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THE CULT OF THEOS PEISMATENE IN MYSIA

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The cult of Theos Peismatene has been known since 2006 from an auction catalogue1 containing a stele from “Asia Minor” with a relief and the following inscription which was included in SEG 56, 20422:

Μεγακλής καὶ Ἐπιτυχάνως
οἱ [.].μένου θεῶν vac.
vac. Πεσματηνής Εὐχήν.

During our work in the Yavuz Tatı Collection (İzmir) in 2001–2, we copied a series of dedicatory inscriptions, all of which record the name θεὸς Π(ε)σματηνης3. We were told that they were unearthed “around the villages Yeşilçomlu and Doğa”, which are situated at the eastern shore of the lake Manyas near Daskyleion (Ergili) in Mysia. This information, indeed, has been confirmed by the fact that another dedicatory stele of this series has recently been found around these villages and transported to the Bandırma Museum4. Though there is no precise information about the exact spot, one may roughly localise the sanctuary of this local goddess around Yeşilçomlu5 and Doğa villages near the lake Manyas. The letter forms and iconography lead one to date the material to the late Hellenistic period, perhaps 2nd/1st century B.C., as it has already been suggested in SEG 56, 2042.

In all of the representations on our stelai, the goddess, who wears a polos, is sitting on a throne, holding a phiale in her right hand and pouring libation on an altar; she holds something in her left hand: in nos. 5 and 12 the object is probably a tympanon, but, due to the mutilation, in other cases it is difficult to be identified. She is accompanied by one or two dogs6. In most cases

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1 It is a pleasure to thank Mr. Yavuz Tatı for his kind permission to work on these inscriptions.
3 The editors of SEG describe the relief as: “Trapezoidal white marble stele, tapering to the triangular pediment; in a recessed niche a relief representing at left two worshippers approaching a goddess seated at right (long robe; dog (?) seated at her feet; polos: Kybele) holding a bowl and pouring a libation on a central altar; behind the altar a tree, before it a small servant leading a sacrificial animal (small quadruped: ram?); inscription below; under the inscription an unframed relief representing, from left to right, a small servant carrying an object, a rider holding a spear, and a bull”; cf. also A. Chaniotis, EBGR 2006 [2009], no. 53.
4 The remnants of stucco on the surfaces of some of the stelai are the indications that the stelai were probably reused at another construction.
5 As it has not yet been possible to work on this dedication, it will be published elsewhere.
6 For a piece of a dedicatory inscription and an unepigraphic fragment, which also seems to have belonged to a dedication, both from Yeşilçomlu, see C. Tanrıver, Arkeoloji Dergisi III (1995), 107, no. 4, Pl. XII.4a and XIII.4b (cf. SEG 45, 1665).
there is a rectangular altar in the middle of the scene and a tree in the background. The divine epithet Πεσματηνή (or Πισματηνή as in nos. 2 and 7) is probably in connection with an unattested toponym, e.g. Πεσματα, as has already been supposed by R. A. Tybout in SEG 56, 2042. Its Greek origin, e.g. πεσσαμ (LSJ, s.v. (A and B)), is neither improbable nor certain.

1. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos and holding a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. There are two dogs on either side both looking towards the goddess. The goddess pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle of the scene. On the left four standing worshippers, all in adoration; in the foreground a servant leading an animal (ram ?) to be sacrificed. There is a tree in the background. 37 x 23 x 9, letters 0.7 to 1 cm.

Ποτάμων Ποτάμωνος
Θεῷ Πεσματηνήν
εὐχήν.

Potamon, son of Potamon, made a vow to Theos Peismatene.

2. Marble stele with flat-topped pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment there is the depiction of the following scene: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos. She holds a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. There is a dog sitting on her right. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers; a woman on the right and a man on the left, both in adoration; in the foreground a servant holding a ram (?) to be sacrificed; behind the altar another person carrying something (a wineskin, ἀσκός?) on his/her head. There is a tree in the background. 64 x 31.5 x 7.5, letters 1.2 to 1.5 cm.

Διομήδης Ποτάμωνος
ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῆς
ἀδελφῆς Θεῶ
4 Πισματηνήν εὐχήν.

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7 LSJ, loc. cit. cite an epigram from Mysia where Asklepiades the deceased is qualified as follows: Μιλητου-πάλασ κέμα / νέκος, Ἀστικὸν αἷμα / ὁκευρὸν τοῦτοι πεῖσμα λοσάμενος (BCH 25.327 = R. Merkelbach – J. Stauber, Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten II, 2001, 89, 08/09/05).

8 An inscription from Tire, SEG 50, 1133bis, mentions in line 7 a Λούκος Β’ Πισμα. While G. Petzl, EA 32, 2000, 196–7 wrote Πισμά, Cl. Brixhe, Bull. ép. 2001, 376 reckons with the nominative Πισμᾶς or Πίσμας. Is the – elsewhere unattested – name formed on an indigenous root?
Diomedes, son of Potamon, made a vow to Theos Pismatene on behalf of himself and his sister.

3. Marble stele with triangular pediment and acroteria. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess who wears a polos and holds a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. On her right there is a sitting dog looking towards the goddess. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left three standing worshippers, all in adoration; in the foreground a servant holding a ram to be sacrificed. There is a tree in the background. 52 x 26 x 8, letters 0.9 to 1.2 cm.

"Αρτεμίδος Αρτεμιδώρου ύπερ ἑαυτῆς καὶ τοῦ [ό]νδρος καὶ τῶν τέκνων
4 [Θεῶ] Πεισματηνή εὔχην.

Artemīd, daughter of Artemidoros, made a vow to [Theos] Peismatene on behalf of herself and her husband and children.

4. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess with polos, who holds a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. A dog is sitting on her right. On the left there is a person lying on a kline decorated with a garland. 20 x 16 x 5, letters 0.8 cm.

Μενίσκος Θεῶ
[Πεισματηνή εὔχην.

Meniskos made a vow to Theos Peismatene.

5. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess with polos, who holds a phiale in her right hand and a tympanon in her left. Two dogs sitting on either side. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers, both in adoration; in the foreground a servant holding a ram (?) to be sacrificed. There is a tree in the background. 52 x 29 x 6.5, letters 0.8 to 1.1 cm.
Metrodoros, son of Artemidoros, made a vow to Theos Peismatene on behalf of himself and Menedemos, his brother.

6. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a goddess who holds a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. On her left there is a dog. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left a standing worshipper, perhaps a child, in adoration; in the foreground a ram (?). There is a tree in the background. 29.5 x 22 x 7.5 (letter height omitted).

Loukas made a vow to Theos Peismatene.

7. Marble stele with triangular pediment. The left lower part of the stele is damaged. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos and holding a phiale in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. On her right a dog looking towards the goddess. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers; in the foreground a slave who brings a ram (?) to be sacrificed. 22 x 16.2 x 5, letters 0.8 cm.

[Pol]ydote, daughter of Dionysios, made a vow to Theos Peismatene.
For another appearance of the name Πολυδότη in this region see Th. Corsten, *IvPrusa ad Olym-pum* I, no. 188: [Πολυδότη Ζ]̣̣̣̃̄ ̣[].

8. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a *polos*. She holds a *phiale* in her right hand and an unidentified object in her left. On her right a sitting dog looking towards the goddess. The goddess pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers, both in adoration; in the foreground a servant holding a ram (?) to be sacrificed. There is a tree in the background. 53.5 x 24 x 9, letters 0.8 to 1.1 cm.

[Δ]ιονύσιος Φιλομήλου Θ[εό]̣̣̣̃̄ ̣[Πεισ]̣̣̣̃̄ θατῆν εὐχ[ήν].

*Dionysios, son of Philomelos, made a vow to Th[eos Peis]matene.*

9. Marble stele with mutilated pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a *polos*. She holds a *phiale* in her right hand. Two dogs sitting on either side. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers, both in adoration; in the foreground a servant holding a ram (?) to be sacrificed. Behind the altar there is a woman carrying a tray (?) on her head. 38 x 28 x 8, letters 0.8 to 1.3 cm.

Μόσχιον [ ]
σωθείσα χωρ[ι]στήριον.

*Moschion, [daughter of …], after having been saved (gave this) thank-offering.*

On σώζεσθαι by the gods see P. Herrmann – H. Malay, *New Documents from Lydia*, 2007, 112, no. 84, on line 17 with bibliography.
10. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos. She holds a phiale in her right hand. On her right a dog. She pours libation on an altar placed in the middle. On the left two standing worshippers, a man on the right and a woman on the left, both in adoration; in the foreground a servant who holds a ram (?) to be sacrificed. There is a tree in the background. 20.5 x 14.5 x 4.5, letters 0.9 cm.

Τίμων Θεό
Πεισματη[ν]
ε[ις]χήν.

1 TIMON lapis.

Timon made a vow to Theos Peismatene.

11. Marble stele with oval-shaped pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos and holding a phiale in her right hand. On her right there is sitting a dog looking towards the goddess. The goddess pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left a standing woman. There is a tree in the background. 22 x 14.5 x 8, letters 0.6 to 0.8 cm.

Μηνοδότη Θεῶι
Πεισματη[ν]
ε[ις]χήν

Menodote made a vow to Theos Peismatene.

It is worth to note that Θεῶι is the only dative with iota adscript.

12. Marble stele with triangular pediment. In a rectangular recess below the pediment are depicted: on the right a sitting goddess wearing a polos. She holds a phiale in her right hand and a tympanon in her left. On her left a sitting dog. She pours libation on a rectangular altar placed in the middle. On the left a standing man in adoration. 17 x 11 x 4 cm.

It is not clear whether the stele is unepigraphic or whether it bore a painted text. Anyway, its context and iconography do not leave any doubt about is origin from the sanctuary of our goddess.
Özet


Bu makalede tanıtılan ve 11 tanesi yazıtlı olan 12 adet adak steli I.Ö. 2. ya da 1. yüzyıllı aittir. Stellerin üzerinde yer alan kabartmalarda genellikle birbirinin aynı olma özelliği de çok benzeri olan sahneler betimlenmektedir: En sağda tahtında oturan, bir polos (başlık, taç) giyen, sağ elindeki bir kaptan (phiale) ortadakialtarın üzerine içki döken ve sol elinde bilmediğimiz bir obje tutan Anatanrıça Peismatene ve ona eşlik eden iki köpek; ortada bir altar ve onun arkasında bir ağaç; solda dua eder pozisyonda gösterilen adak sahipleri; en önde kurban için bir hayvan (koç?) getiren bir köle vs. (gerek kabartmalardaki sahnelerin neredeyse birbirlerinin aynı olmaları ve gerekse yazılıdaki harf benzerlikleri bu stellerin aynı atelyede ve hatta aynı ustadan yontulmuş olduklarını düşündürmektedir).

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