Πόλεις and Πολιτείαι in upper Macedonia under the Principate: A new inscription from Lyke in Orestis

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ΠΟΛΕΙΣ AND ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΙ IN UPPER MACEDONIA UNDER THE PRINCIPATE: A NEW INSCRIPTION FROM LYKE IN ORESTIS

Although new inscriptions and archaeological data have tended to refute earlier views that there were no urban centres in Upper Macedonia under the Principate and that the main form of civic organisation in the region was the komai,¹ the degree of urbanisation—i.e. the number of cities—in the region is still a matter for debate. Modern scholars’ estimates vary on this point, and this is partly due to the different interpretations that have been given at various times of the nature of the communities in Upper Macedonia, which in three different inscriptions are referred to as politeiai: i.e. the politeiai of Orestis (Battyna and Lyke) and Elimia (Oblostai). Thus, chiefly on the basis of the famous decree of Battyna, some scholars refer to these politeiai as cities, others doubt that they really were proper cities, and yet others believe that they were tribal communities.²

It is symptomatic of the general puzzlement that two eminent experts in

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² For the opinions that have been ventured from time to time regarding the nature of these communities, see F. Papazoglou, “Encore une fois sur une signification tardive du mot politeia”, ZA 45, 1995, 239–40. Regarding Lyke, we must also add the views of Ph. Petsas, “Χρονική Αρχαιολογική 1968-70”, Μεσογειακά 15 (1975), 311, and D. Samsaris, Ιστορική Γεωγραφία τής Ρωμαϊκής Επαρχίας τής Μακεδονίας, Thessalonike 1989, p. 153, who both call it a city. As far as we know, no special study has been devoted to the term politeia for the various meanings of the term in the inscriptions, see P. Herrmann’s brief but comprehensive article, “Επιγραφική Νοτιζέν 10-2”, EA 21, 1993, 71–2 (10 politeiai).
the study of the Macedonian institutions have argued this particular issue from
diametrically opposed positions in recent works. M. B. Hatzopoulos believes
that the politeiai were simply komai — communities with rudimentary civic
organisation and limited autonomy as regards their external relations and con-
sequently their dealings with the Roman authorities. This theory has been
criticised by Ph. Papazoglou, who argues that in Upper Macedonia the term
meant a ‘small civic community’ (petite communauté civique), apparently
meaning a city and standing by her theory about the origin of the word in the
Macedonian inscriptions — i.e. that it is the Greek rendering of the Latin term
civitas.

We believe that fresh light is shed on the problem by the epigraphical
find published here. It is a dedicatory inscription that was found in the
summer of 1995 during an excavation conducted by Professor Nikolaos
Moutsopoulos in the little basilica of St Demetrius on the islet of Ayos
Ahillios on the smaller of the Prespa Lakes.

Parallelipipedic slab of soft limestone damaged at the left edge. Re-used as the lintel over the
door from the narthex into the naos. Dimensions 1.04 x 0.34 x 0.34 m. Height of letters
0.030–0.050 m. Now in its finding place, the narthex of the church. The script is carefully exe-
cuted. Characteristic letters are the reverse sigma, found eight times (ll. 1, 2 and 3), and the upsilon,
which is considerably taller than the other letters (ll. 3 and 4). Ligatures : TH in ll. 1 and 4
(Plate 1).

Epigrafia dell Villaggio, Faenza 1992, pp. 158–9; idem, Macedonian Institutions under the
4. Papazoglou (n. 2), 243.
5. We should like to thank Professor N. Moutsopoulos both for his permission to study and publish
the inscription and for his information about the circumstances of its discovery.
6. The reverse sigma does not appear in the published inscriptions from Upper Macedonia,
though it is seen in a few inscriptions from Thessalonike from the mid-first century AD
onwards: see IG X 2, 1, 70 (AD 66/7), 34 (AD 89), 69 (late 1st c. AD), 304 (2nd c. AD), 744,
749, and 812 (2nd / 3rd c. AD). The distinctive tall upsilon is also seen in two inscriptions from
Thessalonike: see IG X 2, 1, 57 (2nd c. AD; cf. D. Diamantourou-Papakonstantinou, "Επι-
γραφαι Μηδονίας, Κορσουνίας, Ανδριάννης, Χαλκιδική", Ποταμος, Athens 1990
(MELATHMATA, 10), p. 243, for a photograph and the improved text of the inscription), and 208
(2nd or 3rd c. AD; cf. P. Adam-Velani, Macedonikoi Boimoi, unpublished diss., Thessalonike
1996, p. 181-82, No. 65, with photograph and the inscription dated on the basis of the form of
the monument in the late 2nd c. AD).
The reference to the θεοὶ Σεβαστοὶ does not constitute firm evidence for dating the inscription to a period when there were more than one emperor — i.e. after AD 161 — because the phrase could equally well refer to the living Emperor and his deified predecessors. Thus, apart from the gentilicum Flavius borne by the individuals mentioned, which dates the inscription to after the third quarter of the first century AD, there is no further internal evidence for its dating. However, the overall impression given by the writing suggests that the text probably belongs to the second, if not the early third, century AD.

The individuals mentioned in the inscription are not known from elsewhere. Their cognomen is found once more in Upper Macedonia. In an inscription from Herakleia in Lynkos, the koinon of the Macedonians honours the daughter of a Roman, one of whose cognomina is Fabricianus. The same cognomen also appears in an inscription from Beroia, which preserves a very fragmentary letter to the city from a Roman official or emperor. The name Antipatros borne as a second cognomen by the first person mentioned in the inscription is met occasionally in Upper Macedonia and attests that, under the Principate, inhabitants of the region used the names of figures from Macedonian history.

The precise nature of Antipatros’ donation, which, we are told, is made to his homeland in gratitude for his upbringing, is not specified. Judging by other dedicatory inscriptions in which the same formula, θεοὶς Σέβαστοις καὶ τῇ (δείνῳ) πόλει, is used, it was most likely a building, with the inscription built into the façade.11 Nor do we know why it is his father who is executing the donation, as the text of the inscription specifically states. The most likely reason is that the donor was absent from the city either temporarily or perhaps even permanently. One cannot exclude also the possibility that he was a child.

The use of the word θρηστήριον in this little city in Upper Macedonia is an interesting aspect of this brief dedicatory inscription. It is found already in Homer and the tragic poets, and as far as we know it is met in a small number of inscriptions of the late Empire relating to individuals making donation or offering other services to their homeland, with the intention of thus repaying it for having reared them, as children might repay their parents.12 It is used in this sense equally rarely by writers under the Principate.13 The fact that the word is used so rarely and above all poetically suggests that the author of the inscription, who may well have been the donor himself, L. Flavius Fabricianus Antipatros, was one of the educated members of this little community.

Even more interesting is the fact that the inscription uses the term polis, which touches on the question of the status of Lyke. Lyke, which is on the islet of Ayos Ahillios on Little Prespa,14 was hitherto known to us chiefly from two

11. See, e.g., the inscription of the 2nd century AD from Thessalonike, IG X 2, 1 102 ll. 1–9 (θεοὶς Σέβαστοις καὶ τῇ πόλει ... τὸν ναὸν καὶ τὴν στοάν τῆς Ἑιδώλου Μεμρῆς [τοῦ] ύδας καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον <τῆς> τοῦ ναοῦ), or the inscription of the 1st–2nd century AD from Lakonia, E. Kourinou and G. A. Pikoulas, “Επιγραφή ήμών τῶν Ἀνειπότων (Πλήτυτος) Λακωνοῦντος”, HOPOS 7 (1989), 126 (= SEG 39, 1989, 372), ll. 1–3 (Θεοὶς Σέβαστοις καὶ ταῖς τε Ἀσωπολητῶν πόλις οἱ δείνη ... τὸ βαλανεῖν ἐν θεμελίων...). All the same, it would seem that the donation is not always specified; see, e.g., the inscription from Selge in Asia Minor (Principate), IvSelge (IK 37), 1.


inscriptions from the Principate. One of them preserves the name intact,\textsuperscript{15} in the other there is only the genitive plural ending of the ethnic, the correct restoration of which \[Λυαίων\] by had already been proposed,\textsuperscript{16} is now confirmed by the inscription published here. In the second inscription, which is dated to between the middle and the end of the second century AD, the Lykeans, as a \textit{politeia}, honour the high priest K. Julius Crispus, who is probably the same person as the ambassador of the \textit{ethnos} of the Orestai mentioned in the decree of Battyna.\textsuperscript{17}

The expression \textit{της Λυκαιων [πό]λει} which appears in the new inscription, resolves the doubts about the urban nature of the community\textsuperscript{18} and firmly establishes that, in the period to which the inscription belongs, there was a, probably small, urban centre on the islet of Ayos Ahillios.

But what was the status of Lyke? Hitherto, scholars have produced various answers to this question, based on the term \textit{politeia} in the inscription of Julius Crispus, which, in the absence of other data, they have interpreted in the same way as the same term in the decree of Battyna. The appearance of the

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{EAM} 147, 1. 1, \textit{πολιταρχοῦντος ἐν Λύκῃ Φιλίππῳ.}

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{EAM} 149, [Λυ] ιαίων ἡ πολιτεία [Κ. Ιουλίου Κρίσπου] τοῦ [Συνταγματα]ρχή καὶ εὐ [ εὐκερὴ καὶ εὖ] ἐργαζόμενον τεμίς γὰρ ἐκ τῆς ἐπιμηλείας ἔνεργου Τ. Φλασινίου / Διονυσίου, incl. older bibliography. The islet of Ayos Ahillios has also yielded the following epigraphical finds: i) fragments of clay roof-tiles bearing stamped names and dated (on the basis of the letter shapes) to the Hellenistic period (\textit{EAM} 179); ii) the 'Macedonian' grave altar of the physician K. Julius Niketes (\textit{EAM} 165); and iii) a four-sided slab of the second half of the third century AD, the text of which survives in very fragmentary condition (\textit{EAM} 183). For the various excavations carried out on the island and their findings, see Ph. Patsas, \textit{ArchDelt} (1961–2), Chron. B 2219–26 and A. Andreiomenou, \textit{ArchDelt} 22 (1967) Chron. B 2, 416.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{EAM} 186, II. 32–4, δω τῶν προσελιθέων τοῦ <ν> ἢνους Ιουλίου Κρίσπου καὶ Φιλίππου καὶ Κλέιτου τῶν Πολισιάνων. For the discussion about to this identification, see Papazoglou (n. 1), 242 n. 41. The identification makes it likely that Lyke and the Little Prespa area came under the \textit{ethnos} of the Orestai. Samaras (n. 2), 52–3, supports this on the basis of the area’s geomorphology. The editors of the \textit{Corpus} of the inscriptions of Upper Macedonia (see \textit{EAM} 149) leave the subject open, though on the map at the end of their work they include Lyke and the Little Prespa area in Orestis. At all events, wherever Lyke belonged administratively, the importance of the new inscription for the problem of the civic organisation of Upper Macedonia remains the same.

\textsuperscript{18} See Hatzopoulos (n. 4), 156 n. 28, who disagrees with Papazoglou that Lyke had the status of a \textit{polis} and himself believes that, like Battyna, it was a \textit{kome}. This is in line with his general theory that the only \textit{poleis} of the \textit{kome}s of Upper Macedonia were their capitals: see Hatzopoulos, “Epigraphie et villages..”(n. 3), 160.
term *polis* in the new inscription gives us a new datum, which, if we consider it together with the already known term *politeia*, may shed some light on the question of the status of Lyke, as long as we can establish the relationship between the two terms. At first sight, one might say that they relate to two different points in time and reflect a change in the legal status of Lyke from a *polis* to a *politeia* or vice versa. However, this presents the drawback that no literary or epigraphical source gives any indication that *politeia* means a form of civic organisation different from that of a *polis*.\(^\text{19}\) It seems much more likely that both terms were in use at the same point in time in the inscriptions of Lyke; which means that *polis* in the new inscription denotes either the urban centre of the whole of the autonomous community of the Lykeans, which is called a *politeia*,\(^\text{20}\) or, more probably, the city of Lyke itself, as a term equivalent to, and indiscriminately used for, *politeia*.

At this point, one might well wonder whether and when the term *politeia* is anywhere specifically defined as an autonomous city. There is epigraphical evidence to show that the term did in fact acquire this meaning as early as the Hellenistic period: in a well known Larisian decree of 217 BC, for instance, are mentioned at the same time the equivalent formulas ψεφαρσαμένης τῆς πόλεως and ἐψάφασε τὰ πολιτεῖα.\(^\text{21}\) But even if one denies that the

\(^{19}\) However, attempts have been made to interpret it in this way. Thus, for instance, according to Hatzopoulos, “Epigraphie et villages” (n. 3), 158–9, in the inscriptions of Upper Macedonia the term *politeia* means *kome*. Furthermore, in the dedication from Bragylai in Krestonia (*SEG* 12, 1955, 349: Βραγγύλαι ή βουλή καὶ ή πόλις καὶ ή πολίτεια) to Hadrian and his wife Sabina, the term *politeia* is interpreted by M. B. Hatzopoulos and L. D. Loukopoulos, *Mortylos, cité de la Chrestonie*, Athens 1989 (Μελέτηματα 7), pp. 61ff., as neighbouring *koma* forming a ‘sym-polarity’ with the nearest urban centre; and by Papazoglou (“Encore une fois” (n. 2), partic. p. 238) as the rural population of the *politeia/civitas* of Bragylai, as she had already proposed in an earlier study, “Une signification tardive du mot ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ”, *REG* 52 (1959), 100–5 (cf. *Bull. épigr.* 1960, 202).

\(^{20}\) It goes without saying that, apart from the population of the city, the *politeia* of the Lykeans would have included the inhabitants of the lakeside *koma* (or settlements), archaeological traces of at least one of which have been located in the village of Pyle, southwest of Little Prespa: see Papazoglou (n. 1), 242, and Samsaris (n. 2), 167. On the basis of the remains of a wall he has located, Samsaris also mentions a ‘fortress settlement’ under the Principal on Kale Hill between the villages of Lefkonas and Karyes, 200m west of Little Prespa. With the evidence available, it is not possible to determine the administrative connection between these *koma* and the *polis* of Lyke.

\(^{21}\) See IG IX 2, 517, 11.9 and 17 respectively, cf. 1. 41; for the date of the decree see Chr. Habicht, “Epigraphische Zeugnisse zur Geschichte Thessaliens unter der makedonischen
use of the term could date back to the Hellenistic period in the case of the Lyke inscription (and the Upper Macedonian inscriptions in general) on the grounds that all the available evidence from the same area dates to the Principate, it is by no means difficult to understand the term as signifying a city. In this case, as has already been suggested, the usage would be a Latinism, because Greek translations of Roman administrative documents frequently use the term _politeia_ for the Latin _civitas_.

From what has been said above, it is clear that the two inscriptions from Lyke, taken together, give us no choice but to accept that its _politeia_ and, likewise, the other two communities attested by the same term (Battyna and Oblostai) were indeed cities — i.e. civic communities — regardless of whether the use of the term in the relevant inscriptions is a Latinism (which it very probably is, at least in the light of the existing data) or part of the Hellenistic tradition.

This finding changes the picture we have had hitherto of the degree of urbanisation and the civic organisation of the Orestis area: to the unidentified city mentioned in the list of epheboi (of AD 146/7) from Sisani we may now add the civic community (_politeia_) of Lyke; and, equally, of Battyna, because, thanks to this new inscription, we now have strong grounds for believing that

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22. To the examples collected by Papazoglou (“Encore une fois” [n. 3], 327–8), who was the first to moot this hypothesis, should be added such interesting epigraphical texts as an excerpt from the copy of the *Lex de provincius praetoris* (of 100 BC) found at Knidos; see IvKnidos (IK 41) l, 31 l. 31 πρὸς τοὺς δήμους πολιτείας τε (which corresponds to the Latin _gentes civitatisque_; see comments on the inscription), and a provision from the *Monumentum Ephesiaeum*: see H. Engelmann and D. Knibbe, “Das Zollgesetz der Provincia Asia”, *EA* 14, 1989, 103 & 39 aítnes politeía [i καὶ ἀτινα ἥθη] νη καὶ οἶτινες δήμοι εἶναι ἕξιον διοικήσεως Ἐφεσίων, etc. (see comments on the inscription). See also P. Herrmann, “Rom und die Asylie griechischer Heiligtümer, *Chiron* 19 (1989) 113 l. 33 - 4 τ [η] ν ἵ πο λ [τείων τῶν Σαρ-διανόν.

23. See already Papazoglou, (n. 1), where she uses the word _cité_ for Lyke (p. 242) and the phrase _communauté autonome_ for Battyna (p. 241); cf. _eadem_, “Encore une fois” (n. 2), 243, where the three _politeiae_ of Upper Macedonia are collectively referred to as _petites communautés civiques_.

24. See _EAM_ 187. Although reservations have been expressed as to whether the inscription was found _in situ_ (see Papazoglou [n. 1], 244), most scholars accept that it originates from the
the latter’s *politeia* was an civic community, like Lyke. The same must apply to the area of Elimia, where, apart from Aiane, there is an inscriptional reference to the *Οβλοστίων πολιτεία*. Whether there was the same degree of urbanisation and similar civic organisation in the rest of Upper Macedonia is a question to which only new epigraphical and archaeological finds can give a definite answer.

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25. *EAM* 37. According to some scholars (see Papazoglou, “Encore une fois” [n. 3], 242, and G. Karamitrou-Mentesidi, *Κοζάνη, Πόλη Ελιμιωτίδος*, Thessalonike 1993, p. 28), the institutions of the boule and the [demos] mentioned in the honorary inscription *EAM* 34 (of the 2nd c. AD) belong to an unknown city of the *Koinon* of the Elimiotai, which was on the site of modern Kozani. This is challenged by Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* (n. 3), 89–90, who does not regard it as necessarily so and suggests that they are the boule and the demos of the *Koinon* of the Elimiotai. For new inscriptive evidence attesting the existence, at least in the 3rd century BC, of an otherwise unknown city in Elimiotic named Tela, see P. M. Nigdelis, “Μακεδονικά Σύμμεικτα”, *Συμμετοχή* 1 (1995) 173–9, *SEG* 43, 1993 [1996], 937.
ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Πόλεις και Πολιτείας στὴν Ἀνω Μακεδονία κατὰ τὴν Αὐτοκρατορικὴ ἐποχὴ.
Μία νέα ἐπιγραφή ἀπὸ τὴν Λύκη τῆς Ὄρεστίδος.

'Ὁ προσδιορισμὸς τοῦ γομικοῦ καθεστώτος τῶν κοινωτήτων τῆς Ἀνω Μακεδονίας ποὺ εἶναι γνωστὲς ὡς πολιτείαι, δηλ. τῶν πολιτειῶν τῶν Βαττιναιῶν καὶ τῶν Λυκαίων στὴν Ὅρεστίδα καὶ τῶν Ὄξβολστῶν στὴν Ἐλύμεα ἀποτελεῖ γιὰ τὴν ἔρευνα ἕνα δυσεπίλυτο πρόβλημα. Ὄμοιοι ἔρευνες πιστεύουμε ὅτι οἱ κοινότητες αὐτὲς ἦσαν πόλεις, ἐνώ ἄλλοι ὑποστηρίζουμε ὅτι ἐπρόκειτο γιὰ φιλολογικὲς κοινότητες ἢ κώμες. Νέος ψός στὸ πρόβλημα ρίχνει ἡ σύντομη ἀναθηματικὴ ἐπιγραφὴ (τοῦ 2ου ἢ τῶν ἀρχῶν τοῦ 3ου αἰ. π.Χ.) ποὺ βρέθηκε πρόσφατα στὴ νησίδα τοῦ Ἄγιου Ἀγίλλαείου τῆς Μυρής Πρέσπας καὶ δημοσιεύεται ἕδω γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ. Στὴν ἐπιγραφὴ αὐτὴ ἡ Λύκη, ἡ ὅποια μᾶς ἦταν γνωστὴ ἕπω ἄλλη ἐπιγραφικὴ μαρτυρία (ΕΑΜ 149) ὡς Λυκαιῶν πολιτεία, ἐμφανίζεται ὡς Λυκαίων [πολ]. Τὸ νέο δεδομένο μᾶς ἐπιτρέπει νὰ ὑποστηρίζουμε ὅτι ἡ κοινότητα αὐτὴ, καθὼς ἐπίσης, ἀναλογικά, καὶ οἱ ἄλλες γνωστὲς πολιτείαι τῆς Ἀνω Μακεδονίας ἦσαν πόλεις.