

APHRODITE'S RIVALS:
DEVOTION TO LOCAL AND OTHER GODS
AT APHRODISIAS

Some time in the second century CE two men made a dedication, which at first sight does not seem to differ from other inscriptions found in Aphrodisias (fig. 1).¹ It is written on a base, which in dimensions and form resembles many other bases from this city. The text reads: 'To Zeus Thynnaretes (Διὶ Θυνναρήτη), Zenon and Artemidoros, agents of Antonius Celsus, a member of the equestrian order, (dedicated) the *bomos* (altar or base) and the incense-burner (τὴν λιβανωτρίδα) in accordance with the god's command' (Appendix no. 16). The dedicators bear two very common names in Asia Minor. The fact that a father's name is not mentioned in combination with the fact that they were in the service (*pragmateutai*) of a Roman knight shows that they were slaves. We know of another two 'agents' of servile status in Roman Aphrodisias, who represented the economic interests of Roman senators and knights.²

The inscription mentions two dedicated objects: a *bomos*, which usually means altar but can also mean base,³ and a *libanotris*, an incense-burner. The second object is unusual, not otherwise attested in Aphrodisian epigraphy. Worshipping the gods by burning incense, usually on a *thymiaterion* or a pyre, is a Semitic tradition,⁴ but this practice was widespread in the Imperial period. The motivation for the dedication is also unusual, at least in the inscriptions of Aphrodisias: 'upon the god's command' (κατὰ ἐπιταγήν τοῦ θεοῦ). The god seems to be Zeus, the recipient of the dedication. We can only speculate about how he gave his command. He might have appeared in the dream of one of the dedicants or he might have expressed his wish in an oracle. That he specifically demanded an incense-burner, and not for instance a statue or an altar, may be related to a shift in ritual practices that has been observed in the Imperial period, away from blood sacrifice and towards worship that focused on exaltation.⁵ There is only one other dedication in Aphrodisias made upon divine command (Appendix no. 6); interestingly, it was also made by a man without a father's name, again a slave or a freedman, a man accustomed to receiving commands. Finally, the recipient of the dedication is also unusual:

1. Unpublished. Mentioned in *SEG* LVII 1009.

2. *MAMA* VIII 570; *SEG* LIV 1061.

3. E.g. *SEG* XXVII 716; XXXII 1001.

4. E.g. Bordreuil & Gatiér 1990.

5. Nock 1933, 117; Bradbury 1995; Chaniotis 2010a, p. 136 with n. 101. Cf. Belayche 2005 (exaltation).

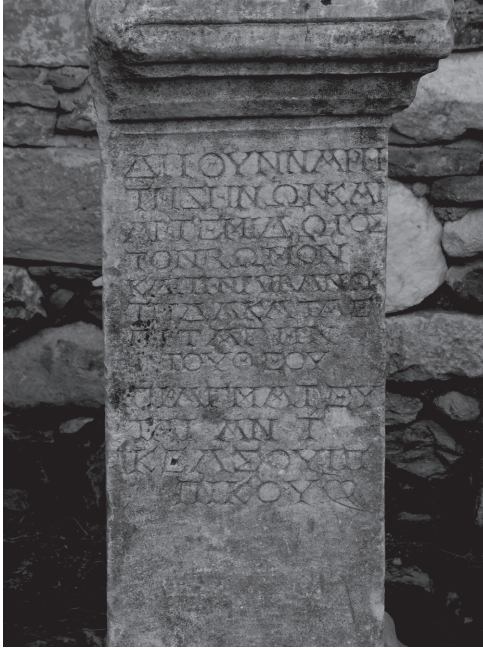


Fig. 1 - Marble base that supported an incense-burner dedicated to Zeus Thynnaretes (Appendix no. 16).

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neither Aphrodite, to whom the overwhelming majority of dedications in the city were addressed, nor Zeus Nineudios, the patron of Nineuda, the old name of Aphrodisias,⁶ but another Zeus. Thynnaretes belongs to a widespread group of divine epithets in Anatolia with the ending *-etes* or *-ites* that derive from place names.⁷ The ending of the place name Thyn-nara is paralleled by other Anatolian toponyms (e.g., Pi-nara, Mon-nara, Olima-nara, etc.). Thynnara is indirectly attested as the earlier name of the city of Synnada in Phrygia, whose eponymous founding hero was Thynnaros. For this reason, the citizens of Synnada were designated as *Θυνναρίδαι* (the descendants of Thynnaros).⁸ What Aphrodisias and Synnada have in common is the production of marble, and this explains the presence of Antonius Celsus, probably a man engaged in the trade of marble, in Aphrodisias.⁹ Zenon and Artemidoros made in Aphrodisias a dedication to the god of their place of origin. Zeus Thynnaretes was the god they worshipped, the god to whom they prayed, the god who appeared in their dreams or gave them instructions through oracles. In short, this god was part of their religious and cultural identity. That Zenon and Artemidoros expressed their devotion to Zeus Thynnaretes in a foreign place is significant in itself; that this foreign place was named after another deity – Aphrodisias is the city of Aphrodite – made it even more significant.

To a foreign visitor of Aphrodisias the city must have seemed dominated by this goddess. It certainly seems so to us. The sanctuary, with its propylon,

6. On the name Nineuda, see Chaniotis 2010b, p. 461–462.

7. Chaniotis 2007.

8. Thynnaros: Leschhorn & Franke 2002, p. 140. Thynnaridai: Merkelbach & Stauber 2001, p. 374–375.

9. I owe this suggestion to Riet van Bremen.

temenos, and temple, is the largest precinct in the city, the temple the most monumental structure. Aphrodite's cult statue, known from several copies, decorated the civic coinage;¹⁰ the *neopoioi*, the board of magistrates responsible for the construction of the temple, count among the most important local officials. Aphrodite was recipient of donations and bequests. No other name, either of a human or of a god, is as often mentioned in Aphrodisias' epigraphic record as that of Aphrodite. In the local inscriptions she is mentioned as the recipient of public dedications (see n. 25); as the recipient of fines for the violation of graves;¹¹ as the ancestor of the emperors and eponymous patron of the city.¹² But what we know about her cult can be summarized in four phrases: she had a priest, a priestess, and *neopoioi* (magistrates responsible for the construction of the temple);¹³ a cult official called *anthephoros* ('the bearer of flowers')¹⁴ suggests a procession in which flowers played some part; the doves in her sanctuary should be protected;¹⁵ and a banquet took place in connection with sacrifices, presumably during her festival.¹⁶ This is really not much for a goddess who is named more than one hundred times in the local inscriptions. And as I shall attempt to show, Aphrodite primarily served as the divine patron of a civic community and not as the divine patron of individuals. Her epithets clearly express her 'political' function.¹⁷ She is 'the eponymous goddess of the city' (τὴν ἐπόνομον τῆς πόλεως θεόν),¹⁸ 'the goddess who presides over the city' (τὴν [προεστ]ῶσαν τῆς πόλ[εως ἡμ]ῶν),¹⁹ the leader ([τῆς καθηγετιδος θεᾶς),²⁰ the ancestral goddess ([τῆ πατρία?] θεῶ),²¹ the ancestor of the emperors (Θεᾶ Ἀφροδίτη Γενέτειρα, Προμήτωρ Ἀφροδίτη, Ἀφροδίτη Προμήτωρ θεῶν Σεβαστῶν).²² Only the epithets *epiphanes* and *epiphanestate* ('the one whose power is manifest')²³ and *hiera* and *hierotate*²⁴ allude to the goddess' divine side.

10. Brody 2007.

11. *I Aph2007* 2.309, 2.523, 11.29, 11.37, 11.43, 12.412, 12.526, 12.918, 12.1003, 12.1016, 12.1020, 13.101, 13.104, 13.108, 13.109, 13.110, 13.111, 13.112, 13.126, 13.145, 13.149, 13.154, 13.156, 13.604, 13.610, 13.702, 14.19, 15.5, 15.8, 15.245, 15.247. Recipient of a fine for another offence: 12.803.

12. See notes 18–22.

13. Priests: *I Aph2007* 1.7 1.38, 1.187, 8.85, 12.215, 12.1020, 12.1111, 15.261. Priestesses: 1.7, 12.1020. *Neopoioi*: e.g. 5.10, 5.204.

14. *I Aph2007* 1.159 (*MAMA VIII* 516); *I Aph2007* 1.183 (*MAMA VIII* 515); *I Aph2007* 5.210 (*SEG XL* 926); *I Aph2007* 12.531 (*CIG* 2821); *I Aph2007* 1.187 (*MAMA VIII* 514).

15. *I Aph2007* 13.609 (*MAMA VIII* 411); Reynolds 1982, p. 172–173 no. 46).

16. *I Aph2007* 12.26 (*MAMA VIII* 413). On the facilities for the banquet see Chaniotis 2008a, p. 64–65.

17. Chaniotis 2003, p. 77–79.

18. *I Aph2007* 8.114 line 8 (Reynolds 1982, no. 25).

19. *I Aph2007* 12.26 A 7–9 (*MAMA VIII* 413).

20. *I Aph2007* 12.911 line 2 (*MAMA VIII* 419).

21. *I Aph2007* 12.1004 (Reinach 1906, p. 97–98 no. 12).

22. *I Aph2007* 12.305 (*SEG XXX* 1253); *I Aph2007* 4.308 (Reynolds 1982, no. 55; *SEG XXXII* 1097); *I Aph2007* 9.34 (*SEG XXXVI* 988).

23. *I Aph2007* 12.26 lines A 9–10: ἐπιφανεστά[την θ]εᾶν Ἀφροδίτην; *I Aph2007* 5.108 (Reinach 1906, p. 105 no. 19): Ἀφροδείτη θεᾶ ἐπιφανεστάτη; *I Aph2007* 5.109 (Reinach 1906, p. 105–106 no. 20); *I Aph2007* 12.1207 (Reinach 1906, p. 291 no. 201): [τῆ ἐπιφανεστ]ᾶτη θεῶ [Ἀφροδίτη]; *I Aph2007* 12.26 d 15–16 (*MAMA VIII* 413): τῆ ἐπιφανεῖ οὐ[ρα]νία πανδήμω θεᾶ Ἀφροδίτη.

24. *I Aph2007* 12.526 line 8: τῆ [ἐρ]ωτάτη θεῶ Ἀφροδείτη. The existence of the epithet *ἐρωτάτη* suggests that in another inscription (*I Aph2007* 2.309 = Reynolds & Roueché 2007,

The civic aspect of Aphrodite's cult is also quite obvious as regards dedications addressed to her. 31 of the 32 published dedications to Aphrodite have a public character: they were made by magistrates or by the entire community, they were jointly addressed to her, the emperors, and the Demos, or they were made on the basis of a public promise of benefaction (ἐπαγγελία).²⁵ Not a single dedication was made in fulfilment of a vow. The only human to whom Aphrodite of Aphrodisias reportedly appeared in a dream was not a citizen of Aphrodisias but the Roman general Sulla.²⁶ In dedications addressed to Aphrodite, the People, and the Emperor, the dative is used in order to express the donation of a building, not in order to express an offering triggered by a religious motive (i.e. a vow, a thanksgiving dedication, a dedication upon divine command).

This civic character of Aphrodite's cult becomes even more obvious when we compare this evidence with a group of inscriptions that has never been studied in a systematic manner: private dedications to other gods. Far less numerous than the dedications to Aphrodite, they reveal religious diversity and tension between private worship and the public religious image of a civic community.

Normally, divergent religious behaviours and identities in the Imperial period, that is the devotion to gods other than those whose cult was organised by the community, are connected with foreigners, private cult associations, and mystery cults. Despite the abundance of epigraphic sources, Aphrodisias confronts us with the rather unusual situation that we have no evidence for initiates in Egyptian mysteries, for worshippers of Mithras, or for the followers of any other mystery cult for that matter. A Jewish community must have existed in Aphrodisias, probably since the Hellenistic period, but its presence becomes visible in the epigraphic record no earlier than the fourth century CE.²⁷ We do not know of any cult associations, and the only private dedication by a foreigner is the aforementioned dedication to Zeus Thynnaretos. But when we look beyond the great monuments and turn our attention to more humble objects, we notice expressions of religious worship originating in the lower strata of society and the superficially Hellenized descendants of the local Karian population (Appendix). The addressees of these dedications usually were the same gods as the ones officially worshipped in Aphrodisias – Theos Hypsistos is the only exception (Appendix no. 14); but the vocabulary of the dedications expresses religious devotion that differs from the official worship.

p. 158-159 no. 100 = SEG LVII 1016) we have to read ἱερῶ θεῶ Ἀφροδείτῃ ('to the sacred goddess Aphrodite') and not ἱερὰ θεῶ Ἀφροδείτῃ ([money to be] 'sacred to the goddess Aphrodite').

25. All references are to *I Aph 2007*. Dedications by the demos: 5.6; by priests: 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 4.4, 12.314; cf. 4.308; by a neopoios: 5.108, 5.109; by a strategos: 12.204; by a stephanephoros: 8.1, 8.5; by Julius Caesar: 8.31. Joined dedication to Aphrodite and the emperor(s): 5.6, 5.9, 8.108, 8.112; to Aphrodite, the emperor(s), and the demos: 4.4, 5.207, 5.208, 8.52, 8.113, 8.233, 9.1, 12.204, 12.314; to Aphrodite, the emperor(s), and the Fatherland: 8.115; to Aphrodite and the Fatherland: 5.108, 5.109; to Aphrodite and the demos: 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 8.1, 8.5; to Aphrodite, the divinity of the emperors, the senate, and the *populus Romanus*: 12.305. Epangelia: 1.109, 8.52, 9.25. Unclear background: 2.701 (dedication of a building), 4.109, 11.407 (dedication of a building).

26. App., BC 1, 97. The only private dedication to Aphrodite is 8.228.

27. Chaniotis 2002.

The earliest text is a dedication made by Diogenes and Tatia to Koure Plyaris in fulfilment of a vow (no. 1). We notice that the dedicants do not have patronymics. In a city whose inhabitants were obsessed with ancestors, not only mentioning the name of their father but also that of their grandfather and further ancestors – sometimes up to seven generations –, this can only mean that we are dealing with individuals of low status, possibly freedmen or slaves. We also notice a spelling mistake in the name of Diogenes (Διωγένης), and also the form Κούρη instead of Κόρη. I suspect that this form originates in a literary text, perhaps a hymn. I mention this because it reminds us how much material has been lost – in this case a ritual performative text – and how shaky the basis of our research is. The dedication was made in fulfilment of a vow; we can, therefore, assume that Diogenes and Tatia had prayed to this Virgin. Finally, the Virgin is identified as a local divinity: Plyaris, ‘the Virgin of Plyara’. The place name Plyara is indirectly attested through an honorary decree of the Plyareis for Agroitas of Gordiou Teichos, found in Aphrodisias.²⁸ The location of Plyara is not known. It was an independent polis in the Hellenistic period, which must have been incorporated into Aphrodisias, probably in the late Hellenistic period.²⁹ We shall encounter these features – lack of a patronymic, prayer and vow, devotion to a local god – in several other texts. They recur in the votive of a certain Philomousos, a man without a patronymic, possibly a slave or a freedman (no. 6). His dedication, found east of Aphrodisias, was made upon divine command. The god, who had appeared in his dream or had otherwise communicated his wish was Zeus Spaloxios. His epithet certainly derives from a place name (Σπαλώξ-ιος), the otherwise unattested Σπάλωξα.³⁰ Spaloxa, like Plyara, must have been a place near Aphrodisias, to the east of the city, incorporated into the city’s territory in the Imperial period. Spaloxios is also known from a local coin (Ζεὺς Σπάλωξος) and from another dedication, to which I shall return later (no. 4).³¹

We find exactly the same constellation – lack of patronymic, dedication to a local god – in an early dedication (no. 2), written on the base of a small marble image of an eagle. The dedication of statuettes of eagles is common in Aphrodisias (nos. 8 and 9). As one may infer from the arrangement of the text on the stone, there is not enough space to restore a patronymic, and even a very short name (e.g. Παπᾶ) can hardly fit into the lacuna. Meleagros identified himself not with the name of his father but by his occupation. He was a bronze-smith, a representative of the lower social strata, probably a slave or a freedman. The addressee is, again, a local god: Zeus Nineudios. His *epikleisis* derives from the place name Nineuda, which is not directly attested but can plausibly be reconstructed on the basis of parallels, such as Attouda, not far from Aphrodisias, or Pereuda in Phrygia. Νίνευδα must be the early name of

28. Drew-Bear 1972, p. 435–436.

29. Chaniotis 2010b, p. 462–463.

30. Cf. other Anatolian place names, such as Araxa, Kounaxa, etc.

31. Robert & Robert 1983, p. 166 n. 27. The three Kouretes in Caria, (S)paloxos, Panamoros, and Labrandos, derive their names from place names (Spaloxa, Panamara, Labraunda) and are connected with cults of Zeus (Labraundos, Panamaros, Spaloxos/Spaloxios). On the Kouretes, see Bremmer 2009, p. 297.

Aphrodisias, transmitted in the form Νινών by the local historian Apollonios.³² The change of the name from Νίνευδα to Νινών (the city of Ninus) can be explained by the mythological association of Aphrodisias with the eponymous ktistes Ninus, the husband of Semiramis. But the uncorrupted form of the name is preserved in Zeus' epithet: Νινεύδ-ιος. A building was dedicated to him in the late Hellenistic period,³³ and two inscriptions of the first century CE mention his priest Dionysios.³⁴ Another three dedications can be attributed to Zeus Nineudios: the dedication of a woman for the well-being of her son (no. 7) and two statuettes of eagles (nos. 8 and 9). In the latter cases the epithet of Zeus is not mentioned, but we can infer the identity of the god from the votive object. In addition to the traditional association of Zeus with the eagle, it seems that there is a specific mythological connection between the eagle and Zeus Nineudios in Aphrodisias. In the reliefs that decorated a late-first-century civic basilica and alluded to local myths,³⁵ an eagle appears on an altar next to Ninus, that is next to the founding hero, whose name is associated with Ninoe/Nineuda. Unfortunately, we know nothing about this particular foundation legend. Again, none of the dedicants has a patronymic, and two of the dedications were made in fulfilment of vows (nos. 7 and 9).

The same applies to the dedication of a certain Korymbos (no. 3): it was made upon a vow, the recipient was not Aphrodite, and the dedicant probably was a man of low social status. Dedications to Asklepios can be expected in any Greek or Hellenized city, and Aphrodisias is not an exception.³⁶ The five dedications to the healing god were made by individuals without a patronymic (nos. 10–13 and 17), always in fulfilment of a vow. Four of these dedications are 'anatomical votives', with representations of diseased body parts (breasts: nos. 12, 13, 17; eyes: no. 10). In one case (no. 12) a man made the dedication on behalf of a woman, apparently his wife. The dedication of Eugenia (no. 17) is of particular interest because she used an extremely rare epithet: εὐεπήκοος ('the one who is willing to respond well to prayers') is a variant of the very common ἐπήκοος. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only attestation of this word in an inscription, and it is very rare in the literary sources.³⁷ As I have argued elsewhere, the use of a divergent vocabulary in the communication between mortals and gods, especially in the context of praise, is a strategy through which worshippers expressed piety.³⁸

Another four dedications, all by individuals without a patronymic, were made in fulfilment of vows. One of them is addressed to an anonymous goddess who responds to prayers (no. 15); one might be tempted to identify this goddess with Aphrodite, but the next votive relief (no. 18, fig. 2) shows that Aphrodite was not the only goddess in Aphrodisias who was expected to listen to prayers. It is a marble block decorated with the representation of a pair of ears on either side of a palm branch in relief; a crown adorns the right side. It

32. Chaniotis 2003, p. 71 and 80.

33. *IAph2007* 12.304 (*SEG* XLIV 864).

34. *IAph2007* 12.612 (*MAMA*VIII 410); 11/104 (Paris and Holleaux 1885, 79–80 no. 10).

35. Yildirim 2004 and 2008.

36. On the cult of Asklepios and other healing deities in Karia, see Nissen 2009.

37. *LSJ*, s.v.

38. Chaniotis 2010a, p. 135–138.

Fig. 2 - Dedication of two gladiators to Nemesis (Appendix no. 18).



is obviously a gladiatorial monument.³⁹ The votive relief was first dedicated by a gladiator with a *nom de guerre* inspired by mythology: Sarpedon. The relief was then re-used by another gladiator, whose *nom de guerre* derives from the name of the river Hermos; as other names of gladiators connected with rivers, it alludes to speed and might. Later, Christians engraved a cross on the upper left corner of the block. The relief was dedicated to an anonymous ‘goddess who listens to prayers’, certainly Nemesis, the patron of gladiatorial events.⁴⁰ The dedication of Markianos to Theos Hypsistos (no. 14) may be connected with the group of the ‘god-fearers’ (θεοσεβειῆς) and with Jewish influence.⁴¹

We can more clearly recognize the main features of the private dedications, when we compare them with dedications by priests, members of the elite. Among the numerous dedications made by priests, often of buildings,⁴² I have selected for this small dossier two texts that commemorate the erection of temples of local gods (nos. 4 and 5). In the first case, the divine recipients of the dedication were Plouton, one of the most popular gods in this part of Karia,⁴³ Kore, and the Demos (fig. 3). The inclusion of the Demos shows that the priest who made the dedication understood and presented his donation as a benefaction to his civic community and not – or not only – as an act of devotion.

We observe the same features in the second dedication (no. 5, fig. 4). A priest with the telling name Eusebes Philopatris (‘Pious Lover of the Fatherland’)⁴⁴ funded a cult building for Zeus Spaloxios and the ancestral Zeus. Eusebes was

39. On gladiatorial monuments in Aphrodisias see Hrychuk Kontokosta 2008.

40. On the connection of Nemesis with gladiatorial combats see Hornum 1993. I cannot share the author’s view that Nemesis was exclusively connected with gladiatorial shows; she was more generally the patron of contests.

41. See the most recent discussion by Mitchell 2010.

42. *Laph2007* 1.2 (Aphrodite); 1.8 (Aphrodite); 3.2 (Eleutheria); 4.4 (Aphrodite); 5.7 (Arete); 8.85 (Aphrodite); 8.211 (Hygieia); 11.51 (Dionysos); 11.104 (Zeus Nineudios); 12.638 (Asklepios); 12.703 (Mes Askainos and Hermes Agoraios); 12.712 (Asklepios).

43. Nissen 2009, p. 105–133.

44. I understand Philopatris as Eusebes’ second name, not as an honorary title. Second names are very common in Aphrodisias; see Chaniotis forth.

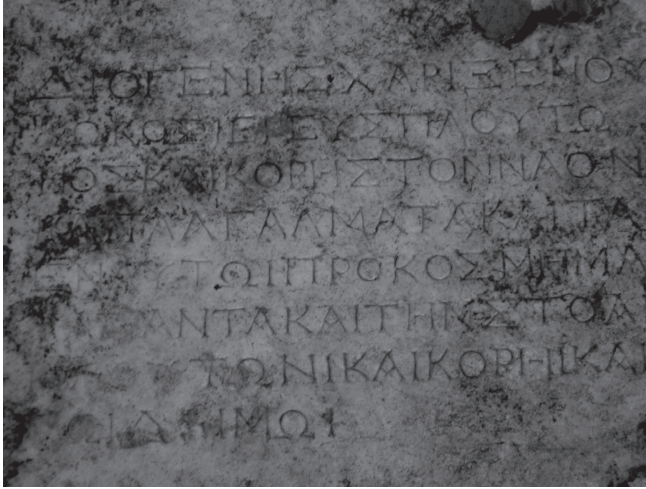


Fig. 3 - Dedication of a priest of Plouton and Kore (Appendix no. 4).

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a prominent member of the elite, who had also sponsored the propylon and the north portico of the Sebasteion.⁴⁵ In this case, the recipients of his donation were two local gods. Zeus Patroios, the ancestral Zeus, is not otherwise attested,⁴⁶ but Zeus Spaloxios is. As we have already seen, his epithet derives from the local place name, Spaloxa.

Although this epigraphic dossier is not very extensive, it still permits some conclusions. First, we can detect a certain development over time. Most dedications to local gods (Zeus Nineudios, Spaloxios, Plyaris, Plouton and Kore) are concentrated in the Hellenistic period and the first century of the Common Era, that is in a period in which Aphrodite was not the only divine patron of the city. The cult of a local Carian Zeus was very prominent. According to the literary tradition, Sulla's dedication in Aphrodisias was a double axe, the symbol of Zeus.⁴⁷ The dedications to local gods, both by private individuals and by priests, date to a period in which Aphrodisias was still developing as an urban centre and was gradually becoming the only civic community in the area. In the first century BCE Aphrodisias was still connected in a sympolity with Plarasa, in which Plarasa was the 'senior partner'.⁴⁸ It was only in the late first century BCE or the early first century CE that Aphrodisias overshadowed Plarasa and absorbed all other civic communities of this area. Aphrodite became the dominant figure of Aphrodisias in the course of the Imperial period, presumably not for (exclusively) religious reasons but because of her importance for local identity and unity.⁴⁹

Secondly, if the worship of Aphrodite had a predominantly political background, the worship of three other deities reflects religious trends of the

45. *I Aph2007* 1.102 (SEG XXX 1244); *I Aph2007* 9.1; *I Aph2007* 11.17 (MAMAVIII 489).

46. Augustus is identified with Zeus Patroios in *I Aph2007* 12.902.

47. App., *BC* 1, 97.

48. Chaniotis 2003, p. 69-71.

49. Chaniotis 2003, p. 77-79.



Fig. 4 - Dedication of a priest of Zeus Patroios and Zeus Spaloxios (Appendix no. 5).

Hellenistic and Imperial period. Asklepios' cult must have arrived with Greek settlers and had to compete with the cult of the traditional healing deity of Caria (Plouton). Theos Hypsistos attracted worshippers in the Imperial period, and the cult of Nemesis is connected with the introduction of gladiatorial shows.

Thirdly, the private dedications studied here allow us to detect a certain tension in the religious behaviour of different social strata. Taking the dedications of buildings aside (nos. 4 and 5), since they are a distinct phenomenon and concern elite benefactions, what all private dedications share is the fact that not a single dedicant gave the name of his father – and this in a city where the common practice was not only to give the name of the father but also that of the grandfather, the grand-grandfather, and further ancestors. These dedications reveal the religious identities and practices not of the elite that dominates the public epigraphy of Aphrodisias but of the lower social strata. One of the dedicants was a smith (no. 2), another has the common slave name Philomousos (no. 6), two others were gladiators (no. 18). The assumption that, as in the case of the slaves of Celsus (no. 16), dedicants without patronymics were members of the lowest classes, slaves and freedmen, is quite safe; mistakes in spelling (Appendix nos. 1, 14, and 18) indicate limited education. Such private dedications differ from 'public' dedications (dedications by magistrates and the entire community, dedications of buildings) not only with respect to the recipients – a variety of deities other than Aphrodite – but also with respect to the display of religious sentiments. All of them, without exception, allude to the fact that they were made after a personal communication with a god: most of them mention the fact that they were made in fulfilment of a vow (nos. 1-3, 7, 8, 10-14, and 17), that is after the god had responded to a prayer; in three cases the divine response to a prayer is expressed through the use of the epithet *ἐπήκοος/εὐεπήκοος* (nos. 15, 17, and 18); and in the remaining two cases the dedication was made upon divine command (nos. 6 and 16). In the two dedications made on behalf of relatives (nos. 7 and 12), the dedicants' motivation was affection and not the personal display of wealth and power. A mother dedicated a votive for

her son (no. 7); a man dedicated an ‘anatomical relief’, with the representation of breasts, on behalf of his sick wife (no. 12).

Most of the dedications that express religious sentiments were addressed to local gods, patrons of indigenous communities with Anatolian names that have existed in the area long before the arrival of Greek settlers and long before Aphrodisias became the only civic community: to Zeus of Nineuda (nos. 2 and 7; cf. 8 and 9); Zeus of Spaloxa (no. 6); the Virgin of Plyara (no. 1).⁵⁰ Two slaves from Synnada showed in Aphrodisias their piety to the god of their place of origin: to Zeus of Thynnara (no. 16). Several texts do not show devotion to the patrons of local communities but display personal devotion to a powerful deity. Markianos (no. 14) was a worshipper of the Highest God, i.e. a god influenced by Jewish monotheistic ideas. Eugenia (no. 17) addressed Asklepios with a unique epithet (εὐεπήκοος).

Until the fourth century, when the competition among religions – Jews, Christians, worshippers of the traditional gods – started to dominate Aphrodisias’ epigraphic record,⁵¹ it is only through private dedications that we can detect ruptures in the otherwise uniform image of the city of Aphrodite.

50. On the significance of divine patrons of small communities in Anatolia see Belayche 2006.

51. Chaniotis 2002 and 2008b.

APPENDIX

Private dedications and dedications to local gods in Aphrodisias

1. *I Aph 2007* 8.209, Hellenistic.
 Διογένης μετὰ Τατίας Κούρη Πλυαρει εὐχίην.
 Diogenes together with Tatia to the Virgin of Plyara in fulfilment of a vow.
2. *SEG LIV* 1037, first century BCE (marble image of an eagle).
 Μελέαγρ[ος vacat?] | χαλκεὺς Δι[τὶ Νινευ] | δίφ εὐχίην [vacat?].
 Meleagros, a bronze-smith, to Zeus Nineudios in fulfilment of a vow.
3. *I Aph 2007* 8.207, first century BCE/CE.
 Κόρυνβος [- -] θεῶι εὐχί[ν - -].
 Korynbos to [- - the] god in fulfilment of a vow.
4. Unpublished, first century BCE/CE.
 Διογένης Χαριζένου Κώκος, ἱερεὺς Πλούτωνος καὶ Κόρης, τὸν ναὸν καὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ προκοσμήματα πάντα καὶ τὴν στοὰν Π[ι]λ[υ]ούτωνι καὶ Κόρηι καὶ τῷ Δήμῳ.
 Diogenes Kokos, son of Charixenos, priest of Plouton and Kore, (had) the temple and the statues and all the additional decorative elements in it and the portico (made) for Plouton, Kore, and the Demos.
5. Unpublished, early first century CE.
 [Δι]τὶ Σπαλωξίῳ καὶ Διὶ Πατρῴῳ Εὐσεβῆ[ς] | [Μ]ενάνδρου Φιλόπατρις, ὁ ἱερεὺς αὐτῶ[v].
 To Zeus Spaloxios and Zeus Patroios, Eusebes Philopatris, son of Menandros, their priest (dedicated this).
6. Robert & Robert 1983, p. 166 n. 27, Imperial period.
 Διὶ Σπαλωξίῳ [κ]ατὰ ἐπιταγῆ[v] [Φ]ιλόμουσος.
 To Zeus Spaloxios, in accordance with his command, Philomousos.
7. Unpublished, Imperial period.
 Μελιτίνη ὑπὲρ ΕΕ[c. 5]χίου τοῦ υἱοῦ Διὶ Νινε[υ]δίῳ κατ' εὐχίην.
 Perhaps {E} E[ύστο]χίου.
 Melitine for her son --chios, to Zeus Nineudios, in fulfilment of a vow.
8. Ertuğrul 2008, p. 89 no. 5, Imperial period (marble image of an eagle).
 Μελτίνη Διεὶ εὐχίην.
 Meltine, to Zeus in fulfilment of a vow.
9. Ertuğrul 2008, p. 88f. no. 4, Imperial period (marble image of an eagle).
 Θεῶ Διὶ Ἄδραστος ἀνέθηκε.
 To Zeus, the god, Adrastos dedicated this.

10. *I Aph2007* 15.240, first century CE (panel with representation of a pair of eyes).

[- -] Ἐλευθερ[- -] [θε]ῶ Ἀσκληπ[πίω] εὐχ[ήν].

[- -] Eleuther[- -] to the god Asklepios in fulfilment of a vow.

11. *I Aph2007* 4.113, second century CE.

Θεῶ Ἀσκληπ[ιῶ] [ε]ὐχ[ήν].

To the god Asklepios in fulfilment of a vow.

12. *I Aph2007* 11.3, Imperial period (altar with representation of breasts in relief).

Διονύσιος ὑπὲρ Ἀμμίας εὐχ[ήν].

Dionysios on behalf of Ammia, in fulfilment of a vow.

13. *I Aph2007* 5.112, second century CE (votive panel with representation of breasts).

Ἀμια|ς θεῶ Ἀσκληπιῶ εὐχ[ήν].

Amias to the god Asklepios, in fulfilment of a vow.

14. *I Aph2007* 2.516, Imperial period.

Μαρκια[ν]ὸς θεῶ ὑψίστοι ε[ὐ]χ[ήν].

Markianos to the Highest God, fulfilment of a vow.

15. *I Aph2007* 10.103, second century CE (representations of a bird and a dolphin flank the word εὐχ[ήν]).

Θεῶ ἐπηκόω Εὐδαμος εὐχ[ήν].

To the goddess who listens to prayers, Eudamos in fulfilment of a vow.

16. Unpublished, second century CE.

Διὶ Θυνναρήτη Ζήνων καὶ Ἀρτεμίδωρος τὸν βωμὸν καὶ τὴν λιβανωτρίδα κατὰ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, πραγματευταὶ Ἀντ(ωνίου) Κέλσου ἵππικοῦ.

To Zeus Thynnaretes, Zenon and Artemidoros, agents of Antonius Celsus, a member of the equestrian order, (dedicated) the altar/base? and the incense-burner in accordance with the god's command.

17. *I Aph2007* 5.117, c. third century CE (panel representation of breasts in relief).

Εὐεπηκόω Ἀσκληπιῶ Εὐγενία εὐχ[ήν] ἀνέθηκεν.

To Asklepios who listens to prayers well: Eugenia dedicated (this) in fulfilment of a vow.

18. *SEG LVI* 1191, third century CE.

Σαρπηδὼν θαιῶ ἐπηκόω εὐχ[ήν] Ἑρμος εὐχ[ήν]

Sarpedon (dedicated this) to the goddess who listens in fulfilment of a vow. Hermos (dedicated this) in fulfilment of a vow.

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