carry a table top as a form. The Eros table support is typologically constructed to support a possibly rectangular table top carried by a single leg in the center (Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993). *Trapezophoros* consists of three main parts: a table support with an irregular surface in the form of a square column or a tree trunk, a figured relief and a pedestal. The column is usually

Tables, which are called “*trapeza*” in Ancient Greece and “*mensa*” in Latin in ancient literature, are thought to be made of materials such as wood and ivory and covered with silver or gold (Richter, 1966, p.65). These types of tables are generally seen as special furniture used in ancient buildings such as temples, sanctuaries, baths and houses (Dinç, 2021, p.289). *Trapezophoros* is seen as an important work in the decoration of spaces, reflecting elegance and richness in Antiquity. It is also known that table supports were presented to temples or donated (Anadolu, 1991, p.71, fn.1). Figured marble monopod supports carrying a rectangular table top in the Roman Period were generally found in religious places,

in the context of tombs, in private houses or villas, such as atriums, tricliniums or fauces. The production of marble table supports with or without figures found in these areas became an important industry with the rise of luxury villas around 100 BC and continued into late antiquity (Philips, 2008, pp.253-254). In Greece tables had been used chiefly for dining purposes and were of comparatively simple design. The Romans, with their greater love of possessions had tastes more like our own and used tables as pennant stands as we do. There was, therefore, an excellent opening for the Roman designer both to enrich what he found and to evolve new forms (Richter, 1966, p.110). Table supports with figured decorations from the Roman Period are known with many examples within the borders of the empire (Dinç, 2021, p.289). Table supports were made in different forms in the Antique Period, and works were produced in the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Periods, in the form of animals, sphinxes or mixed wealthy forms, as well as god-goddess, mythical heroes or human figures (Cohon, 1984, No. 1-260; Çelikbaş, 2015, p.43). The height of the table supports is about one meter, and their widths and depths are close to each other. For those whose upper vertical is left, the place where the table top will sit is certain. Table supports with animal protoms on the outer surface are seen as carrier elements and are stated as a kind of caryatid (Anadolu, 1987, p.293). Table supports, especially depicted as lion's claws, were frequently used in the 4th century BC, and their use has decreased after this time (Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993, Cat. No. 97; Cat. No. 83a-b.; Kökdemir, 2019, p. 107). We see similar examples in Ephesus Museum (Anadolu, 1991, pp.72-73, Figs. 1-5) and in Izmir Archeology Museum (Anadolu, 1987, p.293, Figs. 1-5). Especially Dionysus and his group were used lovingly in the works dealing with God-Goddess, legendary heroes or human figures (Anadolu, 1991, p.73, Fig. 11; Dinç, 2015, p.92, Cat. No. 45, 46, 47). Apart from this, Marsyas (Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993, Cat. No. 80a), Hercules (Anadolu, 1991, p.73, Figs. 14-15; Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993, Cat. No. 59a-b, Cat. No. 105a-c), Eros (Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993, Cat. No. 48 a-f, Cat. No. 102c), Hermes (Ajootian, 2000, pp.487-488, Fig. 1), in Attis (Stephanidou-Tiberiou, 1993, Cat. No. 77a-b, Cat. No. 101a-c, 107a-b) are descriptions that are used lovingly.

ICONOGRAPHY and TYPOLOGY

Eros is the god depicted as a child in mythology. Eros is the god who first appeared or existed in the existence of the gods; it also existed by self-breeding (Hesiod, 62; LIMC-III-1, pp.850-852). In addition to being in return for "love" as a word, it also symbolizes reproduction. To unite in their narratives and beliefs; it also carries reproduction within itself. Eros is the god who brings beings closer to each other and symbolizes reproduction

by creating life (Erhat, 2013, pp.101-102); It also provides happiness and virtue to man at the time of death. Eros also symbolizes reproduction on the basis of the family (Guest, 2008, p.46); it can be presented as an offering since it contains health, fertility and reproductive structures (Hadzistelidou-Price, 1969, pp.107-110).

The earliest depictions of Eros are the black-figure Attic plate found on the Acropolis of Athens. On this plate, Aphrodite holds two naked and wingless children named Himeros and Eros, linking them to another tradition that shows them as children of Aphrodite (Carpenter, 2002, p.72). The winged and adult Eros depiction begins to be depicted on Attic vases with red figures. More than one Eros appears in almost all love stories, and in one scene. In the 4th century BC, Eros usually began to appear with his bow. It first appeared as a statue in its own right at the end of the 4th century BC; Eros statues were made by Praxiteles and Lysippos (Dinç, 2021, p.290). Eros was depicted as an adult in the Classical Period, but as a plump and fleshy child in the Hellenistic Period. This typological transformation in the depictions of Eros shows an important transition. The Hellenistic Period child Eros depictions were liked and started to be widely used in free or group sculptures. The chubby boy form adopted by the Romans continued to be used (Sharpe, 2014, p.163). Especially in the Roman Period, Eros sculptures were lovingly used in the completion of free sculptures and garden decoration of villas (Döhl, 1968, p.44). Eros remained a secondary god in Greece and Rome, and therefore his cult did not have much importance among people. This is probably why Eros was not worshiped very often, either in partnership with another god or alone (Ful, 2021, p.167).

Eros depictions are frequently encountered in stone works. It is especially encountered in Roman sarcophagi and free sculpture works. In addition to being an ornamental element, it is believed that there is a god who gives happiness and virtue to people in death; in addition, it is frequently depicted in sarcophagi and free sculpture works, as it basically represents the reproductive impulse that constitutes the family. Garland bundles consisting of leaves and fruits and Nike and Eros figures are completely stereotyped in the relief sarcophagi of the Roman Period. In addition to being depicted with the Eros bow in free sculpture works of the Roman Period, it is also depicted with various fruits and garlands.

There are few examples of the 'Eros' figure, which is carved as the front face relief of the Roman Period marble table supports. One of the closest typological similarities to his statue in Afyonkarahisar Museum comes from the work found in Tyana (Berges-Nollé, 2000, 110, Cat. No.23, Taf.58; Niğde Museum Inventory No. 1.1.55 (Nr.231).

The winged Eros is depicted standing and naked on a pedestal in front of a column or tree stump. Especially his chubby, soft and loose flesh juvenile body is very well worked out. He is holding the *chlamys* with his left hand. *Chlamys* is fastened with a clip on the right shoulder. *Chlamys* contains various fruits. An animal must have been depicted on the upper right side of the pedestal, with only paw parts remaining. Eros is depicted as winged, leaning against a column or tree stump at the back.

When we delve into the left hand and fruits carried in the *chlamys* of the young male, one more contradictory detail against the fruits carried only in the personifications of autumn of “*tempora anni*” illuminates. When we closely look at it, there are pomegranate, fig, walnut, and pine cone in the fruits and there is a bunch of grapes in the right hand. All of them are autumn fruits and related with the autumn (Gökdemir, 2019, p.117).

Figure 3-4: Right and left side view / *Sağ ve sol yandan görünüm* (B.E. Sönmez).



It is seen that the belief of seasons come taken from Greek world is continued but transformed radically in Roman world. In Roman Period, the seasons are called “*tempora anni/karoi*” in their Latin names (Casal, 1990, pp.891-892). Contrary to the Greece world, seasons similar to Eros iconography are confronted as in the personification of the figures of in general four young or children sometimes winged, sometimes wingless. Figures of the four season i.e. spring, summer, autumn, and winter, depicted via young man or child figures are visualized in a special iconography in the Hellenistic Period like in the Horai portraits in Italy based on the objects carried and differences between their clothes on these sarcophaguses. According to that, iconographies of four seasons are portrayed in these forms: These figures are in the form of the iconographies of young man or child in generally at a frontal stand position and naked and wearing a *chlamys* or sometimes dressed, sometimes winged, sometimes wingless (Gökdemir, 2019, p.113).

The figure of Eros in the Dortmund Art Museum is also one of the similar comparative typological examples (Feuser, 2013, Taf. 19, figs. 3-4). Eros is depicted standing and naked on a pedestal in front of a column or tree stump. He is holding the *chlamys* with his left hand. *Chlamys* is fastened with a clip on the right shoulder. *Chlamys* contains various fruits. There is an animal figure on the right side of his leg.

STYLE and DATING

Although the original of the Eros Statuette (Figs. 1-6) dates back to the Hellenistic Period, it was also lovingly worked in the Roman Imperial Period (LIMC-III-2, p.617: No. 111, 156). The Eros statuette on the sarcophagus found in the Perge Necropolis (Koch-Sichtermann, 1982, p.541, Lev. 533; Mansel, 1958, pp.99-100, Fig.51), the sarcophagus in the Side Museum (Koch, 2008, p.171, Figs. 10-14) and the Eros figurine with garlands on

it and the Eros (McCann, 1978, p.85, Fig. 95) figure on the sarcophagus in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, our work is similar in style. In all three works, the eyelids are given thickly and the pupils of the eyes are embroidered. The hair is in small curls and extends to the nape, covering the ears. It bears a close resemblance to the child sculptures in the Manisa Museum (Dinç, 2015, pp.87-89, Cat. Nr.: 42-44). Along with the posture of the legs and hips, the body fullness structures processed in accordance with the child's anatomy are similar; in addition, the deep lines that are evident in the waist and groin transitions stand out as common features in both works. It also shows stylistic similarities with the bronze Eros statuette found in the Agora of Athens (Sharpe, 2014, p.163, Fig. 17). The body exhibits a strong "S" movement so that the right hip protrudes outward. The upper body and the lower part are given in proportion. Due to the rotational movement, the lateral crotch lines became prominent. Since it is depicted in the form of a little boy, the body, which is carved in accordance with this anatomy, is given in a full form. His face is round and full, and his nose is small. The mouth is small and the lips are thick. The chin is round and full.

It shows close similarity with the table support with Eros relief from Tyana, both typologically and stylistically (Berges-Nollé, 2000, p.110, Cat. No.23, Taf.58; Niğde Museum Inventory No. 1.1.55 (Nr.231). The stance and typology of clothing are also common in works that are quite close. In the Tyana work, the body weight is carried by the right leg, while in the Afyonkarahisar example, the left leg carries the body weight and with this movement, the

left hip is opened to the side. In both works, the left arm is bent at the elbow and the *chlamys* is held. After forming a fold on the wrists, the 'S' extends sharply down the sides in folds, forming flat pleats, with groove-shaped strips opened with straight drill strokes on the fold surfaces. The dress has similar style features with the Afyonkarahisar example, as it takes the form of a soft triangle that opens next to the left leg. The body exhibits a strong "S" movement so that the right hip protrudes outward. The upper body and the lower part are given in proportion. Due to the rotational movement, the lateral crotch lines became prominent. Since it is depicted in the form of a little boy, the body, which is carved in accordance with this anatomy, is given in a full form. The drill features used in clothes and fruits come to the fore and show similar characteristics in terms of style.

It shows a close similarity with the embossed table support in the Dortmund Art Museum, both typologically and stylistically (Feuser, 2013, Taf. 19, figs. 3-4). Posture and clothing typology are also common in works whose heights are quite close. While the body weight is carried by the right leg in Dortmund's work, in the Afyonkarahisar example, the left leg carries the body weight and with this movement, the left hip is opened to the side. In both works, the left arm is bent at the elbow and the *chlamys* is held. After the garment forms a fold at the wrists, it extends sharply down the sides in 'S' folds, forming flat pleats. Here, groove-shaped strips opened with straight drill strokes on the fold surfaces draw attention. The dress has similar style features with the Afyonkarahisar example, as it takes the form of a soft triangle that opens next to the left leg.

Figure 5-6: Fruit and animal footprints view / *Meyve ve hayvan ayak izleri görünümü* (B.E. Sönmez).



The body exhibits a strong “S” movement so that the right hip protrudes outward. The upper body and the lower part are given in proportion. Due to the rotational movement, the lateral crotch lines became prominent. Since it is depicted in the form of a little boy, the body, which is carved in accordance with this anatomy, is given in a full form. His face is round and full, and his nose is small. The mouth is small and the lips are thick. The chin is round and full. The eyelids are given thickly and the pupils are embroidered. The hair is in small curls and extends to the nape, covering the ears. The drill features used in clothes and fruits come to the fore and show similar characteristics in terms of style.

When the style and stylistic features of the comparison samples are compared, it seems appropriate to date the work to the Late Antonine - Early Severan Period.

CONCLUSION

The marble *Trapezophoros*, which was brought to the museum by purchase, was embroidered as an Eros figure in relief. Despite the lack of right arm and leg of the work, it was dated together with the style path after being examined typologically and iconographically together with the preserved parts. Afyonkarahisar is a residential area with important marble quarries - Dokimeion. Rescue excavations and archaeological excavations carried out in the city support this with reliefs, sarcophagi, grave steles and sculptures. Dokimeion marble attracts attention with its fine and high quality white marble. When we look at the material and style features used in the figurines, this table support strengthens the possibility that it is a Dokimeion workshop.

One of the known settlements in Afyonkarahisar is the ancient settlement of Prymnessos (Sülün). Eros *Trapezophoros* was found in the Prymnessos settlement and was brought to the museum by purchase. Prymnessos settlement is located in the central Sülün village of Afyonkarahisar (Sönmez, 2023, p.627). This settlement dominated the region around the Kaystros River during the Roman Period (Gönçer, 1971, p.168). Since Prymnessos is also on the route of marble being transported from the region to Rome, there may have been an important sculpture workshop or workshops here (Thonemann, 2013, p.28). Apart from the Eros *Trapezophoros*, statues of Nike, King Midas, Demeter and Hercules were found in this settlement and are exhibited in the museum (Sönmez, 2023, p.627; Gönçer, 1971, p.168). The lack of a significant archaeological study in the Prymnessos settlement where Eros *Trapezophoros* is located leaves the evaluation of its relationship with Eros *Trapezophoros* incomplete; It also limits the evaluation from its historical point within the Roman Imperial Period (Sönmez, 2023, p.634)

Marble furniture used in home architecture and decoration has been the subject of many researches in order to express the economic status and social structure of people with status in the Roman Period. Marble tables, which are indispensable elements of both pomp and rich Roman banquet scenes, are made of high quality white marble and decorated with figured reliefs (Dinç, 2021, p.293). The *Trapezophoros* with Eros figure must have been used as an indicator of wealth and magnificence, which adorned one of the houses of the Roman noble families living in the city in the second half of the 2nd century AD. *Trapezophoros* are also known to be presented to temples or donated (Anadolu, 1991, p.71). Figured marble monopod supports carrying a rectangular table top in the Roman Period were generally found in religious places, in the context of tombs, in private houses or villas, such as atriums, tricliniums or fauces.

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