News about Quintus Veranius

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In 1881/82, Eugen Petersen and Felix von Luschan, leading an archaeological expedition to south-western Asia Minor under the auspices of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, discovered in the ancient city of Kibyra a fragment of an inscription in honour of Quintus Veranius, the first governor of the Roman province of Lycia (43/44–47/48 AD). The text has been intensively discussed, not least because Quintus Veranius seems to have been honoured by a city which beyond doubt did not lie within the boundaries of the new province for which he was responsible.

With recent excavations going on under the direction of Dr. Şükru Özüdoğru (University of Burdur), the inscription is now preserved even in three copies, two of them almost completely. It reads now in translation: “[The] people [of Kibyra] have honoured Quintus Veranius, legate of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus in praetorian rank, for taking care of the imperial works in accordance with the orders entrusted to him by Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus, the founder of the city, and of the ‘Imperial Peace’ and of supply of grain during a time of shortage as well as for showing under all circumstances careful forethought worth of the Emperor.”

The fact that Quintus Veranius is stated to have “taken care [...] of the ‘Imperial Peace’” (epimeletheis [...] tēs sebastēs eirēnēs) is unusual and the most interesting new aspect of the inscription. As several contemporary monuments from Asia Minor show, a phrase like this is obviously not linked with questions of warfare and peace. It rather seems to indicate that Quintus Veranius must have set up or promoted a cult of pax Augusta in Kibyra. For the elite ruling the Roman Empire, the cult of pax Augusta was a means of honouring the emperor, which played an important role especially during the era of Emperor Claudius (41–54 AD).

The inscriptions will be published among the conference proceedings in honour of the late Dr. Filiz Dönmez-Öztürk, a wonderful young Turkish epigraphist, who passed away prematurely at the age of 35. She is sadly missed.