

THE FORTUNES OF THE ROMAN CONVENTUS OF CHALCIDICE¹

Louisa D. Loukopoulou

ABSTRACT: The paper discusses recently published evidence of the Roman presence in Anthemous and Mygdonia from the IInd c. B.C. to the IInd c. A.D. and attempts to elucidate the possible links of the *conventus c. Romanorum* of Acanthos with the emergence of a Roman city in Apollonia of Mygdonia.

The influx of Roman *negotiatores* in Macedonia in the wake of the establishment of Roman rule is well attested². Moreover, epigraphic documents testify to the formation of a *conventus civium Romanorum* in more than one city as early as the middle of the I st c. B.C.: Beroia, Akanthos, Idomenai, Styberra, Edessa and Thessalonica. The presence of such communities is equally assumed for other cities — Herakleia in Lyncestis for one, and Stobi — on the basis of the evidence for numerous persons bearing the Roman *tria nomina*. The Roman element was soon invigorated by the settlement of veteran colonists and the foundation of several colonies on Macedonian soil: at Cassandrea and Dium in 43 or 42 B.C. by Brutus, in Philippi by Marc Anthony in 42 B.C., in Pella, before 30 B.C. (?), to be reinforced all too soon by Augustus himself. In all of the above cases the strategic importance of their location on major communications arteries or ports seems to have been the main attraction or the reason for the site's selection at a time when recurrent barbaric invasions took advantage of the devastation of the country to dispute the Roman rule and occupation.

The recent publication of inscriptions from Anthemous and Mygdonia testifies to the early presence of Roman *negotiatores* in Chalcidice during the IInd century B.C., well before the foundation of the Roman colony at Cassandrea³. Their installation in what appears to be the back-waters of Chalcidice can only be associated with the exploitation of the resources of a region rich in agricultural products and, most importantly, in timber and minerals — indeed gold and silver⁴ — where it would

seem plausible to assume the existence of extended public Roman — formerly royal Macedonian — domains. For this however, there is no evidence. It would also seem plausible to assume that they represent the nucleus of the *conventus c. R.* which

1. ABBREVIATIONS:

Papazoglou, *ANR W* = F. Papazoglou in *ANR W* 7. 2. 1, 302-369.

Papazoglou, *Macedonia* = F. Papazoglou in *Μακεδονία, 4.000 χρόνια ελληνικής ιστορίας και πολιτισμού* (Εκδοτική Ἀθηνῶν A.E. 1982).

Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Two Studies* = M.B. Hatzopoulos-L. D. Loukopoulou, *Two Studies in Ancient Macedonian Topography* ("MEAE THMATA 2"; Athens 1992).

Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches I* = M.B. Hatzopoulos-L. D. Loukopoulou, *Recherches sur les marches orientales des Téménides. Ière Partie* ("MEAE THMATA 15"; Athens 1992).

Hammond, *Macedonia II* = N.G.L. Hammond dans N.G.L. Hammond et G.T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. II (Oxford 1979).

Papazoglou, *Villes* = F. Papazoglou, *Les villes de Macédoine à l'époque romaine*, *BCH Suppl.* XVI (Athènes 1988).

2. On the presence of *negotiatores* in Macedonia, see the studies of F. Papazoglou, *ANR W* 356-57 and Papazoglou, *Macedonia* 196 and 539, nn. 23 and 24.

3. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* 51-52, no. A6: Γ. Ὡλιος Μανίου υἱός (Anthemous); 83-83, no. K4: Λεύκιος Φερρώνιος Γαίου υἱός (Kalindoia); cf. the reference to "domiciliated foreigners" in a fragmentary honorary decree from Anthemous dated to the late 40s of the I st c. B.C. (*op. cit.* 44-48, no. A2, line 10).

4. In the area of Stratoniki, between Stagira and Akanthos (Hammond, *Macedonia II* 70).

appears established before the end of the 1st century B.C. in Akanthos, the natural maritime outlet of the area and, more importantly, the safest port of call for ships linking the East to the West, at a time when land transportations were plagued by barbarian raids and Philippi, with its port of Neapolis, were not yet under Roman control⁵.

The situation was drastically remedied under the peace of Augustus. With Thrace under Roman control and, later, under direct Roman rule, with the establishment and fast development of the Roman colony at Philippi and that of Apri to the North of the Thracian Chersonese some decades later⁶, the safety of the land transports was guaranteed. The importance of Akanthos seems to have declined, her role being taken over by Neapolis, and nothing more is heard of its *conventus c. Romanorum*. Was it absorbed in the colony of Cassandrea?

The assumption would have been plausible were it not for some unexpected evidence testifying to the persistence of domiciliated Romans in Mygdonia, at least to the end of the 1st century A.D. No less than 21 ephebes —out of a total of 180, indeed 11%— in four different ephobic lists from the city of Kalindoia (modern Kalamoton) carry the Roman citizenship or use Roman nomina (or derivatives of such nomina) in an otherwise Greek type of nomenclature⁷. To judge by their cognomina, three of them appear to belong to neo-Romans of non Italic origin, owing their enfranchisement to emperors of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties: T. Κλαύδιος Ζώσιμος⁸, T. Φλάουιος Ἀπολλώνιος⁹, Γάιος Ἰούλιος Μαρξ¹⁰; five others are of Italic origin on the evidence of their latin cognomina, enfranchised probably under the triumvirate or by some Julian emperor¹¹. Furthermore, eight ephebes, also of Italic origin, descend probably from families of *negotiatores*¹². The names of five other Roman *gentes*¹³, are deduced from various forms of nomenclature borne by non-Roman citizens, as are the names of the *Publicii*¹⁴ and the *Ventuleni*¹⁵ attested in epitaphs of later date from the same area. It is noteworthy that none of these non imperial *gentes* is attested in the relatively scanty prosopography of the Roman colony of Cassandrea¹⁶.

Archaeological and epigraphic discoveries from Kalindoia indicate a major rise of the importance

of the city under Augustus; there is evidence for the instauration in the city of the cult of Rome and Augustus —with monthly sacrifices, athletic contests and other festivities— and for the dedication of a statue of Cesar Augustus funded by a wealthy citizen, Apollonios son of Apollonios son of Kertimmas¹⁷. Was it the influx in Kalindoia of the Roman *negotiatores* of the area and the establishment of the *conventus c. Romanorum* which accrued the city's importance and wealth, bringing

5. Cicero's laments over the loss of control over the essentially important military East-West axis illustrate the situation which prevailed in the province; cf. the analysis proposed in Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Two Studies* 62-100.

6. On the *Colonia Claudia Aprensis*, see L. Loukopoulou, "Colonia Claudia Aprensis", μία ρωμαϊκή ἀποικία στην νοτιοανατολική Θράκη", *Μνήμη Δ. Λαζαρίδη, Πόλις και χώρα στην αρχαία Μακεδονία και Θράκη*, 9-11 Μαΐου 1986 (Thessalonike 1990) 701-715.

7. The lists are published in Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 87-94, nos. K9-K12.

8. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 90, no. K9 line D100.

9. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 91, no. K 11 A1-2. Cf. *op. cit.* 84, no. K6: Φλαουία Μύστα.

10. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 90, no. K9 D 95.

11. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 89 (K9 C70: M. Ἀντώνιος Λόνγος); I 89 (K9 C69: Κόιντος Κάσσιος Σεκοῦνδος); I 88 (K9 B24: A. Ἰούλιος Κέλερ Κέλερος); I 88 (no K9 B25: Γ. Ἰούλιος Πρόκλος, υἱοί); I 90 (K9 D97: Σέξτος Ἰούλιος Πρόκλος).

12. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 89 (B56: *Caecilii*); I 93 (K11 D61: *Cottii*); I 93 (K11 D65: *Maesii* or *Messii*); I 94 (K12. 21: *Statilii*); I 89 (K9 C68: *Sulpicii*, [cf. *ibidem*, no. K9 D90: Σουλπᾶς]); I 94 (K12. 14: *Terentii*); I 92 (K11 B21: *Tessidii*).

13. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 92 (K11 C45: *Bruttii*); I 92 (K11 B17: *Herennii*); I 92 (K11 B20: *Rennii*); I 92 (K12. 12: *Rhodii*); I 92 (K9 C63: *Scanii*).

14. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 59-60, no. A14 (Anthémonte).

15. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I 60-61, no. A15 1-3 et 9-11 (Anthémonte).

16. D. Samsaris, "Η ρωμαϊκή ἀποικία τῆς Κασσανδρείας", *Δωδώνη* 16 (1987) 353-433.

17. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I, 77-80, no. K2; on the statue of Cesar, see *ibidem*, with plates XXXIII-XXXV.

about the astonishing demographic bloom attested by the large numbers of ephebes yearly attending the local gymnasium in the second half of the 1st century A.D.? Indeed the two complete ephebic lists of Kalindoia¹⁸ contain the names of 90 and 65 ephebes respectively. This development would seem quite plausible if, as supported in a communication recently presented by our colleague Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos¹⁹, the plain of Kalindoia was by no means some cut-off area, but formed part of the old route of the *via Egnatia*, as indeed of its predecessors, the βασιλική ὁδός of the Macedonian kings and, before that, that of the Persian occupation²⁰. With the pacification of the land communications under Augustus, our Mygdonian city was best suited and well located to become the epicentre of business and commercial undertakings in the area and, as inferred in the honorary decree for Apollonios son of Apollonios²¹, it did its best to grasp and take advantage of the spirit of the times.

However, the boom of Kalindoia does not appear to outlive the end of the century. The economic, cultural and demographic blossoming illustrated by documents of the early imperial period, appears to wither away as early as the turning of the 2nd century A.D., as does the presence of Romans. To trust the archaeological evidence, the old prosperity dissolved into obscurity.

The key to the mystery both of the disappearance of the Roman *consistentes* and of Kalindoia's decline may be sought in yet another unexpected epigraphic discovery, originating from a bordering region. A fragmentary latin imperial letter dated to the year 137 A.D. was recently discovered on the southern bank of Lake Bolbe. Addressed by the emperor Hadrian to the *IIviri* and the *decuriones* of the *Apollonienses*, it reveals a fact hitherto unattested: that the Mygdonian city of Apollonia, Kalindoia's neighbour to the North, had acquired some kind of Roman civic status. The equally fragmentary text of a second imperial letter engraved on the same slab and evidently anterior to the former letter mentions the construction of a *stabulum* for the convenience of through travellers and the provision for the city's water supply, entrusted to the care of the imperial procurator by an emperor, whose name does not survive²².

This extraordinary discovery was bound to intrigue. Our sources do not list Apollonia of Chalcidice among the rare colonies of the Balkan peninsula: in the late Roman itineraries Apollonia is qualified as *mansio*, neither as *civitas* nor as *colonia*²³. Moreover, there is no evidence of Latin documents anterior to the 2nd c. A.D. from the area. In a communication presented in 1992 at the 2nd Congress of Thracian Studies in Komotini²⁴ we tried to identify certain analogies believed to exist in the evolvement of the presence of the Roman element in the Thracian Chersonese on one hand and in Mygdonia on the other: the Roman *negotiatores* came to eastern Chalcidice on the morrow of the Roman conquest, as they did in the Chersonese; they settled probably in Akanthos, the main outlet of the rich mineral ore of the region and of the local agricultural products, but also the starting point of an important maritime route leading to the Hellenistic East, as they did in Koila, at a time when the principal land road, the famous *via militaris* constructed by the proconsul Caius

18. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* 187-93, nos. K9 and K11 (Museum of Thessalonike Cat. nos. 2668 and 2667).

19. M.B. Hatzopoulos, "The Via Egnatia from Thessalonike to Apollonia", *Acts of the International Congress in Honour of N.G.L. Hammond "Historical Topography of Macedonia and Thrace"*, Pentalophos (nome of Kozani), May 1993 (forthcoming).

20. See recently L. Loukopoulou, "Ὁ Φίλιππος Β' καὶ ἡ ἐκτροπή τῆς βασιλικῆς διὰ τῆς Θράκης ὁδοῦ", *Acts of the International Congress in Honour of N.G.L. Hammond "Historical Topography of Macedonia and Thrace"*, Pentalophos (nome of Kozani), May 1993 (forthcoming).

21. *Supra*, n. 17.

22. The documents were presented at the *Vth International Symposium on Ancient Macedonia*, in November 1990 (and in early 1991 in a conference at Athens) by our colleague Professor George Souris, to whom I extend my sincere thanks for the information cited above.

23. For a discussion of the testimonia and epigraphic evidence, see Papazoglou, *Villes* 218-22.

24. L.D. Loukopoulou, "Ἡ ρωμαϊκὴ παρουσία στὴν νοτιοανατολικὴ Θράκη", *IId International Symposium of Thracian Studies*, Komotini, September 1992 (forthcoming).

Egnatius —indeed her eastern part— offered no guarantees of security. In Akanthos as in Koila they formed a *conventus*. Eventually, the security of communications was established through the *pax Romana* and guaranteed henceforth by the presence of a Roman colony, Philippi, in eastern Macedonia, and, soon thereafter, by a second colony, Apros, in south-eastern Thrace. The newly created situation drove the Italics to relocate in proximity of the principal East-West communications axis. Kalindoia, situated at short distance from the *via Egnatia* —if not on its older course itself, as suggested above²⁵— welcomed a large part of the members of the *conventus* of Akanthos and exploited dynamically this favourable reverse of fortunes, as attested by the decree honouring Apollonios son of Apollonios and by the ephebic lists of the second half of the 1st century A.D.

The decline of Kalindoia just after the turn of the century could not be independent of the developments registered in her bounds: the emergence of Apollonia as a city of Roman status in the early 1st century. Indeed the attribution of the Roman civic status to Apollonia can not possibly antedate the end of the 1st c. A.D. For it would be hard to believe that Kalindoia would attract the domiciliation of the Italics of the region and that they would participate in the cultural and religious life of the Greek city, if a Roman colony or *municipium* had already been established a few miles from there, indeed on the principal communications artery of the area.

Did Apollonia's transformation then coincide with the important works announced in the letter of the unidentified emperor, which, on their part, imply measures for the amelioration of the military artery (construction of a *stabulum*, water alimentation)? One could not miss the connotation with the extensive repair works of the *via Egnatia* undertaken by Trajan²⁶, which probably culminated in the reinforcement of the Roman presence along its axis, as evidenced by the foundation in areas of crucial importance of yet further civic centers, such as *Ulpia Topeiros*, on the crossing of the river Nestos, and of *Traianopolis* near that of the river Hebros²⁷. Seen from that angle, we propose to view the transformation of Apollonia as being part of this reshaping²⁸, aiming at relocating and

attracting thither the members of the neighbouring *conventus c. Romanorum*, which was upgraded, indeed promoted, to a *municipium*, following a model applied in more than one cases by the emperors of the Aelian house in dealing with similar situations.

Kalindoia, deprived of her role of epicentre of the Roman presence and of the economic boom which the latter brought about, and bypassed by the course of the great military and commercial road, withered away eventually for good.

L. D. Loukopoulou
Centre for Greek and Roman Studies
National Hellenic Research Foundation
University of Cyprus

25. *Supra*, n. 19.

26. P. Collart, "Une réfection de la 'via Egnatia' sous Trajan", *BCH* 59 (1935) 395-415; cf. eiusdem, "Les milliaires de la Via Egnatia", *BCH* 100 (1976) 177-200.

27. Λ. Λουκοπούλου, "Τόπειρος, πόλις τῆς Θράκης: προβλήματα ιστορικής γεωγραφίας καὶ τοπογραφίας", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 14. 1 (1989), 577-99.

28. A reshaping probably associated with the relocation of the Mygdonian part of the road, which was henceforth reinforced to cross the less stable soils of the southern coast of the two lakes, as was recently suggested by our colleague M.B. Hatzopoulos (*supra* n. 19).

ROMAN NOMINA ATTESTED IN ANTHEMOUS AND KALINDOIA *

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Antonii | Μ. Ἀντώνιος Λόνγος | K9 C70 |
| Aurelii | 8 persons | |
| Bruttii | Βρούττιος Κρήσκης | K11 C45 |
| Caecilii | Α. Καϊκίλιος Ῥοῦφος | K9 B56 |
| Cassii | Κ. Κάσσιος Σεκοῦνδος | K9 C69 |
| Cottii | Λούκιος Κόττιος Οὔηρος | K11 D61 |
| Claudii | Τ. Κλαύδιος Ζώσιμος | K9 D100 |
| Ferranii | Λεύκιος Φερράνιος Γαῖου υἱός | K4 |
| Flavii | Τ. Φλάουιος Ἀπολλώνιος Φλαουῖα Μύστα | K11 A1-2 K6 |
| Herennii | Ἑρέννιος Λάκωνος | K11 B17 |
| Iulii | Α. Ἰούλιος Κέλερ Κέλερος Γ. Ἰούλιος Πρόκλος, υἱοί Γάϊος Ἰούλιος Μαρὰς Σέξτος Ἰούλιος Πρόκλος | K9 B24 K9 B25 K9 D95 K9 D97 |
| Maesii (vel Messii) | Μ. Μαΐσιος Οὐαλέριος | K11 D65 |
| Olii | Γ. Ὦλιος Μανίου υἱός | A6 |
| Publicii | Πουπλικία Ἐλπιδίου | A14 |
| Rennii | Ῥέννιος Τήρης | K11 B20 |
| Rhodii | Κηζεβίς Ῥοδιανός | K12 12 |
| Scanii | Σκάνιος Πρόκλου | K9 C63 |
| Statilii | Τ. Στατεῖλιος | K12 21 |
| Sulpicii | Α. Σουλπίκιος Γάλβας Κλεόμαχος Σουλπᾶ | K9 C68 K9 D90 |
| Terentii | Τ. Τερέντιος Σεκοῦνδος | K12 14 |
| Tessidii | Τ. Τεσσίδιος Πίστος | K11 B21 |
| Valerii | Μ. Μαΐσιος Οὐαλέριος | K11 D65 |
| Ventuleni | Οὐεντουληνός (Σ)μέρις Οὐεντουληνός Ἀμμιανός | A15 1-3 A15 9-11 |

* References are to Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou, *Recherches* I.