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# A new Antonine inscription and a new imperial statue-group from the bouleterion at Ephesos

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This paper presents a new inscription from Ephesos, one not discovered through recent excavation or survey, but rather through archival research in the papers of John Turtle Wood, the first excavator of the site. Wood discovered this inscription and several others during his excavations of the bouleterion.<sup>1</sup> The stone, a low statue-base inscribed with three short lines of text, is lost. It exists only as a sketch in one of Wood's letters archived in the British Museum. When taken in the context of the other inscriptions from the bouleterion at Ephesos, this statue-base inscription suggests that an imperial statue-group stood in the building. It also may be added to the corpus of inscriptions concerning P. Vedius Antoninus III,<sup>2</sup> the well-known benefactor of Ephesos. The first part of this paper discusses the discovery of the new inscription in the archive; the second part discusses its significance.

*John T. Wood and his excavations at Ephesos, 1863-74*

John Turtle Wood excavated on the site of Ephesos between 1863 and 1874. His primary goal was to find the famous Temple of Diana, which he did in 1869. Until that date, Wood dug numerous trial trenches throughout the ancient city,<sup>3</sup> exploring many monuments, all of which have since been re-explored by the Austrian Archaeological Institute. Between May 1863 and February 1864, Wood funded his excavations himself. In March of 1864, on the advice of C. T. Newton, Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, Wood confined his excavations to the bouleterion, where he would probably find sculptures and inscriptions; for this purpose he was granted £100.<sup>4</sup> Since the British Museum was now funding the excavations and expected to be sent antiquities, Wood regularly wrote letters to A. Panizzi, principal librarian, and to C.T. Newton, informing them of his activities and finds. There are over 300 letters in the archive. The letters to Newton are of especially great interest and value because they contain descriptions of statuary, as well as the transcribed texts of inscriptions that Wood had found. In most cases, the items he described or transcribed were subsequently shipped to England. The new inscription, however, was not among the antiquities that came into the possession of the British Museum.

In March 1864, Wood began clearing the bouleterion, starting with the area of the *scaenae frons*.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the month he had reached the level of the stage, where he found many fragments of inscribed wall panels which, when assembled, proved to be a series of monumental inscriptions.<sup>6</sup> On 28 April 1864, Wood wrote to Panizzi describing his earliest finds from the bouleterion:

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- 1 Throughout his letters and in his *Discoveries at Ephesus*, Wood refers to the building in question as the odeum. However, with the Austrian exploration of the surrounding buildings in the mid-20th c., and particularly the discovery in 1955 of the adjacent prytaneion which clarified the administrative character of the area, the identity of the structure as a bouleterion has been widely accepted. Therefore we have elected to use the term bouleterion in referring to this building. For summary with full references see J.-Ch. Balty, *Curia ordinis* (Brussels 1991) 511-12. In what follows IE = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* Ia-VIII,2 (IGSK, Bonn 1979-84); BM III = E. L. Hicks, *The collection of Greek inscriptions in the British Museum, Part III. Priene, Iasos and Ephesos* (Oxford 1890).
  - 2 Vedius 3 'Der Bauherr' in *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* VII.1 (IGSK 17.1, Bonn 1981) 88-89; RE VIII A (1955) 563.
  - 3 J. T. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus* (London 1877) 35.
  - 4 *Dilettanti report on excavations at Ephesus* (Dept. of Antiquities, London 1872) 2.
  - 5 Wood (supra n.3) 42; J. T. Wood to C. T. Newton, 15 March 1864.
  - 6 Wood (supra n.3) 43.