



CLEARCHUS

CLEARCHUS (b. ca. 390 or 410 b.c.e., the latter date based on Memnon's report of his age as fifty-eight years at his death in 352), tyrant of Pontic Heracleia (modern Ereğli) in 363-52 b.c.e. As a young man he studied for four years with Isocrates and Plato in Athens (Memnon, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* III/B, pp. 337-38, frag. 1; *Suda*, s.v. "Kléarkhos"). After his return home he became involved in factional struggles and was banished; he then led a band of mercenary troops in the service of the Persian satrap of neighboring Pontic Phrygia, Mithridates (son of [Ariobarzanes](#)), with whom he plotted to capture Heracleia in 364. When the oligarchs of Heracleia recalled Clearchus to arbitrate in their conflict with the populace, he betrayed both them and Mithridates, persuading the people to choose him as the true protector of their democracy (Justin, 16.4.10-16). He banished or killed the oligarchs and seized power in 364-63 b.c.e., ruling for twelve years (Diodorus, 15.81.5) with brutal rigor and ferocity. He was, however, a patron of learning and founded the first public library (Memnon, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* III/B, pp. 337-38, frag. 1). Clearchus's rise from leader of mercenary troops to tyrant of a city-state is typical of the unsettled period of the satrapal revolt against [Artaxerxes II](#) (ca. 405/4-359/8 b.c.e.) in Asia Minor. He was on friendly terms with the Persian court and sent ambassadors to both Artaxerxes II and [Artaxerxes III](#) (359/8-358/7 b.c.e.; Memnon, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* III/B, pp. 337-38, frag. 1). Obviously under the influence of eastern thought, he claimed divine descent, as a son of Zeus. In the twelfth year of his rule (353-52 b.c.e.) Clearchus fell victim to a conspiracy of aristocrats and was mortally wounded during celebrations of the festival of Dionysus (Memnon, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* III/B, pp. 337-38, frag. 1; Diodorus, 16.36.3; Justin,



16.5.12-16). Nevertheless, his son Timotheus (r. ca. 352-37), a minor, was named to succeed him, with Clearchus's brother Satyrus as regent for the first seven years.

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