



Summary :

Kys was a town or city of Caria. It is identified with the settlement of Bellibol, where the ruins of a Hellenistic theatre were found. However, Kys is also possibly identified with the ancient Carian city of Kyon.

Other Names

Palaiopolis, Bellibol, Belebol, Pirlebol, Benipouli

Geographical Location

Southwest Turkey

Historical Region

Caria

1. Geographical Location – History

Kys was a town or city of [Caria](#). It is identified with the modern settlement of Bellibol (Belebol, Pirlebol, Benipouli), 30 km to the south of the village of Bozdoğan. The site is found on a hill, between the valleys of the Marsyas and Harpasos rivers, to the southwest of Hyllarima. The settlement of Kys is probably identified with the Carian city of Kyon, formerly called Kanebion and reported by Stephanus Byzantius.¹ According to epigraphic evidence, Kys was at some point called Palaiopolis, a name maintained in the modern place-name Bellibol.²

Kys is not reported by any ancient writer. One of the testimonies about the existence of this place-name in Caria is a resolution of [Stratonicea](#) in the 1st c. BC, found in [Lagina](#).³ Our only knowledge about the city is restricted exclusively to information obtained from architectural remains, inscriptions and coins, where the ethnic name Kyeiton or Kyiton appears.⁴ The city probably worshipped [Artemis](#) and [Zeus](#), the latter being the major deity of Kys. This view was based on the representation of the double axe, Zeus' symbol, on a relief, and mainly the representation of Zeus on 1st c. BC coins, which depict the god's head on the **obverse** and an eagle surrounded by a wreath on the **reverse**. Moreover, an honorary inscription of the 1st c. BC confirms that Zeus Eleftherios (Liberator) and emperor [Tiberius Claudius](#) were also worshipped.⁵ The cult of Artemis in the city is indicated by bronze 1st c. BC coins depicting the head of the goddess on the obverse and a wreath encircling a quiver and a spear on the reverse.⁶ There are also inscriptions reporting the cult of an unknown local deity of the **Koinon** of Lagnoa, an unidentified neighbouring town. Finally, the fact that members of the Heraclid tribe lived in the city, as evidenced by inscriptions, indicates the Hellenization of the citizens.⁷

2. Buildings

Although the site has not been excavated, the visible archaeological remains suggest the presence of an important settlement already in the Hellenistic period. The acropolis revealed scattered ruins, including segments of a marble theatre with a partly surviving **cavea**. The theatre possibly belongs to the Late Hellenistic period judging from the layout and the similarities with the theatres of Hyllarima and [Alabanda](#). An arched underground passage connected it with another building, possibly identified with the city's agora. The existence of the theatre indicates that the inland of Caria was Hellenized and the local population was familiar with theatrical performances.⁸ The necropolis of the Roman period, where columns, statue pedestals and sepulchral monuments were found, was at the foot of the acropolis.⁹

1. It remains unknown whether Kyon/Kanebion is a variant of the name Kys or a different, unidentified Carian city. Diehl, C. – Cousin, G., "Sénatus



Consulte de Lagina", *BCH* 9 (1885), p. 450; Zgusta L., *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen* (Heidelberg 1984), pp. 315-316. For the etymology of the name Kyon/Kanebion, see Laumonier, A., *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958), pp. 463-464. Kanebos, after whom the city of Kyon/Kanebion was named, was a local hero or god of Caria, whose cult is evidenced in Hyllarima, while there is no evidence certifying the hero's cult in Kys.

2. *PECS*, p. 473, see entry "Kys" (G.E. Bean); Cousin, G. – Deschamps, G., "Emplacement et Ruines de la ville de Kys en Carie", *BCH* 11 (1887), p. 305; Laumonier, A., *Les Cultes Indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958), p. 463, n. 4.

3. See Şahin, M.Ç., *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia* (IK 22:1, Bonn 1982), p. 10, 508.11.

4. For the inscriptions, see Cousin, G. – Deschamps, G., "Emplacement et Ruines de la ville de Kys en Carie", *BCH* 11 (1887), pp. 305-311. For the coins, see Head, B.V., *Historia Numorum* (Oxford 1911), p. 617.

5. Zeus' cult and the specific type of coins with the god's representation are reported only by Laumonier, A., *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958), pp. 463-465.







6. A different collection of coins of the Imperial period depicts a quiver between vines on the front and Amaltheia's horn and a thyrsus on the verso. For the coins, see Head, B.V., *Historia Numorum* (Oxford 1911), p. 617.

7. For the inscriptions, see Cousin, G. – Deschamps, G., "Emplacement et Ruines de la ville de Kys en Carie", *BCH* 11 (1887), pp. 305-311; Laumonier, A., *Les Cultes Indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958), pp. 464-465.


8. Marchese, R.T., *The Historical Archaeology of Northern Caria, A Study in Cultural Adaptations* (BAR 536, Oxford 1989), p. 101.

9. Cousin, G. – Deschamps, G., "Emplacement et Ruines de la ville de Kys en Carie", *BCH* 11 (1887), pp. 305-311; Marchese, R.T., *The Lower Maeander Flood Plain, A regional Settlement Study I* (BAR 292, Oxford 1986), pp. 265, 267, 281; Marchese, R.T., *The Historical Archaeology of Northern Caria, A Study in Cultural Adaptations* (BAR 536, Oxford 1989), p. 101, 149; *PECS*, p. 473, see entry "Kys" (G.E. Bean).

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Glossary :

	cavea
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The auditorium or audience sitting of a theater.



[koinon, the](#)

The term koinon pertains to every confederacy of ancient cities.



[obverse](#)

The face of the coin which bears the more important device. Due to ambiguities that sometimes exist, many numismatists prefer to use the term for the side struck by the lower (anvil) die.



[reverse](#)

The back view of a coin where the issuing authority is usually inscribed.