
The Last Tyrants of Athens*

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To Max and Frida

ABSTRACT This paper deals with the complex situation that lived Athens at the first decades of the Ist Century BC. Between the good and advantageous relations with Rome, that led Athens to big benefits from the control of the Delian markets, and the hard sack of the city by the troops of Sulla in March 86, the city suffered an economical crisis that derived in political instability. The government of Athens finally was hold by some persons who acted like tyrants, in a moment when events and historical context (social conflict and economical crisis) seems to remember the situation that produced the historical phenomenon of the Greek Tyranny.

KEYWORDS Mithridatic Athens, Medeios of the Piraeus, Athenion, Aristion, Delian business, social conflict, economic crisis.

The period of the first decades of the Ist Century BC was certainly one of the most conflictive and notable moments in the history of ancient Athens. Thus, since the excellent prosperity gained as a result of the loyalty to Rome until the shocking siege and sack of the city by Sula in 87/6, Athens lived intensely a Bronze Age, after the Golden age in Pericles' times and the Silver one by the hands of Lycurgus of Butadae. The reasons of his rise under Roma protection after the destruction of Corinth in 147 BC are well known. In contrast, the causes of the fall were full of unresolved questions. Athenian decline in the early Ist Century BC had to be analysed also with the responsibility some personalities had in the events that drove Athens to suffer Sulla's wrath, and almost destruction. Economic crisis, impoverishment and elite conflict lead Athens to be managed by individual rulers, the last tyrants of Athens¹.

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¹ Str. 9.1,20 mentions the tyrants (plural) that Mithridates VI Eupator put in charge of Athens. NIESE 1887, 574-581. LEWIS 2009, 117 assures the 'honour' of being the last Greek tyrant to Hieron II of Syracuse. Nevertheless, tyranny still remained in Greece, at least until the fall of Athens after the Sullan siege of 87/6 BC, as we try to show in the following pages.

MEDEIOS, THE LEGAL TYRANT

Medeios III son of Medeios of the Piraeus² is maybe the most enigmatic and controverted character of the history of ancient Athens. Aristocrat, descendant of one of the main Athenian families, Medeios stands out among his fellow citizens of all ages for being the unique Athenian to have taken the office of Eponymous Archon four times in his life (101/100, 91/90, 90/89, 89/88)³, three of them consecutively. He is, in fact, the only case we know of an Athenian in charge of the main archonship so often, and there is no record of any other Archon to have held this position three times steadily. No doubt, the context when his political activity took place and the consequences of his government make Medeios a leading figure of his times.

First, we must consider Medeios as a prominent member of the Athenian traditional aristocracy. Descendant of Lycurgus of Butadea⁴, Medeios' family was in charge of some important hereditary priesthoods of Athens⁵. He was also a leading politician, and in 101/0 BC he was Eponymous Archon. During this charge, he must manage questions like the slave revolt in Attica in 100 BC⁶. Our sources say little about this fact⁷, but it seems clear that the number of rebel slaves were very high (μυρία), and the revolt last at least until 97 BC⁸. During the uprising, the slaves ruined the Athenian countryside, resulting in a serious influence in Athenian economy. Medeios probably had a main role in crushing the slave mutiny⁹.

During the decade of the 90s, Medeios had also a surprising continuity of public charges¹⁰, like the director of the public bank at Delos¹¹ (100/99), στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα in Athens (99/98)¹², and so more both in Athens and Delos¹³. Medeios' links with the Delian affairs surely show his own importance as a distinguished personality in the Delian commercial and economic activities¹⁴. Finally, in 91 he was once again Eponymous Archon. This is an irregular fact, but more irregular is the continuity of Medeios' rule as Archon, three continuous archonships since 88. Nevertheless, in 88/7 Medeios was no more Archon, and actually we know nothing more of him. His absence provoked the Eponymous Archonship was empty, as far as the epigraphical Archon's list records for this year the inexistence of Archon (ἀναρχία)¹⁵.

As Tracy has stressed, the slave revolt of 101/0 not only resulted in a concrete and temporal impoverishment, caused by the looting slaves made during the crisis, probably

² KIRCHNER 1901–1903, n° 10098.

³ IG II² 1713, 9–11.

⁴ Ps.-Plu. *Lyc.* 843B.

⁵ Cf. SCHILLER 2006, 267-268, 271 and n. 42; DAVIES 1971, 349: “in the present case it can hardly be accidental that the two branches of the *genos* held the chief Athenian priesthoods of the two deities concerned in the famous dispute *περὶ τῆς χώρας*”. Also, HAUVETTE-BESNAULT 1879, 491; TRACY 1979, 227.

⁶ TRACY 1979, 233-234 dated this slave revolt in the year 100.

⁷ Ath. 6.272F.

⁸ TRACY 1979, 233 has stressed that the consequences of the economic crisis caused by the slave revolt are still substantial in 98/7.

⁹ VERDEJO MANCHADO-ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2013.

¹⁰ Cf. TRACY 1982, 159-164; OSBORNE 1984, 289-291; GEAGAN 1983, 205-206; KARILA-COHEN 2007, 376-7.

¹¹ IG II² 2336, 185.

¹² About this office, cf. GEAGAN 1967, 18-31; 1997, 21-22.

¹³ Cf. ROUSSEL 1916, 112. BADIAN 1976, 106; MACKENDRICK 1969, 55.

¹⁴ ROUSSEL 1908, 350, n° 401.

¹⁵ TRACY 1991, 202-4.

until 98/7, but also in a long term debt¹⁶ concerning the most of the Athenians. In a critical speech of 88/7, Athenion of Athens talks about the problem of debts and explains the promise of Mithridates for cancelling the debts¹⁷, so we can consider that the consequences of the economic crisis of the early 90s were still affecting more Athenian families in 88/7, when Athenion arrive to Athens¹⁸. In this sense, MacKendrick proposed that the power of Medeios and his circle came of their financial capacity as creditors of the most part of the impoverished Athenians¹⁹.

Athenion, also in his speech, made the Roman Senate responsible of this situation. We have not much clues for this. Nevertheless, at the light of the epigraphical evidences we know the links between Medeios and the pro-Roman Athenian faction²⁰. Probably, the Roman Senate was favorable to continuity in the power of Medeios and his pro-Roman circle, representing the traditional aristocratic group that controls the Delian business as allies of Rome²¹.

Was Medeios a tyrant? The ancient sources actually do not consider him so. Nevertheless, Medeios' continuous rule over Athens, although it was made through a legal magistracy, as it was the Eponymous Archon, seems very suspicious. First, we can consider him as the type of tyrant described by Aristotle in *Politics* and resulted of a magistrate elected to a high office that misuse it in order to rule by himself²². Thus, his unstopped size of power seems to be away from legality. But Medeios can be also considered a tyrant by other reasons. When Athenion criticizes the preceding government (i.e. that of Medeios), he mentions an unfortunate situation in Athenian religion. Some temples, says Athenion, are closed. What we can explain from this is that maybe Athenion considered Athens, at his arrival, in a situation of *loimos*, the religious Greek concept for corruption. As R. Parker has masterly showed long time ago, civil strife was usually linked in Greek thought to *loimos*²³. In this way, the repeated Archonships of Medeios coincided also with a break in the succession of tribes in the cycles of the priesthood²⁴. The death of Medeios, at one time Eponymous Archon and priest of Poseidon Erechteus probably had consequences in the natural religious practice of Athens as a State. As far as a bad ruler, or even an illegal ruler, could produce a religious corruption for the community²⁵, Medeios could be seen as the responsible for this *loimos*, and as a consequence, a tyrant.

¹⁶ TRACY 1979, 207.

¹⁷ Ath. 5.212A. Likewise, GLEW 1977, 255. On the economies of Mithridates in this time, cf. DE CALLATAÏ 1997, 288; SANTANGELO 2007, 37.

¹⁸ MATTINGLY 1971, 86 has suggested that the situation fo *anarchy* could be caused by an economic crisis.

¹⁹ MACKENDRICK 1969, 60-61 propose that the power of Medeios and his circle was a result of their financial authority, as creditors of the main part of the Athenian population. Cf. *contra*, DAVIES 1973, 229.

²⁰ Following Byrne's interpretation of IG II² 1054: BYRNE 1995, 59. Cf. also ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2009, 49-60.

²¹ Cf. RUBINSOHN 1993, 20-22.

²² Arist. *Pol.* 5.10.5.

²³ PARKER 1983, 257.

²⁴ DINSMOOR 1931, 281.

²⁵ Cf., for example, Hom. *Od.* 19.109-114; Hes. *WD* 225-47. Cf. PARKER 1983, 265.

ATHENION, THE POPULIST

After his three illegal eponymous archonship, Medeios seems to vanish. Nothing more is known about him. Probably caused by his absence, Athens lived a vacuum of power. At the end of the maritime season, we hear about the arrival to the city of Athenion, a peculiar and hard-to-know historical character.

The sources related to Athenion of Athens are hardly difficult to manage. The most of the ancient writers about this period of ancient Athens mentions someone called Aristion, and just Posidonious, in a very complex reference (Frag. 253 Edelstein-Kidd) recorded by Athenaeus of Naucratis in his *Deipnosophists*²⁶. In this account, Athenion appears described as an Athenian ambassador send to Mithridates VI Eupator, and *philo*i of him. Peripatetic philosopher, and a bastard illegally inscribed as citizen according to Posidonious²⁷, Athenion represents for Athenaeus the best example of the corruption of the wise men and philosophers when they become rulers²⁸. In fact, once in Athens, Athenion addressed a hard speech to his fellow citizens in the assembly (from a platform held by the Roman generals near the Stoa of Attalus). There, he summarize the situation Athens lived at his arrival: *ἀναρχία*, that means actually the absence of an eponymous archon, to which Athenion made responsible the Roman Senate, and the institutional deterioration (closed *gymnasia*, theaters without assemblies, voiceless courts). As a result of his discourse, Athenians elected him Hoplite General (*στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ τὰ ὅπλα*)²⁹.

With this new authority, Athenion put sentinels in the gates of the city and send hoplites to patrol the country, ordering to pursue the citizens that flee illegally from the city and those who conspire from within the city with the exiles against his rule, truly decreeing a curfew for Athens. Athenion also deprived some wealthy Athenians of their properties, and even others were condemned to death. According to Posidonious, he used to organize frequently meetings of the Athenian assembly. This was, indeed, the way how Athenion became a tyrant. Finally, a shortage of food in Athens force Athenion first to ration the wheat and barley. Maybe as a consequence of that, after confiscating the estates of both citizens and strangers, Athenion ordered his political and fellow Apellicon of Teos, also himself a Peripatetic, to seize the treasures of the temple of Apollo at Delos. Nevertheless, this mission was a great failure³⁰, and we do not hear anymore of Athenion or even Apellicon³¹.

At the light of this account, it hardly surprises that Athenion could be considered by the ancient authors, effectively, a tyrant. To begin with, he acted, according to Posidonious, in his own profit. In this sense, Athenion came to power with the support of the mob. He also opposed his rule to those wealthy, “sober-minded” Athenian citizens, as the confiscation of their properties seems to show. Also, his populist attitude appears again in the idea of the frequency of reunions of the assembly, where the people, and not the aristocrats, can give support to his policies. Apart from this popular

²⁶ On the discussion involving Athenion and Aristion, see MCGING 1986, 120-124; FERRARY 1988, 441-444; BUGH 1992; KIDD 2004, 59-60. MASTROCINQUE 1999, 77-8 collected an almost updated bibliography on the topic. Nevertheless, the most recent approach, I guess, is ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2015.

²⁷ BRINGMANN 1997, 156-7. Likewise, on bastardy in the Ancient World, cf. MACDOWELL 1976, 88-91; RHODES 1978, 89-92; CARLIER 1992, 107-125. Also, HODOT 1992.

²⁸ MOMIGLIANO 1971, 33 considers the portrait of Athenion by Posidonious as the most hostile of all Antiquity.

²⁹ On this position, see SARIKAKIS 1951; FERGUSON 1909, 314-323; GEAGAN 1967, 18-31.

³⁰ Ath. 5.215A.

³¹ Ath 5.211E-215B.

support, Athenion had some kind of military backing, as we can infer from the references to patrols, hoplites, and even to a group of *cataphracts* (κατάφρακτικοί)³². But after all, Athenion can be considered a tyrant by the ancient audience as far as he ruled as a subordinate of a king, as philosopher and *philoi*³³, and therefore, as a real tyrant, in the best Hellenistic tradition, in charge of a city subdued to the royal decisions of a dynast as Mithridates VI Eupator.

Nevertheless, this philo-Roman opinion about Athenion contrasts with what we can observe from an accurate and detailed analysis of the information we can collect, in order to reconstruct a better, more historical, situation for Athens under Athenion's rule.

If we contrast what we know about Athenion's activities from Athenaeus and the powers of the Hoplite General, we sure find similarities. Athenaeus says that Athenion was elected as Hoplite General in the Theatre, and we know this is one of the places where Athenians elected Hoplite Generals³⁴. The powers we know for the Hoplite General also fits well with what we know about Athenion's activities as a ruler. Until we know, the charge of the Hoplite General existed in Athens, at least, since the Classic age³⁵ From the Third Century BC onwards, this office was increasing his powers, and it was held by main political personalities of Athens³⁶. Philostratus records that both the Archonship and the Hoplite General were the main magistracies of Athenian politics³⁷. During the First Century onwards, the Hoplite General was in charge of the defence of the frontiers and the direction of the epebes during military service, even controlling public order and the security forces of the city. His attributions could also have included corn supply's management, and the supervision of markets and shipping as far as other civic activities both in Athens and in the Piraeus³⁸.

If we then consider the activities under rule of the Hoplite General in contrast with what we know about Athenion's rule, there were not main differences between them. The use of patrols (maybe epebes³⁹), hoplites or military forces were some of the Hoplite General's responsibilities. Also, related to the control of goodies, it was the Hoplite General's authority to control, or even ration, the food in case of shortage, as far as he controlled the markets and the corn supply's management, so Athenion was acting within his own office when he manage the wheat and barley among the Athenians. In the end, we can consider that, as far as Delos was under Athenian control, the corn reserves and the Delian markets⁴⁰ were probably also managed by the Athenian Hoplite General, so, although unusual, the actions taken by Athenion, in order to resolve the shortage had nothing illegal, including the mission against Delos⁴¹. But he still seemed a tyrant.

As far as we know, until Medeios' disappearance, Athenian rulers tried to make a policy of careful accommodation of the Romans and Italians, especially of *negotiatores* and

³² Ath. 5.214A. Cft. also the discussion about this point by BUGH 1992, 114-119.

³³ SMITH 1993, 202-212.

³⁴ GEAGAN 1967, 19.

³⁵ Arist. *Const. Ath.* 61.1. Likewise, cf. RHODES 1981, 678-79. Also, WHEELER 1991, 147-52.

³⁶ OLIVER 2007, 163. IG II² 2336 is a reliable source for the importance of the Hoplite Generals, with the names of the Generals following that of the Eponymous Archons. Cf GEAGAN 1967; TRACY 1979, 215.

³⁷ Philostr. *VS* 2.20.103.

³⁸ Plu. *Mor.* 736D; IG II² 1039; IG II² 3500; GEAGAN 1967, 23-27.

³⁹ Although we know from Athenion's speech in front of the assembly that something went wrong with the epebes, as far as the *gymnasia* seem to be closed, somehow. On this question, cf. VERDEJO-MANCHADO-ANTELA-BERNÁREZ 2013.

⁴⁰ NICOLET 1980, 97 mentions the great reserves of grain collected in Delos, as far as the law of 58 BC seems to show.

⁴¹ BASLEZ 1982, 52 and n. 10.

merchants in connection with the trading interests on Delos⁴². After the crisis of the end of the IInd century, Athenian prosperity changed, and a lot of Athenians were impoverished by debts. Athenion's rule gained the support of those poor Athenian citizens.

Posidonius stress the fact that Athenion's rule frequently use to ask for meetings of the assembly. In this sense, we must remember that maybe a political project from Athenion was, in fact, started during his short rule. Actually, an Athenian inscription (*Agora I 2351*) records an attempt to change the Athenian constitution, in order to establish a new political system, strongly democratic, with a clear influence of the Peripatetical political theory⁴³. This constitutional proposal can be dated during the reign of Athenion. In fact,

Aristotle's political science was a practical science in the first place, addressed not only to philosophers but especially to men engaged in politics⁴⁴. So, Athenion fits perfectly in this Aristotelian view of political activity, as director of a political project based in an Aristotelian category⁴⁵, as it was the radical democracy stressed in the inscription of *Agora I 2351*. Then, with Peripatetical theory in mind, the final aim of Athenion's political project seems to have been the instauration of a new democratic constitution, within which the Athenian people could be the active agents of the Athenian government⁴⁶. Indeed, this political project would have been just a first step in a broad plan, within which the Peripathetics, with Athenion at their head, and surely with Mithridatic support, also expected to resolve the social, economic and cultural problems Athens suffered then, in order to recover the great glorious position of classical Athens.

Probably, the main problem of Athenion in his attempt to restore democracy and prosperity in Athens was the opposition of the wealthy class of Athenian traditional aristocrats, merchants also, linked with the Delian market, those who during the nineties where creditors of good part of the Athenian population. Nevertheless, the fact that his rule was supported by the people made him, at the eyes of the aristocratic audiences, both Greek and Roman, as a *demagogue*. His democratic activity did not actually benefits the judgement Romans could do about him, as far as democracy was understood by Roman political thinking with cautious prevention. In J.-L. Ferrary's words, Greek democracy "n'était pas non plus un adversaire qu'on dût réduire dans un combat idéologique, mais le désordre qu'elle leur paraissait favoriser les inquiétait, et le maintien de leur hégémonie s'accommodait mieux de l'évolution de leurs sujets vers un ordre politique plus proche de celui des nouveaux maîtres du monde"⁴⁷. As a consequence, Athenion is perceived by the Romans and philo-Romans as an agitator, and in the end, as a dangerous enemy, as far as he is not considered as a ruler for his own profit, but as a Mithridatic agent, although what we have already shown seems to provide evidences that Athenion had his own political objectives. Then, being

⁴² TRACY 1982, 179. However, as Tracy masterly remarks in 179-80, "nearly every Athenian shared to some extent in the prosperity created by the port of Delos and concurred to some degree with a policy of cooperation, if not outright accommodation [with Rome]".

⁴³ OLIVER 1980, 199-201; ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2009b, with full bibliography.

⁴⁴ LORD 1978, 337.

⁴⁵ SANTANGELO 2007, 64 has stressed the opposition between Athenion's will to exercise restraint and good sense, as a pupil of Aristotle. This was another feature of Posidonio's critical portrait and shows his will, as a Stoic, to attack the rest of the Athenian philosophical schools.

⁴⁶ We must keep in mind the statement, although very distant in time, made by Ioannes Lydus in VI Century AD about Domitianus, considering innovations as proper of tyrants: cft. ESCRIBANO PAÑO 1993, 9.

⁴⁷ FERRARY 1987-1989, 206.

ineluctably linked with Mithridates, Athenion must be fitted in some topical clichés and prejudices (stranger, illegal citizen, false philosopher, despot or tyrant). In this sense, Athenion fits well in the tradition of the Greek tyrant as a defender of the impoverished against the *aristoi* and the riches, with populist (and popular) policies of distribution of lands and cancellation of debts⁴⁸ and grievous actions of impiety⁴⁹, as the plan for sacking the Delian temples of Apolo seems to show. Thus, Athenion actually appears in what we can call a ‘typical’ time for tyranny, as it was that of the Athenian early Ist century BC, marked by a social instability, a usual topic in the appearance of tyrannies since the Archaic age⁵⁰, the opposition of a popular ruler against the aristocracy⁵¹, and the elimination of the *best* citizens⁵². To sum up, he can be pictured as a traditional ‘demagogue’, a *new man* who obtains the support of the demos in order to face the wealthies citizens and, since that point, tries to gain the best for his own profit⁵³.

Nevertheless, we can not forget that, apart from the Athenian people, Athenion had other kind of supporters. We know, for example, of Apellicon, fellow in philosophy and in government, who was a rich merchant. Also, Posidonios says that when Athenion came to Athens, he was accommodated in the house of Dies, also a merchant⁵⁴. So, facing Medeios and Athenion, we find that as far as the first was the visible head of a traditional, pro-Roman Athenian aristocracy with strong links with the Delian markets, the latter obtained the support of a new aristocracy, not traditional, maybe pro-Mithridates, and surely related to the business in Delos. This is a point we must consider carefully, for it can shows some kind of struggle between two elite groups who were trying to obtain the control of the Athenian government, which meant also the authority to manage wealthy Delos⁵⁵. Nevertheless, at least during the short rule of Athenion, we can not really talk of breakdown, because prosopographical studies showed that some magistrates who were in charge in Athenion’s government had also been members of Medeios’ government in the past⁵⁶.

ARISTIÓN, THE *REAL* TYRANT

After the failure of Apelikon’s naval campaign to seize the treasures of Delos, we know nothing more about him or his colleague Athenion. Nevertheless, the main point Delos and Athens meant as strategic ports for the Pontic offensive against Rome drove Mithridates to send his commander Archelaus with a naval force to siege and recover the control over Delos, and consequently, over Athens. In order to do so, Archelaus placed an Athenian, Aristion, the Epicurean philosopher⁵⁷, at the charge of the city with

⁴⁸ MOSSÉ 1969, iv.

⁴⁹ Impiety as a main characteristic of tyrants: DUNKLE 1967, 160.

⁵⁰ MOSSÉ 1069, 2; ANDREWES 1956, 147.

⁵¹ ANDREWES 1956, 23.

⁵² ESCRIBANO PAÑO 1993, 28.

⁵³ The topical concept of the demagogue as tyrant from the Archaic age had continuity in the Greek tradition since the IVth Century, as is shown in the works of the classical philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, and beyond, becoming the usual significance of the concept even until Athenion’s times. Cf. MOSSÉ 1969, 88, 134.

⁵⁴ DOW 1942, 313-314.

⁵⁵ Some of these questions are analyzed in VERDEJO-MANCHADO–ANTELA-BERNARDEZ 2011, 91-96.

⁵⁶ BADIAN 1976, 112.

⁵⁷ The links between the historical characters of Athenion (Peripatetic) and Aristion (Epicurean) and the facts that drove Athens to the Sullan sack seems to be a result of Posidonios’ account, who attacks these

the help of 2000 Mithridatic soldiers. With the help of them, Aristion killed the pro-Roman Athenians, he made himself the tyrant of the city and align Athens definitively in the Pontic side for the war against Rome⁵⁸.

At the light of this facts, Aristion of Athens fits perfectly in the whole Greek idea of how a tyrant must be. First, he became ruler not by law or election, but by force, thanks to the Mithridatic army under Archelaus' commandment. Second, his rule obtained the support of the people in front of the hostility of the wealthy *aristoi*, the 'sober-minded' Athenians⁵⁹. And third, he is an impious ruler, guilty of *hybris* against the Gods, as far as he refused to turn on the light of the sacred lamp of the Athenian Erechtheion⁶⁰. In this sense, his rule over Athens drove the city to the siege of Sulla⁶¹, the Roman sack⁶², the lost of autonomy, and even to almost destruction⁶³. In this way, Aristion appears as an uncontrolled character drove by rage, killing, celebrating big banquets during the shortage resulted by the Sullan siege⁶⁴, and even take refuge in the Acropolis, as the first applicant to tyrant of Athens, Cylon did in 632 BC⁶⁵. Thus, portrayed as a irascible ruler, he is compelling all the worse a tyrant can be, but even more, because he is not actually the real ruler, but his government is subdue to a greater power, that of the King who employs him to direct the city's affaires. Thus, this fact allow to consider Aristion, so similar in some way to Athenion, as a typical Hellenistic tyrant: philosopher, *philo* of a King and impious ruler by force of a free city with the support of the people and against the will of the city's aristocrats. Of course, these elements justified the Roman action against the tyrant, not only as a way to recover the supremacy under Athens and Greece, but also as guarantors of the freedom of the Greeks against the Kings. Surely, the ideological cocktail of freedom, kings and tyrants would have the best reception in the Roman public opinion, if we consider the traditional hostility of the Romans against the monarchy, the personal power and, of course, the popular governs.

However, despite the fact that our sources, mainly pro-Roman accounts⁶⁶, try to explain the tyranny of Aristion as the unique responsibility of himself, we know that he rule with the help of other Athenians⁶⁷. Once the city fell into Sulla's hands, and he finally could capture Aristion and his staff, we know that Aristion was executed, but he was the only one who paid with his life to the Romans for driving Athens to betrayal. The rest of Aristion's colleagues in the rule save, as it seems, their lives. Nevertheless, it seems difficult to accep that these colleagues can be, as the accounts maybe would like to propose, members of the people or representatives of the mob. First, Aristion was probably a member of the Athenian wealthy class, and as it happened during the government of Athenion, his staff was probably also wealthy Athenians, i.e. 'sober-minded' citizens. So on, at the light of this easy conclusion, we can doubt actually for Aristion of a *real* government supported by the people, as also Athenion's own liked to be viewed. What we have, in the end, is simply a conflict among aristocrats, a struggle

schools as a way to glorify his own, the Stoics. On the question of the role played by the philosophical schools in the context of the Mithridatic Athens, cf. FERRARY 1988, 435-486.

⁵⁸ App. *Mithr.* 29.

⁵⁹ Ath. 5.214A-D mentions this 'sober-minded' citizens as the detractors of Athenion's rule.

⁶⁰ Plu. *Sull.* 12, 3; *Num.* 9, 5-6. Cf. PALAGIA 1984, 515-521.

⁶¹ HOFF 1997, 33-51; ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2009c, 475-492.

⁶² A review of the military campaign of the Athenian siege can be found in ANTELA-BERNÁRDEZ 2013.

⁶³ Plu. *Sull.* 14, 6; Str. 9.1.20.

⁶⁴ Plu. *Sull.* 13, 2-3.

⁶⁵ Hdt 5.71; Thuc. 1.126; Plu. *Sol.* 12.1.

⁶⁶ And also, anti-Athenian accounts, for sure: BALLESTEROS PASTOR 2005, 389.

⁶⁷ Plu. *Sull.* 23, 2.

for power between two types of wealthy Athenians, i.e. those who traditionally ruled the city under the patronage of Rome, like Medeios's circle, and those who, once Medeios' circle seems to weak, tried to gain the control of the city using both a legal reform or the army's force, with the patronage of king Mithridates, the new savior of the Hellenic world.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we can consider that after the conflict among these groups of interests, some kind or *lobbies* in fact, the final victory owned only to Sulla, who choose who lived and who died and was near to drove his troops to totally destroy the long time ago glorious Athens. Sulla, the ultimate tyrant, was able to impose himself thanks to the definitive item, military force. In order to gain booty, rewards and military experience, he command a very successful campaign against Mithridates just before coming back home, to Rome, in order to fight his own comrades and, by the force, proclaim himself the unique, real and legal ruler of Rome. In the tyrant's game, you win or you die. Unfortunately, during the game, people may also suffer and also die.

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