



THREE INSCRIPTIONS FROM CIBYRA KİBYRA'DAN ÜÇ YAZIT


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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present two newly discovered inscriptions and one newly published inscription from Cibyra, an ancient city located within the borders of Burdur Province, Türkiye, along with epigraphic, archaeological, and numismatic evidence. These inscriptions were found during excavations in the area known as Agora Teras I. Several inscriptions, particularly from the Hellenistic period, are present on the wall of the Agora. Two of the inscriptions presented here (nos. 1 and 3) were also found on this wall. The first inscription (no. 1) is an honorary inscription dedicated to a priest of Apollo, dated to the Roman Imperial Period, recently published by L. Meier. The second inscription (no. 2) is a graffito, an acclamation carved on a column belonging to the stoa. Lastly, the third is a fragment of a votive inscription addressed to Zeus Soter. Both Zeus Soter and Apollo were prominent deities in Cibyra. The worship of Apollo in

Öz

Bu makale Türkiye'nin Burdur ili sınırları içerisinde konumlanan Kibyra antik kentinde bulunan biri yenice yayımlanmış ve iki yeni yazıtı epigrafik, arkeolojik ve numismatik kanıtlarla tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu yazıtlar Agora Teras I olarak adlandırılan alandaki kazılar sırasında keşfedilmiştir. Agora'nın duvarında özellikle Hellenistik Dönem'e ait çok sayıda yazıt bulunmaktadır ve burada sunulan yazıtlardan ikisi (no. 1 ve 3) de Agora'nın duvarında bulunmuştur. L. Meier tarafından yenice yayımlanan ilk yazıt (no. 1) Apollon'un bir rahibi için yazılan onurlandırma metni olup Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne tarihlendirilmektedir. Sonraki yazıt (no. 2) bir acclamatio içermekte olup Agora duvarı önünde duran stoaya ait bir sütunun üzerine kazınmış grafitidir. Sonuncusu ise Zeus Soter'e hitaben yazılmış bir adak yazıtı parçasıdır. Bu tanrılardan Zeus Soter ve Apollon Kibyra'nın başlıca tanrıları arasında yer almaktadır. Apollon inancı edebi kaynaklardan bilinmekte ve Hellenistik

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Cibyra is known from literary sources dating back to the Hellenistic period, while Zeus Soter appears in Cibyra from the second quarter of the first century AD. These two deities also feature on coins minted in Cibyra. Additionally, for the first time, the goddess Tyche is attested alone. According to the graffito, she was invoked to bring abundance to a shop.

Keywords: Cibyra, Apollo, Zeus, Tyche, Cult, Votive and Honorific Inscriptions.

döneme kadar uzanmaktadır. Zeus Soter ise MS birinci yüzyılın ikinci çeyreğinden sonra Kibyra'da görülmektedir. Bu iki tanrı aynı zamanda Kibyra'da basılan sikkeler üzerinde de yer almaktadır. Tykhe ise tek başına ilk kez belgelenmiştir ve grafitiye göre Agora'daki bir dükkana bereket getirmesi için dua edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kibyra, Apollon, Zeus, Tykhe, Kült, Adak ve Onurlandırma Yazıtları.

Introduction

Among the inscriptions recorded in the ancient city of Cibyra, located within the borders of Burdur province, those with cultic content are relatively few compared to other types of inscriptions. Among the gods previously known from philological studies as well as epigraphic studies conducted in the city are: Asclepius, Zeus, Arete and Apollo. The three new inscriptions presented in this article were found in the area known as the Agora terrace I (Fig.1).



Fig. 1. Image showing the Colonnaded Street (Agora terrace I) and the Agora (Source: Excavation archive of Cibyra)

1. A Priest of Apollo

A limestone block used as spolia in the wall of the Agora terrace I.¹ The block appears to have been cut from the top and bottom for re-use, resulting in damage and partial breakage to the surface. A closer look reveals the four-line Greek inscription. Lunar epsilon (ε) is used, while sigma is represented in both classic and lunar form (ς, Ϻ; *theta* is represented as Θ, *kappa* with short cross-bars (κ), *my* as M and *omega* is semi circular as ω.

Findspot: On the western stoa wall situated in the Agora terrace I (Colonnaded Street), on the left side of the entrance of the fifth store (Fig. 2a).

Dimensions: H.: 0.32 m; W.: 0.56 m; D.: ca. 0.30 m; L.h.: 0.025-0.035 m.

Date: Roman Imperial Period.

Ed.: Meier 2024: 52 no. 21.



¹ For an archaeological assessment of the wall, see Özudođru, 2020:168-169. For the inscriptions used as spolia in the wall, see Meier, 2020: 65-74.



Fig. 2a-b. The inscription and its position on the wall

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00 [-----]?
 [ὁ δ]ῆμος ἐτίμησεν
 2 καὶ ἀπ^υ.εθέωσεν^υ.
 Τρωΐλον Ἀριστομά-
 4 χ[ο]υ ἱερέα Ἀ[π]όλ^υ-
 [λωνος-----]

[- - ? D]emos honoured and deified
 Troilos, the priest of Apollo, the son of
 Aristomakhos, ...

L. 1: As noted above, the upper section of the face, as well as a portion of this line, appear to have been crudely cut or removed. The inscription may contain the term “*demos*” on its own² or in the context of ὁ Κιβυρατῶν δῆμος³ or, less likely, Καισαρέων Κιβυρατῶν ἡ βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος.⁴ The lower right part of the letter H, and almost all of the letter M are discernable. There is no space for an additional letter, i.e. *epsilon*, between the letters *tau* and *iota* in the verb ἐτίμησεν, and the largest portion of the letter *iota* is clearly legible, cf. Meier 2024: 52 no. 21.

L. 2: A single vacancy exists after the letter Π and another after the letter N at the end of the verb ἀπεθέωσεν, cf. Meier 2024, 52 no. 21. This inscription

² For the examples see *I.Kibyra* 37-41, 49.

³ *I.Kibyra* 42A.

⁴ For the honorific examples see, *I.Kibyra* 45-46. Recent studies have shown that although this expression typically appears in inscriptions from the second century AD, it was actually used as early as AD 46, see Kileci – Tüner Önen 2024.

contains the first known use in Cibyra of the verb ἀπεθέωσεν, which means to deify. In this sense, the verb ἀποθεῶω is the most unusual feature of this inscription. It is apparently attested earlier on epitaphs in Aphrodisias, Philadelphia, and one in Karapınar, Lycaonia.⁵ Of these, those in Aphrodisias and Philadelphia are dated to the second century AD. The verb basically refers to the death of the person and possibly also to the consecration of the tomb.⁶ In addition to the verb, there are also epitaphs in Aphrodisias that use the noun form of the verb, *apotheosis*.⁷ Commenting on these inscriptions, J. M. Reynolds and C. Roueché (2007: 147-148) stated: “A few inscriptions suggest the possibility that the tomb included space to provide for formal cults of the dead, notably by reference to *apotheosis* (no. 187) and to the tomb as a *heroon* (no. 100)”.

LL. 3-5: Although the name Troilos⁸ is very common in the Cabalian region, Aristomachus is here attested for the first time. The nearest evidence of the latter is from Phrygia.⁹ The upper right part of the letter *upsilon* at the end of the name Ἀριστομάχ[ο]υ can be observed.

The haphazard nature of the lettering and the disparate characterisation style suggest that the inscription may date to the third century AD.

What is known about Apollo in Cibyra dates back to the Hellenistic period. According to Cicero's oration *ad Verrem*, there was a temple dedicated to Apollo, which was plundered by two brothers, Tlepolemos and Hieron, citizens of Cibyra, who fled from the city and went to Verres.¹⁰ It is believed that Tlepolemos was accustomed to modelling in wax and Hieron was a painter. Ş. Özüdoğru (2020, 297) believes that the temple may have been located on the hill behind the theatre, pointing to architectural traces dating back to the first century B.C., which was then rebuilt as a church in the early Eastern Roman Empire. There are two epigraphic references to Apollo in Cibyra. One of which was found by M. Collignon¹¹ in front of a mosque in Gölhisar.¹² In this inscription, dated between the first century BC and the first century AD, the demos and Roman businessmen honoured and crowned (ἐτείμησαν καὶ ἐστεφάνωσαν) Kallikles the priest of Apollo, son of Magas.¹³ The other one, on the other hand, found in Beyköy, located in the territory of Cibyra, is a votive inscription of Aurelius Tatas to Apollo Khereusieideus

⁵ Aphrodisias: *MAMA VIII 570 = IPh2007 12.908 = CIG 2831*. Philadelphia: *TAM V,3 1797*. See also *TAM V,1 234*. Karapınar: Laminger-Pascher, 1984, 33 no. 28. Also see, Meier 2024: 52-53.

⁶ *Thesaurus graecae linguae* mentions the one in Aphrodisias (*IPh2007 12.908*) as “de sepultis, quibus consecratum esset sepulchrum”, see Estienne 1831-1856: 1435 s.v. ἀποθεῶω.

⁷ See *IPh2007 11.52, 12.320, 12.1108*.

⁸ For the name Troilos recorded in Cibyra, see *I.Kibyra 39, 41, 42A-E, 44A-E, 47, 53, 87b and e, 97a, 112-113, 115, 119, 183, 192, 203, 205, 209, 238, 249, 254-255, 274, 298, 346-351, 359, 370*; see also *LGPN V.C; Dökü – Kileci, 2022: 108-109*.

⁹ For the records of both Troilos and Aristomakhos, see *LGPN V.C*.

¹⁰ Cicero, *ad Verrem*, II.4.30-31.

¹¹ Collignon, 1878: 598, no. 5.

¹² The place where M. Collignon (1878: 598, no. 5) recorded the inscription is the Uluköy quarter which was united with the Horzum quarter in 1953 as Gölhisar, see *RG, 1953-8349, 5704*.

¹³ Collignon, 1878: 598, no. 5; *IGR IV 919; I.Kibyra 60*.

(Ἀπόλλωνει Χηρευσιειδεῖ),¹⁴ dated to the third century AD. The epithet is considered to be either toponymic or a formation of the word χήρευσις (=widowhood).¹⁵ The final line (5) of the inscription presented here may have contained an epithet associated with Apollo, or διὰ βίου, as observed in the inscription of Quintus Veranius Philagros in *I.Kibyra* 41: ἱερέα Ἀρετῆς διὰ βίου.

Another type of evidence relating to Apollo is found on coins. Although there was a cult of Apollo in Cibyra during the Hellenistic period, the god does not appear on its coins,¹⁶ on the other hand, he appears on two coins dating from the Roman Imperial period, one from the reign of Tiberius¹⁷ with a *tripous* standing in a tetrasyle temple, and the other from the reign of Gordianus with a representation of Apollo seated with his lyre beside him and a bird pecking above five pellets.¹⁸ He was also worshipped by the people of Cibyra, who gave their children theophoric names such as Apollonios, Apollonis and Apollos.¹⁹

In the light of the literary sources, Apollo in Cibyra can be associated with the theatre and therefore with art, as no trace of his nature is known in Cibyra.

2. Tyche, and an Acclamation for Titus

A graffito, incised on a column of the stoa in the Agora (Fig. 3). The first five lines of the graffito are prominently marked and visible at eye level, while the last two lines are eroded. The letters are incised and vary in size; alpha is carved in two different ways, as A and Α; lunate



Fig. 3. Inscription in detail

¹⁴ Milner, 1998: 35, no. 86; *I.Kibyra* 81; *SEG* 48, 1596.

¹⁵ For the commentary see Milner, 1998: 35, no. 86.

¹⁶ There is only one style of Hellenistic coinage from Cibyra, with a male head on the obverse, usually thought to be that of Cibyras, the mythical founder of the city, but more likely the head of Ares or Athena, and an equestrian galloping to the right on the reverse, whose depiction has also been compared to Ares, an indigenous god seen on the inscribed rock reliefs at Zekeriyaköy. On the reliefs see Sarre, 1896: 49, 51; Delemen, 1999: 69-70; Çimen, 2011: 49; Robert, 1955: 72-78. For the comparison see Özüdoğru, 2020: 351-161, 381-383; Dökü – Kileci, 2022.

¹⁷ *RPC* I 2886A.

¹⁸ *RPC* VII.1 662.

¹⁹ *I.Kibyra* 47, 114-121, 132, 168, 203, 214, 246, 265, 272, 295, 380. On Apollos see also the commentary *I.Kibyra* 121.

epsilon and *sigma* (ε, Ϛ *upsilon* with a transverse stroke (Υ) are preferred, and *omega* is probably incised similarly to *omicron* with a line underneath (⊙).

Findspot: Agora terrace I (Colonnaded Street).

Dimensions: L.h.: 0.04-0.07 m.

Date: Late Roman Imperial period (Due to the letter forms).

A. Εὐτυ-

2 χεῖ

Τύχη

4 ἐργασ-

τηρίου.

vacat

A) *Tyche is well off for (this) shop.*

B) *Up for three times, Titus!*

B. 1 Ἄξι' τῷ γάμ-

μα' Τίτε.

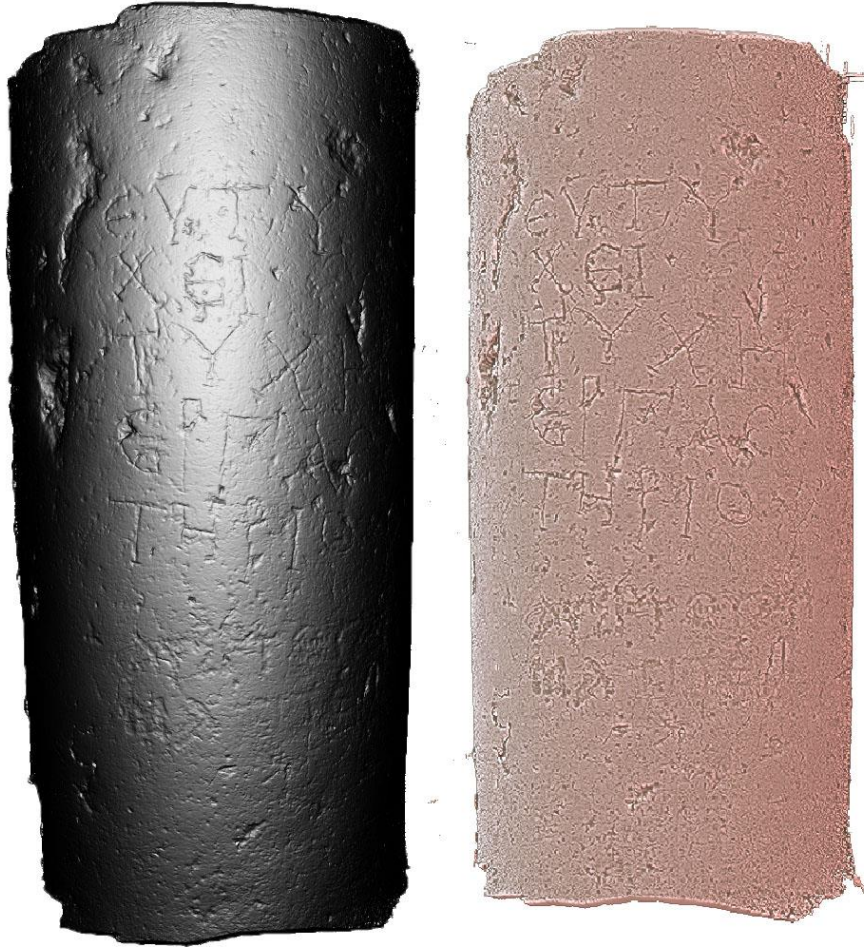


Fig. 4. Photogrammetric analysis

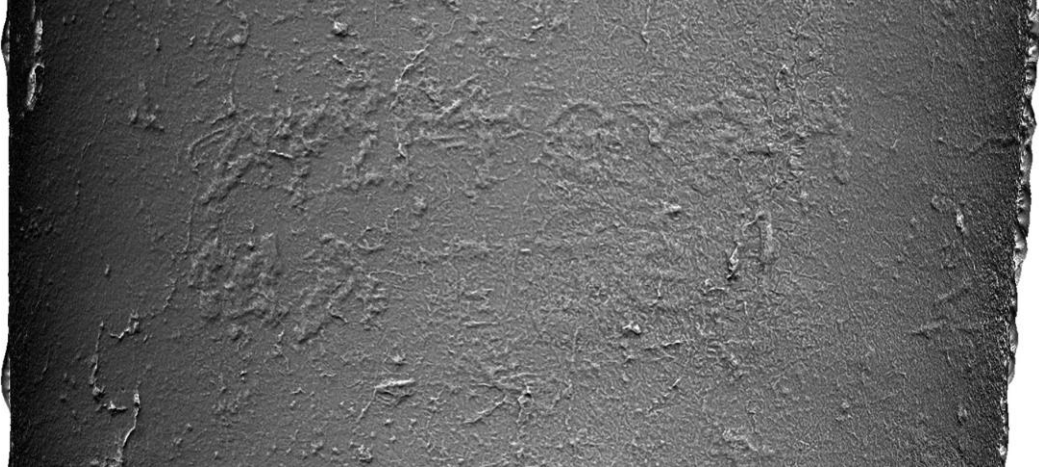


Fig. 5. A more detailed view of the last two lines

L. 3: As a goddess, Tyche is the personification of both good and bad fortune, possibly due to her blindness.²⁰ She is predominantly depicted in a positive light²¹ as shown in the inscription presented here. In parallel, her iconography with the horn of Amaltheia also symbolises her power to bring abundance / prosperity and good things.²² It is widely believed that Tyche has existed since the founding of cities and is responsible for their prosperity and success. She participated in the care of the city's problems and enabled the city to overcome them.²³ According to E. Christof (2001, 276), this term mostly signifies the city's good fortune rather than a deity. The goddess is attested in Cibyra as τύχη τῆς πόλεως together with the god Asclepius, to whom the patients express their gratitude after being cured by the physicians in Cibyra.²⁴ As far as can be deduced from this graffito, Tyche appears here as a deity who was expected to bring abundance and prosperity to the shop.

B.1-2: This section of the stela appears to have been intentionally removed or worn away over time. Due to the difficulty in visually identifying the entire section, photogrammetric analysis has been employed. The letters contained in the modifiers (') were only legible during the photogrammetric analysis (Fig. 4-5). Although the characters in these lines are similar to those in the lines above, the writing method seems to have been slightly altered. The letters are carved thicker, and the letter alpha is shaped as Α. It is therefore possible that these two lines were carved at different times.

3. A Votive Inscription for Zeus Soter

Limestone block bearing a single line of Greek inscription. The block may have been cut on all sides to be used as spolia. There are some broken sections on the bottom part of the face.

Findspot: On the wall of the southern terrace of Agora.

²⁰ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* VII.2.

²¹ Pindaros, *Nemeia* VI.24; Sophocles, *Philoktetes* 1326; Scherf, 2010: 52.

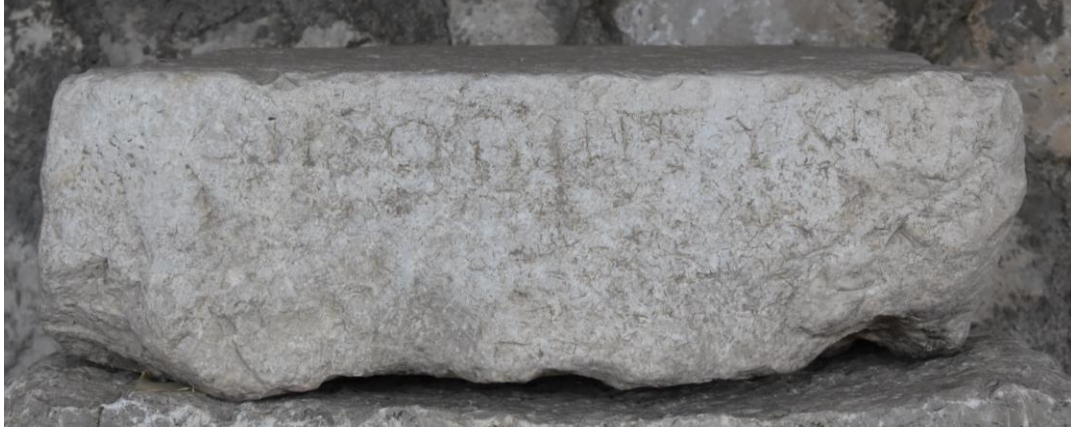
²² Dionysos Chrysostomos, *Orationes* LXIII.7.

²³ Christof, 2001: 92.

²⁴ Hill, 1895: 121, no. 6; Robert, 1937: 384-389; *I.Kibyra* 82-83.

Dimensions: H.: 0.18 m; W.: 0.50 m; D.: 0.505 m; L.h.: 0.025-0.03 m.

Date: Late Hellenistic – Early Roman Empire period (according to the letter forms).



[-----]?

[N.n. ?]

1

Διὶ Σωτήρι εὐχήν.

fulfilled (his/her) vow to Zeus Soter.

Zeus was generally worshipped in Cibyra during the Roman Imperial period, especially between the first and the third centuries AD.²⁵ There is only one stela found in Sazak, a modern settlement located in the territory of Cibyra in antiquity, which dates from the Hellenistic period according to the letter forms.²⁶ Zeus appears in Cibyra and its surroundings with various epithets and acclamations such as *soter*, *megas*, *megistos*, *epekoos*, *sabazios*, *karpophoros*.²⁷ There are also reliefs of Zeus holding winged thunderbolts,²⁸ or simply winged or unwinged thunderbolts, on stelae and as rock reliefs in the

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²⁵ Milner, 1998: 36, no. 89; 41, no. 100.6; 42, no. 102; *I.Kibyra* 44A-D; 78-80, 95, 367; *SEG* 48, 1592; 61, 1235; Corsten, 2015: 7-10. For the records at Ormaleis see, Ramsay, 1895: 307, no. 114; Milner, 1998: 41-42, no. 101; 48, no. 114; *CCIS* II, 19, no. 43; Corsten – Drew-Bear, et al., 1998: 55-57; *SEG* 48, 1585, 1593, 1605. For detail information on Zeus see Cook, 1914; 1925; 1940.

²⁶ Milner, 1998: 44, no. 108.

²⁷ For *soter* see, Milner, 1998: 44, no. 108; *SEG* 48, 1590; Petersen – von Luschan, 1889: 187, no. 246-248; *I.Kibyra* 44A-E, 78; For *megas* see, *I.Kibyra* 79; for *megistos* see, Ramsay, 1895: 307, no. 114; Corsten, 1998: 55-57; *SEG* 48, 1605; for *epekoos* see, Corsten, 2015: 7-10; *SEG* 41, 1235; for *sabazios* see, Milner, 1998: 48, no. 114; *SEG* 48, 1585; *CCIS* II, 19, no. 43; for *karpophoros* see, *I.Kibyra* 95. Additionally, one inscription in Puteoli is inscribed with the name Zeus Soter in the first line. However, the most recent study indicates that this is Zeus Soter Olympios, which refers to the emperor Hadrian, see Şahin 1996, 45-46; *SEG* 44, 823; 53, 1090.

²⁸ The thunderbolt of Zeus is associated with the vivid flash (κεραυνός), thunder (βροντή) and lightning (στειροτή). This weapon, in mythology, is forged for Zeus by Brontes (Βρόντης), Steropes (Στερότης) and Arges (Ἄργης), the children of Uranos and Gaia (Hesiodos, *Theogonia*, 140ff.). In Greek literary sources, this unique weapon of sudden death and fear is accompanied by the adjectives περωτός and περόεις, e.g., Aristophanes, *Aves*, 1714: κεραυνόν περοφόρον Διὸς βέλος; Sophokles, *Oidipus Coloneus*, 1460: Διὸς περωτός ἦδε μ' αὐτίκ' ἄξεται βροντή πρὸς Ἄθην; in Latin sources is seen as *fulminis alis* (Vergilius, *Aeneis*, V. 319), *horrifici fulminis alis* (Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, II. 97). For the fear see also Homeros, *Ilias*, XXI. 195-196.

Cabalian highlands,²⁹ which may refer to places where lightning strikes; possibly as *kataibates* (καταιβάτης) meaning “Zeus *who descends in thunder and lightning*”.³⁰

Zeus Soter was one of the main deities of Cibyra appearing on both epigraphic material and coins.³¹ In the first century AD, the city had a priest of Zeus Soter, named Marsyas, who was honoured by five *phylae* on the back wall of diazoma of the theatre.³² Apart from the theatre, the *stadium* was also dedicated to him as well as to Septimius Severus and his family.³³ Considering the location of the inscription – on the wall of the southern terrace of the agora, at the junction of the road of the first terrace of the agora and the main east-west road – Ş. Özüdoğru believes that it was brought to this wall from the sanctuary dedicated to Zeus Soter,³⁴ the entrance of which can be seen today at the same junction with a monumental gate.

The cult of Zeus Soter in antiquity was generally established after an earthquake, war or for some military reason, in order to be saved from disease or disaster, according to the ancient sources.³⁵ During the first century, Cibyra experienced some disturbances such as earthquake and the spread of the Lycian revolt to the city. Although both events are relevant to the establishment of such a cult, they are not sufficient to provide a clear date for its establishment. However, based on the inscribed characters, it is possible to consider the earthquake of 23 AD as a possible date for the establishment of the cult.

Conclusion

Apparently, Apollo and Zeus were among the most important deities worshipped in Cibyra. As attested by both epigraphic and ancient sources, the former dates back to the Hellenistic period. The cult of Zeus Soter can be traced back to the Hellenistic Period in the territory of Cibyra. The earliest evidence of an official cult of Zeus Soter in the city is provided by the honorary inscriptions of Marsyas, a priest of the god, which are dated to the first century AD. Additionally, Tyche is often seen with Asclepius in Cibyra, possibly as a luck-bringer for good health. However, she is also attested to here for the first time as a goddess of prosperity.

²⁹ Tarkan, 2011: 17-18, 20, 29, Kat. 16; Beceren, 2018: 38, 143, kat. no. 119; 144, kat. no. 120-121; 183, Levha V, Resim 9; 184, Levha VI, Resim 10; Özüdoğru, 2020: 324; Dökü, 2014: 234; 2019: 518-519; 2020: 228-230; Dökü – Kileci, 2023.

³⁰ *LSJ* 1996, 891, s.v. καταιβάτης.

³¹ For the coins see, *Numismatik Naumann*, 1 July 2018, Auction 67 Lot. 373; *BMC Phrygia* 21, 29, 39, 43, 47, 50-51, 56, 79, 96; *SNG Cop Phrygia* 280, 284, 286, 288, 290, 301; *von Aulock* 3723, 3733, 3739, 8397; *Tübingen* 4101; *RPC* I 2883B, 2884-2885, 2890; II 1262-1262A, 1267; III 2294-2295; 2297-2298, 2305; IV 1957; IV.2 1946, 1949.

³² *I.Kibyra* 44A-D.

³³ *I.Kibyra* 78; Dökü – Kaya, 2013: 183; Özüdoğru, 2020: 292, fn. 439.

³⁴ See Özüdoğru, 2020: 295. For the sanctuary’s monumental finds, see Özüdoğru, 2020: 182, 294, 329.

³⁵ Ksenophon, *Anabasis*, I.8.16; VI.5.25; *Cyropaedia*, VII.1.10; Diodoros, *Bibliothēke Historike*, XIII.102.2; Arrianus, *Historia Indika*, 21; Aelius Aristides, *orationes*, 1; 25.318; Malalas, *Khronika*, XI; Fontenrose, 1988: 141; Graf, 2017: 242; Kileci, 2019.

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