



## [An Anatolian Guardian of Peace in the Mid-3rd Century CE](#) [1]

A decree honours a local officer for having acted as a “guardian of peace” in a remote location of southern Anatolia between 270’s and 280’s CE.

**Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.):** Local decree

**Original Location/Place:** Field near Ovaçik, in the civic territory of Termessos.

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** Elmal? Museum (Turkey)

**Date:** 283 CE

**Physical Characteristics:** The inscription is inscribed on a panel on the face of an elongated stone block.

**Material:** Stone, type unspecified by the original editors.

**Measurements:** The entire block (containing two inscriptions) is 50 centimetres high, 220 centimetres wide, and 71 centimetres thick.

**Language:** Greek

**Category:** Roman, Greek

**Publications:** Ballance, Michael, Roueche?, Charlotte, “Three Inscriptions from Ovac?k”, in: R.M. Harrison (ed. W. Young), *Mountain and Plain: from the Lycian coast to the Phrygian plateau in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001, p. 97-98 [SEG 41.1390b].

**Commentary:** The format of this inscription resembles many other honorific texts prepared by the communities of the Greek East for prominent citizens. A decree (?????/dogma) of the council (?????/boulê) and people (?????/dêmos) is drafted and a series of superlative titles such as ??????????????/axiologôtatos and ??????????????/endoxotatos follows before a rarer formula, ???????? ??????????/eirênês prostatês, is integrated. This commentary will focus on the circumstances that motivated the nomination of the honouree, Marcus Aurelius Kiliortes, as a “guardian of peace.”

Firstly, it must be noted that the inscription was not found in the monumental centre of a urban settlement but, rather, in the isolated territory surrounding the village of Ovaçik. These remote lands in southern Turkey reach above 1000 metres high and dominate the mountain passes between northern Lycia, Pisidia, and the Mediterranean. Here, remains of an ancient fortress and a village still exist (see Mitchell, “Native rebellion”), the stones of which have sometimes been extracted by local villagers for modern constructions. Even if our block was discovered in such a reused context, it can be related closely to other slates that were still located in-situ. This additional evidence facilitates the provision of a temporal framework for the episode. As sometimes happens with this kind of texts, our honorific inscription does not include explicit references to dates or even local eponymous magistrates. The only chronological mark is inferred from the fact that Kiliortes acted as high-priest (?????????/archiereus) of one Augustus (= ??????????/Sebastos) and two Caesars (l. 5) while these were still alive. Such co-regencies became increasingly popular between the high and late Roman imperial periods, particularly after the Tetrarchy; but this sequence most likely refers to the reign of Carus, Carinus and Numerian between 283 and 284 CE. This date is supported by the appearance in the honorific text of Kiliortes’s father, Mar. Aur. Hermaios. Among the related documents aforementioned, we have a long acclamation mostly dedicated to this Hermaios. In a dramatic tone, the local population aimed to keep Hermaios in their territory because he performed many benefactions for them and, especially, he had become a ??????????????/lêstodeiôktês (“brigand-chaser”) contributing to the peace (????? ??? ??????????/hyper tês eirênês). The analogous references to peace appearing in both the father’s and son’s inscriptions must therefore derive from similar episodes of danger which they fought to curb. Indeed, the intervention of Hermaios and Kiliortes in issues pertaining to local security is confirmed by additional letters sent by Roman authorities to them. For example, Kiliortes was contacted by the tribune Valerius Euthios after the latter was informed about the incursion of a band of brigands (????????? ??? ??????????/systêma tôn lêstôn) in the territory of [Termessos](#) [2] (SEG 41.1390a; cf. Zimmermann, “Probus, Carus und die Ra?uber”). In the case of Hermaios, the *dux* M. Aur. Ursius sent him a letter requesting to pick a group of young men (????????????/neaniskoi) and bring them to the city of Cremna (SEG 51.1813 I.A.i). This last geographical remark is fundamental for shedding even more light on the context of this group of inscriptions.

Cremna was a Roman colony, located not too far away from Termessos in Pisidia [<https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/638814>] (see Mitchell, *Cremna*). According to Zosimus (I.69-70) and the *Historia Augusta* (Prob. 16.4), the inaccessible site was captured by a rebel called Lydius (or Palfuerius) in the reign of



Probus, i.e. 276-282 CE. The same sources report that Lydius was an Isaurian “nourished in the brigandage custom of this people” who recruited a band of criminals and started to raid Pamphylia and Lycia. This description fits perfectly the circumstances recorded by the inscriptions of Hermaios and Kiliortes as these were forced to face episodes of pillage and great insecurity caused by marauders. The chronology is also concordant with our honorific text, which would consequently have been produced in the aftermath of these attacks. Ancient historiography attributed the end of Lydius’s rebellion to the actions of the Roman army and, particularly, of a general who laid siege to Cremna until the brigands surrendered and their leader died. Archaeological surveys have brought to light signs of the Roman siege (Davies, “Cremna in Pisidia”), and even the inscription that the Roman governor Terentianus Marcianus dedicated to the emperor Probus after the victory is preserved (*I.Pisid.Cen.* 15). The epigraphic dossier of Hermaios and Kiliortes show, nonetheless, that such a positive outcome was also caused by the collaboration of local population and institutions who led their compatriots to the battlefield, killed brigands and, ultimately, kept the peace of their territories. In other words, when the security structures of the Roman Empire failed to control conflictive groups of criminals, local forces needed to intervene.

This system, however, was not exclusive to the last quarter of the 3rd century CE when the provinces of the eastern Mediterranean were at bay under the attacks of Goths from the Black Sea, the Sassanids from Persia, and internal insurgence. Even on a minor scale, the high Roman imperial period was not free from such episodes of insecurity. In the reign of Commodus, the people of Boubon, also in southern Anatolia, were left with their own means to deal with an episode of local insecurity; not so many years after Aelius Aristides famously proclaimed universal peace. Either or at the beginning of Late Antiquity, these structures proved fundamental for the maintenance and defence of the *Pax Romana* which was extolled by both the imperial propaganda and the inscriptions of the provincial population. The clearest example of this model was the *eirênarchia*. An inscription from Akmoneia shows that the appointment of these local officials was controlled by the Roman governor. Termessos, the civic territory to which the fortress of Hermaios and Kiliortes belonged, has also provided us with inscriptions honouring its eirenarchs; one of them is said to have been in charge of several districts (*TAM* III.104), and another even prepared a defence tower during his term of office (*TAM* III.941). In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, these structures did not only increase regional quietness, but also guaranteed the human and institutional survival that was acclaimed. The defence of Hermaios and Kiliortes of their lands, nonetheless, did not happen by chance. It rested on the structures of regional security that Rome favoured from the beginning of the Empire; keeping local magistracies under the direct control of the provincial administration.

Keywords in the original language:

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- [?????](#) [4]
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Thematic keywords:

- [peace](#) [13]
- [Pax Romana](#) [14]
- [security](#) [15]
- [brigandage](#) [16]
- [Termessos](#) [17]
- [Cremna](#) [18]
- [Asia Minor](#) [19]
- [Carus](#) [20]
- [Carinus](#) [21]
- [Numerian](#) [22]
- [honours](#) [23]



- [local elites](#) [24]
- [Roman army](#) [25]
- [crisis of the third century](#) [26]

**Bibliographical references:** Brélaz, Cédric, [La sécurité publique en Asie Mineure sous le Principat \(Ier- IIIème s. ap. J.-C.\): institutions municipales et institutions impériales dans l'Orient romain](#) [27] (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2005)

Davies, Gwyn G., [Cremna in Pisidia. A Re-Appraisal of the Siege Works](#) [28], *Anatolian Studies* 50 (2000) : 151-158

Ballance, Michael, Roueche?, Charlotte, [Appendix 2: Three Inscriptions from Ovacik](#) [29], in *Mountain and Plain: from the Lycian coast to the Phrygian plateau in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods* (ed. R. Martin Harrison, Wendy Young; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 87-112

Mitchell, Stephen, [Cremna in Pisidia: an ancient city in peace and in war](#) [30] (London: Duckworth, 1995)

Mitchell, Stephen, [Native rebellion in the Pisidian Taurus](#) [31], in *Organised Crime in Antiquity* (ed. K. Hopwood ; London: Duckworth, 1999), 155-176

Zimmermann, Martin, [Probus, Carus und die Rauber im Gebiet des Pisidischen Termessos](#) [32], *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 110 (1996) : 265-277

**Other sources connected with this document:** Inscription

## [Commodus and the Security of Boubon](#) [33]

Commodus praises the southern Anatolian city of Boubon for defending the local security and confirms a reward granted by the Lycian council.

- [Read more about Commodus and the Security of Boubon](#) [33]

Inscription

## [C. Claudius Lucianus: an Eirenarch from Akmoneia selected by the Roman governor](#) [34]

C. Claudius Lucianus is selected possibly by the proconsul of Asia M. Sulpicius Crassus for the position of eirenarch, which was in charge of keeping local security.

- [Read more about C. Claudius Lucianus: an Eirenarch from Akmoneia selected by the Roman governor](#) [34]

Inscription

## [M. Aurelius Meidianus Platonianus Varus, curator and priest of Roma Augusta in Termessos](#) [35]

A member of the elite of Termessos (southern Anatolia) and priest of the goddess Roma Augusta, is honoured for acting as *curator* of the city of Sagalassos.

- [Read more about M. Aurelius Meidianus Platonianus Varus, curator and priest of Roma Augusta in Termessos](#) [35]



Inscription

### [Oples, leader of the Termessian allies dispatched to Marcus Aurelius \[36\]](#)

A member of the local elite of Termessos is honoured for having led a group of allies dispatched to the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

- [Read more about Oples, leader of the Termessian allies dispatched to Marcus Aurelius \[36\]](#)

Inscription

### [Perge, metropolis by the emperor-god Tacitus \[37\]](#)

The city of Perge in southern Anatolia celebrates its new title of *metropolis* after the exceptional grant of the emperor Tacitus, worshipped as a god.

- [Read more about Perge, metropolis by the emperor-god Tacitus \[37\]](#)

Inscription

### [Valerius Statilius Castus, Oinoanda and the arrival of imperial statues under Valerian \[38\]](#)

A military officer is honoured in Oinoanda (southern Anatolia) for providing peace and being generous on the day on which a sacred image of Valerian II arrived.

- [Read more about Valerius Statilius Castus, Oinoanda and the arrival of imperial statues under Valerian \[38\]](#)

Inscription

### [Fulvius Asticus on the Tetrarchic Price Edict \[39\]](#)

The governor Fulvius Asticus comments on the Price Edict decreed by Diocletian and his colleagues in the Tetrarchy.

- [Read more about Fulvius Asticus on the Tetrarchic Price Edict \[39\]](#)

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