Περίληψη - Abstract

Κυριάκος Κυρούς: "Οι Χρηματικές Διανομές στις Πόλεις της Αυτοκρατορικής Λυκίας και η Κοινωνική και Πολιτική τους Σημασία"

Κατά την διάρκεια του 2ου αιώνος π.Χ. παρατηρείται στον ευρύτερο χώρο της ελληνόφωνης ανατολής ένα νέο είδος ευεργετισμού: πρόκειται για τις διανομές χρημάτων από πλούσια μέλη της ελίτ προς πληθυσμιακές υπο-ομάδες των πόλεων -συνηθέστερα προς στους σωματίτες αλλά και πιο συγκεκριμένα τα μέλη των ποιο προβεβλημένων σωμάτων των πόλεων, όπως η βουλή και η γερουσία, των οποίων τα μέλη μονοπωλούσαν την οικονομική και πολιτική ζωή. Τα δεδομένα που αφορούν το φαινόμενο αυτό αντλήθηκαν από 44 επιγραφές από την Λυκία και από γραμματειακές πηγές που αναφέρονται σε δωρεές χρηματικών διανομών. Η Λυκία ως επιλεγμένος χώρος έρευνας αποτελεί έναν κλειστό θεσμικό χώρο εξαιτίας της σύμπηξης του κοινοτήτων και ως τέτοιος αποτελεί το ιδανικό ομοιογενές περιβάλλον για την διερεύνηση του ρόλου των χρηματικών διανομών στην αντιπαράθεση των ανώτερων και των κατώτερων τάξεων στην Λυκία.

Στα πλαίσια της αναθεώρησης του ευεργετισμού ως ενός πολιτικού και δευτερευόντως οικονομικού φαινομένου και όχι ως την απάντηση της ελίτ σε μία κατάρρευση των οικονομικών δυνατοτήτων των πόλεων κατά την περίοδο αυτή, στόχος είναι να προσεγγιστούν ερωτήματα σχετικά με τα αίτια της εμφάνισης αυτού του νέου φαινομένου των χρηματικών διανομών την δεδομένη χρονική περίοδο και να ερευνηθεί κοινωνική σημασία του. Έτσι στο πρώτο κεφάλαιο αυτής της εργασίας σκιαγραφούνται τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά των χρηματικών διανομών ενώ στο δεύτερο κεφάλαιο αναλύονται ερωτήματα που άπτονται των κοινωνικών πεποιθήσεων και της λειτουργίας τους ως εργαλείων κοινωνικής εξουσίας εντός των πόλεων της Λυκίας του 2ου αιώνα μ.Χ..

Διαπιστώνεται στις πηγές η πληθώρα των χρηματικών διανομών, οι οποίες τελούνταν με αφορμή κάθε έκφανση της κοινωνικής ζωής, με πιο σημαντικές ίσως τις εκλογές, την ανάμειξη στη δημόσια ζωή, την ανάρρηση σε αξιώματα, τις συνελεύσεις της εκκλησίας του Δήμου και τις εκκλησίες, γεγονότα που υπογραμμίζουν την πολιτική σκόπευση των διανομών. Επιπλέον, ο καθημερινός χαρακτήρας των διανομών αυτών σε συνδυασμό με τον ιεραρχικό χαρακτήρα τους - τα μέλη των σωμάτων της βουλής και της γερουσίας και τους καθημερινούς ερωτήματα που άπτονταν των κοινωνικών πεποιθήσεων και της λειτουργίας τους ως εργαλείων κοινωνικής εξουσίας εντός των πόλεων της Λυκίας του 2ου αιώνα μ.Χ.,
During the 2nd century A.D. our sources indicate that a new type of munificence arose: money distributions from the ruling elite to subdivisions of the populace of the poleis - usually towards their co-citizens but also to the deliberative councils of the poleis that where manned by their peers, who monopolized the economic and political life of the communities. The relevant data that is analyzed - 44 inscriptions and a number of ancient literary texts concern money distributions in the poleis of imperial Lycia. This province is ideal for the study of such a phenomenon as it provides a homogenous political and social landscape as a result of the strong unifying grip of the Lycian koinon.

In view of recent research which rejects the theory of a region-wide economic crisis in Asia Minor as the reason for the unprecedented proliferation of euergetism during the 2nd century A.D., new approaches which trace its sources to the political process of these hierarchically structured societies have been developed. In this frame of mind, the goal of this essay is to research the reasons for the emergence of money distributions in Roman Lycia and to interpret the attitudes towards them, and their function as a source of social power. The first chapter deals with primary evidence - inscriptions and literary sources - leading to the second that addresses questions relating to money distributions as generators of social power.

Both literary and epigraphic sources indicate that a great number of money distributions was handed out by the elites in both public events with overtly political character that were epigraphically commemorated - such as elections, the gatherings of councils and the ekklesia, the ascension of an official into office, religious festivities and games. What changes how we understand the length of the phenomenon is the important letter of Pliny towards Trajan, making us privy to the fact that money distributions also happened in numerous social events in the community - marriages, birthdays or even during the passage of male offspring into adulthood. This gives us a very clear idea of the multitude of the money distribution cases that are lacking from our epigraphic evidence.

Facts also extremely important for determining the nature of this extensive feature of everyday life are the identity and number of the grantees and the expenditure - both overall and per capita. Most of the distributions known to us are directed to the citizen body, that naturally numbered in the thousands or towards councils dominated by the elites of the towns or the whole of Lycia. The expenditure could even reach hundreds of thousands of denarii. It can be implied moreover, that virtually all men running for any form of office were staging such money give-outs. But what strikes the reader
of relevant inscriptions the most is the hierarchic nature of the handouts in question- when the distributions where meant for the citizen body or when even other social groups were also included, the wealthiest and most socially prominent stood to earn the most.

So how did this form of investment on behalf of the ruling classes of Lycia furthered their interests? Looking into the sources of the 2nd century A.D. -both Latin and Greek- one can discern that emperors and parts of the nobility disapproved of such money distributions along with the gladiatorial and other games because in the end they offered one the one hand, a bartering tool for the less wealthy citizens that were expressing their indignation about the immense economic and political inequalities in their communities and on the other, a way for disaffected members of the elite to take advantage of social unrest and threaten peace in the provinces or even the emperor himself.

Impervious to these fears, the elite of Lycia seemed to believe that money distributions were an acceptable means of maintaining social peace and competing for offices and honors. The advantages of money distributions could not be ignored: first they were easily organised because they did not need extra expenses or a long time in order to take place, something that was useful when the elites faced demands for further munificence or emergencies; secondly, the offering of money to the populace exploited effectively the demands, expectations and beliefs of lower class citizens concerning the proper conduct of the rich within the community. This way, the oligarchy acquired the goodwill of the citizenry through an ephemeral rise of their buying power, in exchange for an infinitesimal fraction of their surpluses. Thirdly, as an element of ritualized politics they re-enforced the acquiescence of the citizen body towards the hierarchical and oligarchic nature of the polity, where as the distributions aimed only towards the city councils or the city representatives and officials of the koinon, bought out the notion of the separate character and the unified interest of the privileged elite.

Concluding, money distributions were possibly the most complete ideologically and effective as a political praxis solution to the problems that the elite of Lycia and Asia Minor in general faced for the successful election into office, the continuation of their privileged access to positions of power and the maintenance of the social hierarchy. The effectiveness of this mechanism of social power is reflected also on the creation of foundations for the continuation of the benefactions, responding to the established habit of the recipients and the need of the benefactors to continuously stress their presence, their aspirations and benefactions, as they organised at will, with bigger or lesser success, the public sphere of their homeland.