



C. Claudius Lucianus: an Eirenarch from Akmoneia selected by the Roman governor

Akmoneia.jpg



[1]

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.

Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.): Honorific

Original Location/Place: Akmoneia

Actual Location (Collection/Museum): Ahat (Turkey)

Date: 180 CE to 192 CE

Physical Characteristics: Rectangular block, carefully carved. The right hand side of the stone is chipped away and the text is severely weathered from line 14. The base most likely supported a statue because a dowel and channel can still be observed on top.

Material: Marble

Measurements: 145 centimetres high, 50 centimetres wide, and 51 centimetres thick. Letters are between 3.5 and 2 centimetres tall.

Language: Greek

Category: Roman, Greek

Publications: E. Varinliog?lu (2006), "Five Inscriptions from Acmonia", in *REA* 108.1, p. 355-373 [*AE* 2006.1424; *SEG* 56.1493].

Commentary:

This inscription, found during the excavations carried out by the Museum of U?ak at Akmoneia (Ahat) [<https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/609293>] was firstly published by Ender Varinlio?lu in 2006, and his edition was subsequently included in *AE* and *SEG* without significant alterations. A rather normal honorific base, the text would not have attracted much scholarly attention if it were not for the interesting lines dealing with the appointment of the honouree as eirenarch. As will be discussed below, this local position was fundamental for the maintenance of peace during the Roman imperial age; so the fact that it was controlled by the provincial administration needs to be analysed in detail.

Before commenting on the content of the inscription, the reader must be warned that our edition differs from that originally published by Ender Varinlio?lu. On the basis of a high-resolution photograph provided by Charles Crowther (University of Oxford), I was able to offer new readings for the lines 14 to 18 recording Lucianus' appointment as eirenarch. While the participation of the Roman governor cannot be questioned (?? ????? ??? ??? ?????????? ??????????????/en tois hypo tou anthypatou exeilegmenois), his name was not provided in the first edition. Instead, I proposed to identify him as M. Sulpicius Crassus, a proconsul which would date the appointment to the reign of Commodus (*HA Comm.* VII.7; cf. *SEG* 49.1684, *PIR*² VII.2 no. 993, *RE* IV A 751 no. 43).

The honours of the city council (?????/boulê) and people (?????/dêmos) are dedicated to a member of the elite



of Akmoneia bestowed with Roman citizenship and begin with his genealogy and relation to prominent locals such as the *stephanephoros* C. Claudius Severus. Even if Lucianus does not seem to have reached this peak of his political *CURSUS* by the time the inscription was set up, the text records that his engagement with civic institutions started as soon as he was four months old. From this premature age, we must infer that his parents paid for the costs attached to the position of ??????????/*agoranomos*, the person who was in charge of supervising the market activities (Laes, “Children and Office Holding,” p. 166; Strubbe, “Young Magistrates in the Greek East”). After such an early initiation into public office, he continued to contribute to the well-being of the community acting five times as ??????????/*sitônês*; i.e. assuring the supply of grain. Both the ??????????/*argyrotamia* and the ??????????/*grammateia* played a more clerical role as “treasurer” and “secretary”, respectively. All such offices, in any case, confirm the involvement of both the honorand and his family in local politics either before or after his position of eirenarch. In fact, another inscription recording the euergetic actions of Lucianus and his brother Iulianus specifies that the latter supervised the market in a period of grain shortage (*MAMA* VI, p. 149, no. 165).

Lucianus’s background and actions need to be connected with the only other ancient source attesting the appointment of eirenarchs by the Roman governor. It comes from Aelius Aristides, who anecdotally reports that “every year the names of ten leading men (????? ?????? ??? ??????/*deka andrôn tôn prôtôn*) had to be sent to the governor from each city” (*Orations* L.72). Out of these ten, one would be selected as “guardian of the peace” (????? ??? ??????????/*phylax tês eirênês*). In 153 CE, a city in Mysia – Aristides’s place of origin despite his normal residency at Smyrna – nominated him and he tried to avoid the appointment by gathering letters, including some from the imperial family, confirming his status as official rhetor and, consequently, exemption from public office. The governor Severus accepted this evidence, extolled the rhetor’s fame, but somehow regretted that Aristides declined the offer “to share in my administration” (????????? ??????/*synarxai moi*). Prior to the discovery of our Akmoneian inscription, Aristides’s account was regarded with suspicion; even a mere invention by this hypochondriac and hyperbole orator. This was also the position originally adopted in the most recent and excellent book on the local security of Asia Minor prepared by C. Brélaz, *La sécurité publique* (but see now Brélaz, “Aelius Aristide *Or.* 50.72–93”). His work collects and analyses all the attestations of eirenarchs surviving from epigraphic records. The problem with such testimonies – as usually happens with other local offices – is that they reveal very little about the role of the *eirenarchia*, beyond the clear reference to peace. In other words, while we are aware that this position existed and was fully functioning during the Roman imperial period, its exact hierarchy, duration and duties would remain unknown on the sole basis of epigraphic evidence. Therefore, one must find additional sources that complement our knowledge of local politics in the eastern Mediterranean. Normally, Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides are most helpful in this regard. But, as previously noted, the Mysian rhetor did not specify the tasks that he would have completed, had he finally accepted the nomination as eirenarch.

For all these reasons, one must focus on two references to eirenarchs appearing in rather non-canonical sources: the *Ephesiaka* and the Martyrdom of St. Conon. The first is an ancient novel which records that the female protagonist Anthia was captured by a band of Cilician robbers and later released by an eirenarch who brought them to Tarsus, the governor’s seat (XIII.2). In the case of Conon, we have the narration of the persecution of a saint from Magydos in Pamphylia as a result of Trajan Decius’s religious policy in the mid-3rd century CE. His capture was allegedly carried out by a mixed group of local officials, auxiliary soldiers, and “the staff of the eirenarch” (????????????? ??????/*eirênarchikê taxis*). Not surprisingly, both Cilicia and Pamphylia have provided us with epigraphic attestations of eirenarchs (see Brélaz, *La sécurité publique*, p. 353-355, 368-369). Such detention duties can also be confirmed by the information provided by more reliable ancient sources. When Pliny the Younger was governor of Bithynia-Pontus, for example, he asked Trajan about the role of public slaves in charge of these local custodies (*Letters* X.19-20). An inscription from Boubon also reports that brigands were neutralised and taken captive by the city in the reign of Commodus. Finally, the Digest (11.4.4) specifies that “local magistrates (*magistratus municipales*) had to take care of transferring captured outlaws to the offices (*praesidium*) of the governor safely and rightly”. This information is fundamental for contextualising the longest attestation of eirenarchs in legal sources: *Digest* 48.3.6. This entry, referring to decisions adopted by both Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, specifies that eirenarchs were not only in charge of keeping local criminals in detention, but also had to write a report before they were sent to the centres of provincial administration. This report needed to be impartial and eirenarchs were accountable for all their actions with the captives both before and after the custody. Thanks to this note in the Digest and all the related evidence here discussed, the key role of eirenarchs in the



policing duties of the provinces can be confirmed. Even if the Roman governor was ultimately responsible for security (see Fuhrmann, *Policing the Roman Empire*, p. 171-199), he was making use of local officials that facilitated his job. Moreover, this help was not limited to Asia Minor as some eirenarchs are also found in the Greek peninsula (see Brélaz, *La sécurité publique*, p. 378-381), and analogous local security forces appointed by the Roman administration can be epigraphically attested in Egypt (*P. Oxy.* XXII.2343) and Palmyra (Ingholt, “Deux inscriptions bilingues,” no. 1).

Under such circumstances, the tight control over their selection process and the references to “courage (??????/andria), virtue (????/areté) and good-will (??????/eunoia)” recorded in our inscription from Akmoneia should now be better understood. Both in this testimony and other related sources it should become evident that local institutions were crucial for maintaining the peaceful conditions on which the imperial *Pax Romana* could be proclaimed. At least, this was so until the 5th century CE, when eirenarchs were considered a “class pernicious to the state” and consequently disbanded in the Theodosian Code (12.14.1).

Keywords in the original language:

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Thematic keywords:

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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](#) [25] (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2005)

Brélaz, Cédric, [Aelius Aristide \(Or. 50.72–93\) et le choix des irénarques par le gouverneur: à propos d'une inscription d'Acmonia](#) [26], in Philologos Dionysios: Mélanges offerts au professeur Denis Knoepfler. Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Neuchâtel (ed. N. Badoud ; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2011), 603–637

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Other sources connected with this document: Inscription

[Commodus and the Security of Boubon \[32\]](#)

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 \[32\]](#)

Inscription

[An Anatolian Guardian of Peace in the Mid-3rd Century CE \[33\]](#)

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.

- [Read more about An Anatolian Guardian of Peace in the Mid-3rd Century CE \[33\]](#)

Inscription

[Valerius Statilius Castus, Oinoanda and the arrival of imperial statues under Valerian \[34\]](#)

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 \[34\]](#)

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