ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Authoring : *Kadirea Maria*
Translation : *Κούτρας Νικόλαος*
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Summary :

The institution of the Roman colony survived for more than 500 years. The first Roman ruler who attempted to install colonies in the East was Julius Caesar. The most important reasons for establishing colonies in Asia Minor should be correlated to the need of rewarding war veterans and rehabilitate the lower urban social strata of Italy. The relations between the newly established colonists and the local population were in each case regulated by special legislation. The institutions of the colonies were based on those of Rome.

Date

From 46 BC onwards

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

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1. Introduction

The institution of the Roman colony survived for more than 500 years on account of its adaptability. Successive generations of inhabitants were able to find in this political and social arrangement the means to satisfy various social and financial needs.[1]

The first Roman who attempted to establish colonies in the East was Julius Caesar, and his policy was continued by the Emperor Augustus. His colonizing project resulted in the arrival of approximately 15,000 Italian colonists (50,000-100,000 individuals if we include family members and slaves) in the lands of Asia Minor. The colonists originally settled mainly in the areas of Pisidia and Phrygia, forming small Latin-speaking communities which had to survive in a predominantly Greek-speaking social environment and comprise, together with the members of the regional elite families, the local ruling class.[2]

2. Reasons for the establishment of colonies in Asia Minor

The most important reasons for establishing colonies in Asia Minor revolved around the need to reward war veterans for their services with land property and to provide economic rehabilitation for the lower social strata of Italy, especially Rome. To the above reasons we must add the need to protect the eastern provinces from external threats. This political solution was imposed by Augustus, who, feeling the lack of significant Roman military presence at crucial defensive positions, mixed civilians with war veterans in the colonies he established. The construction of a large road network that connected these colonies in 6 BC was an additional measure intended to pacify this region.[3]

Through its colonizing programme Rome rewarded its veterans for their military services, the local economy of the Greek areas was boosted and the empire became fortified against external threats. Contrary to the West, though, where the colonies played a key role in the Romanization of the local populations and the dissemination of Roman culture, in the East these political units cannot be considered important on a cultural level. Although, of course, the learning of Latin and the adoption of Roman customs and living habits was considered as an important step towards the Romanization of Asia Minor, it appears that ultimately the local populations assimilated the Roman colonists – they did not succeed in disseminating Roman cultural elements in the Greek-speaking communities.

3. Social provenance of the colonists and the local populations

The colonists were veterans originating from Italy, although many of them had Greek ancestry, or descended from the urban populations of Italy, especially Rome. The establishment of colonies in Asia Minor had been in a way prepared by the *negotiatores*; these were Romans who resided in areas of the eastern Mediterranean already by the late 3rd cent. BC and worked as money lenders

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and wholesale merchants. The establishment of colonies was also facilitated by the fact that the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire were largely familiar to a great number of veterans who had spent extensive periods of time there, due to the incessant warfare in these areas.[4] The relations between the newly arrived colonists and the local populations were regulated by special legislation, but this is not known for all colonies. When we have the establishment of a colony in a pre-existing city, the obvious question is what happened with its earlier inhabitants. In several cases the colony was divided in two population groups, the colonists and the locals, each group enjoying different social standing, privileges and obligations. It is certain, however, that the members of the local aristocracy, which eminently participated in the Roman polity, acted as a link between colonists and local populations and facilitated the assimilation of the former in the existing socio-political system. At any rate, the colonies offered opportunities for social and political ascend to many newly arrived families who belonged to the poorer classes.[5]

4. Socio-political institutions and local self-governance

The institutions of the colony were modelled after those of Rome. The administrative body of the city formed the *ordo decurionum*, similar to the *boule* of a Greek city. The deme, which was called *populus* and was organized in *tribus* (=tribes), features alongside the *decuriones* in decrees in honour of wealthy patrons.

Like in the political system of Rome with its two consuls, the highest echelon of the political hierarchy was taken up by two officials whose term was annual, the *duoviri*. Every five years they were called *duoviri quinquennales* (=duoviri of five year term) and their functions within the colony can be linked to those of the censores at Rome. The political system was completed by the *aediles*, the *quaestore*s (=treasurers) and the *curator annonae* (an official responsible for keeping the city supplied with grain and foodstuffs in general); these functioned similarly to their counterparts in the Roman capital. There was also a number of officials whose posts were Greek in character, like secretaries, the gymnasiarchai and the agonothetai.

As in Rome, the top-ranking religious official of the colonies was the *pontifex* (=archpriest), who supervised all types of worship, while the adoration of the gods was managed by the *flamines* and the *sacerdotes*. The most important of the former looked after the worship of the most important Roman deity, Iovis Optimus Maximus. The imperial cult was managed by the sacerdotes, who were free citizens, but mainly by the *augustales* and the *seviri augustales*, who were usually slaves and freedmen.

Those who offered benefactions to the colony, usually officials and affluent citizens, as well as very often members of the imperial family, received the honorific title of *patronus coloniae* (=patron of the colony) and became accepted into the local ruling class, the ordo decurionum. One of the most important and expensive form of benefaction was the erection of public edifices, the distribution of money and grain to the citizens, as well as the organizing of games, especially gladiatorial fights and *venationes* (=spectacles involving the hunting and slaying of wild animals in the amphitheatres). Apparently there were also indications of spectacles of a more Greek nature, as suggested by the testimonies of the agonothetai and the gymnasiarchai who organized the so-called *certamen gymnicum* (=a type of athletic contest where the athletes competed in the nude).[6]

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1. After the Carthaginian Wars (146 BC) the Roman colonies acquired a predominantly military character, becoming orientated towards the protection of Roman lands. For this reason we have the establishment of coastal colonies close to Rome (*coloniae maritimae*) populated by veterans. During the Triumvirate period, colonies were founded in accordance with political expediency without seriously taking into account strategic considerations and the rights of the local populations. Julius Caesar was especially mindful to reward veterans and people originating from the poorer classes of Rome and Italy. Antony and Augustus generally followed Caesar's colonizing programme, for it seemed most advantageous under the historical circumstances of the era: Bowersock, G.W., *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965), pp. 62-72.

2. Levick, B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford 1967), pp. 56-67; Mitchell, St., "Population and the Land in Roman Galatia", *ANRW* II, 7.2 (1980), pp. 1053-1081, esp. pp. 1067-1068; Sartre, M., *Le Haut-Empire remain. Les provinces de Méditenanee orientale d'Augusteaux Severes (31 αν. J.-C.-235 apr. J.-C.)* (Paris 1997), pp. 251-253.

3. The colonies of Pisidia can be seen as characteristic examples of military colonies established at defensive sites; these were founded by Augustus under the -real or perceived threat- Omonadeusic War. By the time of the Flavii imperial interest focused mainly in northern Asia Minor. The colonists

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revitalized the economy of the surrounding areas: Alexandria at the Troad, for example, functioned as an important commercial node between Thrace, Bithynia and Asia Minor. Vittinghoff, Fr., *Römische Kolonisation und Bürgerrechtspolitik* (Wiesbaden 1952), pp. 87-89 and 130-134; Bowersock, G.W., *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965), pp. 68-71; Levick, B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford 1967), pp. 21-28 & 203-214.

4. Levick, B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford 1967), pp. 56-58. For the *negotiatores* see Hatzfeld, J., *Les Trafiquants Italiens dans l'Orient Hellenique* (Paris 1919).

5. Prosopographical studies have shown that in their original homeland, Etruria, some of the most prominent families of Antioch and Pisidia, like the Caristanii and the Flavonii, were completely obscure; Levick, B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford 1967), pp. 56-67.

6. Levick, B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford 1967), pp. 68-91.

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Glossary :

agonothetes, the
Official assigned with the task of organising and hosting the contest in the framework of a contest.

censor
senior Roman magistrate responsible for financial matters, the supervision of the morals and public order.

consul, -lis
An official of the Roman state. In the period of the Republic, it was the highest military and political office: two consuls were elected each year. The consular office survived into the Imperial period (and further into the early Byzantine period), becoming a honorary post.

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.

Sources

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Quotations

Auxiliary Catalogues

Catalogue of Roman colonies in Asia Minor

PROVINCE OF ASIA

Colony: Parion: C(olonia) G(emella ή -emina) I(ulia) P(ariana)

Founder: Augustus (after 31 BC)

Colony: Alexandria Troas: Aurelia Antoniniana (on coins of Caracalla)

Tribe: Aniensis

Founder: Augustus (27-12 BC)

PROVINCE OF BITHYNIA-PONTUS

Colony: Sinope: Colonia Iulia (Caesarea) Felix Sinope

Year of foundation: 46/5 BC (?)

Colony: Herakleia Pontike

Founder: possibly Julius Caesar (shortly after 45 BC)

Colony: Apamea Myrleia: Colonia Iulia Concordia (Augusta) Apamea

Founder: Julius Caesar (shortly after 45 BC)

PROVINCE OF CAPPADOCIA

Colony: Archelais

Founder: Claudius

Colony: Faustinopolis: Colonia Faustiniana

Founder: Marcus Aurelius

Colony: Tyana: Antoniniana Colonia Tyana

Founder: Caracalla

PROVINCE OF GALATIA

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Colony: Antioch of Pisidia: Colonia Caesarea (Antiochia)

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Colony: Parlais: Colonia Iulia Augusta Parlais

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Αποικία: Cremna: Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Cremna

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Colony: Olbasa: Colonia Iulia Augusta Olbasa/Olbasenorum

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Colony: Comama: Colonia Iulia Augusta (Prima Fida) Comama

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Colony: Lustra: Colonia Iulia Gemina Felix (Lustra)

Founder: Augustus (shortly after 25 BC)

Colony: Germa: Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix

Founder: Augustus or Domitian

Colony: Iconium: Colonia Claudia Iconium / Colonia Aelia Iconiensis Colonia Hadriana Augusta Iconiensium

Founder: Claudius or Hadrian

PROVINCE OF CILICIA

Colony: Ninica: Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Ninica Claudiopolis

Founder: Augustus or Domitian

General comments: All the colonies in Galatia founded by Augustus (except Antioch of Pisidia) were called Iulia Augusta (see Lustra: Iulia). Sinope, Herakleia Pontike and Apamea Myrleia of the Bithynia-Pontus province were civilian and not veteran colonies. Bowersock, G.W., *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965), p. 64.

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