# The Mosaic Inscriptions of the Cibyran Odeion Kibyra Odeion'unun Mozaik Yazıtları

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#### Abstract

The aim of this article is to introduce three mosaic inscriptions and an inscription fragment of a pedestal, unearthed during the excavations carried out in the stoa in front of the Olmpeion odeion between 2011 and 2014 in Cibyra. As it is understood from the inscriptions, the mosaic floor; approx. 550 m<sup>2</sup>, in front of the monumental entrance of the odeion in a north-south direction was decorated in mosaic flooring by Aurelius Sopatrus and Claudius Theodorus, sons of Epancrates from one of the leading families of the city. It was carried out chronologically between 249-254 AD (according to the Cibyran era, 226-231). The first inscription includes the philanthropists promise to adorn the floor with mosaic in front of the odeion (249 AD); The second is to start the mosaic flooring in the same year. The last is to fulfill the promise completing the mosaic floor in front of the odeion (254 AD). Through the inscriptions, it is understood that the Cibyran odeion was called "Olympeion". Other than this, new persons relating to the provincial priesthood of Asia are documented. Finally, a fragment of an honorary inscription is introduced which is thought to have been used for typogenic material dating to 243/252 AD.

Keywords: Cibyra, Olympeion Odeion, mosaic, Asiarch, 243-254 AD.

#### Öz

Bu makalenin amacı 2011-2014 yılları arasında Kibyra'daki Olympeion Odeion'u önündeki stoada gerçekleştirilen kazılar sonucu ortaya çıkarılmış üç adet mozaik yazıtı ile stoa'daki bir postamente ait yazıtlı fragman parçasının tanıtılmasıdır. Yazıtlardan anlaşıldığı üzere odeion'un kuzey-güney doğrultusu boyunca uzanan anıtsal girişi önündeki yaklaşık 550 m<sup>2</sup>'lik mozaik döşeme kentin önde gelen ailelerinden Epankrates'in oğulları Aurelius Sopatros ve Claudius Theodoros tarafından yaptırılmıştır. Yazıtlar ışığında odeion'daki mozaik döşemenin İS 249-254 tarihleri (= Kibyra era'sına göre, 226-231) arasında gerçekleştirildiği belgelenmiştir. İlk yazıt hayırhahların odeion önündeki mozaik döşemeyi yapma sözü vermesine (İS 249); ikinci yazıt, aynı yıl içinde mozaik döşeme çalışmalarına başlanmasına ve son yazıt ise verilen sözün yerine getirilip odeion'un önündeki mozaik döşemenin tamamlanmasına (İS 254) ilişkindir. Bu yazıtlar sayesinde diğer verilerin yanı sıra Kibyra Odeion'unun 'Olympeion' olarak adlandırıldığı öğrenilmiş olup, dönemin Asia imparator kültü başrahibi gibi önemli şahsiyetlerin belgelenmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Son olarak ise mozaik taban kaplamasınını üzerinde İS 243/252 yılına tarihlenen (Kibyra era'sına göre 220/9?), devşirme malzeme olarak kullanıldığı düşünülen ve muhtemelen bir onurlandırma yazıtına ait fragman tanıtılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kibyra, Olympeion Odeion'u, mozaik, Asiarkhes, İS 243-254.

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We would like to express our thanks for the permission to publish these inscriptions given by Assistant Professor Şükrü Özüdoğru, Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Faculty Member, who has been the head of the excavation of the city of Cibyra.

# Position of Inscriptions in Odeion's Stoa and Brief Description of Stoa Mosaics

Four inscriptions, the subject of this paper, are on the mosaic floor of the stoa which extends along the odeion front (the second author of this article has been working on a doctoral dissertation entitled "Odeion of Cibyra"; according to the finds and studies, the odeion was built in the Antonine Period). The inscriptions are written in mosaic in the floor forming part of the royal stoa's floor. The odeion's stoa was discovered during the 2011 season excavations, and the same season it was completely uncovered (For the excavation report see. Özüdoğru – Dökü 2012). The current length of the stoa is 55 m and its width is 9.10 m. The mosaic pavement is approximately 550 m<sup>2</sup> in size and is one of the largest *in situ* mosaic pavement in Anatolia. It has survived to a large extent in a complete state. The most noteworthy destruction on the ground is on the south side of the area due to the construction of a bath built there in late antiquity (For the bath of the city see. Özüdoğru - Tarkan 2018). In addition, in making connections to the infrastructure and water systems of the bath, there was partial damage to the mosaic floor.

The odeion's stoa extends in a north-south direction in accord with the facade position of the odeion, and consists of a rear wall forming the outer wall of the scene by closing the front of the odeion, a column array near the center of the stoa and three steps at the front border<sup>1</sup>.

Mainly, white and gray tesserae were used in the mosaic floor. In addition to these colors, it is also observed that partly pinkish and darker shades of gray tesserae are used. It is decorated in the form of panels with geometric ornaments, the edges of which are framed by the use of gray tesserae. The area between the panels and the border walls on both sides, having an average width of 1.60 m, is bordered by undecorated outer frame belts decorated with white tesserae. It extends continuously in a north-south direction along the existing part of the odeion's stoa. Currently, thirteen different sizes of geometric pattern panels are orientated in a north-south direction. In the center of the odeion's stoa are eleven column bases that divide the geometric patterned boards on the floor horizontally. Nine column bases from the north to the south are undamaged. Only the stylobate part of the last two bases in the south direction have survived. These are the bases of the columns placed in the central part of the odeion's stoa to support its roof. The inscription fragments are placed in two of the eleven panels between the bases. On the other nine panels, the ,X' shape is described (for the area photograph see. Fig. 1).

<sup>1</sup> Important data on the odeion's stoa is that it has been determined that the stoa continues past the odeion on both sides. In this context, the length of the stoa must be much greater than the part that is already exposed. It can be stated that the length of the stoa is a few times more than its exposed part, especially considering that it extends in the theater direction, which is located approximately 100 m north of the odeion. From this perspective, it can be said that stoa has a covered portico function that connects the odeion and the theater.

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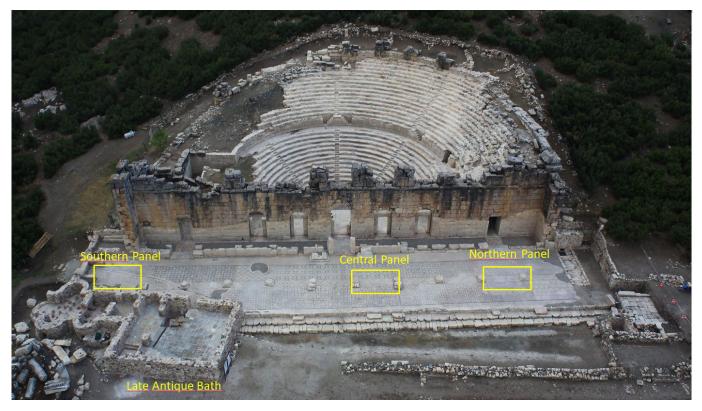


Figure 1 Odeion and it's stoa (Cibyra Excavation Archive).

# 1 - Central Inscription Panel

The central inscription tabula on the mosaic floor is between the two column stands near the center of the odeion's stoa. This inscription tabula is located on the north edge of the odeion's main entrance gates. The central gate of the back wall of the stoa is reached when moving westward from the point where the inscription is located. The location of this gate is symmetrical with the main gate of the odeion in the facade wall. Thus, when passing through both doors, one enters the center of the pulpitum (scene). This is also the central axis of the odeion. Another important data about the location of this inscription tabula is that the area in which it is located is highlighted with some additional architectural elements. One apiece, square pillars are placed in front of both the column bases bounding the inscription from two sides and the third column base in the southern direction. Although the missing surfaces are much, it is obvious that these mentioned piers are placed in the area as sculptures. The mosaic in front of the odeion, which also lays on the floor of the odeion's stoa, consists of six lines of ancient Greek inscription. The inscription, which is quite well preserved, is located inside a tabula (Fig. 2).

Dimensions: H.: 1.11 m; W.: 3.88 m; Letter H.: 0.13-0.18 m.

Date: 249 AD (226 in the Cibyran era).

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έτους ςκσ΄·

2 Πολιτευσαμένου Μ(άρκου) Έ-

πρίου Άυρ(ηλίου) Όρθαγόρου ἀσιάρχο[υ],

- Αυρ(ήλιος) Σώπατρος Έπανκρατοῦς μετὰ τοῦ
   ἀδελφοῦ μοῦ Κλ(αυδίου) Θεοδόρου ἀποδιδώ-
- 6 μεν τὴν ὑποσχέσιν τῆς ψηφώσεως.

Year 226. When the asiarch Marcus Eprius Aurelius Orthagoras officiated, (I), Aurelius Sopatrus, son of Epancrates, together with my brother Claudius Theodorus gave the promise of this mosaic.

L. 1: Year 226 stated in the Cibyran era corresponds to 249 AD due to the fact that the city started using a new *era* (Tac. ann. IV.13.1; see also Özüdoğru 2020: 136) after the earthquake of 23 AD.

LL. 2-3: The verb πολιτεύω is employed to mean "being in management, taking part in management" as it is used with participium aoristum medio-passivum conjugation. (Liddle-Scott 1883: 1250 s.v. πολιτεύω; Bailly 1935: 1587 s.v. πολιτεύω) Marcus Aurelius Eprius Orthagoras, stated in the inscription, was in the office and he is indicated as asiarch. This person as being an asiarch is documented for the first time both in the city and in the province of Asia. While this term means the chief executive of the province Asia, this civil office was first mentioned in the work of the ancient geographer Strabo (Strab. XIV. 1. 42 c 649) as the main position in the province. This is a title used from the ancestors and transferred for generations. This is an indication that Marcus Aurelius Eprius Orthagoras is a noble person and takes over this task from his ancestors. For the position of asiarch see also Brandis 1896: 1564-1578; Mehl 2003: 157; Dimitriev 2005: 277. Kearsley (1986:183) emphasizes that the rank of asiarch and archiereus has the same meaning, although Magie (1950: 1298-1301 fn. 61) agrees with him, he also states that title of archiereus in the province of Asia is an honorary title. On the other hand, Chapot (1904: 153 fn. 4) states that asiarchs should have been of a higher degree since they were also effective in the administration of the province. (On the subject see also Macro 1979: 96; Deininger 1965: 41-50. For detailed information see; Friesen 1993: 85 ff.; 1999a: 275 ff.; 1999b: 306 ff.). The person who is entitled asiarch is assigned annually and takes charge of some certain duties within provincia Asia. For this reason, there are more than one office bearing priest in the state (Mehl 2003: 158). Kearsley (1986: 191) emphasizes that it is possible to award two titles to different people at the same time, and this is not the same as asiarch status and

Figure 2 Central Inscription Panel (Cibyra Excavation Archive, H. 1.11 m / W. 3.88 m). state high priesthood). It is known that Cibyra previously had an Asia cult priest (For the related inscriptions in the city see; Corsten 2002: 63, 69-71, 149. Also see; Kılıç-Arslan 2018: 504-512).

Lines 4-6: It is understood that Aurelius Sopatrus, together with his brother Claudius Theodorus, most probably members of a leading family living in the city, promised to cover the area of approximately 550 m<sup>2</sup> at the entrance of the odeion in mosaic ( $\dot{\alpha}\pi \sigma \delta i \delta \dot{\omega} | \mu \epsilon \nu \tau \eta \nu \dot{\upsilon}\pi \sigma \sigma \chi \epsilon \sigma \nu \tau \eta \varsigma \psi \eta \phi \dot{\omega} \epsilon \omega \varsigma$ ). Although the subject of the sentence is Aurelius Sopatrus, the verb  $\dot{\alpha}\pi \sigma \delta i \delta \dot{\omega} | \mu \epsilon \nu$  in lines 5-6 emphasizes that they promised it jointly. While these names are recorded for the first time in the city, the name Sopatrus is known from an inscription found in Cibyratis, see; Corsten 2002: 254.

This inscription, in which the mosaic is promised, is written in the middle part of the mosaic pavement. To the south, the inscription giving the start of construction of the mosaic is a continuation of the document mentioned here. In this regard, based on epigraphic data, it can be assumed that the mosaic flooring started from the south and continued northward along the front of the odeion.

### 2. Southern Inscription Panel

The second (southern) panel on the mosaic floor is located at the southern end of the existing part of the stoa. The position where the inscription is located corresponds to the south side of the entrance direction of the south gate in the back wall of the stoa. The southern gate of the stoa is placed symmetrically with the southern gate of the odeion's parodos. Thus, the southern inscription panel is located at the point where the audience entered the odeion from the south. The southern inscription panel -unlike the other two- is not placed between column bases. This inscription is written on a specially designed *tabula*. In addition, this inscription *tabula* was designed larger than the other two inscription *tabula* measuring 2.63 m x 2.15 m. Both the information and its design confirm that this inscription is the main inscriptions and the water pipes of the bath structure pass over the first line, 4 letters are missing. Despite this, the completed mosaic inscription is quite well preserved. There is a missing word in the thirteenth line. (Fig. 3)

Dimensions: H.: 2.15 m; W.: 2.63 m; Letter H.: 0.085-0.16 m.

Date: 249 AD (226 in the Cibyran era).

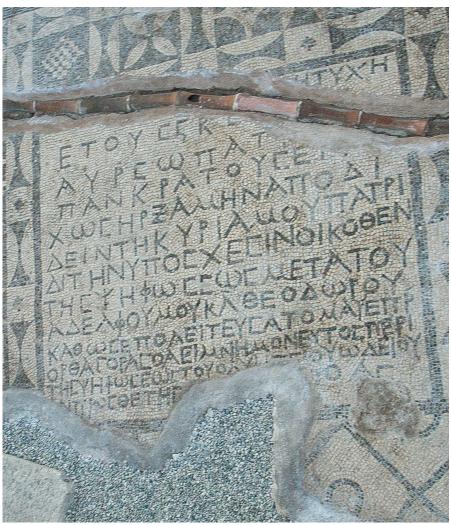


Figure 3 Southern Inscription Panel (Cibyra Excavation Archive, H. 2.15 m / W. 2.63 m).

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τῆς ψηφώσεως τοῦ Όλυμπείου φδεί [ἕ]νπρόσθε τῆς [βασιλικὴς σ]τοᾶς. To good fortune!

*Year 226.* 

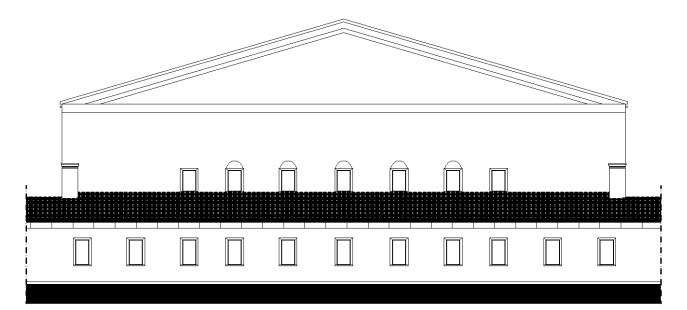
(I,) Aurelius Sopatrus, son of Epancrates, together with my brother Claudius Theodorus started to fulfill the promise of mosaic covering at my own expense for my supreme homeland, when Marcus Aurelius Eprius Orhagoras officiated, who, always memorable with the mosaic of the Olympeion Odeion in front of the royal stoa. L. 2: This statement regarding the date of the inscription is dated to the same period as the previous inscription.

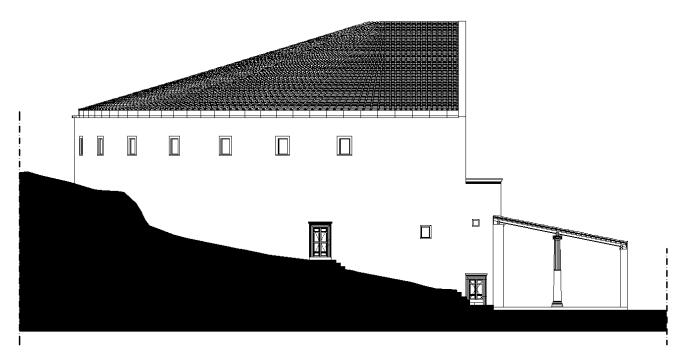
LL. 3-6: Epancrates' son Aurelius Sopatrus declares that he started the mosaic covering he promised before ( $\eta \rho \xi \dot{\alpha} \mu \eta \nu \dot{\alpha} \pi \sigma \delta \iota | \delta \epsilon \tilde{\iota} \nu \dots | \tau \eta \nu \dot{\upsilon} \pi \sigma \sigma \chi \dot{\epsilon} \sigma \iota \nu \dots | \tau \eta \varsigma$   $\psi \eta \phi \dot{\omega} \sigma \epsilon \omega \varsigma$ ). Here, Aur. Sopatrus refers to his promise about the mosaic covering he gave in the central inscription panel (the first inscription).

L. 7: Expression of οἴκοθεν, just like ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων, means at one's own expense. On the inscription on the same mosaic named northern mosaic, expression of ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων is employed. The inscriptions of the city use the expressions ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων (Corsten 2002: 133) and ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀναλωμάτων (Corsten 2002: 43, 75).

LL. 8-9: The name of Aurelius Sopatrus' brother is given as Claudius Theodorus. The name Theodorus is produced from the words  $\theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma$  (theos), which means god in the ancient Greek language, and  $\delta\iota\delta\delta\sigma\alpha\iota$  (*didonai*), which means giving. So, meaning, given by god. This name has not previously been recorded in the city.

LL 10-14: During the office of Marcus Aurelius Eprius Orthagoras (year 226 according to the Cibyran era) (On Marcus Aurelius Eprius Orthagoras also above see. Inscription 1 lines 2-3), in 249 AD, construction of mosaics started. From being written in the mosaic, it is expected or desired that the asiarch always be remembered with the mosaics of the Olympeion Odeion covered in front of the royal stoa. The type of the stoa can be given as basilica stoa as a completion proposal. There is a similar completion in both Ephesus and Hieropolis (Alzinger 1974: 26-27; for the drawing of stoa, Alzinger 1974: abb. 15a-d; D'Andria 2016: 31). Stoa Basilicas, in both Hierapolis (D'Andria 2003: 98 fig. 76.) and Ephesus (Alzinger 1974: 26-28, abb. 14) are designed in two floors and are directly connected to the Agora. However, the structure of Cibyra is quite different and is at a very great distance from Agora. In addition, the excavation finds and architectural data indicate a single story facade. In consequence, when the data related to the architecture of the building is evaluated, we find a rectangular long structure with a roof on which the front and back facade is bounded by a wall and the central part is divided by columns (Figs. 4-5). The rear side of the scene wall of the odeion also forms back wall of this stoa (for the details of both the odeion and it's stoa see. Özüdoğru 2020: 232-254). According to the finds, it is also considered that this stoa has a connection with an expected stoa that extends between the odeion and the theatre. Although it is not yet certain which stoa is in the mention here as basilica, according to the archaeological finds, the proposal of the area covered in mosaic (see. Figs. 4-5) may be the basilica stoa, or it is the stoa that extends from the odeion to the theatre, which has neither yet been studied nor excavated, but is expected. If the mentioned basilica stoa is the structure in front of the odeion, then the mosaic floor belongs to the basilica stoa. But the inscription reads "the mosaic of the Olympeion Odeion in front of the royal stoa". With this, it can be asserted that the royal stoa may be the stoa between the odeion and theatre. This, because, according to the studies on the odeion, the structure covered with mosaic seems to belong to the odeion. Though this is just a hypothesis as yet, the stoa problem can only be concluded with certainty following the completion of the excavation of this area.





# 3. Northern Inscription Panel

The inscription panel in the north is written between two column bases in the direction of the northern door in the back wall of the stoa. The northern gate of the stoa is opposite the odeion's northern parados gate. Therefore, this inscription is found across the area where the audience entrance came into the building from the north. The inscription panel with the five-line ancient Greek inscription is well preserved. (Fig. 6)

Dimensions: H.: 1 m; W.: 3.73 m; Letter H.: 0.15-0.017 m.

Date: 254 AD (231 in the Cibyran era).

#### Figure 4

A proposal for the eastern side of the stoa adjacent to odeion (Cibyra Excavation Archive).

#### Figure 5

Southern side of the odeion and stoa (Cibyra Excavation Archive).



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Figure 6 Northern Inscription Panel (Cibyra Excavation Archive, H. 1 m / W. 3.73 m). ἕτους αλσ΄· Ἐπὶ γραμμ[α]τέως τοῦ ἀξιολογωτάτου Λ[υ]σιμάχου, Ἀυρ(ήλιος) Σώπατρος Ἐπα[ν]κρατοῦς ἐψηφώσεν μετὰ τοῦ ἀδε[λ]φοῦ Θεοδόρου ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων.

Year 231. During the secretariat of respectable Lysimachus, Aur(elius) Sopatrus, son of Epancrates, together with his brother Theodorus covered with mosaic at their own expenses.

Line 1: In this text, located in the northern part of the mosaic, the date is 231 in the era of Cibyra, unlike in the first two inscriptions. Due to the beginning of the Cibyran era mentioned above, it is understood from this inscription dated to 254 AD that the mosaic flooring work was completed (see line 4:  $\dot{\epsilon}\psi\eta\phi\dot{\omega}\sigma\epsilon\nu$ ). Considering the dates on the first two inscriptions, it took five years to furnish this floor with mosaic.

LL. 1-2: Another dating method in the inscription is to give the name of the secretary. The name Lysimachus was recorded here for the first time in the city. Apart from this name as secretary, it is known that four more people from the city officiated:

The first record known regarding the secretary position in the city is in the agreement between Cibyra and Apollonia Salbace, which shed light on the Hellenistic Period of Cibyra, especially as its dated to the first quarter of the second century BC. It is stated that a *grammateus* named Ciddounis was in the committee of the treaty<sup>2</sup>. Another *grammateus* named Publius Aelius Orestes (Corsten 2002:11) is known to have officiated in 137 AD. While in the inscriptions in Corsten 2002: 37 and 40, it is known that Marcus Claudius Philocleus Casianus is mentioned as the secretary of the city with the expression  $\gamma \rho \alpha \mu \mu \alpha \tau \delta \omega \varsigma$   $\tau \eta \varsigma \pi \delta \lambda \epsilon \omega \varsigma$  and the year is stated as 182-183 AD Finally, in Corsten 2002: 46, which is dated to 185-186 AD, Tiberius Claudius Capito is recorded as the secretary of the city as the expression  $\gamma \rho \alpha \mu \mu \alpha \tau \delta \omega \varsigma \tau \eta \varsigma \pi \delta \lambda \epsilon \omega \varsigma$  is used. According to an honorary inscription dated 190 AD, which has not as yet been published, it is known that Nearchianus, son of Nearchus, also officiated as a secretary<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The inscription in question will be reviewed soon.

<sup>3</sup> Preparation for publication on the related inscription is in progress.

## 4. Pedestal Fragment Piece

The fourth inscription fragment, part of the subject of this article, is carved on the facade of the northernmost part. The piers are placed directly onto the mosaic floor. This data shows the piers were located after the mosaic had been completed and it also indicates that the base in question were reused-spolia.

The upper part of the inscription carrier, which is located on the far left of the mosaic inscriptions in front of the odeion, is mostly broken and the upper part has not yet been unearthed in the course of excavations. For this reason, it is not possible to determine a statue in the upper part. There is a 3-line ancient Greek inscription on the base, which is spolia, a pedestal reused as a pier base. Although the meaning cannot be formed completely, the date element is clearly recorded. However, it is probably a fragment from an honoring inscription. The material of the bottom profile of the inscription carrier is marble. (Fig. 7)

Dimensions: H.: 0.28 m, (profile): 0.17 m; W.: 76 m. Letter H.: 0.025 m.

Date: Between 243-252 AD (between 220-229 in the Cibyran era).





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[-----]νέωι [ ca. 2 ]Υ For ... neos [ -- ] his [ -- ]. [ ca. 2 ] ΕΛ [ -- ]Σ αὐτοῦ Year 220 ? [ -- ἕ]τους. κσ΄

On the top lines, (total number of lines is unknown) a *masculinum* name ending with -neos is expected. However, the following name must be the *masculinum* genetivus form of the father or ancestor name. The materials to be uncovered and the pieces to be found in later field studies may over time complete this inscription. The given year starts with  $K\Sigma$  in the Cibyran era which is 220. However, there is a broken lacuna before  $K\Sigma$ , which puts the date at between 220 and 229 in the Cibyran era, that corresponds to between 243 and 252 AD. This date range is a certain proof that this pedestal was used as a spolia after the mosaic was laid.

In consequence, it is understood from the mosaic inscriptions that the Cibyran

Odeion was once called "Olympeion". To date, there is no odeion known in Anatolia that has been attested in this name. According to the Cibyran eras written in the mosaic, i.e. 226 and 231 that correspond to 249 and 254 AD, the work of mosaic flooring took five years, and it is promised and laid at their own expense by the siblings, named Aurelius Sopatrus and Claudius Theodorus, the sons of Epancrates; probably members of a significant family in the city. The names of the people, who performed the mosaic flooring, are attested here for the first time in Cibyra. However, what they did is a good example of philanthropy recorded in Cibyra. Although there is a lacuna in the inscription no. 3, it is obvious that the mosaics belong to the odeion which is in front of the royal stoa. As for the lacuna before the word stoa, basilica is proposed, which was a multi-functional construction in the antiquity. Apart from these, there is a name of a new asiarch. It is also a significant data for both the city and province of Asia, because he was unknown to date. As of the γραμματεύς, a few are already known from both the Hellenistic and the Roman inscriptions found in the city and its surroundings. However, this inscription holds a new secretariat's name who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

It can be presumably assumed that after the laying of the mosaic, the stoa, which is expected to extend between the odeion and the theater, was extended to the front of the odeion<sup>4</sup>. This because some of the columns and pedestals of the stoa are deployed on the mosaic itself as spolia materials. This is proved by the inscription on the pedestal fragment piece as the inscription is dated to between 243-252 AD. (220/9, according to the Cibyran era). It is observed that the arrangement and new use activities in front of the odeion were also changed and transformed in late antiquity. The most prominent feature of these is the new bath structure built in the north of the odeion and its infrastructure and water systems related to this structure that damaged the mosaic floor. From this perspective, it can be stated that the Olympeion Odeion at Cibyra was actively used from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>5</sup> (For the dating data of the bath materials see Özüdoğru – Tarkan 2018: 189-190), and in line with the needs of the city, when the odeion fell from use, the use of the area changed, due to the new conditions of Late Antiquity.

<sup>4</sup> The accuracy of this hypothesis will be determined from further excavations in the area.

<sup>5</sup> The latest material is dated to the  $5^{\text{th}}$  century AD according to the data from the excavation of Cibyra bath.

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