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Attalos I and the Conquest of Pessinus. I.Pessinus 1 Reconsidered

Abstract: Only very few sanctuaries of the ancient world can boast such a broad and diverse literary, epigraphic and numismatic tradition as the temple state of Kybele Agdistis in Pessinus. And yet, inconsistencies or lacunae in the sources have resulted in countless controversies on the history of the cult place. In particular, the most detailed account of the Roman quest for the sacred meteorite of the goddess in 205/4 BC (Livy 29.10.4–29.11.8; 29.14.5–14) has often been rejected as later fabrication. An important argument is that King Attalos I of Pergamon, the guide of the Roman embassy according to Livy, did not yet have access to Eastern Phrygia at the time. The close relation between the Attalid kings and the sanctuary is attested by Strabo (12.5.3), who remains unspecific in chronological terms though, and through a number of royal letters addressing Attis, the ruling priest of Pessinus, which have traditionally been dated to 163/156 BC. However, Christian Mileta (2010) has convincingly shown that I.Pessinus 1 should rather be identified as a letter by King Attalos I to one of his own military officials, providing instructions for the conquest of “Pessongoi” in 207 BC. All attempts at not identifying this place with Pessinus have failed, and Mileta’s argument for the high date can be further enhanced by a closer study of the letter and its addressee. This way, we shall be in a much better position to understand what happened in the Gallos Valley at the end of the 3rd century BC.

Keywords: I.Pessinus 1; Pessongoi; Kybele Agdistis; Attalos I; Galatians; Gallos Valley.

1. Introduction

If we trust Strabo’s *Geography*, the Pessinuntine temple of the Goddess Kybele Agdistis became famous not so much due to any distinguished Phrygian past, as is still most widely believed,¹ but through the Roman quest for a statue of the goddess: “It was the Romans who first made the sanctuary famous, when they sent for the statue of the throned goddess (*aphidryma*) from there, following the oracles of the Sibyl, just as in the case of the statue of Asklepios at Epidaurus.”² Apparently, Strabo confused the cult image of his day, seated and clothed like a Roman *matrona*, with the aniconic meteorite (*baitylos*), which was what the Roman ambassadors had brought home from their mission in 205/4 BC.³ Most detailed is the report of Livy, who contextualizes the events in the later course of the Hannibalic War. Ac-

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This study is one of the results of a major revision of Pessinuntine History (Coşkun ca. 2016/17 and ca. 2017/18): I argue that we have no evidence for a continuous cult of regional importance prior to the arrival of the Romans, but that much of its renown, as of its monumental architecture was owed to the Attalids. For introductions to the site, its history and its legends, see Tsetsckhladze 2009 and 2013; Claerhout – Devreker 2008; for the cult of Kybele and Attis Roller 1999 (cf. Roller 2009) is still the best treatment, not least because her argument acknowledges the lateness of the Pessinuntine tradition.

¹ See the references above, n. *. But note that Strabo locates the ancient centers of the Phrygians outside, if close by, the Gallos Valley (12.5.3 [567C] ed. Radt III 2004, 494): πλησίον δὲ καὶ ὁ Σαγγάριος ποταμὸς ποιεῖται τὴν ῥύσιν. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτῳ τὰ παλαιὰ τῶν Φρυγῶν οἰκητήρια, Μίδου καὶ ἔτι πρότερον Γορδίου καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν. ‘Rather nearby, also the Sangarios River winds its course, and on its banks are the old residences of the Phrygians, of Midas and formerly also Gordios and some others.’

² See Strabo 12.5.3 (567C) ed. Radt III 2004, 494: ἐπιφανὲς δ’ ἐποίησαν Ῥωμαῖοι τὸ ἱερόν, ἀψίδρυμα ἐνθένδε τῆς θεοῦ μεταπεμψάμενοι κατὰ τοὺς τῆς Σιβύλλης χρησμούς, καθάπερ καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ τοῦ ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ.

³ On the *baitylos*, see Roller 1999, 256; Strobel 2000, 658.

According to the Sibylline Oracles, victory would depend on bringing home the *Mater Idaea*, who was – somewhat surprisingly – identified with Kybele from Pessinus and not from the Troad.⁴

Livy also specifies that the Oracle from Delphi had directed the Romans to King Attalos I of Pergamon, to help them find their ‘Mother’. The king must have been quite influential, as is also revealed by the role that Pergamon played as a station not only for the ambassadors’ march to Pessinus, but also for its way back to Rome, with the sacred meteorite in their luggage. In fact, the Roman rituals owed so much to the Greek cult of Kybele and Attis at Pergamon that some scholars have claimed this royal city as the true origin of the *baitylos* – which, in my view, goes a bit too far.⁵

This said, nothing more is heard about the relation between the center of Attalid power and Pessinus in the surviving historiography. In fact, for the next century, the whole literary tradition on Pessinus does not preserve much more than a passing remark that Polybios and Livy make about the campaign of Manlius Vulso against the Galatians in 189 BC.⁶ But there must have been a little more in the non-extant parts of Polybios and the lost *Histories* of Strabo. This seems to be revealed by the one further reference that Strabo makes in his *Geography*: “The sacred precinct has been adorned by the Attalid kings in an appropriate fashion with a temple and also with porticoes of white marble.”⁷ It will be argued in the present paper that we can now adduce a documentary source from 207 BC: namely, an inscription from Pessinus that has been known for a long time, but was previously dated to 163 BC. While Livy’s report on the events of 205 BC will thus gain further credence, we shall also be able to better contextualize Attalid involvements with Eastern Phrygia and the Galatians in the late-3rd century BC.

II. Introductory Remarks on the Royal Correspondence from Pessinus

Attalid interest in and support of Pessinus is not only attested by Livy and Strabo. We learn much more about their relation from an epigraphic dossier found at Sivrihisar near Pessinus in the 19th century. Carved on stone in the early Principate, the text has come down to us in substantial parts, even though all the stones and part of the squeezes taken by Alfred von Domaszewski are now lost.⁸ Until very recently, the common view was that the three slabs of white marble contained the fragments of seven letters authored by King Eumenes II (197–158/57 BC) or his brother Attalos (II) either before or after his

⁴ The main narrative is Livy 29.10.4–29.11.8, for the quest in 205 BC, and 29.14.5–14, for the return of the embassy in 204 BC. For further references, see above, nn. * and 3, and below, nn. 5 and 20.

⁵ Besides Livy and Strabo, see esp. Varr. LL 6.3.15: “Megalesia dicta a Graecis, quod <Magna Mater> ex Libris Sibyllinis arcessita ab Attalo rege Pergama; <i>bi prope murum Megalesion, [in] templum eius deae, unde advecta Romam” (ed. Leigh 2004); also see Serv. ad Verg. Georg. 2.394: “hymni Libero apud Graecos Graeca, apud Latinos Latina uoce dicuntur; hymni uero Matris Deum ubique propriam, id est Graecam, linguam requirunt”. The latest rejection of Livy’s account is by Bowden 2012; but in defense of the tradition, see Leigh 2004; Russo 2015, 140–154; Coşkun 2016/17.

⁶ Polyb. 21.37.4–7 and Livy 38.18.7: there is no reference to previous interactions of the Pessinuntines with the Attalids or Romans. – We hear more about Pessinus as of 102 BC, when the ruling priest Battakes was on a mission in Rome; see Diod. 36.13 and Plut. Mar. 17 with the discussion by Bowden 2012; however, his claim that the *baitylos* reached Rome only then is unconvincing; see Coşkun 2017/18.

⁷ Strabo 12.5.3 (567C) ed. Radt III 2004, 494: κατεσκευάσται δ’ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀτταλικῶν βασιλέων ἱεροπρεπῶς τὸ τέμενος ναῶ τε καὶ στοαῖς λευκλίθοις.

⁸ For a date under Augustus, see Virgilio 2003, 189f.; Strubbe, I.Pessinus p. 1. More convincingly, Mileta 2010, 110–112 (with reference to Tac. Ann. 3.60–63; 4.14) suggests dating the publication of the dossier to or after AD 22/23, when the privileges held by sanctuaries were revised empire-wide. For a description of the three (now-lost) marble slabs and the letter shapes, see Mileta 2010, 207–210. – We can here safely ignore another letter by Attalos (II) found in 2003, since it is different in nature: it was not sent to Attis, but to the Attalid officials Sosthenes and Heroides around 160 BC (Avram – Tsetschladze 2014, ed. princeps) or rather in the 180s BC (Thonemann 2015: 183 BC; I shall soon suggest 188/185 BC elsewhere); moreover, it was found in Ballihisar and the stone was local marble.

appointment as co-ruling king (159 BC).⁹ In fact, it is widely accepted that all of the seven letters were written between 163 and 156 BC (a view that will be challenged below).¹⁰

The dossier is commonly understood as ‘secret correspondence’, as if Attis was a Galatian and the sanctuary formed an integral part of a territory under the control of a Galatian tribe or confederation. Accordingly, the priest was regarded as spying for or conspiring with the enemy against his effective Galatian overlord, even trying to break free from him with Attalid support.¹¹ Such views are ill-conceived, since the ancient sources, at least until the 160s BC, persistently describe the sanctuary as Phrygian, and not even the single testimony that mentions a Galatian as Attis priest in the 150s BC (I.Pessinus 2 names his brother *Aioiorix*) provides any indication that Pessinus was then regarded as a Galatian fiefdom or part of Galatian territory. On the contrary, the aforementioned accounts by Livy and Strabo seem to indicate both independence from the Galatians and some influence of the Attalids. The seven letters from Sivrihisar, now in combination with an eighth royal letter recently found in Ballıhisar,¹² persistently convey the impression that Pessinus was under the supreme authority of the Attalids until the dissolution of the Pergamene kingdom.

Be this as it may, when the scattered sources on the Galatians are followed up systematically, it further emerges that a fixed Galatian territory did not exist at the time. Rather there were a number of independent and for the most part nomadic tribal communities dwelling north or east of the Gallos Valley. It is likely that Pessinus had occasionally been under threat by Tektosages in the later 3rd and early 2nd centuries, whereas firm control by the Tolistobogioi is not attested before the mid-1st century, whence the *emporion* gradually developed into the urban center of the westernmost Galatian tribe.¹³ At all events, for the sake of avoiding circularity, none of these hypotheses will be drawn on to further our understanding of the oldest document of Pessinuntine history, to which we shall now turn.

III. The Controversy on the Chronology of *I.Pessinus* 1

The fragment of the first letter (I.Pessinus 1) reads as follows:¹⁴

[...]μενους συστήσαι [ca. 10] διὸ καὶ νῦν τὴν ταχίστην π[αραγ]ενόμενος ἐπὶ τοὺς τόπους καὶ

⁹ The most important publications and commentaries are by Dittenberger, OGIS I 315; Welles, RC 241–253, no. 55–61; Virgilio 1981; 2003, 302–308, no. 33 (with fotos of the remaining squeezes made by von Domaszewski: figs. 61–67); Strubbe, I.Pessinus no. 1–7. For no. 1, also see the text and translation by Mileta 2010 (with further references to older scholarship, esp. A. D. Mordtman [SBAW 1860, 180–185] and A. von Domaszewski [AEM 6, 1884, 95–98]).

¹⁰ 163 BC is the traditional date of no. 1, which will be challenged below, section 3. 156 BC is mostly regarded as the *terminus ad quem* for no. 7, since a Pergamene embassy was yet to be sent to Rome at the outbreak of the next war with Bithynia (for 158 BC, see Avram – Tsetschladze 2014, 151 n. 2).

¹¹ See, e.g., Strubbe, I.Pessinus p. 1: “they reveal conspiratorial efforts of the Attalids to gain control over Galatian territory, acting through the high-priest of Pessinus, who was their secret ally”. Most outspoken is Stark 2007, who argues that the goddess of Pessinus was chosen by the Romans precisely because it was perceived as Gaulish by them; this runs counter to the complete evidence. Cf. Virgilio 1981, 88–93; 2003, 189; Mitchell I 1993, 26; Boffo 2007, 114; Claerhout – Devreker 2008, 53; Verlinde 2010, 117; Marek 2010, 281: “der ursprünglich geheime Charakter dieser Korrespondenz”; Ma 2013, 50; 54; 56; Avram – Tsetschladze 2014, 151; 162; Thonemann 2015, 121; Payen 2016, 150f. – Körte 1897, 15f. has, however, claimed that Pessinus was not yet under Tolistobogian control in 189 BC, since Vulso had never considered it a destination of his campaign, such as Gordion or Ankyra; only afterwards, it became Tolistobogian, as seemed to be warranted to Körte by I.Pessinus 2. Strobel 2002, 10 specifies that Pessinus was independent, though by a grant of the Tolistobogioi after adopting the cult; but Strobel goes on to claim that Attis was a “tetrarchic prince” as early as the 3rd century BC; against such speculations, see Coşkun 2014.

¹² See above, n. 8.

¹³ For a full argument, see Coşkun 2017/18; for the time being, see Coşkun 2011; 2013.

¹⁴ I here adopt the text and translation of Strubbe, I.Pessinus 1.

ἐπισκεψάμενος πάντα σα⁵||φῶς διασάφησόν μοι πόσων ἔτι χρεῖαν ἕξεις στρατιωτῶν. Καί τοὺς Περσῶγγους δὲ ἔάν δύνῃ πραξικοπήσῃσαι, | γράφε μοι τίνων ἐστὶ χρεία· ἱεροῦ γὰρ τοῦ | χωρίου ὄντος ληπτέον ἐστὶ πάντως. ¹⁰|| *vacat* Ἐρρωσο δλ', Γορπιαίου ζ' ἀπιόν(τος).

“... therefore go now as quickly as possible into the country districts and inspect everything well, and then let me know how many more soldiers you will have need of. And if you can take Persongoi by treachery, write me what is needed, for since the place is sacred, it must be taken by all means. Be well (Year) 34, the 7th day of the last decade of (the month) Gorpaios.”

The introductory lines that would have spelled out the author and the addressee of the letter are lost, but this is the only inscription of the epigraphic dossier with a full subscription. The letter was dispatched on the 27th Gorpaios of an unspecified year 34. So we are looking at a time in or near August of either 207 BC, if the letter has been dictated by Attalos I (and if we further accept that, by the time, he counted 241/40 BC as his first regnal year),¹⁵ or 163 BC, if it has been authored by Eumenes II (or his proxy Attalos [II]). These two are the only Attalid kings who ruled for such a long period.¹⁶ Scholars have widely agreed on the lower date, claiming that Attalos I was less interested in eastern expansion, or that otherwise the time gap between the first and the remaining letters would be too long.¹⁷ But Christian Mileta has recently challenged this view. His arguments can be summarized as follows:¹⁸

- a) The recipient does not seem to be Attis, who tends to be addressed in a more friendly fashion otherwise, but a subordinate official receiving military instructions from his king.
- b) While the chronological sequence of the seven letters should be accepted, the time gaps are uncertain; the original and the squeeze of the first inscriptions have been lost, so that we cannot be certain

¹⁵ Some caution is in place here, given the various uncertainties concerning Attalos' kingship. First, we know of no other letter in which he used a regnal year (cf. Welles, RC 24; 28; 29; 34 – though the latter three have fragmentary endings). Second, while the Macedonian year 241/40 BC is widely accepted as the beginning of Attalos' rule, there is some controversy as to when exactly he began to rule effectively and when he assumed the royal title. The latter tends to be dated somewhat later, after his first major victory over the Galatians, for Polyb. 18.41.7 states that “he made this victory the beginning (of his rule)” (*archēn*) and then “showed himself as king for the first time”. Scholars have variously suggested dating this first Galatian victory, which is normally identified with the defeat of the Tolistobogians at the Kaikos river (OGIS I 275), to 241/36 BC. However, if we take Polybios' aetiology of Attalos' kingship literally, we should do the same with his claim that Attalos “ruled as king” (*basileusas*) for 44 years (18.41.8). Livy 33.20f. not only confirms the number of years, but also mentions the king's death very soon after the Roman victory over Philip at Kynoskephalai in the spring of 197 BC; this date is consistent with the fact that Attalos died while still in Greece. If these pieces of information are combined and inclusive count is admitted, 198/97 BC was Attalos' 44th regnal year (according to the Macedonian calendar), so that both Attalos' Galatian victory *and* his assumption of the diadem fall into 241/40 BC. This early date for the Galatian victory, and thus the beginning of his kingship, gains further support through the new chronology for the Seleukid War of Brothers: I have argued elsewhere that this war took place 246–ca. 242 BC, thus ending *prior* to the peace that sealed the Third Syrian War in 241 BC (Coşkun ca. 2017). Accordingly, Antiochos Hierax and the Tolistobogians would have been free to attack Pergamon as early as 241 BC. Cf. also Strab. 13.4.2 (626C), who offers the same explanation for Attalos' kingship as Polyb., but ascribes him only 43 years as king. Unless this is a slip, this might imply that the Battle at the Kaikos took place around the summer of 240 BC (thus in the latter part of 241/40 BC).

¹⁶ To my knowledge, no one has so far seriously considered that this might be a Seleukid era year. In case, this would equal about August 278, thus a time when Antiochos I had not yet overcome the turmoil that had arisen in Syria after his father's assassination in 281. Conflicts in Asia Minor seem to have been concentrated in Mysia and Bithynia during that year.

¹⁷ For the traditional chronology, see Dittenberger, OGIS I 315 n. 7; Stähelin 1907/73, 75f.; Welles, RC p. 247; Hansen 1971, 126: “we can infer that the king of Pergamon furnished troops to the priest for the conquest of religious strongholds”; Virgilio 1981, 37–47; 2003, 189; Strubbe, I.Pessinus p. 1.

¹⁸ Mileta 2010, followed (based on a previous ms.) by Stark 2007, 86f. (with n. 27 for an earlier reference to a high chronology, which is based on an apparent error though). Mileta's view has been rejected by Avram – Tsetskhladze 2014, 151 n. 2 (without explanation).

if more letters were originally inscribed; at any rate, there is no longer the need to press inscriptions 2–7 into the narrow time frame of 163 to 156 BC, if the first is moved up to 207 BC.

c) 207 BC would coincide with the war between Pergamon and Bithynia (208–205 BC), and since both sides are likely to have employed Galatians, there is nothing surprising about part of the war unfolding in the area of Pessinus.

d) Since “Pessongoi” is qualified as a “holy and fortified place” that was “to be taken by all means” (ἱεροῦ γὰρ τοῦ | χωρίου ὄντος ληπτέον ἐστὶ πάντως), this can only have been Pessinus itself; the form τοὺς Πεσσόγγους may well be a pseudo-ethnic instead of the toponym, caused by a “Hörfehler”.

e) Miletta adds the Romans’ interest in the *baitylos* as a further motivation for Attalos to conquer Pessongoi.

Admittedly, the last point is quite weak: the king could not yet know about the Romans’ divine quest as early as 207 BC. Despite his ideological creativity and diplomatic skills, which have recently found much appreciation,¹⁹ one would have to go as far as to suppose that Attalos had instigated the consultation of the Sibylline Oracle by the Senate commission in 205 BC – which Miletta does not do, and which would indeed be utter nonsense.²⁰ But even if we abandon the last point, the rest of the argument still appears compelling to me. In fact, much can be said to further corroborate the high chronology.

To follow up on d), it is worthwhile noting that no one has so far come up with an alternative location of *Pessongoi*, or at least identified any Hellenistic sanctuary or fortified settlement near Pessinus in or outside the Gallos Valley.²¹ In addition, one should be cautious not to posit a further toponym (or ethnic) that is otherwise unknown and cannot be etymologized as Galatian, Greek, Anatolian or Phrygian.²² After all, Biagio Virgilio’s suggestion of a Greek root that would qualify the *Pessongoi* as “Shoe-Makers” does nothing but illustrate the despair caused by the denial of the obvious.²³

Most importantly, it is quite counter-intuitive not to identify the *Pessongoi* with *Pessinus*, all the more so in an epigraphic dossier that collects documents of prime interest for the history of the cult place and settlement of Pessinus. Letter 1 was chosen to head the documentation, because it appears to be the very first attestation not only of the name of the sanctuary (even if in a form different from that which later became standard), but also of its character as a “sacred, fortified settlement”. This choice is even more

¹⁹ Chrubasik 2013; Russo 2014; Coşkun 2016/17.

²⁰ I wonder if Miletta’s argument has been influenced by Stark 2007, which is in the bibliography, though not quoted in the present context. Stark argues – quite unconvincingly – that the Romans had so far failed with an *evocatio* of a Gaulish divinity, so that they hoped to overcome the Gaulish enemies in Northern Italy with the help of the goddess from Phrygia, whom they allegedly perceived as Gaulish. Besides, Stark p. 109 suggests that it was in 207 BC that the *baitylos* was transferred to Pergamon where the Romans found it in 205 BC. But see above, n. 4.

²¹ See the surveys by Verlinde 2010 and Tsetschladze 2013 for the Gallos Valley, as well as Darbyshire – Mitchell – Vardar 2000, 88–93 (*cf.* the map in Strobel 1999, 395f.) for the wider area.

²² Welles, RC p. 247: “Pessongoi ... was a city or stronghold, a holy place of Anatolian or of Gallic religion. It is otherwise unknown”; Strubbe, I.Pessinus p. 6 for an aporetic discussion. Surprising is Zgusta, KON p. 487, par. 1050, according to whom *Pessinus* does not have Anatolian parallels; this seems sufficient for him to declare the toponym as Celtic with reference to the name “des galatischen Stammes *Pessongoi*”. However, Delamarre 2003 and 2012 or Falileyev 2007 do not offer any Celtic parallels.

²³ Virgilio 1981, 75–77 for an etymology based on πῖσ(σ)υγγος; this is repeated in 2003, 303 n. 610, with the explanation: “... che hanno lo stesso significato di σκυτεός, ‘colzolaio’, e potrebbe consentire di ipotizzare la presenza nei domini pessinuntini di attività economiche legate alla lavorazione delle pelli, del cuoio e delle calzature, che potevano trovare sbocco nel grande mercato di Pessinunte del quale parla Stabone ...”. The sacredness of the chorion is explained with the “competenza sacerdotale pessinuntina” over the place. If all of those speculations were conceded, it would still be unimaginable (in my view) that the king would have put such weight on the sacredness of the place, and this in a letter presumably addressed to Attis.

obvious, if Mileta is right (and I think he is) that we should contextualize the publication of the royal correspondence under Tiberius, after the senate had decreed to revise all privileges for sanctuaries in the Greek parts of the empire.²⁴ Documents as letter 1, composed by one of Rome's closest and most respectable allies in history, would certainly help to bolster the claim that Pessinus was deserving of a privileged status.

IV. The Recipient of Attalos I's Letter and the Conquest of Pessinus in 207 BC

Based on the "Befehlston" of the letter, Mileta has further suggested that the recipient is unlikely to be Attis, who is addressed in a more respectful tone otherwise.²⁵ Further arguments can be added that speak against the ruling priest of the sanctuary (whether or not he was called *Attis* by the time)²⁶ as the correspondent. If the military campaign alluded to in the letter was directed against Pessinus, it is quite unlikely that the priest was in charge of the operations. We are thus no longer required to explain why a priest of Kybele was involved in a military undertaking, let alone in a leading position. While priesthood and military service were of course not mutually exclusive in the ancient world (a passing reference to Caesar as Pontifex Maximus or to the Maccabees as high priests of Yahweh might suffice),²⁷ military leadership should not be claimed for a castrate priest,²⁸ at least as long as there is no shred of evidence to buttress such an implausible assumption.

At any rate, there is clearly more to be said on the matter. Whether τὸς Πεσσόγγους are to be identified with τὸν Πεσσινούντα or τὸς Πεσσινουντίους, the instructions about the nature of the(ir) settlement would be all too trivial: no priest of any sanctuary needs to have it explained to him that his (former?) see had to be taken whichever way *because* it was sacred and fortified. We can go further yet: not even a royal official would have required such superfluous explanations in 163 BC, that is 25 years after Pessinus had become part of the Attalid Kingdom (as I would maintain), or at least decades after major constructions sponsored by the Attalid treasury had been started (the prevailing scholarly view). Likewise implausible is that King Eumenes II or his brother Attalos II had so vague a knowledge of Pessinus that they would allow their chancellor to misspell the name of the then famous sanctuary so brutally.

In contrast, for the year 207 BC, the detailed instructions as well the "Hörfehler" make perfect sense. Pergamene army units had been dragged ever deeper into Phrygia during the ongoing war with the Bithynians and Galatians, meanwhile reaching a strategically located place that appeared to harbor a sanctuary of local (though not yet far-reaching)²⁹ renown. It is uncertain what source Attalos I was drawing on, when he dictated the letter in 207 BC. Possibly, a local informant had made his way to the Pergamene court and talked about the strategic location of the place. But the same information might equally well have come from the messenger who had been dispatched from the commander-in-chief of the operations in Eastern Phrygia and who was then addressed in turn through the present letter.

²⁴ On the criteria valued by the senate (see above, n. 8, for more context), cf. Tac. Ann. 3.60: "magnaue eius diei species fuit, quo senatus maiorum beneficia, sociorum pacta, regum etiam, qui ante vim Romanam valuerant, decreta ipsorumque numinum religiones intropexit ...".

²⁵ Mileta 2010, 115.

²⁶ Which is to be doubted, see Coşkun 2016/17.

²⁷ One might add Archelaos Sisines or Kleon of Gordiukome, former 'warlords', whom Pompey or Octavian respectively appointed as high priests of Komana Pontike, see Coşkun, APR s. vv. for documentation.

²⁸ On the mythical aetiology of castration, see Roller 1999, 252–54; 258; on the Anatolian background, see Bremmer 2004, 557; on the Roman re-interpretation as punishment, see Thomas 1984, 1504–12. Due to the attestation of a Galatian as Attis in the 150s BC (see above, with reference to I.Pessinus 2 mentioning *Aioiorix*), it has been argued occasionally that castration had ceased in the 2nd or even 3rd century BC (Thomas 1984, 1511; Bowden 2012, 254; 258). But the first piece of firm evidence for at least an exemption of Galatians dates to the late Julio-Claudian period (I.Pessinus 17f.). See Coşkun 2017/18 for a more complete argument.

²⁹ This aligns with my conclusion in Coşkun 2016/17, for which I had not drawn on I.Pessinus 1.

The lack of evidence for the further development of the war leaves us in the dark as to whether Attalid troops prevailed by arms or by bribery in 207 BC. In fact, we cannot be sure if the Pessinuntines were under control of those Galatians allied with Prusias of Bithynia, supported the Galatians as voluntary allies, or were simply trying to maintain neutrality and independence. But the king's hope that some bribery might do the job would speak against the assumption that Pessinus had been occupied by Galatian forces at the time, let alone that it formed part of any Galatian territory whatsoever. The Pessinuntines likely had their own defenses to protect themselves at least from brigands that were roaming around, though they could barely withstand a royal army.³⁰

Epilogue

Accordingly, year 34 is to be translated as 207 BC, and the first letter of the epigraphic dossier from Sivrihisar thus represents part of the instructions that King Attalos I gave to one of his officials who operated in Eastern Phrygia. The correspondence dates to after the departure of Antiochos III to the East (212 BC) and also shortly after the outbreak of the Bithynian War (208 BC). At the same time, it predates the arrival of the Roman ambassadors searching for the *Mater Idaea* (205 BC). Apparently, Attalos had not been able to foresee any such quest. But when the Roman ambassadors showed up in Pergamon asking for his support in securing the *Mater Idaea*, he might well have known that there was not only a Mount Dindymos in the Troad, but also in the Gallos Valley. The latter might have been recommended further, since the Roman search had been triggered by a meteorite shower in Italy, given that the most sacred object in Pessinus was a *baitylos*. We are in no positions to tell for how long this sacred stone had been harbored in the Gallos Valley – quite possibly only for a very short period of time.

In addition, Attalos could not only lead the way, but also effectively secure the extradition of the most sacred object. His reputation as effective protector against Galatian raids and generous sponsor of monumental architecture would have further induced the willingness of the locals to provide him with the *baitylos*, when he asked for it. The friendliness with which the Galloi welcomed Manlius Vulso (and Eumenes II) in 189 BC, in combination with the generous sponsorship displayed by the Attalids shortly thereafter further speak against the idea that the take-over had a harmful effect on the relation between Pessinus and Pergamon.

If this is how we should best reconstruct the events in Eastern Phrygia from 207 to 205 BC, we are also in a better position to understand Strabo's statements quoted at the beginning of this article: namely, that the sanctuary owed its fame to the Roman quest for the goddess, and its splendor to the Attalid marble constructions, and not to any kind of great Phrygian past owed to Kings Midas and Gordios, whose centers of power and cult were at some distance from Pessinus.³¹

Abbreviated Literature

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
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³⁰ The only material traces of Hellenistic fortifications have been uncovered in the area of the Roman temple; see Verlinde 2010, 113–116, though with the unlikely suggestion that those defense constructions had been sponsored by Philetairos in the earlier 3rd century BC.

³¹ See above, n. 1.

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Özet

Attalos I ve Pessinus'un Fethi. I.Pessinus 1 Hakkında Değerlendirme

Pessinus'taki Kybele Agdistis tapınak devleti denli geniş ve muhtelif içerikli edebi, epigrafik ve nü-mizmatik geleneğe sahip olmakla Antik Dünya'nın sadece birkaç tapınağı övünebilir. Hal böyleyken kaynaklardaki tutarsızlık veya boşluklar kült merkezinin tarihçesi hakkında sayısız tartışmayı da beraberinde getirmektedir. Özellikle Tanrıça'nın göktaşı hakkında Roma tarafından İ.Ö. 205/4 yılında yürütülen incelemeye dair Livius'un detaylı anlatımı (Liv. 29.10.4–29.11.8; 29.14.5–14) daha sonraki dönemlerin bir uydurması olarak çoğu kez reddedilmektedir. Bu yöndeki önemli bir veri Livius'a göre Roma sefaretine rehberlik eden Pergamon Kralı Attalos I.'in o sırada Doğu Phrygia'ya henüz girmemiş olmasıdır. Her ne kadar kronolojik dizgeler açısından belirsiz kalsa da Strabon'un aktarımıyla (12.5.3) Pessinus'un idaredeki rahibi Attis'e hitaben kaleme alınan ve yaygın görüşe göre İ.Ö. 163/156 yılına tarihlenen birkaç kraliyet mektubu, Pergamon krallarıyla tapınak arasındaki yakın ilişkiyi belgelemektedir. Bununla birlikte Christian Mileta (2010), I.Pessinus 1'in "Pessongoi"un İ.Ö. 207 yılındaki fethi sırasında Kral Attalos I'in kendi askeri görevlilerine gönderdiği talimatları içeren mektubu olduğunu ikna edici bir şekilde göstermiştir. Mektupta geçen "Pessongoi"u Pessinus ile özdeşleştirmemek yönündeki her girişim başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmış ve Mileta'nın daha erken bir tarihleme için sunduğu argüman mektup ve muhatabı üzerine bu makalede yapılan detaylı bir incelemeyle daha da güçlenmiştir. Bu yolla İ.Ö. 3. yüzyılın sonunda Gallos Vadisi'nde ne olduğunu anlayabilmek için çok daha iyi bir konuma sahip olunmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: I.Pessinus 1; Pessongoi; Kybele Agdistis; Attalos I; Galatlar; Gallos Vadisi.