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## [G. B. Bowersock, Greek sophists in the Roman Empire - suite]

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### Présentation de la fiche

Cote**b023\_f0812**

Source**Boite\_023-18-chem | Philosophes. Sophistes.**

Langue**Français**

Type**FicheLecture**

Relation**Numérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730**

### Références éditoriales

Éditeur**équipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).**

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 19/03/2021 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

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was in every respect sensible, even predictable. This eloquent ambassador served many times afterwards on missions to the emperor; and we are told that at a time when Hadrian's favour was directed rather to Ephesus, Polemo so converted him to Smyrna that he was moved to bestow ten million drachmas upon the city. With those funds a corn market, a gymnasium, and a temple were built.<sup>1</sup> There exists an inscription from Smyrna which testifies to the effectiveness of Polemo with the emperor Hadrian: it refers to what was obtained from the emperor διὰ Ἀντωνίου Πολέμωνος.<sup>2</sup> This is explicit, official, and contemporary documentation of Philostratus' account of Polemo as an ambassador. The voice of Polemo was powerful even from the grave. He had been appointed ambassador on a matter of temple rights in Smyrna, but unfortunately his death prevented a personal appearance before the emperor. Yet the emperor, who will by now have been Antoninus Pius, demanded to hear the speech which Polemo had composed for the occasion, and on the strength of that posthumous appeal the embassy had a successful outcome.<sup>3</sup>

The ailing Aristides went to Rome only once, when he delivered the multitude of commonplaces which make up his address to Rome.<sup>4</sup> He was nevertheless able to use his influence and skill as a sophist in the interest of Smyrna by intercession with Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. And indeed, as Aristides himself realized, he owed some service to the city in view of his persistent and unorthodox refusals in the past to hold any public office or undertake any liturgy.<sup>5</sup> An earthquake laid Smyrna in ruins in 178: such an event was always an occasion for an embassy to the emperor. Funds had to be acquired for the costly business of rebuilding, and therefore Smyrna dispatched to Marcus and Commodus some unknown representatives. Although avoiding the journey to Rome, Aristides composed

<sup>1</sup> VS, p. 531.

<sup>2</sup> IGR 4. 1431, l. 33.

<sup>3</sup> VS, p. 540.

<sup>4</sup> Aristid. 26 Keil (ἐἰς Ῥώμην). Cf. 48. 60 Keil (on the journey to Rome). Cf. J. H. Oliver, *The Ruling Power* (1953), pp. 886-7; also for an account of what may be Aristides' original contribution in the speech, J. Bleicken, *NGA* (1966) 7, pp. 264-5. C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (1968), pp. 88-90, argues that the ἐἰς Ῥώμην was delivered in 155 on a second visit to Rome (for which, however, evidence is wanting).

<sup>5</sup> See Aristid. 20 Keil.

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