



Summary :

Lycian city on Bey Dağ. It formed a confederation with Akalissos and Korme. From the city the fortification walls, burials of the sarcophagus type as well as remains of domestic architecture are still preserved. Information on the civic institutions of the city is offered by inscriptions, both funerary and dedicatory.

Geographical Location

South Turkey

Historical Region

Lycia

Administrative Dependence

Koinon of Lycia, Province of Lycia

1. Location-name

The Lycian city of Idebessos was built at an altitude of 1,000 meters on Bey Dağ, close to modern Kozağacı, a suburb of Karacaören. In antiquity the closest large city was [Arycanda](#), at a distance of 18 kms to the west. Together with its two neighbouring cities Akalissos and Korme they formed a confederation, headed by [Akalissos](#).¹ According to Bean, the ending –ssos indicated a pre-hellenic place name, but his view on the antiquity of the site is not confirmed by the presence of numerous Lycian tombs as is the case with other cities with a purely Lycian past.

2. Archaeology

The city was built close to a gorge, along which a fortification wall is still extant, although badly damaged. From the city's monuments a small theatre is also preserved, oriented towards the mountain, which must have had a capacity of about 700 spectators. At the site a significant number of tombs of a later period was found of the sarcophagus type with a domed cover. Those [sarcophagi](#) are not concentrated in a necropolis, but rather scattered among the remains of houses. Many of the covers are missing or broken. The majority of the sarcophagi are decorated with plain round shields, but there are also some with relief decorations of cupids, wild animals etc. In some cases the sarcophagi are based on podiums with an exedra (platform) in front.

Intramural burials are rare in Asia Minor, at least in the Early Hellenistic period.² The funerary inscriptions of Idebessos constitute a good testimony of a common phenomenon in Hellenistic [Lycia](#), namely the formation of a local aristocracy based rather on wealth than origin.³

3. Institutions

The aforementioned inscriptions as well as some dedicatory ones constitute a source of information on the civic institutions of Idebessos. One learns of the existence of [agoranomoi](#),⁴ [prytaneis](#),⁵ superintendents of public works,⁶ [gymnasiarchs](#),⁷ [dekaprotoi](#) (decemprimi) and [eikosaprotoi](#) (both of the city and of the [confederation](#)),⁸ as well as of the existence of an institution which referred to the whole of Lycia, that of the [hypophylax](#) of the Lycians.⁹

4. Religion

The most frequent mention of deities on funerary inscriptions is that of the Dioscuri.¹⁰ One could assume, then, that they constituted the city's patron gods. There are also frequent appeals to the nymphs.¹¹ It is possible that the two cults were related to that of



[Apollo](#), patron god of Akalissos and possible of the entire confederation.¹² Finally, on a relief there is depicted a triad of gods, unfortunately without an inscription.¹³ It has been suggested that the triad corresponds to the “Theoi Agrioi”, the cult of which is attested elsewhere in Lycia as well.

1. Bean, G.E., *Lycian Turkey: an archaeological guide* (London 1978), pp.139-140 and TAM II, nos. 830, 833, 836, 837, 844, 849 etc.
2. Zimmermann, M., *Untersuchungen zu historischen Landeskunde Zentrallykiens* (Bonn 1992), p. 70.
3. Zimmermann, M., *Untersuchungen zu historischen Landeskunde Zentrallykiens* (Bonn 1992), p. 74 and TAM II p. 302.
4. TAM II, no. 838.
5. TAM II, nos. 831, 832, 834, 837.
6. TAM II, nos. 831, 835.
7. TAM II, nos. 835, 838.
8. TAM II, nos. 838, 847.
9. TAM II, nos. 831, 834.
10. TAM II, nos. 845, 847, 855, 857.
11. TAM II, nos. 824-827.
12. TAM II, no. 845.
13. Frei, P., “Die Götterkulte Lykiens in der Kaizerzeit”, in ANRW II, 18.3 (Berlin 1990), p. 1829, with reference to the initial publication by Pace, B., “Ricerche sulla Regione di Conia, Adalia e Scalanova”, *ASAtene* 7 (1924), p. 71, no. 79.

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	Frei P. , "Die Götterkulte Lykiens in der Kaiserzeit", Haase, W. – Temporini, H. (eds), <i>ANRW II.18.3</i> , Berlin – New York 1990, 1729-1864
	Zimmermann M. , <i>Untersuchungen zur historischen Landeskunde Zentrallykiens</i> , Bonn 1992
	Petersen E., Luschan F., von , <i>Reisen in Lykien II</i> , Wien 1889

Glossary :



agoranomos, the

Civil official responsible for the maintenance of the market and the price balance of foods.



gymnasiarch, the

The man responsible for the supervision of the youngsters and the adolescents who were trained at the gymnasia and at the palaestrae. This rank, widely diffused in all cities of the ancient Greek world, constituted a public office which was usually bestowed on the most eminent and rich citizens, since it required great expenses.