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Aristion of Athens

0. Onomastic issues

An intense debate over the identification of Aristion with Athenion of Athens began at the end of the 19th century and continued for the best part of the 20th. The identification was mainly based on Pos. F253 Kidd = FGrH 87 F 36 = Athen. 5.211d-215b. In fact, Niese 1887 and Bugh 1992 (see 111f. n. 8 for bibliography) persuasively demonstrated that Athenion and Aristion were two different people. They were both philosophers (a Peripatetic and an Epicurean respectively) and gained a dominant position in Athenian politics almost at the same time (88-86 BC), i.e. the early stages of the First Mithridatic war.

1. Central Biographical Dates and Family Relations

Aristion was born in the second half of the 2nd century BC. His birth date and his youth are altogether unknown, but his Athenian citizenship is safely attested by Appian (Mithr. 6.28), Pausanias (1.20.5), and Eutropius (5.6). According to Appian (Mithr. 6.28.110-112), he professed to be an Epicurean philosopher. Pausanias (1.20.5) describes Aristion as an Athenian citizen, sent as an envoy by King Mithradates VI Eupator to the Greek cities. There is hardly any trace of Aristion before his rise to prominence during the First Mithridatic War. Together with the fact that he lived at the court of the King of Pontus, this suggests that he never reached a high public office in Athens and was never part of the Athenian élite before the First Mithridatic War. No information about his family and descendants has been preserved.

2. Relations with Rome and Career

According to Bugh, Aristion made his first appearance in literary sources in Pos. F253.122-125 Kidd = Athen. 214a under the name of Athenion. Poseidonios mentions a tyrant named Athenion who sent cataphracts to pursue the pro-Roman Athenians trying to escape the city. Bugh has persuasively suggested that Aristion – not Athenion – was in charge of these Eastern horsemen who were entrusted to him by Mithradates’ general Archelaos after the conquest of Delos (App. Mithr. 28). Aristion’s tyranny over Athens came after the fall of Athenion’s hegemony (probably after the defeat of the latter’s associate Apellikon of Teos in Delos) and was based on Pontic military support and the gold looted from the Delian Sanctuary. According to Poseidonios (F253.116-145 Kidd = Athen. 214a-d), Aristion’s main achievement was suppressing the pro-Roman faction in Athens. This appears to have formed part of a deliberate program targeting any opposition in the city, while **Sulla** was leading his campaign in Greece.

After all, the lack of support among the members of the Athenian élite was made clear by the pro-Roman revolt in Delos. As is well known, a number of wealthy Athenians and Italians owned estates on the island (a full list of the Italians in Delos is given by Hatzfeld 1912, updated by Ferrary 2002), since they wanted to keep their assets safe during the war (Candiloro 1965, 135-141; Santangelo 2007, 37-39).

According to Appian, Aristion took part in the battle of Chaironeia against **Q. Brutius Sura** in 87 BC (App. Mithr. 29; also see Plut. Sull. 11.3-5; MRR II 15-16, 50), before going back to Athens to arrange the city's defense. During its siege, Aristion is described as a reckless leader, who made fun of an overwhelming enemy and was often seen drunk. Moreover, he was not able to negotiate an honourable way out on behalf of the city (Plut. Sull. 13). When the walls were taken, Aristion had apparently been deserted by the Pontic soldiers, who had fled to the Piraeus; he headed to the Acropolis to arrange a last defense there (App. Mithr. 30; also see Paus. 1.20.5-7). According to Plutarch (Sull. 14.7), **Curio** was tasked with besieging the tyrant, and Aristion eventually gave up due to lack of water; it started raining immediately afterwards. After his surrender, he was immediately sentenced to death (Strab. 9.1.20).

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Aristobulos, König von Kleinarmenien bzw. von Chalkis (ad Belum?) = Iulius Aristobulus

1. Zentrale Lebensdaten und Familienverhältnisse

→ Stemma der Herodianer (in Vorbereitung)

Aristobulos wurde wohl zu Beginn der 30er Jahre n.Chr. als Sohn des Herodes Philoklaudios von Chalkis und der Mariamme (PIR² M 274) geboren (Ios. bell. Iud. 2,221; ant. Iud. 18,134; 20,104). Um 49 heiratete er Salome (Ios. ant. Iud. 18,137). Ihre Identifizierung mit der Tochter der Herodias, die Flavius Josephus vornimmt, ist aber kaum glaubwürdig (Kokkinos 1986, v.a. 35; 43-45; 1998, 310f.; Josephus folgen dagegen u.a. Wilcken 1895, 910; Bringmann 1996, 1105). Wahrscheinlicher handelt es sich um ein anderes, ansonsten unbekanntes Mitglied der herodianischen Familie. Aus der Ehe gingen die drei Söhne Herodes (eventuell erwähnt in Ios.