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Journal of Epigraphy, Reviews and Translations

Issue X (2024)

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Citation Demirhan-Öztürk E. 2024, "New Inscriptions from Olympos (Lykia)". *Libri* X, 85-97. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14517598

Received Date: 10.11.2024 | Acceptance Date: 09.12.2024

Online Publication Date: 21.12.2024

Article Type: Research Article

Editing: Phaselis Research Project
www.libridergi.org



New Inscriptions from Olympos (Lykia)

Olympos'tan (Lykia) Yeni Yazıtlar

Ezgi DEMİRHAN-ÖZTÜRK *

Abstract: This article presents four new inscriptions recorded during the 2024 excavation season in Olympos: 1) The Tomb of Epiktesis and his Family 2) The Tomb of Midas and his Family 3) The Tomb of Zosimos and his Family, and 4) The Tomb of a person(s), whose name(s) is/are unknown. These four tomb inscriptions were uncovered and documented in the area known as the North *Necropolis* of the city. The first inscription is not *in situ*; however, since it was found within the North *Necropolis*, it is thought not to have come from a distant location and probably belongs to this area. Each inscription has been assessed individually within its context. In addition to these assessments, this article provides a brief explanation of the burial penalties commonly found in the tomb inscriptions of Olympos and includes information concerning where these fines were paid to and the amounts involved.

Keywords: Olympos, Lycia, Funerary Inscriptions, Tomb Raiding Penalties

Öz: Bu makalede, 2024 yılı kazı sezonunda Olympos'ta kaydedilmiş dört yeni yazıt tanıtılmaktadır: 1) Epiktesis ve Ailesinin Mezarı 2) Midas ve Ailesinin Mezarı 3) Zosimos ve Ailesi'nin Mezarı 4) Adı Bilinmeyen Kişi/Kişilerin Mezarı. Kaydedilen bu dört mezar yazıtı kentin Kuzey *Necropolis*'i olarak adlandırılan alanda ortaya çıkarılmış ve kayıt altına alınmıştır. Bir numaralı yazıt *in situ* değildir, fakat Kuzey *Necropolis*'in içerisinde bulunmuş olmakla birlikte uzak bir yerden getirilmiş olmayacağı ve muhtemelen bu alana ait olduğu düşünülmektedir. Yazıtlar kendi bağlamlarında tek tek içerikleri dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Yapılan değerlendirmelerin yanı sıra bu makalede tanıtılan mezar yazıtları dikkate alınarak Olympos kentinin mezar yazıtlarında genellikle yer alan mezar cezalarına ve bu cezaların hangi kuruma, ne kadar ödendiğine dair kısa bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Olympos, Lykia, Mezar Yazıtı, Mezar Yağmacılığı Cezaları

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First, I would like to thank former excavation director Prof. Dr. B. Yelda Olcay Uçkan, the new excavation director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökçen Öztaşkın and Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Sami Öztürk for allowing me to work on the inscriptions. I also thank the entire excavation team, especially Assoc. Prof. Dr. Seçkin Evcim, Art Historian Samet Solhan, and Archaeologist Hasan Uysal for their assistance and support. The images included in this article have been taken by the author.

The French scholar V. Bérard (1864–1931) conducted the first epigraphic studies in the city of Olympos¹. Furthermore, in the late 19th century, a team led by the Austrian O. Benndorf (1838–1907) undertook a research expedition in Lykia. E. Kalinka (1865–1946), a member of this team, published the inscriptions he recorded in Olympos in the third fascicle of Volume II of the *Tituli Asiae Minoris* series². After Kalinka, no systematic epigraphic work was carried out in the city for a long time, only some isolated studies were conducted. The first archaeological research was carried out by the Antalya Museum in 1991–1992³. In 1999, archaeological surveys were initiated under the direction of Prof. Dr. E. Parman. Since 2006, excavations have been systematically carried out in the city under the direction of Prof. B. Y. Olcay Uçkan. Since 2022, the excavations of Olympos have been directed by Asst. Prof. Dr. G. Öztaşkın. Systematic epigraphical work at Olympos was resumed by Prof. Dr. B. İplikçioğlu in 2004–2008. In 2013, Prof. Dr. H. S. Öztürk began to work as the epigraphist of the excavations. Since 2015, I have participated in this research as a member of this epigraphical team. Many new finds, primarily from the Byzantine period, continue to be brought to light through the ongoing excavations. You can access some recent publications of these find through footnote⁴.

All the inscriptions found were recorded from the city's North *Necropolis*. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to provide a brief and general overview of the *necropolis* structure of the city. Olympos, a Lycian city, was divided into two by the Olympos Stream running through the middle and separating the Sepet and Musa Mountains to the south and the Musa Mountain to the north⁵. As can be seen on the city map (Fig. 1), those coming by land could enter from the east, and those coming by sea could enter from the west. At the same time, since the city was divided into two by the Olympos Stream, there were 4 different *necropolis* areas, both east and west of the city. The monumental buildings were also located between these 4 *necropolises*, as can be seen on the map. To the east of the city was the Mediterranean Sea. This topography shaped the city as well as its *necropoleis*⁶. The *necropolis* area of the city, like the Roman and Byzantine buildings (IInd–Vth centuries A.D.), extended on both banks of the river. Those entering the city by land or sea had to first pass through the *necropoleis*.

¹ Bérard 1892, 213–239.

² *TAM* II 943–1182.

³ Atila & Çelgin 1991, 75–112; Adak & Atvur 1997, 11–31.

⁴ In the area designated as room 15 in the Bishop's Palace, a floor mosaic was found. For detailed discussions on the figures and inscriptions within the mosaic, see Öztaşkın & Bursalı 2024. For a detailed and comparative discussion on the depiction of Bishop Aristokritos alongside Jesus –the earliest example of the type of wall painting found in Niche 1 within the exedra north of Church No. 3 in Olympos, and the first mention of Aristokritos after Methodius in the records–, see Evcim 2023.

⁵ For detailed, up-to-date information about Olympos, see Olcay Uçkan 2017.

⁶ For detailed information on the urban texture of the city in the Roman and Byzantine periods, see Olcay Uçkan *et al.* 2017, 9–30.

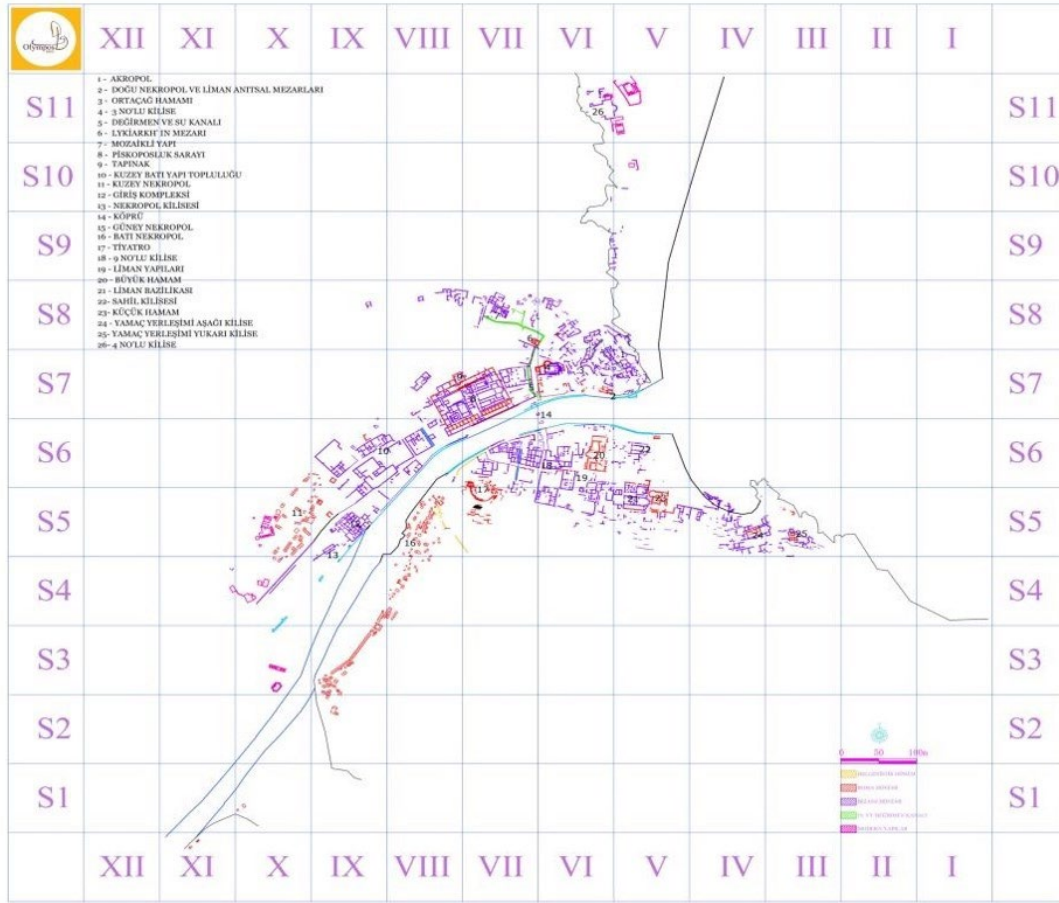


Fig. 1. City plan of Olympos, retrieved from <https://olymposkazisi.com/kentplani/>

1. The Tomb of Epiktetes and His Family (Fig. 2a-c)

It is located on the *in situ* lintel of a limestone vaulted tomb structure.

Findspot: North *Necropolis*.

Mesaurements: H.: 47 cm; W.: 1.19 m; T.: 64 cm; LH.: 1.2-2.5 cm.

Inv. no.: 120.

Date: IInd or early IIIrd century A.D.

Ἐπίκτησις Θεοδοτίας τὸ ἀν^v γῆιον^{vacat}
κατεσκευάσα ἑαυτῆ κὲ τοῖς <γ>ονεοῦσιν μου
κὲ ἀνδράσιν κὲ τέκνοις κὲ ἐγγόνοις^v κὲ γανβροῖς
4 ἑτέρω δὲ οὐδενί, ἢ ὁ βιασάμεν^w ὅς δώσει τῷ
Ἡφέστῳ <X> ,τ, ὧν <ὁ ἐλένξας λήμ->^{vacat}
ψετε τὸ τρίτον.^{vacat}

L. 2: ΤΟΙΣΟΝΕΟΥΣΙΝ *lapis*

Epiktetes, daughter of Theodote, made this tomb for myself, my parents, my spouses, my children, my grandchildren, and my sons-in-law. No one else is permitted to be buried here. If anyone dares to violate this, they will pay 300 denarii to (the Temple of) Hephaistos (Safe). The informant will receive 1/3 of this amount.

L.1: Ἐπικτήσις: This inscription represents the third recorded instance in Olympos⁷. The masculine form of this name is known from the cities of Khios, Brenteison–Brundusium, Amisos, and Mindos⁸. With the appearance of its masculine form, we observe that this name was also used as a unisex name.

The fact that Epiktesis was buried with her mother's name draws attention. In tomb inscriptions, where burial with the father's name is common, encountering a burial with the mother's name in the Lycian region, raises several questions about the position of women in that society⁹: The historian Herodotos, who lived in the Vth century B.C., informs us that the Lycians took their names from their mothers, not their fathers. He even mentions that when someone is asked about their lineage, they would respond as the daughter or son of a certain mother, and name their maternal ancestors¹⁰. Heraklides of Pontos, a historian from the IVth century B.C., also notes that women held authority in Lykia and mentions the existence of a matriarchal governance system in Lycian society¹¹. Unfortunately, we do not have information on how this system functioned. Apart from the instances of burial with the mother's name in tomb inscriptions, we have not found other inscriptions in ancient Greek or Latin that emphasize women's roles (honorary inscriptions aside from the Lycian female benefactress) or provide insight into their social or political status¹². The limited information in this area, unfortunately, does not allow us to draw clear conclusions. According to McLean's statement, "However, in some cases, the use of a mother's name in the filiation formula may simply indicate that the father was deceased"¹³. Based on this statement, it is likely that Epiktetes' father passed away early.

Another noteworthy aspect of this inscription is that Epiktesis commissioned a tomb for multiple spouses. It is uncommon to find references to polygamy in the inscriptions of women who are buried in this manner. This inscription, in which a woman makes reference to having multiple spouses, represents a notable departure from the patriarchal norms prevalent during the ancient period. It also gives rise to further inquiries concerning the authority and status of women in the Lycian region. If these questions are based on a solid hypothesis rather than mere speculation, it would be premature to seek answers. The inscription does not provide the names of any other individuals, making it impossible to ascertain the number of children, spouses, grandchildren, or even parents Epiktesis had. Furthermore, the absence of names precludes any name analysis. The fact that Epiktesis commissioned the tomb for multiple individuals and bore this expense suggests that she may have possessed considerable financial means.

⁷ For instances of this name, see *TAM* II 1007, 1051.

⁸ For instances of this name, see *LGPNI*; IIIA; VA; VB, *s.v.*

⁹ Demirhan-Öztürk 2021, 240–241.

¹⁰ Hdt. I.173.

¹¹ Kılıç Aslan 2023, 2.

¹² For selected examples of female philanthropists on this topic, see Adak 2019, 48–57; Chaniotis 2019, 116–117.

¹³ McLean 2002, 94.

2. The Tomb of Midas and His Family (Fig. 3a-c)

It is located on the lintel of a vaulted tomb structure made of limestone. The vault has collapsed, and the lintel has fallen into the tomb.

Findspot: North *Necropolis*.

Measurements: H.: 30 cm; W.: 81 cm; T.: 43 cm; LH.: 1.6-3 cm.

Inv. no.: 121

Date: IInd or early IIIrd century A.D.

vacat τὸν τύμβον κατεσκεύ- vacat
 vacat ασεν Μίδας Κιληνδοῦ Ὀλυμ-
 πηνός ἑαυτῷ καὶ γυναικί· ἑτέρῳ δὲ
 4 οὐδενὶ ἢ ὁ κηδεύσας τινὰ ἐκτίσει
 πόλει ἄρα, ὧν ὁ ἑλένξας λήμψεται
 vacat τὸ τρίτον. vacat

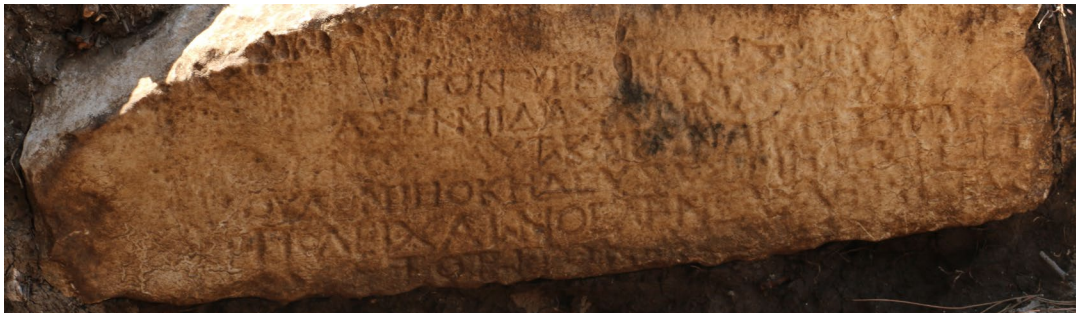
Midas of Olympos, son of Kilendos, made this tomb for himself and (his) wife. No one else is permitted to be buried here. If anyone buries another person here, they will pay 1,000 denarii to the city (of the Olympians). The informant will receive 1/3 of this amount.



a



b



c

Fig. 2

L. 2: Μίδας: In Herodotos, the name Midas appears as a historical figure, the name of the Phrygian king¹⁴. According to the records of the *LGPN*, the name Midas is documented 26 times in the Lycian region. This number appears high when compared to its rate of occurrence in the *LGPN* documented regions of Attica, Kilikia Thrakeia, Kibyrtis-Kabalis, Pisidia and Pamphylia. With this inscription, the name is recorded for the first time in

¹⁴ Hdt. I.14; also see, Pape & Benseler 1863-1870, s.v.

Hephaistion, which was within the sphere of influence of the city of Olympos, and for the second time in the city of Olympos itself. No kinship relationship can be assumed between the Midas mentioned in this inscription and the Midas named in Hephaistion¹⁵. The name Midas is known 10 times in Pisidia and once in Pamphylia, both neighboring regions to Lykia. When we consider the geographic proximity of Pisidia and Pamphylia, the weak interaction of the name between these cities becomes noticeable.

L. 2: Κιληνδος: The name Kilendos has been previously documented four times in Olympos. For the epichoric name, see Zgusta 1964, § 607-10.

3. The Tomb of Zosimos and His Family (Fig. 4a-c)

A small tomb stele made of limestone. The back is partially smoothed but left rough. It was probably originally placed inside a tomb structure. In a later period, it was used as building material in the wall of a structure. Since there was no space left for the last line of the inscription, it was written vertically on the left side, from top to bottom.

Findspot: North *Necropolis*: It was used as spolia in a wall on the street of the North *Necropolis*.

Measurements: H.: 20 cm; W.: 21 cm; T.: 10 cm; LH.: 0.009-1.1 cm.

Inv. no.: 119.

Date: IInd or early IIIrd century A.D.

Ζώσιμος Ἐπα-^{vv}
 φροδείτου Ὀλυμ(τηνός)
 καταεσ^v κεύ^v ασα
 4 εἰαυτῷ καὶ γ^vυ-^{vv}
 ναικὶ Σωτηρίδι^{vv}
 καὶ τέκνοις καὶ
 τῷ ἐκ τῆ^{vv} ς πρώ-
 8 τῆς γυναικὸς^v
 υἱῷ Ζωσίμῳ ἐτέ-
 ρῳ δὲ οὐδενί, ἢ ἐ-
 κτείσι Χ,σν'

12 τῷ Ἡφαίστῳ.^{vacat}

Zosimos, son of Epaphroditos from Olympos, has made this tomb for myself, my wife Soteris, my children, and my son Zosimos by my first wife. No one else is permitted to be buried here; otherwise, they must pay 250 denarii to (the Temple of) Hephaistos (Safe).

L.1: Ζώσιμος: The other inscriptions in the city of Olympos have also been checked for the name Zosimos; kinship relationships have been examined. However, no kinship relationship has been found, even after investigating the names of fathers associated with the same name in parallel.

¹⁵ TAM II 1174.



Fig. 4

L. 1-2: Ἐπαφρόδιτος: The name Epaphroditos is a quite common name in Lykia and Olympos, and this inscription marks the seventh time it has been documented in Olympos¹⁶.

L. 5: Σωτηρίς: The name Soteris is a quite common name in Lykia. This inscription represents the second recorded instance in Olympos¹⁷.

From the size of the tombstone, it seems that the inscription was too long to fit entirely on the stone, so it continues from the left corner. This suggests that Zosimos was not very

¹⁶ *LGPNVB*, s.v.

¹⁷ *TAM* II 999.

wealthy. According to the inscription, Zosimos had two marriages and dedicated this tomb to his wives and children from both marriages. However, he gave his son from the first marriage the same name as his own –a common tradition in Antiquity– and his name is also written on the tombstone¹⁸. Unfortunately, we have no information about his child from the second marriage. The inscription does not clarify whether Soteris was his first or second wife, and for the same reason, we cannot determine the name of his son’s mother.

4. The Tomb of a person(s), whose name(s) is/are unknown (Fig. 5a–b)

The inscription is located on the lintel of a limestone vaulted tomb structure. The vault has collapsed, and the lintel may have fallen into the tomb.

Findspot: North *Necropolis*.

Measurements: H.: 45 cm; W.: 46 cm; T.: 14 cm; LH.: 2–2.3 cm.

Inv. no.: 122.

Date: IInd or early IIIrd century A.D.

0 [ὁ/ἡ κατεσκεύασα/εν τὸν τύμβον]

ἐπιτρέ-^{vv}

ψω, ὁ δὲ^{vv}

βιασάμενος

4 κηδεῦσέ

τινα, ὑποκί-

σετε καὶ^v

τοῖς κατα-

8 χθονίοις

θεοῖς. ☩

Those whom (I) permit (to be buried here) may be interred. If anyone dares to bury another, they shall pay a penalty and he will be sinner before the Gods of the underworld.

As previously stated in the description of the inscription, the vaulted structure of the tomb has collapsed. Additionally, it has been observed that the lintel may have fallen into the tomb. Based on these observations, it can be postulated that the inscription was likely located on the lintel or on the left side of the tomb structure, where the names of the tomb's owners may be found.

L. 0 ff.: The inscription follows the common formulas typically found in the tombs of the city of Olympos. Tomb inscriptions usually begin with: “(ὁ/ἡ) κατεσκεύασα(/-εν) τὸν τύμβον” followed by the listing of those permitted to be buried, and ending with a sentence prohibiting additional burials. After this prohibition, there is usually a threat of a financial penalty for violation, along with information on how much should be paid to which temple.

¹⁸ For detailed information on this topic, see Merkelbach 1991, 37–38; McLean 2002, 93–96.



Fig. 5

L. 5-6: ὑποκίσετε = ὑποκείσεται: Due to the *iotacismus* rule, the reading –ει here has changed to –ι (for the interchange, see Gignac 1976, 190, 249) and –αι here has changed to –ε (for the interchange, see Gignac 1976, 192).

The verb ὑπόκειμαι also means “to be subject to, liable to a *penalty*”¹⁹. This usage is found in many funerary inscriptions across Lykia²⁰. However, it has previously been documented in only one funerary inscription from Olympos²¹. According to that inscription, the fine was

¹⁹ *LSJ*, s.v.

²⁰ For instances, see *TAM II* 88, 225, 248, 254, 329, 338, 845, 854, 871.

²¹ *TAM II* 978.

to be paid to the Temple of Hephaistos. In the case of our inscription however, the institution to which the grave fine should be paid is not specified. In Olympos, grave violation fines were generally paid to the safe of the Hephaistos Temple, the Temple of Zeus, the *fiscus* (imperial treasury), or the *polis* (city). Thus, any of these institutions could be responsible for enforcing the grave penalty. In addition to omitting the responsible institution, our inscription also lacks the amount of the fine. It seems unlikely that the stonemason accidentally left out these details, suggesting instead that these elements may have originally been written in paint, aligning with practice at that time.

L. 7-9: (ἀμαρτωλὸς ἔστω) τοῖς καταχθονίοις θεοῖς: This phrase became standardized in Lycian curse inscriptions starting in the IVth century B.C., serving to deter unauthorized burials. Tomb owners who doubted the effectiveness of financial penalties likely adopted this approach as an added measure²².

The burial penalty encountered in Olympos are generally amounts to be paid for the burial of another person. These fines are typically emphasized as being payable to the safe (to tamieion) of the temples (such as Hephaistos and Zeus), the *fiscus*, and the *polis*. In a section of his 2022 article “Retiring by the Seaside: A Praetorian from Thrace in Lycian Olympos with an Addendum to TAM II.3, 949”, published in *Acta Classica Mediterranea*, Wiedergut provides a general assessment of the amounts and institutions involved in the burial fines of the city of Olympos. According to Wiedergut, for high burial fines of 3,500 *denarii* or more, the receiving institution is typically the *fiscus*, while for lower fines, local institutions (such as the *polis* and temples) were preferred²³. In inscriptions 1 to 3, the following payments are specified: in the first inscription, 250 *denarii* to the Temple of Hephaistos; in the second inscription, 300 *denarii* to the Temple of Zeus; and in the third inscription, 1,000 *denarii* to the *polis*. In the third inscription, we also see that the payment is directed to the local city. This is thought to be related to the individual’s sense of belonging and loyalty²⁴. In the fourth inscription however, the institution to which the payment should be made is not specified, and there is mention of responsibility to the Gods of the underworld²⁵. The absence of a specified burial fine and institution is both notable and significant.

²² SEG LXVIII 1605.

²³ Wiedergut 2022, 78-81.

²⁴ On this subject, in her article, K. Wiedergut (2022) has made some analyses based on the inscriptions and general assessments presented.

²⁵ In Lykia, the existence of the underworld Gods is only encountered in tomb inscriptions, and aside from their role as tomb protectors, no further information is known about these gods. We also have no information regarding the names of these Underworld Gods. The cities in Lykia where the Underworld Gods are mentioned in tomb inscriptions are as follows: in Eastern Lykia, Elmalı and Olympos; in Western Lykia, Kadyanda, Sidyma, Patara, Tlos, and Telmessos; and in Central Lykia, Antiphellos, Teimiussa, Trysa, Istadra, Apollonia, and Aperlai. For more detailed information on this subject, see Efendioğlu 2012, 120-121; Bryce & Zahle 1986.

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* Abbreviations of epigraphical editions and reference works follow the “Liste des abréviations des éditions et ouvrages de référence pour l’épigraphie grecque alphabétique (GrEpiAbbr – Version 02, Janvier 2022)” developed by the *Association Internationale d’Épigraphie Grecque et Latine*.

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