

Ferit BAZ*

New Christian Inscriptions from Saimbeyli in Southeast Cappadocia

ABSTRACT: The article presents four Christian inscriptions from the district Saimbeyli in Southeast Cappadocia. The inscriptions nos. 1–3 were found in the ruins of a church in Cumhurlu. No. 1 mentions the patrons of the church (Hagios Georgios and Eustathios). No. 2, erected by the *chorepiskopos* Euplokos in fulfillment of a vow, contains an acclamation at the end. No. 3 is the funerary inscription of a woman named Kalissora. It is composed as a dialogue between the deceased woman (Kalissora) and the Virgin Mary. The last inscription was found in the neighbouring village Cıvıklı. It was part of the funerary monument of the deacon Georgius. Remains of a church are also attested in the village.

KEYWORDS: Cappadocia, Saimbeyli, Christian dedications and epitaphs, Hagios Georgios, Hagios Eustathios.

Today Saimbeyli is an administrative district in the northeastern part of the province of Adana. To this district belong the villages of Cumhurlu and Cıvıklı, situated some 25–27 km southwest of the town of Saimbeyli.¹ During the Roman imperial period this mountainous region belonged to the province of Cappadocia.² Saimbeyli was located in a strategically important area extending from central Anatolia to Cilicia.³ The region acted as a gateway connecting north and south. This is most probably the reason why the remains of Roman settlements are scarce in the region.⁴ The constant risk of invasions, bandit attacks and epidemics contributed to the fact that this region remained sparsely populated and that so far mostly Christian church buildings have been discovered there. This article evaluates three inscriptions found in the ruins of a church in Cumhurlu as well as the grave inscription of a deacon found in the locality Zoplar near the village Cıvıklı.

* Prof. Dr. Ferit Baz, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, TR – 34308 Şişli/İstanbul (feritbaz@yahoo.com | ORCID: 0000-0003-0090-1004).

I would like to thank the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism's General Directorate of Culture Heritage and Museums for giving me permission to work on the inscriptions of Saimbeyli. Also I would like to thank Mustafa Eryaman who as the representative of the ministry supervised my work. My special thanks also go to the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit (Bilimsel Araştırma Projeleri Koordinatörlüğü) of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (project no. 201013) for supporting the work as well as to the Saimbeyli District Governorship and the residents of the district for their hospitality. In addition, I want to thank my student Emre Macit and my friends from the region Mesut Doğan, Fatih Yağbasan and Yasin Özakçaoğlu for their great contributions during the field work. I am grateful for their work. I would also like to thank Ulaş Yalvaç (doctorand at Marmara University) for reviewing the English text of this paper. Finally, I extend my thanks to Paweł Nowakowski, Mustafa Adak and Burak Takmer, who evaluated the text and shared their valuable opinions with me.

¹ Girginer 2005, 20.

² See Takmer – Baz 2017, 181 with map showing the provincial borders between Cappadocia and Cilicia.

³ Girginer 2005, 20.

⁴ In general terms, the number of the settlements from the Roman period in the Saimbeyli region is low. The existing settlements are small-scale settlements established in rural areas and consist mostly of burial structures. For example, the tomb inscription of a local soldier from *legio XII fulminata* in Himmetli village was published by Takmer – Baz 2017, 176–187.

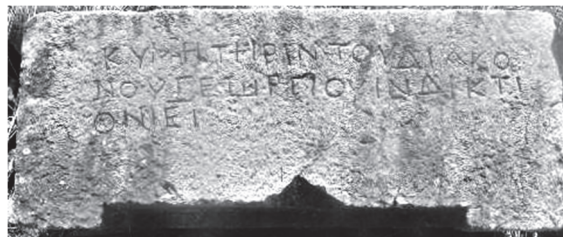
4. Grave inscription of the deacon Georgius

An inscribed limestone lintel found in Zoplar locality of Cıvıklı village. The remains of the tomb can be seen on the left-hand side of the lintel. The lower inner side of the lintel is ornamented. The stone is damaged in the centre bottom area. The lettering is of mediocre quality; the lines are straight and the letters are deeply carved at equal intervals. The letters lean towards the left.

H: 0.40 m.; W: 1.01 m.; D: 0.38 m.; LH: 0.03–0.04 m.

Date: Late Antiquity.

† Κοιμητήριον τοῦ διακό-
2 νου Γεωργίου ἰνδικτί-
ονι ε΄. †



«Cemetery of deacon Georgius in the fifth indictio.»

The word κοιμητήριον was used in the meaning of a tomb.¹⁹ The owner of the tomb was the deacon Georgius. It was one of the essential tasks of the deacons to take care of the poor and to establish welfare facilities.²⁰ The administration of the municipal treasury, which was considered the property of widows and orphans, was also part of their duties at times.²¹ The inscription was found on a slope. In the vicinity we found a well-preserved Roman tomb with no inscription (see Fig. 4). After a short walk across the slope one reaches a church building (see Fig. 5) located on relatively flat land and featuring a floor mosaic with an inscription probably dating from the 6th century (--- των καὶ καρποφορούντων ---).²² However, neither the mosaic inscription nor any other inscription was seen during our research work there.

Bibliography

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Chadwick 1972 | H. Chadwick, <i>Die Kirche in der antiken Welt</i> , Berlin – New York 1972. |
| Girginer 2004 | K. S. Girginer, 2003 Yılı Adana ili ve Çevresi Yüzey Araştırmaları (Saimbeyli), <i>AST</i> 22, 2, 2004, 159–174. |
| Girginer 2005 | K. S. Girginer, <i>Saimbeyli. Arkeolojik Bir Araştırmanın Ardından</i> , Adana 2005. |
| Harnack 1924 | A. v. Harnack, <i>Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten I–II</i> , Leipzig 1924. |
| Hellenkemper – Hild 1986 | H. Hellenkemper – F. Hild, <i>Neue Forschungen in Kilikien</i> , Vienna 1986. |
| Hild – Hellenkemper 1990 | F. Hild – H. Hellenkemper, <i>Kilikien und Isaurien (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 5)</i> , Vienna 1990. |
| Hübner 2005 | S. Hübner, <i>Der Klerus in der Gesellschaft des spätantiken Kleinasien</i> , Stuttgart 2005. |
| I.Ephesos | H. Engelmann – D. Knibbe – R. Merkelbach (edd.) <i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos. Teil 4</i> , Bonn 1980. |
| I.Komana | F. Baz, (ed.) <i>Die Inschriften von Komana (Hierapolis) in Kappadokien</i> , İstanbul 2007. |
| I.Sestos | J. Krauss (ed.), <i>Die Inschriften von Sestos und der thrakischen Chersones (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 19)</i> , Bonn 1980. |

¹⁹ See Rebillard 1993, 975–980.

²⁰ Harnack 1924, 148–150; Klauser 1957, 888–909.

²¹ Klauser 1957, 894; Harnack 1924, 180–182; Thümmel 1988, 107; Chadwick 1972, 49. For some inscriptions found in Cappadocian Comana (Hierapolis) see I.Komana, Nr. 316, 326. For the existence of some deacons in Cappadocia see Van Dam 2003, index.

²² Hellenkemper – Hild 1986, 99 with fig. 156–157; cf. SEG 36, 1238; Hild – Hellenkemper 1990, 228; Girginer 2005, 32.

- I.Smyrna
Keil – Premerstein 1908
Klauser 1957
MAMA X
Nowakowski 2018
Rebillard 1993
Robert 1960
Sayar 1995
Takmer – Baz 2017
Thümmel 1988
Van Dam 2003
Waelkens 1986
White 2013
- G. Petzl (ed.) Die Inschriften von Smyrna, Teil I, Bonn 1982.
J. Keil – A. von Premerstein, Bericht über eine Reise in Lydien und der südlichen Aiolis, ausgeführt 1906 im Auftrage der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Kaiserliche [Österreichische] Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften 53, 2, Vienna 1908.
Th. Klauser, Diakon, RAC 3, 1957, 888–909.
Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, Vol. X. Monuments from the Upper Tembris Valley, Cotiaem, Cadi, Synaus, Ancyra, and Tiberiopolis recorded by C.W.M. Cox, A. Cameron, J. Cullen, eds. B. Levick, St. Mitchell, J. Potter and M. Waelkens, London 1993.
P. Nowakowski, Inscribing the Saints in Late Antique Anatolia, Warsaw 2018.
E. Rebillard, Koimetérion et Coemeterium: tombe, tombe sainte, nécropole, in: Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité T. 105, No 2. 1993, 975-1001.
L. Robert, Hellenica. Recueil d’épigraphie, de numismatique et d’antiquités grecques, vol. 11–12, Paris 1960.
M. H. Sayar, Kilikya’da Epigrafi ve Tarihi Coğrafya Araştırmaları 1993, AST 12, 1995, 39–60.
B. Takmer – F. Baz, The Gravestone of C. Iulius, Optio of the Legio XII Fulminata, Philia 3, 2017, 176–187.
H. G. Thümmel, Die Kirche des Ostens im 3. und 4. Jahrhundert, Berlin 1988.
R. Van Dam, Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia, Pennsylvania 2003.
M. Waelkens, Die kleinasiatischen Türsteine: typologische und epigraphische Untersuchungen der kleinasiatischen Grabreliefs mit Scheintür, Mainz am Rhein 1986.
M. White, Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus 900–1200, Cambridge 2013.

Güneydoğu Kapadokya’daki Saimbeyli’den Hristiyanlık Dönemine ait Yeni Yazıtlar

ÖZ: Makale Kapadokya’nın güneydoğusunda yer alan Saimbeyli’de bulunan ve Hristiyanlık dönemine ait olan yeni yazıtları sunar. 1–3 numaralı yazıtlar Cumhuriyet dönemi kilise kalıntıları arasında bulunmuştur. 1 no.lu yazıt kilisenin sahipleri olan St. Georgios ve St. Eustathios’u anar. 2 no.lu yazıt ise, Euplokos adındaki *khorepiskopos*’un bir adağıdır ve yazıtın sonu bir aklamasyon (uzun yıllar yaşa) ifadesi ile son bulur. 3. nolu yazıt ise, Kalissora adındaki bir kadının mezar yazıtıdır. Yazıt rahmetli Kalissora ile Hz. Meryem arasında bir diyalog olarak şekillendirilmiştir. Sonuncu yazıt ise Cumhuriyet köyüne komşu olan Cıvıklı’da bulunmuştur. Diakon Georgios’un mezar anıtına aittir. Bu köyde aynı zamanda kilise kalıntılarında da rastlanılmıştır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Kapadokya, Saimbeyli, Hristiyan dönemine ait adaklar ve mezar yazıtları, Hagios Georgios, Hagios Eustathios.