



Περίληψη :

Droungarios of the theme of Kibyrrhaiotai, Apsimaros was proclaimed Emperor in 698 by the army of the Kibyrrhaiotai taking on the name Tiberios III; he ascended to the throne after overthrowing Leontios (695-698). He ruled the empire until 705, when the dethroned Justinian II regained power (685-695/705-711). He was murdered one year later. The main goal of his policy was preventing the Arab threat.

Άλλα Ονόματα

Apsimaros

Τόπος και Χρόνος Γέννησης

mid-7th c., Isauria (?)

Τόπος και Χρόνος Θανάτου

February 15th, 706, Constantinople

Κύρια Ιδιότητα

droungarios of the Kibyrrhaiotai, Emperor

1. Descent

On the basis of his baptismal name, Apsimaros, historians assume that Emperor Tiberios III (698-705) was of Gothic, Persian or Armenian origin. The sources are silent with respect to the year and place of his birth, his social background, his career as an army officer until the assumption of the office of *droungarios*, or his family.

Theophanes relates that “the army deposed Emperor Leontios and elected Apsimaros, *droungarios* of the Kibyrrhaiotai at Corycus, who was renamed Tiberios”. This enigmatic phrase is interpreted generally as follows: when in 698 Apsimaros was proclaimed Emperor, he was already serving as a *droungarios* in the [theme of Kibyrrhaiotai](#), probably since 697; it is also assumed that the force he was commanding was exclusively made up of seamen from the town of Corycus.¹

2. Action

2.1. Droungarios of the Kibyrrhaiotai

As a *droungarios* of the fleet of the Kibyrrhaiotai, Apsimaros participated in a naval campaign aimed at recapturing northern Africa from the Arabs. The *patrikios* John, an experienced admiral, was appointed by Emperor [Leontios](#) (695-698) to head the campaign. At first John attacked the port of Carthage, known among Byzantines as Mandrakion, and after he smashed the chain that was blocking the entrance to it, he recaptured the town and some of the neighbouring strongholds.² The leaders of the fleet decided to overwinter at Carthage, where they would await instructions from the emperor. However, the military inactivity of the Byzantines allowed the Arabs to launch a counteroffensive. Having mobilized a large host, they appeared in the waters off Carthage. The Byzantine army was forced to abandon its position and sail to Crete, where they would have an opportunity to revise their strategy.

2.2. Contention for the throne

Modern scholars assume that John’s goal was to strengthen his fleet with naval units stationed in Crete and to return in order to reclaim the town of Carthage from the Arabs.³ The army rebelled, however, exterminated *patrikios* John and proclaimed Apsimaros, the *droungarios* of the Kibyrrhaiotai, emperor under the name Tiberios III.

The insurgent fleet sailed towards the capital and steered into a bay opposite it, Sykai. The rebel, with the support of the [deme of the](#)



[Greens](#),⁴ surrounded and seized [Constantinople](#), and Arsimaros was crowned emperor by the patriarch Kallinikos (694-706). Leontios was subjected to rhinotomy and imprisoned at the Delmatos monastery, while his political allies were exiled.

2.3. Byzantine Emperor

Tiberios III remained in the imperial throne until 705. He sought to reorganize the empire's naval and land forces in order to counter the Arab threat more effectively; he also repaired the sea walls of Constantinople.⁵ In 698 he re-settled in their native lands the Cypriots who, under Arab pressure, had relocated in Syria, as well as in regions of [Asia Minor](#) that were under Arab rule.⁶ His brother Heraclius was promoted to the office of [monostrategos](#) of eastern [themes](#), with the main task of protecting the borders and the [kleisourai](#). In the year 700 the Byzantine fleet [invaded Syria](#). The Arab counteroffensive led to the loss of [Armenia](#) (703-704).

3. Overthrow and end of Tiberius III

When Justinian II (685-695/705-711) recaptured the throne, Tiberius III (698-705) left Constantinople and fled in the direction of the town of Apollonias (on the north banks of the [Bithynian](#) lake of the same name, between [Prousa](#) and Lopadion).⁷ However, he was arrested and, after being pilloried and publicly humiliated by Justinian II in the [Hippodrome](#) to the clapping of the demes, he was beheaded together with Leontios (695-698) in the so-called Kynegion on February 15th, 706. His brother Heraclius had been hanged earlier on the walls together with his aides and commanders.⁸ The son of Tiberios III, Theodosios, escaped execution and later gained great fame as [bishop of Ephesus](#) and supporter of the [iconoclastic party](#).⁹

1. Theophanes, ed. C. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia* 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 370. Cf. Mango, C.-Scott, R. (eds), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813. Translated with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford 1997), p. 517.

2. Christides, V., *Byzantine Libya and the march of the Arabs towards the West of North Africa* (Oxford 2000), p. 48.

3. Mango, C. - Scott, R. (eds), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813. Translated with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford 1997), p. 517.

4. Head, C., *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Madison-Milwaukee-London 1972), pp. 101-102, n. 8.

5. Preger, T. (ed.), *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graccorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Lipsiae 1907), p. 20,11-14.

6. Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *Προς τον ίδιον υιόν Ρωμανόν*, Moravcsik, G.- Jenkins, R.J.H. (eds), *Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio* (Washington D.C. 1967), I, p. 226; II, p. 181.

7. Cf. Mango, C., "The Monastery of St. Constantine on Lake Apolyont", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), pp. 329-333.

8. Theophanes, ed. C. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia* 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 375.

9. Theophanes, ed. C. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia* 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 427. Cf. Head, C., *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Madison-Milwaukee-London 1972), p. 118.



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	Mango C., Sevckenko I. , "A New Manuscript of the "De Cerimoniis"", <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> , 14, 1960, 247-249

Δικτυογραφία :

	Coinage of Tiberius III (698-705) http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/byz/tiberius_III/t.html
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Γλωσσάριο :

	droungarios A military rank, first mentioned in the 7th century. This officer was in command of a <i>droungos</i> , a subdivision of the provincial army (<i>thema</i>).
	kleisoura (lat. clausura) Byzantine military term. Kleisoura initially designated a mountain passage; from the 7 th c. onwards it also meant the military unit responsible for the defence of the passage. The term is also used for an administrative division (smaller than the theme). Its base was in a rough site close to the border, and its administration and economy was not necessarily the jurisdiction of the strategos of the theme. It is considered as the evolution of <i>tourma</i> .
	monostrategos A term used in Byzantine sources to denote a theme's general when the latter, apart from leading his own troops, also took command of neighbouring themes, either to better organise defence in a broad front or to conduct offensive operations under a unified command.
	patrikios (from lat. <i>patricius</i>) Higher title of honour, placed, according to the " <i>Tactika</i> " of the 9th and the 10th centuries, between <i>anthypatos</i> and <i>protospatharios</i> . It was given to the most important governors and generals. Gradually, however, it fell into disuse and from the 12th century did not exist any more.

Πηγές

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Παραθέματα

1. Arsimaros is proclaimed Emperor Tiberios III (year 698):

α. διὰ τοῦτο Λεόντιον μὲν ἀθετοῦσι δυσφημοῦντες, ψηφίζονται δὲ Ἀψίμαρον ὄνομα, στρατοῦ ἄρχοντα τῶν Κουρικιωτῶν τυγχάνοντα τῆς ὑπὸ Κυβερραιωτῶν χώρας, ὃν δρουγγάριον Ῥωμαῖοις καλεῖν ἔθος.

Νικηφόρου πατριάρχου, *Ιστορία σύντομος*, Mango, C. (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History.* CFHB 13 (Washington D.C. 1990), p. 98.

β. Λεόντιον ἀνέσκαψαν ψηφισάμενοι βασιλέα Ἀψίμαρον, δρουγγάριον τῶν Κιβυρραιωτῶν εἰς Κουρικιώτας ὑπάρχοντα, Τιβέριον αὐτὸν μετονομάσαντες.

Θεοφάνης, *Χρονογραφία*, de Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 370.

2. Reinforcement of Constantinople's defence under Tiberios III (698-705):

Τὰ τείχη τὰ πρὸς θάλασσαν ἀνακαινίζονται ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Ἀψιμάρου· ἕως γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡμελημένα ἦσαν πάνυ.

Preger, T. (ed.), *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, p. 20,11-14.

3. Overthrow (year 705) – End (year 706) of Tiberios III:

Ἀψίμαρος δὲ καταλιπὼν τὴν πόλιν εἰς Ἀπολλωνιάδα φεύγει, καταδιωχθεὶς δὲ συλλαμβάνεται καὶ πρὸς Ἰουστινιανὸν ἄγεται· καὶ Ἡράκλειος ἀπὸ Θρακῆς δεδεμένος ἤχθη σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς συνασπιζομένοις αὐτοῖς ἄρχουσιν, οὓς ἐν τῷ τείχει πάντας ἐφόρκεισεν... τὸν δὲ Ἀψίμαρον καὶ Λεόντιον ἀλύσει δεδεμένους εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν πομπεῦσαι πεποιήκεν· καὶ τοῦ ἵππικοῦ ἀγομένου, καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ σένζω καθεζομένου, ἤχθησαν συρόμενοι δημοσία καὶ ἐρρίφησαν ὑποταγάδην αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐπάτησε τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῶν ἄχρις ἀπολύσεως τοῦ πρώτου βαῖου, τοῦ δήμου βοήσαντος, ὅτι «ἐπὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλίσκον ἐπέβης, καὶ κατεπάτησες λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα»· καὶ τούτους ἀποστείλας ἐν Κυνηγίῳ ἀπεκεφάλισεν.

Θεοφάνης, *Χρονογραφία*, de Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 375.

Χρονολόγιο

c. 697: Arsimaros serves as a *droungarios* in the naval theme of Kibyrrhaiotai

698: He is proclaimed emperor by the seamen of his theme (Tiberios III). He besieges and captures Constantinople. He is crowned by the patriarch Kallinikos.

Resettlement of Cypriots, having been expelled by the Arabs, in their native lands

700: Invasion of byzantine troops in Syria



703/4: Arab counterattacks. Loss of Armenia

705: The dethroned Justinian II regains the throne. Tiberios III abandons Constantinople

February 15th, 706: Execution of Apsimaros in the Kynegion of Constantinople