

MITHRIDATES VI
AND
THE PONTIC KINGDOM

BLACK SEA STUDIES

9

THE DANISH NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION'S
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MITHRIDATES VI AND THE PONTIC KINGDOM

*Edited by
Jakob Munk Højte*

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Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom

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Introduction

Jakob Munk Højte

Interest in Mithridates VI Eupator, both scholarly and popular, has a long history. Renowned for toxicology, multilingualism and not least for his endurance in the long struggle with Rome, which eventually led to his downfall, Mithridates VI is one of the few personalities of antiquity that has been the main character in both poetry, historical fiction, plays and operas as well as in an abundance of scholarly literature.

11-13 January 2007, the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Black Sea Studies hosted an international conference on *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom* at the University of Aarhus with the aim of presenting the current state of research in the field and ongoing projects in the region.

The perception of Mithridates VI has changed dramatically over the past centuries. In the initial chapter, L. Summerer takes a historiographical tour from Late Antiquity to the present, which shows that every age has shaped the image of Mithridates to fit contemporary ideological currents. To Th. Mommsen (1854-1856) and Th. Reinach (1895) writing in the later half of the 19th century, Mithridates was in accordance with prevailing "orientalist" views the epitome of a cruel oriental despot, an Ottoman sultan as they styled him, and an opponent of Western civilization. In more recent scholarship the pendulum has swung more in favour of Mithridates, who can now be pictured as a philhellene king defending the Greeks against Roman aggression. This reflects the more critical view of Roman imperialism in the post-colonial world. Interestingly the body of evidence on which these assumptions were made has remained largely unchanged. One of the basic problems in the discussion is the lack of local sources to balance our view. The victor writes the history and any study of the Pontic Kingdom must to a large extent rely on later Roman authors writing for a Roman audience, who have predominantly pro-Roman views although not without some admiration for Mithridates. Once defeated there was no need for diminishing the opponent. This bias as well as the flavouring of current ideological concepts must be taken into careful consideration in order to give a more accurate account of Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom.

Next Chr. Marek offers an overview of the question of Hellenisation and Romanisation in northern Anatolia. Different scholars have presented surprisingly conflicting views on this matter. Some maintain, like the late Ju. Vinogradov (1997, 66), that Pontos was thoroughly Hellenised into the deepest valley through a conscious royal policy, while others rather see a conglomerate of

different ethnic groups held together by a basically Persian but very adaptable royal ideology (cf. Mitchell 2002). As this question deeply influences the way we view the Pontic Kingdom, a fundamental discussion of the premises for reaching these widely different conclusions is badly needed. What are the parameters of Hellenisation and Romanisation, and by which markers should we measure cultural change? Marek looks at markers such as language, onomastics, myth, calendars, and cultural and political institutions, which all show that by the Roman Imperial period, Pontos had become an integral part of the Graeco-Roman world. For the Hellenistic period the question is much more difficult because of the lack of sources apart for evidence concerning the king and the court.

Central to the discussion of Mithridates VI is of course the struggle with Rome. J.M. Madsen and B.C. McGing approach the question of who was responsible for the outbreak of the conflict between Pontos and Rome. Was Mithridates VI the hateful aggressor as the ancient sources suggest or an innocent victim of Roman imperialism? Like any other Hellenistic king, Mithridates had an ambition to enlarge his domain. He had conquered the northern and eastern regions of the Black Sea but in Asia Minor he faced Roman interests. The lengthy prelude to the war of Pontic expansion followed by Roman demands of withdrawal and compliance or the lack thereof by Mithridates shows the complex diplomatic situation of the time. How far he could go, short of outright military challenge to Rome, was difficult to gauge, but as McGing maintains, Mithridates clearly tried to find out. Madsen adds further factors. There were Roman senators eager to further their careers and the acts of the Roman commission in 89 BC had crucial impact on events. In addition there were expectations among the Greeks of Asia for a saviour king to relieve them from the Roman yoke, and Mithridates was a perfect cast for the role. Perhaps both sides were simply drawn into inevitable collision.

M.J. Olbrycht points out an often overlooked condition for the expansionist policies, namely the support of the Parthian Empire, which under Mithridates II the Great extended its sphere of influence to the borders of Pontos. Without his eastern flank covered and the financial support of the Arsakid king, Mithridates VI could not have embarked on his conquest of Asia Minor and the war with Rome, and the sudden death of Mithridates II in 87 BC followed by internal strife in Parthia may have been a contributing factor to the Pontic defeat.

In the cause of the Mithridatic Wars much attention was paid to the propagandistic struggle between Mithridates and Rome, since it was crucial to win the support of the Greek cities. Ilion held prime importance in this struggle because of the mythic past of the city. L. Ballesteros-Pastor unfolds the reports of the fighting over the city and the political implications of the portents of the city goddess Athena Ilias. Ballesteros-Pastor also draws attention to King Juba II of Mauretania as one of the primary sources for the history of Mithridates VI that may have been used later by Appianos and Pompeius Trogus. Juba was well-informed about Pontic affairs, not least because of his marriage with the

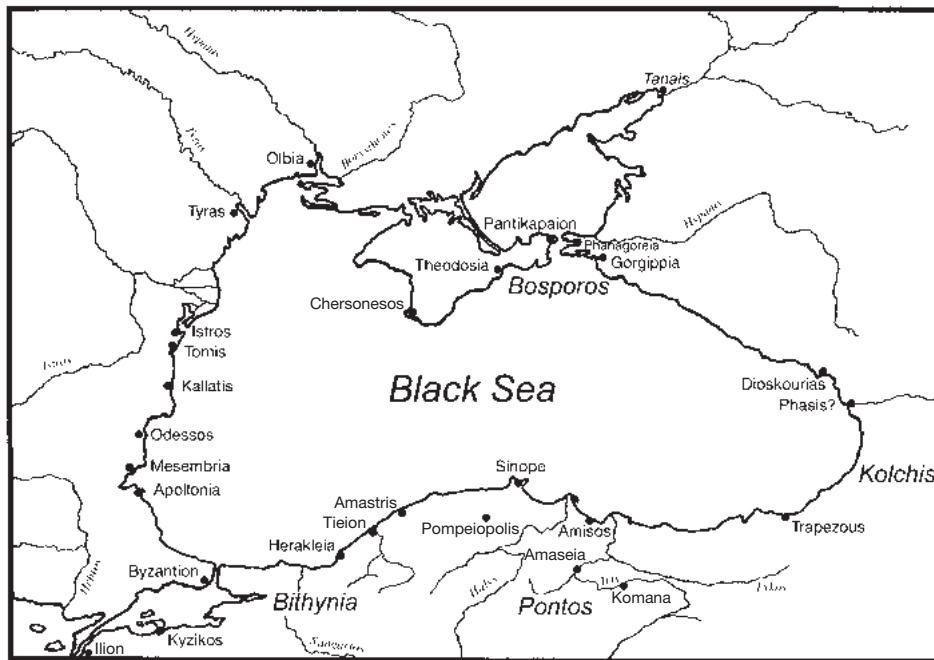


Fig. 1. The Black Sea region.

daughter of Archelaos of Kappadokia, who was a descendant of Mithridates' general of the same name.

Compared to our knowledge of Mithridates VI, sources to the earlier history of the Pontic Kingdom are virtually absent and even the succession of kings and their regnal years are still a matter of debate, which cannot be settled on the basis of the present evidence. O.L. Gabelko takes a fresh look at one of the sources for the dynastic history, the 9th century AD *Chronography* of George Synkellos, which has generally been disregarded because of its seeming inconsistencies. Gabelko suggests that the confusion about the number of kings in the Pontic and Bithynian royal houses results from the inclusion of two little known descendants of Mithridates VI, Orsobaris and Orodaltis, who apparently reigned as queens in Kios, the original seat of the Mithridatid house. He further notes that the starting points of the eras of the kingdoms of Asia Minor coincide with intermarriages with the Seleukid royal family, thus emphasising the importance of recognition by the Seleukid kings.

Another little known area concerns the administrative organisation of the Pontic Kingdom. How was control exercised over the territory? Højte suggests that the minting places of the civic bronze coinage may reflect the administrative division of the kingdom into *strategiai*, similar to the situation in the Kappadokian Kingdom as described by Strabon. Earlier these coins have been interpreted as an attempt to further *polis* structures and to foster local pride.

But several of the localities mentioned on the coins can hardly be described as cities. Rather the coins seem to refer to the fortresses that were the seats of the regional governors, and the coins were probably used to pay the local garrison.

The reign of Mithridates VI saw other innovations in the coin system of the Pontic Kingdom. First of all coins in other metals than gold and silver were introduced, and as a novelty in the Greek world coins were struck in brass and pure copper. T.N. Smekalova traces the spread of these coinages in the areas under Mithridatic influence in Asia Minor and the Bosporos. Striking coins in brass required access to zinc and knowledge of the difficult process of making the alloy, which made them difficult to falsify. This offered the possibility of assigning higher values to the coins in a strained financial situation. Only half a century later did brass and pure copper coins come into regular use again with the coin reform of Augustus.

F. de Callataÿ in his contribution for the first time catalogues the coins struck by the predecessors of Mithridates VI from the first issues under Mithridates III to Mithridates V. The study shows a surprisingly limited coin production in Pontos before Mithridates VI (86 known specimens). The striking of tetradrachms only equalled an estimated 34,000 drachms a year in the period 220-150 BC and under Mithridates V production nearly ceased. This makes the achievements of Mithridates VI even more impressive as he multiplied the rate of striking ten or twenty times. In addition he introduced the most precise dating of the coins in any coinage known in antiquity.

Royal self-representation is discussed by P.-A. Kreuz and J.M. Højte. Kreuz raises the question of how the kingship of Mithridates was perceived by the Greeks. Unfortunately the literary and archaeological record has left only few glimpses of how the king wanted to represent himself. The only really useful example is the monument in honour of Mithridates in the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi on Delos erected in 102/101 BC. Here Mithridates is surrounded by a portrait gallery of the king's friends and allies, which included other Hellenistic kings, Persian officials and Greek courtiers. The monument gave the visitor an impression of a resourceful king with international recognition and prestige fundamental to Hellenistic kingship.

J.M. Højte tries to establish a series of portraits attributable to Mithridates VI among the diverse group of late Hellenistic ruler portraits. A new addition to the list is a recently found head from Pantikapaion. The use of Alexander's image on the coins is also reflected in the sculpted portraits, but Herakles also played a certain role. Unfortunately we have little knowledge about how Mithridates represented himself to his subjects in Pontos, as the portraits have been found in Greek cities outside the realm.

One of the main problems in studying Pontos is the limited number of archaeological excavations and surveys carried out in northern Turkey and even the known monuments have hitherto not been studied to their full potential. One of the very few monuments of the Pontic Kings that has survived



Fig. 2. Pontos.

until the present are the five royal tombs in Amaseia, the first capital of the Kingdom. Although visible since antiquity they have until recently never been the subject of thorough investigation. In 2002, R. Fleischer initiated a project of measuring and reconstructing the tombs. Despite the loss of nearly all the added architectural details, it has been possible to reconstruct the tomb facades in great detail based on the cuttings for clamps in the rock. Furthermore the chronological sequence of the tombs has been firmly established. Contrary

to the common opinion that the kingdom became increasingly Hellenised over time, the tomb architecture shows the opposite tendency, as the earliest tomb most closely resemble Greek models, while the later tombs with archivolts instead of a columns and pediment may reflect local traditions instead. Fleischer ascribes the tombs to the five earliest kings of Pontos, Mithridates I to Pharnakes I, the latest tomb being unfinished when Pharnakes I moved the capital to the newly conquered city Sinope. This view is challenged in the following chapter by J.M. Højte, who suggests that Mithridates VI may also have been interred in Amaseia. After the death of Mithridates VI in 63 BC, Pompeius took the unusual step of giving his adversary a state funeral. A surprising honour for one of the strongest opponents Rome had faced. The reason was probably that Pompeius wanted to imitate Alexander the Great, who likewise had the body of his adversary buried in the tombs of his forefathers. In analogy with the rock-cut tombs of the Persian king outside Persepolis, the graves in Amaseia would have been the perfect setting for the funeral.

Temple states were of central importance to the religious life in the Pontic Kingdom, where three such religious communities are known. E. Sökmen traces the background for this peculiar type of states and discusses their function within the Mithridatic Kingdom and later in the Roman province. In 2004, D.B. Erciyas initiated a survey project at the site of the largest of the temple states in Pontos, Komana Pontike, in order to shed light on the settlement history of the site and its territory. Geophysical investigations were also carried out on the hill Hamamtepe generally considered to be the site of the temple to determine the extent of the site and to identify structures not visible on the ground. Although little Hellenistic material has been found so far, the project holds great potential for extending our knowledge of the site and its organisation in the Mithridatic period.

S.Ju. Saprykin focuses on the political aspects of the use of religion in Pontos, particularly the royal propaganda. It is characteristic that the gods favoured by the kings often were syncretistic with Greek, Anatolian and Persian elements, which could be perceived differently by the various ethnic groups living in the kingdom. In Saprykin's opinion the Greek element was always the strongest with Zeus as the protector of the royal house. Although the Mithridatids were of Persian descent there is little evidence for Persian religious beliefs and practices apart from the worship of Anaitis in Zela. However, much of the source material dates to the Roman period and the contemporary sources are mostly coins, which primarily had a Greek audience.

Whereas there has been a dearth of excavations in Pontos, the situation is very different in the Bosporan region. Here many excavations have detected settlement changes and construction of fortresses around the turn of the second and first century BC when Bosporos was incorporated in the Pontic Kingdom. It seems that this reorientation of the infrastructure and the rising importance of fortified sites in many ways reflect the way Pontos was

organised. One of these sites, the fortified settlement Kuru Bař east of Theodosia on the border of the Bosporan territory, is discussed by A.V. Gavrilov. Here it appears that a Mithridatic garrison was placed to control the land route from Theodosia to the Crimean Mountains. Of particular interest is the large number of coins found at the site spanning the period from the mid-second to the late first century BC.

E.A. Molev discusses the status of Bosporos within the framework of the Pontic Empire. He argues that Bosporos was fully incorporated into the kingdom as a province ruled by a satrap. From the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War, this position was held by sons of Mithridates, which underlines the close relationship between the two parts of the kingdom.

A. Mastrocinque in his contribution makes the bold suggestion that the mechanism found in the Antikythera shipwreck is in fact the *sphaera* of Bilaros mentioned by Strabon as taken by Lucullus from Sinope. If correct this could imply that the cargo of the ship including the many statues may have come from the southern shore of the Black Sea as well.

In the contributions old questions concerning Mithridates VI Eupator and the Pontic Kingdom have been reconsidered and new questions have been raised. It is the hope that the present volume will encourage further research and that new projects in the region will open new possibilities and approaches. More archaeological investigations in Pontos are urgently needed to draw a more complete picture of this important late Hellenistic kingdom.

Finally, the Centre wishes to thank Robin Wildfang and Stacey Cozart for linguistically revising the manuscripts.

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The Search for Mithridates. Reception of Mithridates VI between the 15th and the 20th Centuries

Lâtife Summerer

*"dont les seuls défaites ont fait presque
toute la gloire de trois plus grands
capitaines de la république"*

Jean Racine, *Mithridate*

Introduction

"Il n'y a guère de nom plus connu que celui de Mithridate". This is a quotation from the preface of Jean Racine's tragedy *Mithridate*, which was published in 1673. Today, more than three hundred years later nobody would agree with this. Familiarity with Mithridates seems to have decreased enormously since the 17th century. But what was the reason for the high level of recognition enjoyed by the last Pontic king at this time? What knowledge of Mithridates did people living in Europe in the middle of the 17th century have? How did they perceive and interpret the historical facts found in the ancient written sources? What opinions did Mithridates elicit in scholarly and popular thinking? Through which imagined constructs was knowledge of the last Pontic king generated?

This paper deals with the reception of Mithridates between the 15th and the 20th centuries. The last Pontic king was the subject of scientific works as well as a source of inspiration in popular literature and opera over these centuries. My aim is to show how certain historical facts involving Mithridates were used, distorted, overlooked and finally constructed into positive and negative images of him. In order to understand the changes that occurred over time it is necessary to focus our attention not on Mithridates, but on those who have interpreted him.¹

Mithridates as the epitome of multilingualism

Throughout the centuries, curious legends about the extraordinary intellectual achievement of the last Pontic king have been told. Mithridates supposedly had a prodigious memory. Pliny the Elder and other Roman historians report that he could speak the languages of all the twentytwo nations he ruled.² Since the 16th century, the documentation and description of the multitude and diversity of languages have been connected with the name “Mithridates”. In 1555, the Swiss scholar Conrad Gesner published a linguistic encyclopaedia with the title *Mithridates sive de differentiis linguarum* (about the differentiation of languages). Gesner may also have used Mithridates’ name, because the Pontic king was an opponent of the Roman Empire. The protestant Gesner was as much opposed to universal Roman Catholic power as Mithridates was opposed to Rome’s hegemony.³ Later, other linguists continued to associate increased knowledge of the languages of the world with the multilingualism of Mithridates. Johann Christoff Adelung, a German philologist and grammarian of the early nineteenth century, for instance, entitled his multivolume encyclopaedic work *Mithridates, oder allgemeine Sprachenkunde*.⁴ The most recent comparative linguistic work by Jürgen Trabant, published in 2003, again bears the name of the last Pontic king.⁵

Mithridates as the epitome of botany and antidotes

Throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Mithridates was associated with botany and pharmacology through the reading of Pliny, Justinus and other ancient authors. Some plants still bear his name, such as *mithridatia* and *eupatoria*.⁶ Mithridates supposedly sought to harden himself against poisoning by taking increasing sub-lethal doses of those poisons of which he knew until he was able to tolerate lethal doses.⁷ Out of fear of being poisoned by one of his many enemies, Mithridates fashioned a universal antidote, *antidotum mithridaticum*, which consisted of dozens of ingredients. After Mithridates was defeated by Pompeius, a notebook was found in the king’s archives with a prescription for an antidote, which, modestly, consisted of two dried walnuts, two figs, and twenty leaves of rue pounded together with a pinch of salt (Plin. *HN* 25.7). Among other documents were detailed accounts of medical plants, together with specimens and notes on each, all of which Pompeius ordered to be translated into Latin. Pliny (*HN* 29.25) describes a Mithridatic antidote with fifty-four ingredients and remarks that he is sceptical of theriacs such as *mithridaticum* with their countless ingredients.⁸ The practice of protecting oneself against poison by gradually self-administering non-lethal doses, aiming to develop immunity, is called mithridatizing.⁹ The pharmacological wisdom of Mithridates remained in the knowledge of humanity for centuries. For instance, it turns up in the poem *Terence, This is Stupid Stuff* by the English poet and classical scholar Alfred Edward Houseman in his cycle

of poems *A Shropshire Lad*,¹⁰ and in a poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Mithridates Analysis*.¹¹

The death of Mithridates in popular literature

Giovanni Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*

It was in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that printed editions of the ancient writers became available in their original languages and in translation. As the ancient sources became familiar, interest in history and historical personalities grew. Writers like Dante and Boccaccio transferred ancient history into their own worlds of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Among many other important works Giovanni Boccaccio wrote the moralistic biographical book *De casibus virorum illustrium*



Fig. 1. "Mithridate VI assiégé et mort de Mithridate VI" by Boccaccio. Book illustration from *De casibus illustrium virorum* (1355-1360), French translation Laurent de Premierfait. France, 15th century AD (France, Lyon).



Fig. 2. "Mithridate VI assiégé et mort de Mithridate VI" by Boccaccio. Book illustration from *De casibus illustrium virorum* (1355-1360), French translation Laurent de Premierfait. France, 15th century AD (France, Lyon).

between 1357 and 1363, which tells of the fall of famous men in antiquity. This biography includes Mithridates side-by-side with Pompeius Magnus, Caesar, Marcus Antonius and Kleopatra. The French translation of Boccaccio's work by Laurent de Premierfait, first published in 1400 contains richly illustrated pages, four of them portraying the death of Mithridates.¹² The first shows the hopeless situation of Mithridates (Fig. 1). His castle is already surrounded by numerous Roman soldiers; the king portrayed as a beardless young man waits outside the castle for his execution, kneeling with clasped hands while his slave strikes him with his sword. In the

second illustration Mithridates is shown as an old man wearing a crown and a cuirass. Rather than depicting the slave murdering Mithridates, the artist portrayed an armoured Roman soldier. The soldier is thrusting his sword into the waist of the falling king where the blood flows down along his left leg. The motif of the falling king seems to be caricaturing Mithridates as slightly ridiculous. The third version of the death of Mithridates again portrays the king as an old man with a long white beard clad in the fashion of Medieval rulers (Fig. 2). He is labelled with his name to facilitate identification. Mithridates is shown kneeling at a distance from his castle while his killer approaches with a raised sword from behind. Clasping his hands on his breast the king is depicted very much in the pose of a Christian praying. The final picture portrays the scene after his killing with the headless body of Mithridates lying on a plank while his killer continues cutting off his limbs with a knife.

Comparing these illustrations with the ancient sources, the distortions and fantasies of the people living in Europe at the end of the 15th century concerning the historical person of Mithridates become clear. All details of architecture, weaponry, clothing and other accessories are in the Medieval tradition. It is furthermore noteworthy that the image of Mithridates does not differ either in appearance or in posture and gesture from the other famous men of antiquity illustrated in Boccaccio's book.

Tragedies of the 17th century

In the 17th century, the name of the Pontic king frequently recurs in European literature and plays. After the Italian dramatist Alerio Corbellini¹³ it was the French literature tradition, which had the widest impact.¹⁴ Gautier de Costes de La Calprenède (1610-1663), a royal guardian and chamberlain of Louis XIII, was the first French author to write a tragedy about the Pontic king, which appeared under the title *La mort de Mithridate* in 1637.¹⁵ Probably stimulated by Calprenède's success, Jean Racine, the most important French classisist, devoted another tragedy based on Mithridates, which was published in Bourgogne in 1673. After his early efforts *La Thébaïde* and *Alexandre le Grand*, *Mithridate* marks the zenith of Racine's career. It was Louis XIV's favourite play and it was much admired at court and in public, as quoted above in the introductory remarks.¹⁶ In the preface, Racine claimed that his play is based on historical sources,¹⁷ but in fact Racine only uses the names and the conflict between Rome and the Pontic Kingdom and the volte-face of Pharnakes from the ancient sources. The story concentrates on the death of Mithridates,¹⁸ but it is full of love, jealousy and treachery. In his account, Pharnakes and Xiphares are sons of Mithridates by different mothers and are *frères ennemis*. Pharnakes is cast as the "bad" and Xiphares as the "good" son. They are brought together in Nymphée by the false news of their father's death. Pharnakes has no qualms about pursuing Monimé, believing his father is dead, or about

revealing Xiphares' love for her to his father, or even about betraying his father to the Romans. Upon his father's unexpected return, Xiphares is in full agreement with Monimé. Monimé refuses to marry Mithridates and remains unaffected by his pleas and threats. In the final scene, the dying Mithridates gives Monimé to Xiphares, thanking his son for providing him, as a final spectacle, with the sight of the Romans once again put to flight.

Neither the Oedipal love story, nor the killing of Mithridates by the Romans can be traced back to the ancient sources. With such basic, non-historic motives as love and hatred the plot seems to have been readily accessible to the audiences of 17th century France. At any rate, the motif of forbidden love between the son and the father's bride is evidently derived from the novel *Don Carlos*, which was published by Abbé César Vichard de Saint Real in 1672.¹⁹ The motif of honourable death by suicide was appropriated from the tradition of the baroque *belle mort*²⁰ in that the historical fact that Mithridates was killed by a slave was neglected.

The principal attribute, which Racine assigns to Mithridates is virtue. With his strength of mind and unfaltering courage, generosity, magnanimity and self-restraint, Racine's Mithridates very much resembles the hero of his tragedy *Alexandre le Grand*.²¹ Thus, both these plays by Racine are seen as a celebration of the state and monarch.²²

Operas of the 17th and 18th centuries

Some thirty years after its first performance, Jean Racine's tragedy was translated into Italian by Parini and set to music by Alessandro Scarlatti for the theatre San Giovanni Crisostomo in Venice. The first performance was in 1707. In the following years, a number of libretti were written and composed for operas with the names *Mitridate*, *Mitridate, rè di Ponto* and *Mitridate Eupatore* respectively by several authors.²³ The libretto by Benedetto Pasqualigo *Mitridate re di Ponto, vincitor di se stesso*, composed by Giovanni Maria Capelli in Venice in 1723, generally adopts Racine's model, but differs in a few details. However, Leopoldo Vilati's *Mitridate*, composed in Berlin in 1750, largely changes Racine's model. By transforming Racine's play in five parts to an opera in three stages he gives the figure of Pharnakes more importance. In a battle scene, Pharnakes leads the Romans against the troops of his father. After his defeat he is sentenced to death, a sentence later commuted to a life sentence by his father, and finally he participates in the happy end of the opera.²⁴

More distant from Racine's play, the libretto of Frigimelica Roberti, *Mitridate Eupatore*, deals with an early episode from the biography of Mithridates. His mother Stratonica together with her lover Farnace kills her husband Mitridate Euergetes and rules the Pontic Kingdom. Later the young Mithridates kills Farnace and Stratonica together with his wife Issicratea. Mithridates ascends the throne and swears eternal hostility against Rome.²⁵

Another aspect of Mithridates' life was acted out in the *Mitridate* of Apostolo Zeno, a love story built around his elder son Farnace with a happy ending. Zeno's libretto was very popular and adopted in various versions by several authors and composers, among them Giuseppe Sarti's *Mitridate à Sinope*, first staged in Florence in 1779.²⁶

Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi, a member of the Accademia dei Trformati in Turin, wrote a libretto for Quirino Gasparini's opera *Mitridate*, adopting largely the play of Racine.²⁷ This textbook was also the source for Mozart's first opera. When Mozart composed it he was only fourteen years old.²⁸ Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto* remains the best known among the more than twentyfive Mithridates-operas. Racine's tragedy was only slightly changed:²⁹ Monimé becomes Aspasia, Phodime and Arcas are omitted, but the motif of the Oedipal love story originally adopted from Don Carlos remains. New figures such as the Roman tribune Marzio and the Parthian Princess Ismene are incorporated without changing the original dramaturgy of Racine.

Aspasia, betrothed to Mithridates, is loved by his two sons, Pharnakes and Xiphares, but she reciprocates the love of the latter. Pharnakes conspires with the Roman Marcius against his father, but Mithridates, rumoured dead in his struggle against the Romans, returns, fearing the disloyalty of both of his sons, but is reassured by Arbates (the Governor of Nymphaea) of the loyalty of Xiphares. Pharnakes is betrothed to the Parthian princess Ismene, whom he rejects, and Mithridates, now about to renew his war against Pompeius, distrusts Aspasia and imprisons both his sons when Pharnakes reveals the love of Xiphares for Aspasia, although Xiphares has honourably decided to leave Aspasia and Pontos. Aspasia now rejects Mithridates, who sends her poison, which Xiphares stops her from drinking. In battle, the king is victorious against the Romans but is mortally wounded, and returns to unite Aspasia and Xiphares and to forgive Pharnakes, whom he joins with Ismene in marriage.

The opera won an enthusiastic reception in Milano and other European centres, Mithridates' name was celebrated more than ever.³⁰ The operas of the 18th century present Mithridates as the tragic heroic monarch. Despite some dark sides of his character, Mithridates is conveyed as a great ruler showing his illustrious death at peace with his perfidious son Pharnakes.

Mithridates in scholarly literature

Charles Rollin's *Histoire Romaine*

After the 17th century, Roman history became common knowledge. Historians engaged in systematic studies in order to discover the role of the personality in history. Charles Rollin's multi-volume *Histoire Romaine* appeared in the 1730's and went through many editions in both French and English during the course of the century.³¹ His narrative account is largely based on ancient sources although it is avowedly complicated, uncritical and somewhat inac-



Fig. 3. *"La mort de Mithridate"*, engraving by Gravelot.

curate. Volume eight includes the Mithridatic Wars, in which the personality of Mithridates is considered.

In general terms, Rollin portrays the Pontic king as a virtuous ruler and the greatest enemy of the Romans. The dark sides of the character of the Pontic king are not hidden, but Rollin does not display a tendency to characterize Mithridates as a bloodthirsty brute, as later, especially in the 19th century, historians do. He depicts the negative and positive traits of the personality of the king referring to an anecdote during the siege of Rhodes. The story is told by Valerius Maximus (5.2) and is accepted as authentic by Rollin:³²

"Pendant ce siège, deux traits nous donnent lieu de remarquer dans Mithridate un caractère prompt à la vengeance, mais reconnaissant des services qui lui avaient été rendus. Dans le combat naval dont il a été fait mention, pendant que Mithridate fait avancer son vaisseau tantôt vers un endroit, tantôt vers l'autre, pour animer les siens, ou leur donner du secours, un vaisseau de sa flotte, qui était de l'île de Chio, par la malhabileté sans doute de ceux qui le montaient, vient frapper le sien et le mit en quelque danger. Le roi irrité fit pendre le pilote et contre-maître, et étendit dans la suite les effets de sa colère sur tout l'île de Chio, comme nous dirons en son lieu. Cette rigueur est sans doute condamnable; mais on peut s'empêcher de louer beaucoup ce qu'il fit par rapport à Leonicus, sujet fidèle, qui avait témoigné un grand zèle pour



Fig. 4. “Bachide Eunuko invitata da Mitridate a Monimé”, engraving by Bartolomeo Pinelli (after Colonna 2006, 229).

son prince dans des occasions périlleuses. Ce Léonicus ayant été pris dans quelqu’une des actions de ce siège, Mithridate, pour le ravoir seul, rendit tous les prisonniers rhodiens qu’il avait dans son camp”. In this passage Rollin contrasts the Pontic king’s lack of self-control, his cruel and unrestrained behaviour with his gratitude and generosity, and in doing so he assesses the personality of Mithridates more objectively.

Rollin’s *Histoire romaine* was much read in the 18th and 19th century and at the same time a source for neo-classicists’ visual interpretations of history.³³ Many European painters, sculptures and engravers undertook commissions to illustrate scenes from history reading Rollin’s narratives on the scenes they wished to represent. The French artist Gravelot engraved a book illustration, which conveys the dramatic dying scene of Mithridates (Fig. 3). The old king is sitting on a *kline* in his palace surrounded by three dead women with two soldiers attacking him. Mithridates is about to be killed by a spear. Stretching his right arm forwards the king seems to be craving his speedy death. A kantharos-like vessel and a kylix on the table next to the *kline* refer to the Mithridates’ attempted suicide, which was unsuccessful because of his immunity to poison. Renouncing historical accuracy the artist combines in his illustration the death of Mithridates in Pantikapaion with the mass murder of his family in Pharnakeia. New archaeological discoveries of the 18th cen-

tury enabled the artist to seek to recreate the world of antiquity using ancient architectural elements, furniture, clothing, and other accessories.

The Italian artist Bartolemeo Pinelli also read Rollin and drew inspiration from his reading.³⁴ His famous series *Istoria romana* (1816) consists of endless illustrations of historical events in ancient Rome. Concerning the story of Mithridates, Pinelli did not draw the death of the Pontic king, but the death of his favourite wife Monime in Pharnakeia (Fig. 4). On the basis of the narratives of Plutarch (Luc. 18.2-6) and Appianos (*Mith.* 12, 82), Rollin recounts the story dramatically: The eunuch Bacchides communicated the order of the king to Monime that she had the choice of whatever manner she might deem easiest and most painless. Monime snatched the diadem from her head, fastened it round her neck, and hanged herself. But her diadem quickly broke in two. Following this unsuccessful suicide attempt she cried: "O cursed bauble, could you not serve me even in this office?". Pinelli illustrates exactly this last scene: Monime sits on the *kline*. Her gesture with the open right hand indicates that she has just thrown the diadem away, which lies underfoot. It is interesting to note that Bacchides is portrayed as a brutal hangman carrying a strange dagger with a pointed blade.

Mithridates in Mommsen's Römische Geschichte

In the course of the 19th century, scholarly interest in the historical personality of Mithridates increased. Several doctoral dissertations were written at German universities and biographical articles were devoted to Mithridates.³⁵ But it was Theodor Mommsen who first opened the way for a new perception of the Pontic king. Mommsen, the greatest historian of antiquity in the 19th century, wrote the three volumes of his narrative account of Roman history up to 46 BC in the 1850's. For this achievement he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1902.

The contradictory aspects of Mommsen's view of the Roman Empire, his preconceptions and political convictions have been discussed in all their complexity by Alfred Heuss and George Peabody Gooch.³⁶ There is no need to repeat them here. I will only give a brief overview of Mommsen's perception of Mithridates.

Chapter 8 of the fourth book (volume two) of the *Römische Geschichte* (devoted to the Mithridatic Wars) contains the hardest criticism of Mithridates ever formulated up to the date of its publication. Mommsen describes the Pontic king as a voluptuous, dissipated, violent oriental ruler. Comparing him to Ottoman rulers such as Mehmed II and Suleiman the Magnificent, he frequently calls him sultan.³⁷ What the German historian criticizes in Mithridates was mainly his lack of capacity to rule: "This strange combination of a policy of peace at any price with a policy of conquest was certainly in itself untenable, and was simply a fresh proof that Mithridates did not belong to the class of genuine statesmen; he knew neither how to prepare for conflict like king

Philip nor how to submit like king Attalus, but in the true style of a sultan was perpetually fluctuating between a greedy desire of conquest and the sense of his own weakness". Mithridates is accused of being a false philhellene. In Mommsen's mind, Mithridates only pretended to have an interest in Greek culture in order to influence the Greek population of Asia Minor. Mommsen interprets Mithridates' fondness for Greek literature and art as oriental pomp and remarks: "He, Mithridates, satisfied his intellectual needs with superstition and dream readings. His interest for Greek mysteries was only a raw adoption of Hellenic civilization. He liked Greek art and music, this meant he merely collected precious objects: "Such a person he was; he resembled a sultan".³⁸ All faults of the Pontic king were identified as typical oriental characteristics. Here the author is referring to the Ephesian Vesper: "The horrible orders were except for in a few districts, such as the island of Cos punctually executed, and eighty, or according to other accounts, one hundred and fifty thousand innocent and defenceless men, women, and children were slaughtered in cold blood in one day in Asia Minor; a fearful execution, in which a good opportunity for getting rid of debts and the Asiatic servile willingness to perform any executioner's office at the bidding of the sultan played at least as much part as the comparatively noble feeling of revenge". Further on, Mommsen adds: "This Ephesian massacre was altogether a mere meaningless act of brutally blind revenge, which obtained a false semblance of grandeur simply through the colossal proportions in which the character of sultanic rule was displayed. The sultan again resorted to the most violent expedients".³⁹ In fact, such strongly negative attitudes towards Mithridates are lacking in the Roman tradition. To the best of my knowledge, there is no precedent for the depiction of Mithridates as an inhuman Turkish sultan who tortures to death his opponents and even his own mother, brothers and sons. Mommsen's concept is simple: Mithridates was an opponent of Rome, an enemy of civilization, as much as the Turks were the enemies of modern Western culture.

Mommsen's concept, however, contained a dilemma. Ruthlessness and bloodiness and polygamy were by no means only oriental features and were quite usual in the Greek and Roman world. The Macedonian king Alexander the Great, often glorified by modern historians, not only killed many thousands of Persians, but also murdered his best friends and other antagonistic Greeks.⁴⁰ Likewise some Roman emperors, especially the Julio-Claudians, murdered even their own mothers, sisters and brothers. Mommsen avoided facing these questions. He never wrote the fourth volume of his work on the imperial period. Skipping the principate,⁴¹ his *Römische Geschichte* continues with Late Antiquity.

The lack of interest in Mommsen's views on the age of the emperors and his unwillingness to complete his *Römische Geschichte* have been commented on felicitously by the East German writer Heiner Müller in a poem, in which he compares it with his own writer's block in the aftermath of the collapse of socialism:⁴²

I understood for the first time your writer's block
 Comrade Professor with respect to the age of the Caesars
 As is commonly known
 The happy era of Nero
 Knowing the unwritten text to be a wound from which the blood
 comes that nurses no fame
 And the gasping lacuna in your historical work
 Was a physical pain in my
 How much longer breathing body⁴³

Mommsen's reception of Mithridates as a cruel voluptuous Ottoman sultan fits perfectly to an orientalist worldview, which presupposes an ambivalent fixity in the difference between "Europeans" and "Orientals" in the scholarly and popular thinking of the 19th century.⁴⁴ In fact, Theodor Mommsen was no exception to this approach. Eduard Meyer, who was Mommsen's son in law, also adopts the concept of the oriental ruler Mithridates in his habilitation thesis, *Geschichte des Königreichs Pontus*, published in 1879. Comparing him with Harun-al-Reshid, Meyer reproduces Mommsen's negative image of Mithridates.⁴⁵ This negative reception of Mithridates was also shared by Théodore Reinach in his well-known biography of Mithridates published in 1890 (German translation in 1895).⁴⁶ Accentuating the "ungreekness" of Mithridates, Reinach remarks that the image of the king on the coins also differs from the perfect profiles of the Greeks. His broad nostrils, thick lips and fleshy chin demonstrate, according to Reinach, the self-indulgence of a sultan.⁴⁷ Contrary to Mommsen, Reinach does not question the intellectual capacities of the Pontic king, in particular his multilingualism, but Mithridates differs exactly in this linguistic competence from other Hellenistic kings who usually only spoke Greek.⁴⁸ Reinach concludes that the Pontic king was not only opposed to the Romans but was also an enemy of European culture.⁴⁹ It is surely traces of this tradition which occur when in the *Griechische Geschichte* by Hermann Bengtson first published in 1956, we still read the following comment: "the plan of the Ephesian Vesper could only be conceived in the brain of an Asiatic barbarian".⁵⁰

The latest appearance of the reception of Mithridates as a "sanguine, oriental sultan" is to be found in the narrative biographical account *Mitridate. Il nemico mortale di Roma* published by Giuseppe Antonelli in 1992. Interestingly, Antonelli's book contains illustrations of many Hittite and Assyrian and other oriental monuments apparently in order to show that Mithridates belonged to the world of the ancient Near East. It is still on the basis of this tradition that Italian journalists compare Mithridates with Osama Bin Laden in discussing the Roman analogies for "American Empire" in newspapers and magazines.⁵¹

Mithridates in the 20th century

In general, the 20th century image of Mithridates has been more positive. The few negative judgments of him have largely been survivals of the 19th century tradition noted previously. It was particularly during the second half of the twentieth century that the oriental sultan Mithridates gradually disappeared. Inverting the 19th century concept a new image of Mithridates as the Greek liberator from Roman repression has been constructed. In the political context of post-war Germany, Alfred Heuss, after dealing with Mommsen's formation as a historian of the 19th century,⁵² remarks in his *Römische Geschichte*, first published in 1960, that Mithridates was indeed not a barbarian, rather, he only had the liberation of Greek civilization in mind.⁵³

The historical novelist Alfred Duggan published a much-read biography of Mithridates in 1958 and used the final line of Houseman's poem as his title "He died old, Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus". Duggan even contrasts the civilized Greek king Mithridates with the bloody-minded Romans and in the prologue of his book remarks: "In the course of their amazing expansion, the Romans collided with peoples of an older culture, peoples who had learned the good life and could live it, in everything but military skill superior to the blunt, uncouth farmers of central Italy. To the Hellenised East, Rome could offer nothing but the grasping hand of the tax-farmer and the blood-drinking sword of the legionary. Especially in Asia Minor the Romans were resisted, by civilized men who regarded them as savages. This is a study of the greatest hero of that resistance".⁵⁴

Some Greek scholars present Mithridates as the last advocate of Greek civilization in the Black Sea region.⁵⁵ Drawing parallels between enemies past and present, that is to say between the Romans and the Turks, the latter are now accused of having eliminated Greek culture in Pontos once and for all in 1922 and Mithridates has been considered as the forerunner of the Pontic Greeks and their ambitions.

In a trend that began in the 1980's, scholars have begun to investigate and review the traditional concepts, and now seek to draw a more coherent and objective picture of Mithridates.⁵⁶ Nowadays however, this seems only to be of interest to the academic community. Mithridates is among the historical figures, who no longer inspire interest in wider circles. There are neither exhibitions nor television documentaries nor movies about Mithridates. To my knowledge, the only popular account of Mithridates that has appeared in recent years is Michael Curtis Ford's novel *The Last King. Rome's Greatest Enemy* (2004). Recounting the tale from the perspective of Pharnakes, Ford presents Mithridates as a brilliant king and as the greatest enemy who ever faced the Romans. Through Pharnakes' eyes, we see how Mithridates sought to create a "New Greece" in Asia Minor as a cultural alternative to the Roman Republic's rapidly expanding empire.

Conclusion

A critical appraisal of scholarly and popular writings over five centuries reveals clearly the qualitative and quantitative differences in various receptions of the Pontic king, even though the available textual sources remained unchanged.

By the end of the 14th century the historical person of Mithridates becomes popular with the work of Boccaccio on the “fate of illustrious men”. In the 15th and 16th century the image of Mithridates alters from being an allegory of multilingualism to a metaphor for toxicology. Tragedies and operas of the 17th and 18th centuries concentrate on the death of Mithridates. The scene of the dying Mithridates – exemplifying his tragic fate – is without a doubt the most popular subject. Among some twentyfive operas based on Jean Racine’s libretto from the 1807 work of Alessandro Scarlatti onwards, Mozart’s *Mitridate, re di Ponto* remains the best known. From Theodor Mommsen to Théodore Reinach, scholarship judged Mithridates as a cruel oriental ruler, comparing him with Ottoman sultans through an orientalist worldview. However, since the second half of the 20th century scholars react against this negative tendency by qualifying disapproving comments in the Roman written sources. In scholarly and popular writings, from the middle of the 20th century onwards, the image of Mithridates is transformed from that of grand enemy of the Romans and Western civilization to liberator of Hellenism.

Both sides of the character of Mithridates, positive and negative, are always present though accentuated differently. The judgements of modern historians on the personality of Mithridates differ strongly although their historical research is based on the same primary sources. This leads us to assume tentatively that positive and negative receptions of Mithridates were emphasised for ideological reasons. Without exceeding oversimplification, I suggest that the Pontic king was little more than a pretext, an abstract pattern which anyone could alter to fit the particular shape dictated by political circumstances, individual convictions and prejudices. This does not deny the value of previous scholarship but encourages moving away from the ideological concepts oscillating between the poles oriental despot and Greek liberator to new approaches to the study of the last Pontic king. Critical review of the past portrayals of Mithridates and how these were perceived by the public can make us more conscious about the cultural and political biases of our own times.

Notes

- 1 In this paper I will not pursue my subject chronologically but rather take a more thematic approach and consider the contexts in which the name of Mithridates appears. A complete compilation of available material is not intended.
- 2 Plin. *HN* 7.24.28; 25.3.6; Quint. 9.2.50.
- 3 Braun 1990.

- 4 Adelung 1806.
- 5 Tarabant 2003, 9.
- 6 Watson 1966, 33-43.
- 7 Just. *Epit.* 37.2: "During his boyhood his life was attempted by plots on the part of his guardians, who, mounting him on a restive horse, forced him to ride and hurl the javelin; but when these attempts failed, as his management of the horse was superior to his years, they tried to cut him off by poison. He, however, being on his guard against such treachery, frequently took antidotes, and so fortified himself, by exquisite preventives, against their malice, that when he was an old man, and wished to die by poison, he was unable".
- 8 Plin. *HN* 29.24-25: "The Mithridatic antidote is composed of fifty-four ingredients, no two of them having the same weight, while of some is prescribed one sixtieth part of one denarius. Which of the gods, in the name of Truth, fixed these absurd proportions? No human brain could have been sharp enough. It is plainly a showy parade of the art, and a colossal boast of science". Further remarks of ancient authors on Mithridatic antidote: Cass. Dio 37.13; Gell. 17.16; App. *Mith.* 16, 111.
- 9 Mithridatizing has been used as a plot in the popular literature, among others Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*; Yoshiaki Kawajiri's *Ninja Scroll*; Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* and William Goldman's *The Princess Bride*.
- 10 Houseman 1896, "Terence, This is Stupid Stuff" (lines 59-76):

There was a king reigned in the East:
 There, when kings will sit to feast,
 They get their fill before they think
 With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
 He gathered all that springs to birth
 From the many-venomed earth;
 First a little, thence to more,
 He sampled all her killing store;
 And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
 Sate the king when health went round.
 They put arsenic in his meat
 And stared aghast to watch him eat;
 They poured strychnine in his cup
 And shook to see him drink it up:
 They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:
 Them it was their poison hurt
 - I tell the tale that I heard told.
 Mithridates, he died old.

- 11 Emerson 1847:

I cannot spare water or wine,
 Tobacco-leaf, or poppy, or rose;
 From the earth-poles to the Line,
 All between that works or grows,
 Every thing is kin of mine.

Give me agates for my meat,
 Give me cantharids to eat,
 From air and ocean bring me foods,
 From all zones and altitudes.

From all natures, sharp and slimy,
 Salt and basalt, wild and tame,
 Tree, and lichen, ape, sea-lion,
 Bird and reptile be my game.

Ivy for my fillet band,
 Blinding dogwood in my hand,
 Hemlock for my sherbet cull me,
 And the prussic juice to lull me,
 Swing me in the upas boughs,
 Vampire-fanned, when I carouse.

Too long shut in strait and few,
 Thinly dieted on dew,
 I will use the world, and sift it,
 To a thousand humors shift it,
 As you spin a cherry.
 O doleful ghosts, and goblins merry,
 O all you virtues, methods, might;
 Means, appliances, delights;
 Reputed wrongs, and braggart rights;
 Smug routine, and things allowed;
 Minorities, things under cloud!
 Hither! take me, use me, fill me,
 Vein and artery, though ye kill me;
 God! I will not be an owl,
 But sun me in the Capitol.

- 12 Boccaccio 1400.
- 13 Corbellini 1604.
- 14 The English playwrights Nathaniel Lee and John Dryden should also be noted, see Haupt 1916.
- 15 Rosendorfer (2003, 179) is wrong when he states that the name of Mithridates first appeared in the play of La Calprenède in 1637. As has been noted above, it was in the play by the Italian dramatist Arelino Corbellini in 1604.
- 16 Kuizenga 1978, 280.
- 17 Racine refers to Florus, Plutarch, Cassius Dio and Appianos.
- 18 Racine (III,17): "la morte de Mithridate est l'action de ma tragedie".
- 19 Rosendorfer 2003, 180.
- 20 Kuizenga 1978, 282.
- 21 Kuizenga 1978, 284-285.
- 22 Kuizenga 1978, 282.
- 23 Rosendorfer 2003, 179-180.
- 24 Adlung 1996, 33.

- 25 Apparently ignoring the written tradition on the early biography of Mithridates, Adlung (1996, 34) thinks that this story confusingly combines the motifs from the *Choephoroe* by Aischylos and *Elektra* by Sophokles and Eurypides: "Mitridate Eupatore wird Orest, Stratonica Klytämnestra, Laodice Elektra und Farnace Aegisth".
- 26 Adlung 1996, 34.
- 27 The supposition, often referred to in the literature (latest by Rosendorfer 2003, 180), that Cigna-Santi reworked the translation of Racine's play by Giuseppe Parini, is according to Adlung (1996, 35) wrong.
- 28 Adlung 1996; Rosendorfer 2003, 177-195.
- 29 Apparently the wider audience was able to recognise the similarities with Racine's play, since in the epitome of the debut performance it is noted: "Veggasi la Tragedia del Francese Racine, che si è in molte parti imitate". Cited after Rosendorfer 2003, 181.
- 30 Mozart's *Mitridate* has again become popular and has often been staged in recent years; latest at the 2006 *Salzburger Festspiele* staged by Günter Krämer.
- 31 Rollin 1823, 226-392.
- 32 Rollin 1823, 255-256.
- 33 Walch 1967, 123-126.
- 34 Colonna 2006, 32-36.
- 35 Reinach (1895, 1) refers to the dissertations on Mithridates written in German universities in the first half of the 19th century: J.E. Woltersdorf, *Commentatio vitam Mithridates per annos digestam sistens* (1813) and F.J. Volpert, *De regno pontico eisque principibus ad regemque Mithridates VI* (Münster 1853). P.S. Frandsen wrote four books on *Mithridates Eupator VI, König von Pontos*, but only the first book was ever published. The Greek author Sourias wrote a short story about Mithridates in Modern Greek, published in 1878. Louis Claude de Saint-Martin portrayed Mithridates in his *Biographie Universelle* supposedly using only Armenian sources according to Reinach.
- 36 Heuss 1956; Gooch 1956.
- 37 Mommsen 1854-1856, II, 280-281.
- 38 Mommsen 1854-1856, II, 268.
- 39 Mommsen 1854-1856, II, 285-286.
- 40 Cruel killings, such as the killing of the Indian mercenaries and the execution of Philotas, Parmenion and Kallisthenes, Klitos, and other negative characteristics, such as his excessive drinking, lack of self-restraint and obeisance were also recorded about Alexander by several ancient authors: Plut. *Alex.* 51.5; Cic. *Att.* 12.28.3; Vell. Pat. A very harsh criticism of Alexander the Great was formulated by Seneca (*Q nat.* 6.23.2-3) defending the memory of Kallisthenes: "he (Kallisthenes) had outstanding intelligence and did not submit to the range of his king. The murder of Callisthenes is the everlasting crime of Alexander, which no virtue, no success in war, will redeem: For when someone says, "Alexander killed many thousands of Persians", the countering reply to him will be "And Callisthenes too". Whenever it is said, "Alexander killed Darius, who had the greatest kingdom at that time" the reply will be "And Callisthenes too". Whenever it is said, "He conquered everything on the way to the ocean and even made an attack on the ocean itself with ships unknown to that water; and he extended his empire from a corner of Thrace all the way to the farthest boundaries of the achievements in antiquity of generals and kings, of the things he did nothing will be so great as

- his crimes". Arrianos (*Anab.* 4.14.2) records that Hermolaus, who was accused of having conspired against Alexander, said that "no free man could endure Alexander's arrogance".
- 41 Notes taken during his lectures on the Roman Empire between 1863 and 1886 were published under the title *Römische Kaisergeschichte* in 1992. In the view of Mommsen's son-in-law Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Noellendorf, their academic level was such that their publication would have been an embarrassment. In 1885 a presentation of the Roman provinces in the imperial period appeared as volume 5 of *Römische Geschichte: Die Provinzen von Caesar bis Diocletian*.
 - 42 Müller 1993, 1-9.
 - 43 English translation by B. Demandt, cited after Wiedemann 1997.
 - 44 The concept of orientalism was articulated by Edward Said (1978) in his groundbreaking work *Orientalism*. According to Said, Western scholars affected by the attitudes of the era of European imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries constructed knowledge about the "Orient" as a negative inversion of Western culture. Thus, the negative image of the "Oriental" Mithridates was constructed in scholarly writing through the discourse of the difference between the "Orient" and the "Occident". Orientalism was possibly also shaped by the theories of racial difference between Orientals and Europeans. In the mid-1850's Comte Arthur de Gobineau (1853-1855) published his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*.
 - 45 Meyer 1879, 86: "Charakteristisch ist auch, dass er (Mithridates, den Vater einer neuen Geliebten, einen armen Zitherspieler, mit dem Geschenke der Wohnung und Habe eines eben Verstorbenen überraschte) ein Zug, der an die Geschichten von Harun al Raschid erinnert".
 - 46 Reinach 1895, 277: "So ist Mithridates an Größe und Bedeutung weit mehr als ein Sultan, aber dennoch bildet der Sultan den Grundzug seines Wesens, mit seinen heftig auflodernde Zornesausbrüchen, seiner glühenden, ungezügelter Sinnlichkeit, die in plötzlicher Wallung ihre sofortige Befriedung erheischt".
 - 47 Reinach 1895, 274: "die etwas dicke Lippe und das fleischige Kinn verraten Genußsucht, aber die ragende Braue, die gewölbte Stirn, das in unheimlichen Feuer zu glühen scheint, alles dies vermählt sich zu einem einheitlichen Ganzen, das von Geist und Thatkraft strahlt und in welchem der Sultan hinter dem Krieger und Staatsmann verschwindet". See also Reinach 1888, 248.
 - 48 Reinach 1895, 276.
 - 49 Reinach 1895, 295.
 - 50 Bengston 1986, 489.
 - 51 E. Vigna, "Ma L'impero Americano è come quello Romano?", *Sette Corriera della Sera*, n. 13, 2003, 33-43. Cited after Wyke 2006, 305, 320, n. 2.
 - 52 Heuss 1956.
 - 53 Heuss 2003, 258: "Mithridates war kein Barbar, vielmehr von jeher darauf gesonnen, sich die Ausstattung mit der damaligen Zivilisation, welche aber eine griechische und nun mit der Zeit schon eine griechisch römische war, zu verschaffen".
 - 54 Duggan 1958, 9.
 - 55 Lampsides 1957; Tourlidis 1985, 130-142.
 - 56 McGing 1986; Portanova 1988; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996; Stefanidou 2002.

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Hellenisation and Romanisation in Pontos-Bithynia: An Overview

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Ancient records on Mithridates of Pontos are not few.¹ However, as in the case of the Seleukids and Attalids, no biography of this important king in Asia Minor has survived from antiquity. Since the remaining evidence is hostile towards him, it is difficult to grasp his true personality. Modern accounts concentrate on the evaluation of the effect he had rather than on his achievements or merits. Mommsen wrote in the third volume of his *Römische Geschichte*: “Bedeutungsvoller noch als durch seine Individualität ward er durch den Platz, auf den die Geschichte ihn gestellt hat. Als der Vorläufer der nationalen Reaktion des Orients gegen die Okzidentalien hat er den neuen Kampf des Ostens gegen den Westen eröffnet; und das Gefühl, dass man mit seinem Tode nicht am Ende, sondern am Anfang sei, blieb den Besiegten wie den Siegern”.²

Fight of the East against the West – that sounds familiar today, as does the following, that Mithridates’ death was not an end, but a beginning. What makes Mithridates an appropriate starting point for my article on Hellenisation and Romanisation is indeed his position in the historical framework of my topic. By the end of the second and the beginning of the first centuries BC, Rome was present in Asia Minor with the establishment of three *provinciae*, Asia, Kilikia and Lykaonia. By the *synoikisms* and the settlements of the Hellenistic kings the institution of the Greek *polis* was scattered throughout most areas of these, even in the interior. The threshold between Hellenic civilisation and rural Anatolia had been gradually pushed inland by the *diadochoi* and their successors down to the Attalids and the Bithynian dynasts.³ Yet the monarchies of Pontos, Kappadokia and Armenia, in spite of their Hellenised courts, Greek *philoi*, generals, officers and soldiers, in spite of the kings’ coinage and titles, *philhellen*, *philorhomaioi*, remained outside of this new region. The rulers of these kingdoms were Iranian families, and there was a strong Iranian element in the population of their realms. The Greek cities on the coast of the Black Sea, which they had conquered, were not free, and the vast interior parts lacked *poleis* and were instead dominated by fortresses, villages and farmsteads as well as extensive pastures.⁴ Landlords and peasants lived in feudal-like relationships. Of great importance is the fact that just about the time of Mithridates’ birth the Iranian dynasties in eastern Anatolia were backed by the Arsakid Empire at its peak, a system of vassal kingdoms stretching from northwest India to Armenia.

Before Mithridates appeared, it is true that the Senate of Rome seemed unwilling to cross the threshold into the sphere of these kingdoms, as long as the balance of power was not jeopardized.⁵ At the same time, contrary to the exaggerations of some historians, Mithridates was no Hannibal or counter-Alexander setting out to conquer Italy and the West. His motives, I suppose, are best described as a desire to resist Rome. He endeavoured to oppose a Roman Asia Minor, whose eventual establishment, however, he accelerated by his defeat. To Rome the initial blows dealt by Mithridates in reaction to her foolish gambling taught a shocking lesson that not even Greece was governable without more substantial administrative efforts in Asia, ones that went beyond the mere exploitation of the provinces and the playing off against each other of the friendly kings in this region. The work of Pompeius, in that respect, is a turning point, not just in the North. Perhaps even more than the foundation of settlements, his quite remarkable plan of subdividing the annexed kingdom entirely into city-territories gave birth to a flourishing *polis*-culture.

Examining our sources, we must ask: what are the parameters of Hellenisation and Romanisation and how can we find markers indicative of cultural change? I shall try to approach this question by analyzing a number of major issues selectively: Language, myth, cultural and political institutions and social change. Let us first, however, establish some preconditions. The Greek element was present in northern Asia Minor from the time of the first waves of Milesian, Megarian and Boiotian colonisation in the early seventh century BC.⁶ The geography and climate of the Black Sea region which was quite different from most of the Mediterranean homelands – except around the Propontis – encumbered rather than promoted the growths of *polis*-territories. There was little or no traffic inland by roads or rivers. Amalgamation with populations in the interior seems to have taken place much later than in Aiolis, Ionia, Karia and Lykia. We know of a western population which seem to be related, on linguistic grounds, to the people of Thrace and the Lower Danube,⁷ whereas large parts of northern middle-Anatolia were the homeland of the Paphlagonians, the southern borderland of which was occupied by Celtic tribes early in the Hellenistic period. A very interesting problem, which I cannot discuss here, is the origin of the Herodotean notion of “white Syrians”, a name applied to the population in the northern part of Kappadokia bordering on the Black Sea. The linguistic material for the whole area is confined to fragments, almost entirely personal names. The material connected to the western group is fairly abundant in inscriptions and literature, and there are also many Celtic names preserved. Strabon refers to Paphlagonian and Kappadokian names some of which are attested to epigraphically on both sides of the Black Sea.⁸ The languages involved were apparently spoken as late as in the imperial period; for instance there is the famous anecdote from Saint Hieronymos (*PL.* 26.353) who noticed that around Ankyra the people spoke an idiom familiar to him from his time in Trier, Germany.

When we consider the spreading of Greek personal names, we can offer no sound statistics but rather trace some tendencies, in general not earlier than the Roman Imperial period. We should of course not assume that every one of these names belongs to a member of a particular ethnic group. Name fashions were certainly current at different times and in different places. But this itself is a revealing phenomenon, as the material as a whole confirms a tendency away from indigenous personal names towards Greek ones. This is particularly apparent wherever we can view a succession of generations – with exceptions to the rule, of course. For that reason this *does* tell us something about Hellenisation. I do not believe that this process concerned exclusively the urban elite. According to a well known inscription from Nikaia a couple gave three of seven sons away to foster-parents – a common social institution in northern Anatolia. The couple can hardly have belonged to the rich urban elite but the names of the four sons whom they kept with them were: *Alexandros, Chrestos, Mousikos, Gelasios*.⁹ This is a nice example of a certain “taste” for Greek names, to which we can add instances of personal names like *Sappho* or *Socrates*.¹⁰

Complementary to the spread of Greek personal names there is evidence for the intrusion of Roman name elements. Again this goes far beyond the small groups of Roman citizens, which we find in the province from the Late Republican period on. Proportions can be studied particularly in the Severan lists of *phylarchs* from Klaudiopolis and Prusias ad Hypium, where the great majority contain Latin elements e.g. *Socratianus, Demetrianus*.¹¹ This strange pseudo-Roman nomenclature surely demonstrates an eagerness for a certain social status amongst middle-class provincials, before the *Constitutio Antoniniana* made the differentiation between Roman and non-Roman obsolete, and it can also be taken as evidence for the readiness of the inhabitants of northern Anatolia to identify with imperial Roman society.

One might consider the spread of name-fashions a rather superficial phenomenon. Perhaps even more illuminating for the progress of Hellenisation is the written language used in the area. In northern Anatolia of the Imperial period a knowledge of Greek did not remain confined to the elite in a few urban centres. The hundreds of funerary inscriptions belonging to villagers found at quite a distance from the major cities cannot have been written up as formulae pre-fabricated by a few professional stonecutters in an environment of complete illiteracy. On the gravestones Homeric verses, Greek mythology, proud references to professions and occupations, display of family relations and the narratives of individual fates and merits of the deceased demand the presence of at least some potential addressees in the vicinity who could read and understand these messages. That Greek was taught is attested by the occurrence of teachers, *philologoi, paideutai, grammatikoi*.¹² That there are some instances of insufficiency confirms rather than raises doubts about the dominant role of Greek, since it reveals an eagerness to make use of it even by those who were either uneducated or just not enough educated to have had full command of it.

Latin is a quite different matter. We do not know, at what level, if at all, Latin was taught in the Greek-speaking provinces. There are some well defined areas in which the use of the Latin language in public documents can be found on a more or less regular basis: the first of these is the sphere of the Roman military and the administration of the road-systems. Milestones are regularly inscribed in Latin or both Greek *and* Latin, but again there are a few examples where a milestone is inscribed in Greek only.¹³ The very few tombstones of soldiers with Latin inscriptions do seem to indicate a small Latin speaking community, as in the case of the *miles et tubicen* in Amastris who served in a *cohors Campestris* or *Campanorum* probably stationed there.¹⁴ A small number of funeral inscriptions reveal an ostentatious use of Latin in order to demonstrate proudly the status of *civis Romanus* or at least a marriage to one. Second, in the sphere of public state functions, Latin inscriptions as well as bilingual ones are to be found on monuments in honour of the Emperor or on dedications to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus. They demonstrate courtesy and loyalty towards Rome. To sum up, the Latin language, the language of the masters of the world, did not penetrate to the degree of a *lingua franca*, in either the fields of higher education and literature or those of administration and law. Pliny the Younger's activities were almost entirely concerned with matters within the institutional and legal framework of the Greek city, and he repeatedly uses Greek loanwords as technical terms to explain the issue to the emperor.

A long time after the colonisation of Propontis and the Black Sea region, a considerable expansion of the Greek cities in northern Anatolia took place in two stages. The first is described by the *synoikisms* and foundations of Lysimachos, his opponent Zipoites and his imitators, the Bithynian kings. Civic institutions were introduced in the highlands within Prusa, Prusias, Bithynion. Unlike Bithynia, however, there is no evidence in the interior of such a development under the Pontic kings, nor is there even any autonomy of the Ionian coastal towns. We have no idea of how Sinope after its annexation or Kerasous after its *synoikism* to Pharnakeia were organized.

What, for example, may have happened in Prusa, Prusias or Bithynion, is marvellously illustrated by a new document from outside Bithynia, an inscription from Phrygia Paroreios under Eumenes II. In this inscription, the king concedes to the *Toriaitai*, inhabitants of a military colony, that the Greek and non-Greeks are allowed to constitute a *polis*, organize an assembly and a council, subdivide the citizens into *phylai*, found a gymnasium and finance the oil they need for its functioning as a centre of training and education of the city's youth.¹⁵

The second stage of the expansion of city-states in northern Anatolia is marked by the *polis*-foundations of Pompeius the Great.¹⁶ An act like this by a Roman general or magistrate is unprecedented and without imitation in the East, with the exception of the *synoikism* of Octavian's Nikopolis in western Greece. The Pompeian organisation of the annexed kingdom of Pontus and its

incorporation into a province embracing the greater parts of northern Anatolia differed fundamentally from the preceding institution of the province of Asia in the years 129-126 BC. The whole of the land was assigned, apart from one temple-state, to cities; in the interior of Pontos and Paphlagonia, these were all new foundations: Nikopolis, Megalopolis, Magnopolis, Zela, Diospolis, Neapolis and Pompeiopolis.

Admirable as it is, Pompeius' province of Pontos could not mean more than the establishment of a *basis* of civic institutions and urban development. There was, and there remained into the Imperial period, a threshold between the Hellenised or semi-Hellenised citizens of the *poleis* and the rural populations within their territories. This is made manifest from the outset by the distinct titles of the organisations, their presidents and priests, and those of the provincial assemblies: *Bithyniarches*, *Pontarches*, *Paphlagoniarches* on the one hand and *Helladarches*, *Hellenarches* on the other.¹⁷ From their early stages on, the provincial organisations were named *to koinon ton en Beithynia Hellenon* and *to koinon ton en Ponto poleon*. Evidence of other kinds confirms the existence of this threshold which not only separated rural and urban populations but also upper and lower classes. An interesting question is whether and to what degree the rural populations were integrated into civic functions such as elections, assemblies and law courts, or whether they were just taxed and apart from that left alone as some sort of parallel-society. The exceptional evidence of the marker-stones from the sanctuary of Yassiçal in the territory of Amaseia, which was published by David French,¹⁸ attests to the contrary, i.e. a well organized participation of the rural populations in at least some activities, in particular as far as cult is concerned.

Rome added little. The *demoi*, the *boulai*, the *archontes* continued to function traditionally according to the Hellenic model. Pompeius introduced a *lex provinciae*, the contents of which unfortunately are lost except for a few fragments. The custom of life-long membership in city- as well as provincial councils certainly goes back to it, perhaps also the re-modelling of some magistracies according to Roman institutions. At first sight, Roman legislation may have imposed new constitutional elements not only upon the cities, but also created the *koina*, the organisation at provincial level we just mentioned, generally referred to in German as *Provinziallandtage*. There is no proof of this, however. The initiative instead seems to have come from the side of the provincials. As in Asia there seems to have existed a *koinon* in Pontos since the Republican period. The earliest evidence from Bithynia, 29 BC, as well as from Paphlagonia, 5 BC, emphasizes the provincials' eagerness to initiate a cult in honour of Augustus. About the structure, the procedure of delegating members into the assembly, eligibility etc. we know no details.

The topic of eras and calendars deserves a closer look. We can trace no remnants of pre-Hellenistic calendars from the cities on the south-coast of the Black Sea, but know of the use of Macedonian calendars in for example Amastris and Amaseia. Bithynia had a royal era which started under Zipoites

in the year 298 or 297 BC which is known from royal coins of Nikomedes II.¹⁹ The cities, however, used a different era, starting from 282/81 BC, apparently referring to the downfall of Lysimachos. This era was not abolished together with the monarchy, and its dating continued to be used, stamped into coins of Nikaia, Nikomedeia, Tieion, Prusa, Bithynion, Apameia under two Roman governors ruling the province from 61-58 and 46 BC.²⁰ But in the imperial province, the Bithynian cities did not resume the use of this method nor did they count their years from any other historic event, let alone the introduction of Roman rule – quite unlike Paphlagonia and Pontos. Why? The Paphlagonian and Pontic cities both on the coast and inland considered themselves liberated by the Romans; their chosen dating methods mark a fundamental step towards autonomous *politeiai*. Exactly in this respect the Bithynian cities believed that they were different, for they, whenever they were founded, had enjoyed city-status since the establishment of the Bithynian Kingdom or even earlier. They saw as little reason to mark a change of their political status with the arrival of the Romans as did Miletos, Smyrna or Ephesos in Asia. By insisting on this difference between the city-states of the imperial provinces of Bithynia and Pontos, I must direct attention to the special cases of Herakleia and Tieion. Both towns, it is true, according to Pompeius' decision were not incorporated into the province of Bithynia but attached to the province of Pontos. Yet Herakleia and Tieion were geographically Bithynian and, what matters most, historically had not belonged to the kingdom of Mithridates. They considered themselves autonomous *poleis* long before Nikomedes IV bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans. Accordingly they did not use eras starting from the Roman conquest. For our purpose, we may conclude from the analysis of the eras, that their application in northern Anatolia reflects the cities' very strong desire to emphasize the coming into existence and duration of their political status as a free *polis*, i.e. the institutional and political aspects of their membership in the community of Hellenic culture.

Greek myth and genealogy have a very long tradition in Anatolia. Ilion managed to fascinate Alexander and the Romans with her claim to be the descendant of Troy. The Attalids demonstrated how a semi-barbarian dynasty successfully acquired heroic Greek ancestors and gained the reputation of saviours and protectors of the Hellenic civilisation in Asia. Throughout Asia Minor the construction of genealogies flourished exuberantly from the Hellenistic to the Imperial periods. Such a construction became almost compulsory for any autonomous community in order to be acknowledged as a full member of the Greek family.²¹ The Archaic colonies at Propontis and along the Black Sea had no problem as regards their Greek ancestry, the question for some was simply whether Doros or Ion had founded them. Others made use of the most prominent myths of the North as a sort of naval basis for their origins, in particular the Amazons and the Argonauts. As far as Hellenic genealogy is concerned there is the remarkable exception of Pompeiopolis, a city which refrained from constructing a suspicious network of Greek kinship instead

deliberately advertising her foundation by Pompeius. On the other hand, however, it is rather surprising that this *polis* with no Hellenistic predecessor and a stock of Roman settlers possessed purely Greek institutions, besides *phylai* and a gymnasium with *ephebes*.

The heroes of the mythical past in many cities are followed by heroes in science, art and literature, who contributed to their birthplaces' reputation and self-esteem even when their careers unfolded far away from these cities. A tiny little coastal town on the Black Sea shore of Paphlagonia, Kromna, dared to advertise a claim which in the eyes of reputed ancestral Hellenic *poleis* like Chios, Smyrna, Ephesos or Miletos should have sounded rather ridiculous: they claimed they were the birthplace of Homer.²²

Evidence for contests organized together with the celebration of funerals or festivals in honour of the Gods goes back to the age of Homer. Whatever parallels from the ancient near-eastern cultures may be drawn, the phenomenon in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor is genuinely Greek. This institution is of considerable significance for the spread of Hellenism in general and applies in particular to the northern Anatolian provinces.²³ When Greek cities and confederacies followed the example of Ptolemaios Philadelphos and founded "isolympic", "isopythic" contests the growing multi-cellular festival cosmos of the Hellenistic world certainly reached out to the cities of Bithynia. Polemon II established an *agon* in honour of Claudius in Pontos. Apart from that, east of Bithynia we know until now only of contests in the Pontic and Paphlagonian provincial *koina* in Neokaisareia and Pompeiopolis. But that does not mean much. Evidence in some cases shrinks to a single coin or inscription. It must be considered generally that the nature of our main sources of information may fall short of covering the range of activities that took place in the provinces. For there are regional differences both concerning the "epigraphic habit" and periodic emissions of provincial coinage.

Fundamental for the gradual penetration of the provinces by Greek mass entertainment was mobility, the touring of many professionals and semi-professionals who carried glamour and glory to a multitude of places and events scattered over the map of the Empire. One of the powerful associations with the name Ἱερὰ περιπολιστικὴ σύνοδος – "the holy synod of the travelling competitors" is now attested, surprisingly enough, in the Roman foundation of Pompeiopolis in Paphlagonia. The epigraphic record of this mobility is impressive particularly with regards to the wide distribution of epitaphs telling us the fate of athletes and artists who died abroad as well as the records of victories worldwide. Northern Anatolia is well represented.

The overall picture we get from the inscriptions suggests that short of trade and the movements of army units, the festivals were the greatest cause of long and short distance mobility. Apart from legal, social and economic consequences, here is to be found the basis of transcultural influences contributing to the genesis of, eventually, an almost universal culture of mass entertainment.²⁴

If one wishes to add to this gladiatorial games as an element of Romanisation, one is generously awarded by our sources from northern Anatolia. They appear to have been celebrated on a regular basis on the occasion of provincial assemblies in different cities, large and small. For contemporary observers from the second century AD onwards, such activities had become a uniform, comprehensive phenomenon. Whether the fighting of gladiators, horse races or dancing and acting on the stage, boxing and catching in the arenas, they were all *spectacula* (Tertullian), and they were thought to be something thoroughly Hellenic, synonymous, for a Syriac and Christian writer like Tatianos, with Paganism. The attacks on such *spectacula* launched repeatedly by the Christian pamphletists and Church-Fathers are sharp. What the bishops feared and hated was more than the performance of adultery and salacious dances on the stage, the bloodshed in the arena, more even than the persistent reminder of the visible vitality of pagan rites and myths even within a prevailing Christian population. There was a powerful, very deeply rooted adherence, perhaps addiction, to entertainment of this kind, so that it drew away even open believers regularly from the congregations and assembled and united them instead in a different community. Jakob of Serugh in his fifth century AD homily quotes and furiously refutes the excuses which Christian adherents to these forms of entertainment put forward.²⁵

Where, however, can we draw the line, if anywhere? What were the limits of Hellenisation as far as Greek mass entertainment is concerned? The question has not yet been answered conclusively, and opinions of modern scholars differ from each other. The problem, of course, is greatest in the provinces with a high portion of oriental populations and epichoric languages. It has been emphasized that the difference between rural and city-life has to be considered as a major barrier. Following these arguments the villagers and peasants in the rural areas of Anatolia remained almost entirely excluded, cut off by their lack of literacy, their command of the Greek language and their legal status as non-citizens.²⁶ To them should be added the Jews and Christians who refused to join in out of religious reasons. I do not believe this to be correct in my view of the evidence.

The Christian Empire of course prohibited this development but failed to abolish it all together. Particularly the stage performances outlived the *agones* and *munera* for centuries. Late Antique intellectual life in the Anatolian provinces borrowed a lot from this continuity. The travelling sophists, teachers and rhetoricians had participated in and accompanied the contests; verse, *enkomion*, and philosophical disputes undoubtedly could not have penetrated provincial life to such an extent as they did without the many festivals.

An interesting field of research, not systematically investigated so far, is the language of inscriptions – especially of Late Antiquity – as regards its metaphorical and technical usage of “*agonistica*”. Because of the high level of literary education, which seems to have been present everywhere, one ought to be able to discern to the widespread usage of such language by ordinary

men in the interior of the country, and this is indeed the case. This applies particularly to funerary inscriptions. An ordinary villager in the remote hinterland of Bithynia praised his wife, calling her Βραβεῖον ἀρετῆς – yardstick of virtue. *Brabeion* is a technical term for a crown as the prize in games.²⁷ A young woman who was killed by barbarian invaders is praised by the epigram on her tombstone in Paphlagonia. Having preferred death to being raped, she has become – in the eyes of her husband and contemporary society – an exceptional example of female virtue: she has “won the crown” – as the inscription says.²⁸

The usage of this language by Christian writers deserves particular attention. Martyrdom itself, the *ascesis* of the holy man, the hatred of a luxurious life, as one modern scholar formulated it, is pre-eminently athletic.²⁹ The martyr of Euchaita in Pontos (near Amaseia), Theodoros the “Soldier”, is praised by a fifth century AD inscription as ὁ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀθλητής.³⁰

I believe that together with the political institutions of the *polis* this culture of periodic festivals celebrated in almost every city, large and small, evolved into a central activity that attracted elements from all kinds of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, both from the upper and lower classes, the rich and the poor. It contributed much to the uniformity of the Hellenic world and therefore had the strongest impact on what we may call “Hellenisation”.

Above and beyond the cultural and political framework of the *polis* the inhabitants of the northern Anatolian provinces came into touch with Roman institutions particularly through service in the military and careers which in a few instances led to the eminence of an ordinary consulate in Rome.

There were no legions in imperial Pontos-Bithynia, and Roman military units stationed there were few. Other than in border-provinces the influence of the garrisons on economic, social and cultural change cannot have been far-reaching. At the same time, epigraphic documentation attests to a considerable number of provincials from Pontos, Paphlagonia and Bithynia serving in army-units around the Roman world, with a certain concentration in garrisons on the Lower Danube.³¹

Careers in the imperial orders, especially the senatorial, seem to have started out in the *coloniae*. Roman colonies existed in Apameia, Herakleia Pontike and Sinope, where they were, in the beginning at least, strictly separated from the *poleis*. Apameia advertised its special relationship to Rome by the depiction of Aeneas and Anchises on her coins. Not surprisingly, the earliest senators originating from northern Anatolia, are Apameians in the Flavian and Pompeiopolitans in the Trajanic periods, only a little later the most prominent of course were Arrianos of Nikomedeia and Cassius Dio of Nikaia.³² So far, there is no senator attested further to the east than Pompeiopolis or, from other coastal cities than Amastris. Since double citizenships – although restricted by the Pompeian law – flourished in the Imperial period, the provincial elite perhaps endeavoured to settle in the West, in the larger and prosperous Bithynian cities close to Propontis and the Mediterranean.

However, our prosopographical material especially from the Paphlagonian and Pontic cities is too scarce to allow valid conclusions. Membership in the equestrian order was more widespread. The elite group was eager to claim a noble origin using formulae such as *ek synkletikon* for senatorial, *apo strateion hippikon* for equestrian, and even *ek epitropon* for procuratorian family members.³³ These people identified themselves with Rome. And again they perhaps did not conceive of the powerful world-empire with a perspective other than that of Aelius Aristeides in his famous speech *eis Rhomen*: a universal *polis*.

The dominance of Greek language, education, religion, and way of life was not hindered by Roman authorities in an age, when the Emperor Hadrian instituted the *panhellenion*, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a Spaniard by birth, wrote down his philosophy in Greek. Hellenisation in the East enforced as well as safeguarded the unity of the Empire far more effectively than the legions, the law and the cult of the Emperors. In northern Anatolia as well as in the whole of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, to be “Hellenic” in terms of literacy, language and education became a condition for access to the society of the ruling classes. Hellenisation in the Later Roman Near East did not just correspond to, but was identical with Romanisation. A beautiful glimpse of this powerful tradition is preserved in the Turkish notion of Anatolian Greeks, from the Ottoman Empire down to the *cumhuriyet*, being called *Rum*, Romans.

Notes

- 1 Still the most comprehensive account is given by Reinach 1895. See also McGing 1986.
- 2 Mommsen 1856, 138.
- 3 Cohen 1995.
- 4 I am grateful to Brian McGing for raising the interesting point of the rock-cut inscription of Gazioura (Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, no. 278a; cf. *SEG* 13, 539, and see Robert in Firatlı 1964, 154-155; J. Robert & L. Robert *BE* 1965, 402 & 245). It has been interpreted in a way that a gymnasium *agon* may have existed in the third century BC; this would suggest a rather advanced Hellenisation very early in the interior of Pontos at least at that place. However, the epigraphic basis for such an interpretation is insufficient and the traces, as George Bean read them, suggest a different understanding as to somebody's victory of an *agon* at Byzantion rather than somebody from Byzantion having won a victory at Gazioura.
- 5 This discussion has been reopened by Kallet-Marx 1995.
- 6 Ehrhardt 1983.
- 7 Wittke 2004.
- 8 References to literature in Marek 2003, 174, n. 1.
- 9 *SEG* 33, 1085, territory of Nikaia.
- 10 Marek 2003, 175, n. 7.
- 11 See Ameling 1985 and Marek 2002, 31-50.
- 12 Marek 2003, 176, n. 12.
- 13 Robert 1937, 295, no. 3.4.

- 14 Catalogue of Amastrian inscriptions in Marek 1993, 171, no. 52.
- 15 Jonnes & Ricl 1997, 1-29; add the essential corrections by Müller 2005, 355-357.
- 16 Marek 1993, 26-46.
- 17 Marek 1993, 78 and n. 535; Marek 2003, 66.
- 18 French 1996, 75-92.
- 19 Leschhorn 1993, 178-191.
- 20 Leschhorn 1993, 191-197.
- 21 See the literature quoted by Marek 2003, 101, n. 6.
- 22 Marek 2003, 150 and 64, Abb. 98.
- 23 Robert 1982, 229: "La diffusion de ces concours sous l'Empire marque la diffusion géographique de l'hellénisme".
- 24 For this and the following, see Marek 2003, 95-103.
- 25 Moss, 1935, 87-112.
- 26 Herz 1997, 255-256.
- 27 Robert 1982, 263-266.
- 28 Catalogue of the inscriptions of Kaisareia-Hadrianopolis in Marek 1993, no. 38.
- 29 Eisler 1961, 82-97.
- 30 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, no. 101.
- 31 The evidence is collected in Marek 1993, 62, n. 9.
- 32 Halfmann 1979, 68-69.
- 33 Marek 1993, 175, n. 8.

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The Dynastic History of the Hellenistic Monarchies of Asia Minor According to the *Chronography* of George Synkellos

Oleg L. Gabelko

The purpose of this paper is not only an examination of the ethnic character of the Pontic royal dynasty, but also the elucidation of the kingdom's role as a state of the "second rank" comparable to the other monarchies of Asia Minor – Bithynia, Kappadokia and their relationship with the great Hellenistic power, the Seleukid Kingdom. It will be shown that the *Chronography* written by the 9th century Byzantine author George Synkellos can in fact be used to elucidate questions concerning the dynastic history of the states of Asia Minor, although the work has generally been considered unreliable regarding both factual data and chronology.¹

Synkellos writes (593): Τῷ εὐπ' ἔτει τοῦ κόσμου ἢ τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἢ βασιλέων ἀρχὴ ἐπαύσατο ὑπὸ Αὐγούστον χρηματίσασα ἀπὸ τοῦ εσξή' κοσμικοῦ ἔτους ἀρξαμένη ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα δηλωθήσεται. Ὅμοίως δὲ καὶ ἢ τῶν Ποντικῶν ἢ βασιλέων – "In the year 5480 from the creation of the World (=22/14 BC),² by decision of Augustus, the rule of the eight kings of Bithynia, whose names will be given, ceased; their rule started in the year 5268 (=234/226 BC); likewise with the rule of the ten Pontic kings". A second passage (525) expands on the first: Οἱ Βιθυνῶν βασιλεῖς ἢ κατὰ Διονύσιον ἐνθεν ἤρξαντο διαρκέσαντες ἔτη σιγ' (FGrH 251, F 5b) – "According to Dionysios, eight kings of Bithynia ruled at that time, and that lasted 213 years".³ A third passage (523) describes the Pontic royal dynasty: Οἱ βασιλεῖς Ποντίων ἢ κατὰ τούτους ἤρξαν τοὺς χρόνους διαρκέσαντες ἔτη σιγ'. Περὶ ὧν Ἀπολλόδωρος (FGrH 244, F 82) καὶ Διονύσιος (FGrH 251, F 5a) ἱστοροῦσι – "Ten kings of Pontos ruled at that time, and that lasted 218 years. Apollodoros and Dionysios tell about this".

The scholarly verdict concerning the first two fragments has been clear. According to Perl, the dates given for the beginning and the end of the Bithynian Kingdom are incorrect as is the date for the end of the Pontic Kingdom, and there is no explanation for the incorrect dating of these events to the age of Augustus.⁴ Subsequently it has become customary to change the figure 213 to 223 in the text of the *Chronography*,⁵ as this gives consistency with the Bithynian royal era starting in 297/96 BC by counting 223 years backwards from the death of the last Bithynian king Nikomedes IV in 74 BC.⁶

In spite of the weakness of this solution, no alternative to the alteration of the text has been proposed. The problem is not just that the latest numismatic studies date the death of Nikomedes IV to 75 rather than 74 BC;⁷ this is, to my mind, still debatable.⁸ There are more important issues. Not only does it necessitate a change in the text, but the solution also uses a different fixed point than that mentioned by Synkellos. Furthermore, it doesn't explain why both the Bithynian and the Pontic dynasties are said to end simultaneously (by decision of Augustus), or why Synkellos counts ten kings of Pontos, when Appianos (*Mith.* 112) and Plutarch (*Dem.* 4) only mention eight.

The third passage mentioned above is treated in a similar way. The 218 years are contrary to Synkellos counted from the death of Mithridates VI in 63 BC and thus arrive at the date 281/80 BC for the beginning of the dynasty.⁹ This is obviously an artificial construction, and the problem of the ten kings is not satisfactorily explained.¹⁰ For these reasons most scholars disregard the work of Synkellos as worthless with regard to the Pontic and Bithynian royal dynasties.¹¹

Evidently, the information of the *Chronography* needs to be corrected carefully. I will try to substantiate one further interpretation that does not necessitate any changes of the text and at the same time solves all of the problems raised above.

In calculating the duration of the Mithridatid dynasty, Synkellos (523) probably combined the information of his sources, having obtained the number of kings from Dionysios of Halikarnassos and the duration of their rule from Apollodoros.¹² Thus, according to Synkellos, the Bithynian and Pontic kingdoms ceased to exist simultaneously in 22 or 14 BC, and the duration of the rule of the eight¹³ Bithynian kings was 213 years and that of the ten Pontic kings 218 years.

But why does Synkellos mention ten kings of Pontos? The number of kings of Pontos could be increased either by counting ancestors of Mithridates Ktistes, whose status could perhaps be considered royal,¹⁴ or by counting some descendants of Mithridates VI,¹⁵ who had the title of king.¹⁶ The first possibility seems unlikely, since this would move the beginning of the dynasty into the 4th century BC contrary to the information in Synkellos. As to the descendants of Mithridates the most famous are Pharnakes II and his daughter Dynamis.¹⁷ They should be considered especially because her rule, according to one tradition, ended in 12 BC,¹⁸ which approximates the date found in Synkellos. However, the fact that Pharnakes II and Dynamis reigned in Bosporos and not in the Pontic Kingdom is an obstacle.¹⁹ The sons of Pharnakes II, Dareios (App. *B Civ.* 5.74) and Arsakes (Strab. 13.3.8) cannot be considered the ninth and tenth Pontos kings either, despite the fact that they actually ruled in Pontos, since Dareios died in 39-37 BC²⁰ and Arsakes in 37-36 BC. This does not correspond to the dates given by Synkellos, and in particular his reference to the decision by Augustus. Thus it is necessary to search for other candidates, who could be considered the final representatives of the Pontic dynasty.

The little-known characters “Queen Mousa Orsobaris” (βασιλίσσης Μούσης Ὀρσοβάριος) and “Orodaltis, the daughter of the king Lykomedes” (Ὀροδάλτιδος βασιλέως Λυκομήδους θυγατρός), whose names appear in genitive on coins minted in Prusias-ad-Mare,²¹ are another possibility. As far as we know, Orsobaris was the daughter of Mithridates VI (App. *Mith.* 117),²² and as for Orodaltis, Reinach thought that she was the daughter of Orsobaris from her marriage with Lykomedes, the high priest of Komana.²³ Unfortunately, nothing else is known about these two women, but it is probably not coincidental that they ruled in Prusias-ad-Mare, since this city, formerly known as Kios, was if not the centre of the early Mithridatid dynasty,²⁴ then at least part of the hereditary domain of the family. Thus Orsobaris and Orodaltis could be considered the successors of Mithridates VI on the Pontic throne, although strictly speaking the kingdom had ceased to exist.²⁵ Evidently the Romans approved their status (as in the case of Lykomedes, the father of Orodaltis), and they ruled for a substantial period, so their existence could be reflected in the historical tradition.

Studying the genealogy of the two queens reveals that the competing Bithynian and Pontic dynasties are joined in them once again,²⁶ only to cease immediately after. Supposedly Lykomedes, the father of Orodaltis, was the notorious “pretender”, who unsuccessfully claimed the throne after the death of Nikomedes IV (Sall. *Hist.* 2.71).²⁷ He and his daughter could be considered the direct representatives of the Bithynian royal family, although he was related to the Mithridatids only through his grandmother Laodike.²⁸ If he actually married Orsobaris, the daughter of Mithridates, then their daughter Orodaltis could be considered a Bithynian-Pontic queen, who reigned in a city that had direct connections to both dynasties.

Lykomedes was probably about 50 years old when Caesar appointed him high priest of the sanctuary in Komana in 47 BC, as he was described as rather old when Augustus deprived him of his power in 31 BC (ἀφείλετο ... καὶ Λυκομήδην ἐν μέρει τοῦ Καππαδοκιοῦ Πόντου βασιλεύοντα) (Dio. Cass. 51.2). He is known to have held the royal title, at least at the time he dethroned Arsakes (Strab. 12.3.38).²⁹

As to the marriage between Nikomedes and Orsobaris, two occasions are possible: around 74 BC, when Lykomedes strove for the Bithynian throne,³⁰ and after 63 BC, when Orsobaris was brought back to Asia Minor. The last possibility seems more likely, as it would otherwise be very difficult to explain her presence in the triumph of Pompeius. In 63 BC she was probably with her father and was captured by the Romans.³¹ Consequently Orodaltis, the daughter of Lykomedes and Orsobaris would still have been young in 22 BC (her portrait on the coins seems to confirm this), and it is unlikely that she would have died before this date. Thus it is quite possible that she could have been dethroned in Kios “by decision of Augustus” during his administrative reforms in Asia Minor. It is notable that the terminus of the Bithynian and Pontic dynasties according to Synkellos in 22 BC corresponds exactly to

the date of the eastern mission of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.³² It is no coincidence either, that Scribonius, styling himself the grandson of Mithridates VI Eupator (Dio Cass. 54.24.4), appeared in Bosporos backed by Augustus and Agrippa, just after the true descendants of Mithridates in Asia Minor had been removed.³³ Thus, the well-known passage in Strabon (12.3.1): “But later the Roman prefects made different divisions from time to time, not only establishing kings and potentates, but also, in the case of cities, liberating some and putting others in the hands of potentates and leaving others subjects to the Roman people”, applied to Bithynia as well.

Of course, it is still not clear how the sources of Synkellos (Dionysios and Apollodoros?) could have gotten hold of the information concerning such little-known persons as Orsobaris and Orodaltis, but it seems that exactly this information is the so-called “good tradition” used by the Byzantine author, as Perl relates.³⁴ This proposition solves “the problem of the ten kings of Pontos” and can partially explain why Synkellos mentions only eight Bithynian kings, although *de facto* two more members of the royal line existed (the king Lykomedes and the queen Orodaltis). The kingdom of Bithynia, contrary to Pontos, was abolished after the death of Nikomedes IV, and the Romans were not interested in its resurrection. Besides, as has already been mentioned, Lykomedes was not the lawful son of the last Bithynian king. This could have caused the discrepancy in Synkellos’ information between the number of “indisputable” kings and the actual total duration of power of these kings and their “doubtful” descendants. Maybe this distinction impelled Synkellos to make the following note concerning the Bithynian kings: ὡν τὰ ὀνόματα δηλωθήσεται.³⁵

The “beginning” of the Pontic and Bithynian dynasties, according to Synkellos, can also be determined. Counting 218 and 213 years backwards from 14 BC, we do not find a connection with any important events in the history of the two states. But by counting from 22 BC, we arrive at 240 BC for the beginning of the Pontic dynasty and 235 BC for the Bithynian. These dates are highly significant and hardly coincidental. It is very probable that in 240/239 BC Mithridates II and Laodike, the sister of Seleukos II, were married (Porphyr. *FGrH* 260, F 32.6 = Euseb., *Chron.* I. p. 251 Schoene),³⁶ and this marriage strengthened the pro-Seleukid orientation in the foreign policy of Pontos, and also brought the kingdom to the same level as the other great Hellenistic powers.³⁷ Regarding Bithynia there is similar information about a marriage of the daughter of the third king Ziailas with Antiochos Hierax, the brother of Seleukos II (Porphyr., *FGrH* 260 F 32.8 = Euseb., *Chron.* I. p. 251 Schoene). The exact date for this dynastic alliance is unknown, but it could be connected with the so-called “War of the Brothers” between Seleukos II and Antiochos Hierax – just as the marriage between Mithridates II and Laodike. The chronology of these events is obscure. Usually the end of the conflict is dated to 237 or 236 BC,³⁸ and Chr. Habicht suggests that the daughter of the Bithynian king probably married Hierax before the end of the conflict, but

definitely after the battle at Ankyra in 238 BC, as stated by Porphyrios/Eusebios.³⁹ Considering the evidence, 235 BC seems an even more likely date for the marriage, as it was not necessary for Hierax to obtain the support of the Bithynian king before making peace with his brother.⁴⁰ But afterwards Antiochos prepared for a struggle with Attalos I, in which Ziailas would have been a very valuable ally, as he had already come into conflict with the king of Pergamon.⁴¹ In fact, the Bithynian king interfered in the conflict between Antiochos Hierax and Attalos and died from the hands of Galatian mercenaries, who betrayed him (Trog., *Proleg.* 17; Phylarch. ap. Athen. II.51.7 = *FGrH* 51 F 50).⁴²

Is this sufficient reason to suggest that the sources used by Synkellos used the dynastic alliances with the Seleukids for determining the beginning of the Pontic and Bithynian dynasties? In my opinion, this is quite likely, not least because a similar situation is found in his section on Kappadokia. Synkellos writes (523): Καππαδοκῶν βασιλεῖς ζ' χρόνους ρξ' διαρκέσαντες κατὰ τούτους ἤρξαντο τοὺς χρόνους ὡς Διόδωρος γράφει – “Seven⁴³ kings of Kappadokia, whose rule lasted 160 years, reigned at this time, as Diodoros writes”. If the dynasty of the Ariarathids ceased to exist with the death of Ariarathes VIII (ca. 100-98 BC),⁴⁴ then the starting point must be around 260 BC. It is quite possible that the marriage of the son of Ariaramnes (ca. 280-ca. 230 BC), the future king Ariarathes III (ca. 230-220 BC), and Stratonike, the sister⁴⁵ of Antiochos II Theos (Diod. 31.19.6; Euseb. *Chron.* 1. p. 251 Schoene),⁴⁶ was used as the starting point of the dynasty. Although Ariaramnes ruled in Kappadokia independently, the royal title appeared only on the coins of Ariarathes III, evidently as a result of recognition from the Seleukid king. It seems therefore that intermarriage with the Seleukid dynasty played an important role in determining the beginning of dynasties in the sources used by Synkellos.

Contrary to the situation in Kappadokia, the rulers of Pontos and Bithynia already held the royal title prior to the establishment of political and dynastic relations with the Seleukids. Accordingly, the sources of Synkellos do not ignore the earlier rulers of Pontos and Bithynia, but included them in their lists of kings. Besides, there is no evidence concerning changes in the titles, attributes of power etc. of Mithridates II or Ziailas of Bithynia (although we do not have much information about these kings). From a juridical point of view, however, these marriages were of great importance, and the conduct of Ariaramnes and Ariarathes III set a precedent for the rival dynasty of the Mithridatids;⁴⁷ and the example of the king of Pontos was, in turn, followed by Ziailas. Similarly Mithridates Ktistes took the royal title in 297 BC on the example of Zipoites. This does not mean that the marriage alliances were used for the reckoning of time internally. Bithynia and Pontos used another eras, and neither inscriptions nor coins dated according to Synkellos' chronological scheme are known in any of the three states. Nevertheless, the hypothesis offered emphasizes how important it was for the kings of Asia Minor to establish dynastic connections with the representatives of the Seleukid dynasty.

It is necessary to consider whether the origin of Synkellos' data was Seleukid or local Anatolian. It would be natural to expect that the counting of years in the three dynasties in Asia Minor from the marriage alliances with the representatives of the Seleukid house was initiated by court historians of the Seleukid kings. In this case the marriages could be interpreted as distribution of Syrian royal largesse to these "barbarian" elite. This practice was not introduced *ad hoc* but drew on old Macedonian traditions, which had gained importance during the era of the successors of Alexander. According to this tradition, marriages with women of a royal family gave their husbands the right to full royal power.⁴⁸ This seems especially significant because of the background of the dynastic policy of the previous representatives of the Seleukid dynasty. Antiochos II and Seleukos II both married relatives called Laodike, the daughters of Achaeus the Elder and Achaeus the Younger respectively. It is curious to note that the establishment of the Bithynian-Seleukid alliance differed from those with the Mithridatids and the Ariarathids, as in this case a Bithynian princess married the Seleukid ruler, and not the other way round. But this can be explained by the mutual interest of Ziailas and Antiochos Hierax in finding a strong ally,⁴⁹ and the wish of Ziailas not to be second to the rulers of Pontos and Kappadokia who were already related to the Seleukid house.⁵⁰ Evidently, this alliance had the same status as the marriages of the Seleukid princesses with the representatives of the Ariarathids and the Mithridatids dynasties, and it indicates that the original concept of such marriages had changed and become less valuable.

Thus the initiative for conferring royal status on the elite of Asia Minor may have come from the Seleukid kings, but the rulers of Asia Minor accepted it gladly. Diodoros' information concerning the genealogy of the kings of Kappadokia, however, is headed by the unambiguous reference to its source (31.19.1): "The kings of Kappadokia say ..." (λέγουσιν ... οἱ τῆς Καππαδοκίας βασιλεῖς). If we suppose that this phrase refers not just to the relationship between the Ariarathid and Achaemenid dynasties, then it could indicate a local origin for the propaganda, or at least underline its great importance for the rulers of Asia Minor. The change of style and the legend on the tetradrachms of Ariarathes III also speak in favor of this.

Conclusion

The term "the language of power" understood as a means of communication between the Seleukid rulers and the Greek cities is one of the key notions in a recent monograph by John Ma.⁵¹ The analysis of Synkellos suggests that the same instruments established and maintained the relationships between the Seleukid dynasty and the representatives of the "minor" kingdoms in Asia Minor, at least in 3rd century BC before the irreversible weakening of the Seleukid Kingdom after the defeat in the war with Rome. Evidently, the notion of royalty was not an absolute, and rulers of non-Macedonian origin

had propagandistic methods, that were not open to the representatives of the Seleukid house; the fact that Mithridates VI Eupator assumed the Achaemenid title “king of kings” is the best evidence for this.⁵² However, if the Achaemenid legacy with all its significance was focused on the past, the contacts with the great Hellenistic empires became the most important element in the new political reality, which preoccupied the monarchies in Asia Minor. Relationships with the Seleukid Kingdom that could be considered the successor of both the Achaemenid Empire and of Alexander the Great had to play a leading role. The establishment of dynastic relations with the Seleukid kings turned out to be promising for the rulers of Asia Minor. Bikerman reasonably noted that the representatives of the Seleukid dynasty “did not have the notion of misalliance”,⁵³ but it is necessary to stress that “misalliances” could only be entered into when the legal position of the dynasty as a whole and its potential successors had already been guaranteed.⁵⁴ The Seleukid kings set down legal conditions offering mutual benefits with the aim of ensuring that the marriages of the representatives of the Seleukid dynasty with people, who belonged to the local elites, would not be considered morganatic and could not damage the prestige of the Seleukid kings. One of these conditions provided that the dynasties that became interrelated to the Seleukid dynasty took on an equal rank. The striving for real political independence combined with the wish to establish equitable relations with the Seleukid dynasty became in many ways a uniting factor for the four Anatolian kingdoms Pontos, Pergamon, Bithynia, and Kappadokia. A detailed analysis of their connections with the representatives of the Seleukid dynasty reveals some differences in the formal legal status of these kingdoms as well. This complex of legal conceptions could somehow be reflected in the historical tradition, although we can only speculate about its transmission. The *Chronography* by Synkellos probably reproduced some elements of it. These long-term effects of the Seleukid propaganda should not surprise us, when we bear in mind that the reckoning of time according to the Seleukid era has been in use in some regions of the Middle East until the present time.

Notes

- 1 The edition of Mosshammer 1984 is used throughout this article. For the works of Synkellos, see Laquer 1932, 1388-1410, although not all problems are considered here. Concerning the validity and the difficulties connected with using Synkellos, see Perl 1968, 323-330; 1969, 62-67. He states (1968, 323): “Die Notizen bei Synkellos sind in ihrer Anordnung reichlich verwirrt, gehen aber in ihrer Substanz auf gute Überlieferung zurück, wie ein Vergleich mit den gleichartigen [he is discussing the Bithynian Kingdom O.G.] Nachrichten über die anderen hellenistische Königreiche ergibt. Die Erklärung der sekundären Verwirrungen bei Synkellos ist recht schwierig und muß einer speziellen Untersuchung vorbehalten bleiben”. To my knowledge such a study has unfortunately never been made.

- 2 The double date is mentioned because Synkellos in the lists of the Hellenistic kings after the death of Alexander the Great counts the years starting from 5493 BC (the last year of Alexander is 5170=324/323 BC), while for the age of Augustus the starting point is 5501 BC (the last year of Augustus is 5514=13/14 AD), see Perl 1968, 324, n. 102; 1969, 62-63, n. 102. It will be shown that for the matters treated here it is necessary to use the first system of reckoning.
- 3 Evidently the difference of one year is caused by the different starting points of the year in the Christian and the Macedonian calendars.
- 4 Perl 1968, 324-325; 1969, 63 (cf. Saprykin 1996, 43).
- 5 Perl points out that Synkellos makes the mistake of using tens in other lists of kings as well, giving numerous examples (Perl 1968, 324, n. 105; 1969, 65, n. 105).
- 6 Reinach 1888, 135; 1902, 171; Meyer 1898, 522; Perl 1968, 324, n. 104; 1969, 63, n. 104. The last of the known Bithynian royal tetradrachms dates to the year 224, but this is not considered since the last Bithynian king died in the very beginning of this year, and as usual he was only entered into the lists of kings with the full years of his reign (Perl 1968, 324; 1969, 63). I have previously been of the same opinion (Gabelko 1997, 209, n. 1).
- 7 Callataj 1986, 25-27; 1997, 68-83, 341-344; Mastrocinque 1999, 113. I will emphasize that this opinion is not a return to the old point of view that the Third Mithridatic War, begun the year after the death of Nikomedes IV, must be dated to 74 BC. In my opinion both authors are right in placing the invasion of Mithridates into Bithynia in the spring of 73 BC.
- 8 Gabelko 2005, 400-404.
- 9 Reinach 1888, 95, 131-133; 1890, 32; Magie 1950, 1087; Müller 1973, 126-127; Olshausen 1978, 403; McGing 1986, 19; Perl 1968, 328-330; 1969, 65-67. For a critique of this point of view, see Saprykin 1996, 43. Gabelko & Zavojkin (2004, 74-81) attempts to prove that Mithridates I (and possibly the Bosporan king Spartokos III) could have assumed the royal title immediately after Zipoites of Bithynia had done so in 297 BC.
- 10 Perl (1968, 328, n. 126; 1969, 63, n. 126) does not see any other solution than to change the number ten to eight, and despite the fact that it occurs twice, he considers it not to be a great problem.
- 11 Meyer 1879, 39; Leper 1902, 159; Lomouri 1979, 28-31; Saprykin 1996, 43.
- 12 It was probably not Apollodoros of Artemita, the author of a history of Parthia, but some other unknown historian of the same name, who lived not earlier than the 1st century BC (compare Perl 1968, 328, n. 124; 1969, 67, n. 124). See the reference to the work by some Apollodoros "Pontika" in the Scholias to Apollonios Rhodios (II. 160 b).
- 13 This number corresponds to the canonical number of the Bithynian kings: Zipoites, Nikomedes I, Ziailas, Prusias I, Prusias II, Nikomedes II, Nikomedes III, and Nikomedes IV.
- 14 Diodoros, for example, calls the realm of Mithridates, the father of Mithridates Ktistes, *δυναστεία* (20.111.4) or *βασιλεία* (15.90.3). Concerning these terms, see Kobes, 1996, 7-24; Bosworth & Wheatley 1998, 155-156. For a critical point of view, see Perl 1968, 326; 1969, 65.
- 15 For the immediate descendants of Mithridates VI, see Gulenkov 2001, 79-82. For the dynastic history of Asia Minor after Mithridates VI Eupator, see Sullivan

- 1980a, 913-930; 1980b, 1125-1168. Not enough attention, however, is paid to the individuals we are interested in here.
- 16 Perl 1968, 327; 1969, 66. Perl maintains that the Mithridatid dynasty ended with Mithridates VI Eupator, and he rejects a connection between the date 22/14 BC and the elevation of Polemon I to the Pontic throne by the Romans (Perl 1968, 326, n. 109; 1969, 64, n. 109).
 - 17 Concerning Pharnakes II, see Saprykin 2002, 14-54. For Dynamis, see Saprykin 2002, 90-124; compare Saprykin 1995, 183-193.
 - 18 Saprykin 2002, 106.
 - 19 Compare Perl 1968, 327; 1969, 66. Ballesteros-Pastor's (2000-2001, 64) attempt to see in Justinus' statement concerning Bosporos (37.1.9) that it was the ancestral domain of Mithridates VI seems unconvincing. Probably Justinus made an error in the abbreviation of the work by Pompeius Trogus. In any case, the legal status of Pontos and Bosporos within the Pontic Kingdom may not have been the same.
 - 20 Saprykin 1996, 300-304. Besides, Arsakes could not be considered the legal king, since according to Strabon: "he played the role of the sovereign and excited rebellion *without the permission of a Roman prefect*".
 - 21 See Reinach 1888, 135-139; Head 1911, 513; Macurdy 1937, 27-29; Marek 1993, 49-50; Gabelko 1997, 218-219.
 - 22 Appianos gives another form of the name – Ὀρσάβαρις. It seems that he was not right when he stated that Pompeius, after his triumph in Rome, sent the noble captives to their motherland, except "those belonging to the royal family" (χωρὶς τῶν βασιλικῶν) (*Mith.* 117). Orsobaris was evidently brought back to Asia Minor. Syme (1995, 174) thought that this was brought about by the enemies of Pompeius. Unfortunately, the appearance of her second name, Muse, is not clear on the coins.
 - 23 This supposition seems rather certain as both queens ruled in the same city and had similar Iranian names. The point of view of Kahrstedt (see Macurdy 1937, 29, n. 14) that Orodaltis was not the queen but rather the daughter of the king is very doubtful from a numismatic point of view.
 - 24 Bosworth & Wheatley 1998, 156.
 - 25 Probably Synkellos took into consideration not only kings but also queens who ruled independently as well. At least twice he indicates the year of reign of Kleopatra VII (573), and he includes her reign in the total duration of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt (584). Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the dynastic history of Pontos offered here excludes from the list of Pontic kings Laodike, the widow of Mithridates V Euergetes and the mother of Mithridates VI, who was the sole regent after the murder of her husband. The possibility that a sister of Pharnakes I and Mithridates IV by the name of Laodike reigned sometime in the 150's BC has been discussed by some historians, for example Saprykin (1996, 90). In my opinion this seems unlikely, see Gabelko 2005b, 144-145.
 - 26 Perl is not absolutely right when he supposes that the dynastic connections between the two kingdoms existed even during the reign of Mithridates V Euergetes and Nikomedes II Epiphanes on account of the name Nysa which occurred in both royal dynasties (Perl 1968, 329-330, n. 134; 1969, 68, n. 134). In reality the Bithynian Nysa was the daughter of the Kappadokian king Ariarathes VI and Laodike, the sister of Mithridates VI. She married Nikomedes III and the relationship between the Bithynian and Pontic dynasties was in this case (compare

- with the supposed marriage between Lykomedes and Orsobaris) mediated by the Ariarathid dynasty (Gabelko 1997, 218).
- 27 For Lykomedes, see Reinach 1887, 359-362; Syme 1995, 166-174 (who suggested two rulers with the same name. The Lykomedes of interest here would be a generation younger); Gabelko 1997, 217-218; Ballesteros Pastor 2000, 147-149.
 - 28 It is necessary to pay attention to the curious characterization that the author of the *Alexandrian War* gives of him (61.2.2): "the most noble Bithynian ... from the Kappadokian royal dynasty (*nobilissimi Lycomedi Bithyno ... qui regio Cappadocum genere ortus*)". This indicates a system of double lineage, both parental and maternal, for certain rulers of that time, which is very important for the determination of the origin and status of Orodaltis. Compare also with the real and imaginary genealogy of Mithridates of Pergamon (Strab. 13.4.3; *Bell. Alex.* 26, 78; *IGR* IV, 1682), see Heinen 1994, 63-79; Saprykin 2002, 63). In my opinion, Lykomedes was not the son of Nikomedes IV, but Nysa was his mother (*Sall. Hist.* 4.69.9), see Gabelko 1997, 217-218; 2005a, 407-410. Questions concerning the genealogy of the royal dynasties were of prime importance in Asia Minor and the Black Sea region in the second half of the 1st century BC, when the Romans settled "the dynastic network" (the term used by Sullivan). For Asia Minor, see Frézouls 1987, 176-192. In this situation any information concerning the origin or relation between rulers could attract the attention of historians. It is significant that the real or fictitious relationship with the Hellenistic kings (for example, with the representatives of the Attalid dynasty) was still of great value among representatives of the aristocracy in Asia Minor even in the 1st century AD (*IGR* III, 173; 192).
 - 29 See Saprykin 1996, 300-303.
 - 30 Some scholars have assumed contacts between the Bithynian "pretender" and Mithridates VI (Reinach 1890, 322; Geyer 1932, 2181; Braund 1984, 158, n. 31; Molev 1995, 93). Marriage between a candidate for the Bithynian throne and the daughter of the Pontic king was certainly to the interest of both sides.
 - 31 It is possible that Mithridates meant her to be the wife of one of the Scythian governors (*App. Mith.* 108) (Gulenkoy 2001, 82). The fact that one of the daughters of Mithridates, whose name is still unknown, could actually be considered royal in the barbarian nomadic society of the northern Black Sea region in the 50's-40's BC, has recently received interesting backing from archeological finds, see Zajcev & Mordvinceva 2003, 61-99; 2004, 90-97.
 - 32 For the mission of Agrippa, see Reinhold 1933, 79-80; 167-168; Daniel 1933, 25, 57-58. There is no definite information concerning the reforms of governing in the provinces of Asia Minor that Agrippa implemented, but such changes seem very probable, especially taking into account the changes made later in the East under Augustus.
 - 33 The chronology of the activities of Scribonius are still not clear, see latest Parfyonov 2001, 96-115, especially 108-112; Saprykin 2002, 90-97; Braund 2004, 81-87.
 - 34 See n. 1.
 - 35 A similar note is made concerning the kings of Pergamon (578) – perhaps, because it was necessary to elucidate the status of "Eumenes III" (i.e. Aristonikos). This fact is important as it shows that Synkellos according to his sources considered not merely the "formal" rulers.

- 36 Saprykin (1996, 60-61 with literature) on the basis of earlier research (foremost Reinach 1890, 38) dates this marriage to 240/239 BC, which exactly matches the information by Synkellos.
- 37 Concerning the importance of these marriages for both sides, see Seibert 1967, 58-60, 118; McGing 1998, 105-106.
- 38 See the review of the different opinions by Will 1979, 265-266. The assumption that peace had already been made in 236 BC seems the most well-founded. Judging by the evidence of a Mesopotamian inscription, Seleukos II and Antiochos Hierax were already co-rulers in this year (Magie 1950, 737, n. 23).
- 39 Habicht 1972, 394. The implicit date of 237 BC for this marriage (for example Rizzo 1974, 134), is criticized by Will (1978, 77-78).
- 40 To judge from the sources, Ziailas did not take part in the war (Habicht 1972, 394).
- 41 There is reason to suppose that Ziailas took the region Abrette to the southwest of the Mysian Olympos under his control (Schwertheim 1987, n. 132), thus coming very close to the borders of Pergamon.
- 42 The death of Ziailas is usually dated to 230/229 BC (Vitucci 1953, 35; Habicht 1972, 394).
- 43 The question concerning the "seven kings" is rather complicated. Starting from Ariarathes III, who as the first took the title of king, until the accession to the throne of Ariobarzanes I, the representative of a new dynasty, *eight* kings are known to have sat on the Kappadokian throne (the dates given are approximate): Ariarathes III (ca. 230-220 BC), Ariarathes IV Eusebes (220-163 BC), Ariarathes V Eusebes Philopator (163-130 BC), Orophernes (161-159 BC), Ariarathes VI Epiphanes Philopator (ca. 130-116 BC), Ariarathes VII Philometor (ca. 116-101 BC), Ariarathes IX Eusebes Philopator (101-87 BC or ca. 100-85 BC), Ariarathes VIII (100-98 BC). The queen Nysa (Laodike by Justinus, *Epit.* 38.1.4), who was the regent for her juvenile son Ariarathes VI and who even minted coins together with him (Simonetta 1977, 29-30, pl. III, 11), has to be added as well. However, judging by the example of Pontos (see above, note 25), the queen regents were probably not taken into account in the dynastic lists. Evidently, Synkellos does not take into account one of the above-mentioned kings. But which? There are three reasonable suggestions: 1) Orophernes, since he usurped the power from the lawful king, his brother Ariarathes V; 2) Ariarathes IX, since he was the son of Mithridates VI Eupator and did not belong to the Kappadokian dynasty at all (Just. *Epit.* 38.2.5); 3) Ariarathes VIII, who ruled for a very short period (or even failed to ascend the throne, so Simonetta (1977, 36), although Callataj (1997, 195-200) attributes the minting of some coins to him). Probably, it is better to choose the first or the second alternative, although none of them manages to eliminate all problems.
- 44 As to the date of his death, see Simonetta 1977, 36; Callataj 1997, 194-200. We can suppose that Lykomedes, being "of the Kappadokian royal family", nevertheless was not considered the lawful successor to the throne, since after the death of Ariarathes VIII, Ariobarzanes founded a new dynasty. Note "the change of dynasty" (*mutationemque generis*) as an obstacle for the claims of Lykomedes (*Bell. Alex.* 66).
- 45 It has been shown (Gabelko & Kuz'min 2005) that the sources err in calling Stratonike, the wife of Ariarathes III, the daughter of Antiochos II.

- 46 Reinach 1886, 317-318; Niese 1895, 816; Seibert 1967, 56 & 114; Müller 1973, 127; Simonetta 1977, 16; Will 1979, 292; Saprykin 1996, 41-42. Perl, being extremely critically disposed to this passage, offers to change the number of years to 164 (Ϟξδ) (Perl 1968, 326, n. 111; 1969, 65, n. 111), synchronizing the beginning of the rule of the Kappadokian dynasty according to Synkellos with the date of the foundation of Nikomedia (523). However, there is no reliable basis for this. In that case, the passage (and consequently the establishment of the Seleukid-Kappadokian dynastic alliance) must be dated not to the reign of Antiochos II, but rather to the final years of the reign of Antiochos I, who was killed in 261 BC. This definitely contradicts the information of Diodoros: "He (Ariamnes), made a marriage alliance with Antiochos, called Theos, marrying the daughter of Antiochos to his son Ariarathes".
- 47 Concerning the propagandistic struggle between the representatives of the Ariarathid and the Mithridatid dynasties, see Panitschek 1987-1988, 73-95.
- 48 Hammond 1989, 31; Miron 2000, 49-51; Ladynin 2005, 37. Special attention is paid to the sacred dimension royalty received as a result of a marriage with a woman of the Macedonian royal dynasty. For the representatives of the eastern elite, the formal legal aspect of the establishment of such dynastic connections was much more important.
- 49 Concerning the importance of this marriage for Hierax some scholars are of the opinion that after Attalos defeated him near Aphrodisias, he found shelter in Bithynia where he stayed until the death of his father-in-law (Magie 1950, 738-739, n. 24; Balachvancev 2000, 212).
- 50 Note that Ziailas started his political career as a usurper, when he deprived his stepbrothers of power despite the will of Nikomedes I (Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 14.1-2). The atypical title βασιλεὺς Βιθυνῶν (*Syll.*³ 456) used in the letter to the Council and the People of Kos, was used to legitimize the status of Ziailas obtained after the civil war (Errington 1974, 20-37, 21, n. 7; Gabelko 2005, 210-217).
- 51 Ma 1999, esp. 235-242.
- 52 Karyškovskij 1985, 572-581; Vinogradov, Molev & Tolstikov 1985, 595-600; Ballesteros-Pastor 1995.
- 53 Bikerman 1985, 26. See also Seibert 1967, 4.
- 54 Antiochos III, who already had children with his wife Laodike, the representative of the royal family of the Mithridatids, could thus marry for a second time with a girl of non-royal descent during his stay on Euboia (Polyb. 20.8; Liv. 36.17.7).

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The First Royal Coinages of Pontos (from Mithridates III to Mithridates V)

François de Callataÿ

A magnificent coin portrait of Mithridates III¹ illustrates the jacket of the last and posthumous book by the great numismatist Otto Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage*. Cambridge, 1991 (Fig. 1). The coin was acquired in 1978 by Mørkholm for the Copenhagen Coin Cabinet as a New Carlsberg Foundation gift. It is not the only coin he purchased in those years to fill a gap in the splendid Greek collection kept in Copenhagen: as far as Pontic kings are concerned, Mørkholm succeeded in purchasing one specimen for three out of the four main varieties,² and thus provided a monetary portrait of all the kings decently available on the market. Jugate portraits of queen Laodike with

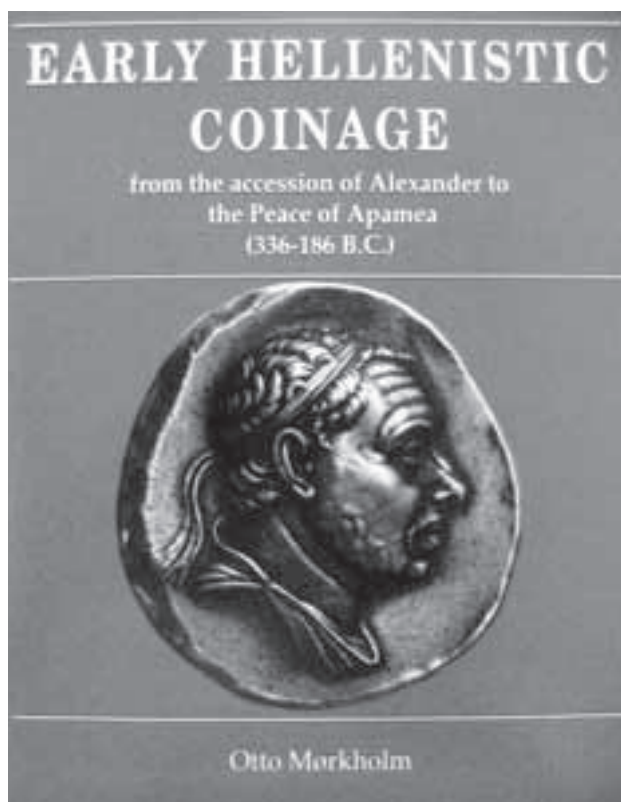


Fig. 1. Front cover of O. Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage*. Cambridge 1991.

her husband Mithridates IV are extremely rare (5 specimens) while portraits of her alone are unique, as is the portrait of Mithridates V, known from only one specimen now in Athens.

Commenting on these Pontic coins, Mørkholm wrote: "The first interest of this coinage, however, resides in the royal portrait. The Pontic kings were proud of their Iranian descent, and although they soon married into the Seleucid dynasty their attachment to their oriental roots remained strong. This gave a series of excellent Greek die engravers a unique opportunity to create a gallery of semi-barbarian royal portraits that has no real parallel in Hellenistic portraiture. The first of these excellent likenesses is that of Mithridates III, probably created about 200. His head or bust is rendered with extreme realism, emphasizing his oriental features that are so different from Greek idealization or Macedonian heaviness. The Pontic portraits are equal to the best Bactrian portraits as far as realism is concerned, and seem to me to surpass them in psychological insight. The meeting of Greek artists with oriental models has created a unique and exceptional portrait art that stands quite isolated and outside the main development of portraiture in the Hellenistic age".³

Indeed, the coinages of the first Pontic kings were praised and discussed above all for the excellence of their portraits. We are not of course required to endorse the usual comments made by past art historians about the "oriental features" and what some deduced about the limited cleverness of these kings (very much in the line with the spirit of Gobineau).⁴ Some like Jean Babelon or, more recently, Peter Green reached summits of political incorrectness. I quote Peter Green: "The early kings of Pontus resemble nothing so much as a family of escaped convicts: Pharnaces I has the profile of a Neanderthal, and Mithridates IV that of a skid-row alcoholic".⁵

Iconography is the other main point of interest: the eight-rayed star and the crescent, generally taken as symbols of the Pontic house, the composite deity on the coins of Pharnakes, Perseus on the coins of Mithridates IV, arguably emblematic of the king's Persian roots, and the figures of Hera and Zeus on the tetradrachms struck in the names of Mithridates IV and his wife Laodike.⁶

This article takes a different approach. Its main aim is to provide at last a die-study, never attempted so far, for these coinages and to contextualize them in terms of monetary volumes, purposes and diffusion.

As a matter of fact, royal Pontic coins from the period before Mithridates VI Eupator are very rare nowadays and, as we will see, it is likely that they were never abundant. In the present catalogue, which does not claim to be a complete *corpus*, but which on the other hand is unlikely to be missing much, 4 staters (for the unique one of Laodike, see below), 64 tetradrachms and 18 drachms have been gathered (Table 1). In other words, we now possess less than 100 coins for roughly a century of coinage by an important Hellenistic dynasty.

Table 1. The number of coins and obverse dies for each of the major royal Pontic coinages.

Kings	Staters		Tetradrachms		Drachms	
	no	obv	no	obv	no	obv
Mithridates III	2	2	19	5	2	1
Pharnakes I	1	1	24	9	16	5
Mithridates IV	1	1	14	6	-	-
Mithridates IV & Laodike	-	-	5	2	-	-
Laodike	-	-	1	1	-	-
*Mithridates V	-	-	1	1	-	-
Total	4	4	64	24	18	6

As a result of this scarcity, our knowledge about these royal Pontic coinages has been slow to develop.⁷ Jean Foy-Vaillant made a first and misleading attempt, with very limited material in 1725. Only two types, out of a total of 11 (or 12) recorded today, were known as late as 1850. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, Joseph Hilarius Eckhel (1737-1798) and Thédodore-Edmé Mionnet (1770-1842) both gave a poor catalogue: out of the four types known to them, two prove to be modern fantasies, duly recognized as such.⁸ Many types were unknown as late as 1880 and three or four⁹ major types surfaced only after WWII (see Table 2).

Table 2. The first appearance of each major coin type.

1706	Tetradrachm of Pharnakes I (Spanheim 1706, 481) ¹⁰
1759	Tetradrachm of Mithridates III (Pellerin 1765 – KAI = KIA for Kios)
1860	Drachm of Pharnakes I (Waddington 1863)
1877	Tetradrachm of Mithridates IV (Sallet 1877)
1888	Stater of Mithridates III (Reinach – Waddington)
1888	Tetradrachm of Laodike (Reinach – Waddington)
1900	Tetradrachm of Mithridates IV and Laodike (Reinach 1902)
1900	Drachm of Mithridates III (Reinach 1900)
1955?	Stater of Mithridates IV (von Aulock – published by Kleiner 1955)
1973	Stater of Pharnakes I (Sale Kastner, 27-28 Nov. 1973, no. 52)
1976	Tetradrachm of Mithridates V (Oikonomides 1976)
2001 ¹¹	Stater of Laodike (Sale Tkalec & Rauch, 19 Febr. 2001, no. 97)

Mistakes were often made: Domenico Sestini (1750-1832) wrongly read the letters KΘ on some tetradrachms of Mithridates III, and interpreted them as a date (year 29).¹² Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818) restored to Mithridates III the tetradrachms given to Mithridates II by Eckhel.¹³ The numbering of the kings is also merely an illusion. The sequence of kings itself was by no means secure when, finally, at the end of the 19th century, Théodore Reinach (1860-1928) took a serious look at the subject.¹⁴ But Reinach himself changed his mind with the discovery of new pieces of evidence. And, recently, Harold Mattingly dared to propose a radical change in the sequence of kings (attributing the coins of Mithridates III to Mithridates IV, that is after the coinage of Pharnakes), which – as we will see – is not to be adopted.¹⁵

Catalogue

Mithridates III (c. 220-200 BC)

Staters (2 coins, 2 obverses and 2 reverses)

Obv.: Helmeted head of Athena to the r.

Rev.: ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (in outer r. field) – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (in outer l. field). Standing Nike to the l., holding a crown in her extended r. hand; different letters or monograms in the inner fields.

Σ and ME (inner l. field) – KO and ΓΑ (inner r. field)¹⁶

O1 R1 a-Paris, BN, 1 = Waddington 109 – found in Ordu, the ancient Kotyora (8.48g [holed]-12h-19mm; see Reinach 1888, pl. XVI, no. 2 (Fig. 2); *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 1 and Alram 1986, no. 22).

Σ and Π (inner l. field) – K (inner r. field)

O2 R2 a-SNG von Aulock, no. 1 (8.52g (Fig. 3) – see Kleiner 1955, pl. 2, no. 10) = Vinchon, 24-25 Nov. 1994 (Velkov Coll.), no. 51 (8.48g-17.25mm).

Tetradrachms (19 coins, 5 obverses and 13+ reverses)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.¹⁷

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (outer r. field) – ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (outer l. field). Seated Zeus to l. He holds an eagle on his extended r. hand and a sceptre in his l. hand; eight-rayed star and crescent in the inner l. field.



Figs. 2-3. *Staters of Mithridates III.*

(KAI) (inner l. field)

- O1 R1 a-IGCH 1544 (Latakia Hoard 1759) Paris, BN (16.85g; see *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 2; Seyrig 1973, 51, pl. 19, no. 11.39 [16.87g (Fig. 4)] and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 2).
b-IGCH 1544 (Latakia Hoard 1759) Paris, BN, Pont 3 (14.91g-12h-33mm – see Seyrig 1973, 51, pl. 19, no. 11.40 [14.93g (Fig. 5)]).
- O1 R2 a-M&M, 61, 7-8 Oct. 1982, no. 131 (16.90g) = Sotheby's (New York), 4 Dec. 1990 (Hunt Coll.), no. 53 (16.90g-33mm-12h [enlarged ill.]).
- O1 R3 a-IGCH 1774 (Babylon Hoard 1900) Berlin, 367/1928 (13.31g [in 6 parts]-12h-34mm – see Regling 1928, pl. 11, no. 60 [13.34g (Fig. 6)]).

Becker Forgeries (copied on O1-R1a)

- OA RA a-Hill, no. 72 (Fig. 7).
b-New York, forgery, gift Robinson (18.18g-30mm-12h).
c-New York, forgery, A.M. Huntington Coll. (14.43g-29mm-12h).
d-Gorny, 30, 19-20 Nov. 1984, no. 3034 (20.02g).
e-Baron von Prokesch-Osten (16.95g – see Köhne 1865, 262).

Obv.: Draped bust of the king, diademed, to r.

Rev.: Idem.

(IIA) (inner l. field)

- O2 R1 a-IGCH 1774 (Babylon Hoard 1900) Berlin (17.11g; see *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 3 (Fig. 8)).

(MT) (inner l. field)

- O3 R1 a-Berlin, Imhoof-Blumer 1900 – acquired in 1899 (16.98g-12h-32mm).
O3 R2 a-NFA, 25, 29 Nov. 1990 ("Northern California Coll."), no. 118 (16.29g-12h) = NFA, 29, 13 Aug. 1992, no. 120 (16.29g-12h) = Sotheby's (Zurich), 27-28 Oct. 1993 (Fund sold by NFA), no. 574 (16.29g-12h (Fig. 9)).
O? R3 a-Berlin, Löbbecke 1906/7644 (16.96g-12h-31mm).

(IΣ) and (EMT) (in inner l. field)

- O4 R1 a-Rollin & Feuarent, 22 mars 1886, no. 582.

(EMT) (under throne), (IΣ) (in inner r. field)

- O4 R1 a-New York, Jameson Coll. (16.07g-33mm-12h) = Sotheby's, 23-28 March 1896 (Montagu Coll.), no. 470 (249gr.) = Weber Coll., no. 4787 (16.11g) = Jameson Coll., no. 2151 (16.07g – see *RGAM*, pl. Suppl. A, no. 3 (Fig. 10)) = Leu-Hess, 7 Apr. 1960, no. 198 (16.10g-32mm).

(MII) (under throne), (IΣ) and A (in inner r. field)

- O4 R1 a-Bruxelles, L. de Hirsch Coll. 1411 (17.11g-29.2mm-12h – see *RGAM*, pl. Suppl. A, no. 1).



Figs. 4-13. Tetradrachms of Mithridates III.

- O3 R1 a-Copenhagen, New Carlsberg Foundation gift 1978 (see Mørkholm 1980, 71, no. 1; 1991, cover; Zahle 1992, 39, fig. 37) = Paravey Coll. 1879 = Paris (see Reinach 1900, 225 [drawing]; *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 4) = Herzfelder Coll. (exchange in 1956 with Paris duplicates) = Leu, 20, 25-6 Apr. 1978, no. 109 (17.13g-12h (Fig. 11)).
 b-SNG *BM* 1024 = London, 1869-11-2-1 Feuardent (17.16g-31mm-11h – see *BMC*, pl. VIII, no. 2; *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 4 [wrongly attributed to Paris]; Head 1932, pl. 32, no. 1; Seltman 1933, pl. 56, no. 8; Newell 1937, 42, no. 1; Kraay & Hirmer 1966, pl. 210, no. 769; Jenkins 1972, no. 585; Davis & Kraay 1973, no. 198, 199 and 202; Green 1993, 350, fig. 122 [wrongly attributed to Paris]).
 c-Paris, Armand Valton 396 (17.09g-30mm-12h – see *RGAM*, pl. Suppl. A, no. 2).
 d-M&M, 75, 4 Dec. 1989, no. 253 (16.37g).

(MII) (under throne) and (AII) and A (in inner r. field)

- O3 R1 a-Hoffmann, 24 Apr. 1867 (Dupré Coll.), no. 240 = Sotheby's, 23 May 1894 (Carfrae Coll.), no. 187 = Sotheby's, 28-31 May 1900 (Rotschild Coll.), no. 304 (265gr. = 17.19g) = Leu and M&M, 28 May 1974 (Gillet Coll.), no. 243 (17.19g, 12h) = Leu, 81, 16 May 2001, no. 236 (17.19g-12h (Fig. 12)).
 b-SNG *Salting*, 30 (17.16g-12h).
 O4 R2 a-Berlin, C.R. Fox 1873 – acquired in 1862 to Borrell (17.03g-29mm-12h – see Reinach 1888, pl. XVI, no. 3 (Fig. 13)).

(EMI) (under throne) and B and (AP) (in inner r. field)

- O5 R1 a-*IGCH* 1372 (Amasya Hoard 1860) Paris, 5 = Waddington 110 (16.95g-33mm-12h – see Waddington 1863, pl. 9, no. 1 [drawing]; *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 5; Alram 1986, no. 24 and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 4).

Drachms (2 coins, 1 obverse and 1 reverse)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (outer r. field) – ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (outer l. field). Seated Zeus to l.
 He holds an eagle on his extended r. hand and a sceptre in his l. hand.
 Eight-rayed star and crescent in the inner l. field.

(ΣΑ) (in inner l. field)

- O1 R1 a-Paris, no. 6 – M2632 (3.85g-18mm-12h – see Reinach 1900, 229 [drawing] and 1902, pl. 3, no. 2; *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 6 and Alram 1986, no. 25).
 b-Bayer Vereinsbank, 11, 1976, no. 32 (3.96g) = M&M Deutschland, 11, 7-8 Nov. 2002, no. 676 (3.96g (Fig. 14)).

Pharnakes I (c. 200-169 BC)

Staters (1 coin)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (outer r. field) – ΦΑΡΝΑΚΟΥ (outer l. field). Uncertain male figure standing facing front with a flat hat and a dress; he holds, in his l. hand, a cornucopia and a caduceus, and, in his r., a vine branch, upon which a young deer feeds; eight-rayed star and crescent in the inner l. field.

(ΜΑ) (outer r. field)

O1 R1 a-Kastner, 4, 27-28 Nov. 1973, no. 52 (8.33g-12h – see Alram 1986, no. 26) = Leu, 22, 8-9 May 1979, no. 116 (8.47g-12h) = Tkalec & Rauch, 25-26 Apr. 1989, no. 105 (8.47g) = Lanz, 70, 21 Nov. 1994, no. 81 (8.44g-11h (Fig. 15)).

NB: Same obverse die as O5 used for drachms. Mionnet (1807, 359 and Suppl. 4, 1829, 464-465) denounces a doubtful gold medallion in Florence (the Mus. Mag. Ducis) as a modern forgery, presented as genuine by Visconti.

Tetradrachms (24 coins, 9 obverses and 13+ reverses)

Obv.: Idem.

Rev.: Idem. Horizontal thunderbolt above the head of the standing male figure.

Without monogram

O1 R1 a-Berlin, Imhoof-Blumer 1900 – acquired in 1893 (16.87g-32mm – see *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 9 (Fig. 16)).
b-Egger, 28 Nov. 1904 (Prowe Coll.), no. 958 (16.55g-35mm).
O2 R2 a-M&M, 47, 30 Nov. 1972, no. 475 (16.88g) = NFA, 5, 23 Feb. 1978, no. 123 (16.85g) = NFA, 25, 29 Nov. 1990, no. 119 (16.85g-12h) = Leu, 81, 16 May 2001 (Wahler Coll.), no. 237 (16.85g-12h – “probably the finest known tetradrachm of Pharnakes” (Fig. 17)).

ΙΣ (in inner r. field)

O3 R1 a-Glasgow, Hunterian Coll., pl. 45, no. 1 (10.84g = 167.2gr. [holed] – see Waddington 1863, pl. 9, no. 4 [drawing]; Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 5).¹⁸
b-St Petersburg (17.00g – see *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 8 (Fig. 18)).



Fig. 14. Drachm of Mithridates III.



Fig. 15. Stater of Pharnakes I.

(ΠΑΣ) (in inner r. field)

O4 R1 a-Berlin, Löbbecke 1906 – 7592 (16.80g-35mm-12h).

Obv.: Idem.

Rev.: Idem (as the staters, without thunderbolt).¹⁹



Figs. 16-23. Tetradrachms of Pharnakes I.

(IYYM) (in inner r. field)

- O5 R1 a-Leu & Hess, 36, 17-18 Apr. 1968, no. 244 (15.27g-12h) = NFA, MBS
18 Oct. 1990, no. 701 (15.26g) = Sotheby's (Zurich), 27-28 Oct. 1993, no.
575 (15.26g-12h) = CNG, 55, 13 Sept. 2000, no. 418 (15.28g (Fig. 19)).

(MH or MT) (in inner r. field)

- O5 R1 a-Brussels, de Hirsch Coll., no. 1412 (17.01g-31.6mm-12h).
O5 R2 a-Berlin, Prokesch-Osten 1875 (17.00g-30mm-12h).
O5 R3 a-IGCH 1372 (Amasya Hoard 1860) Paris, Waddington Coll. (16.99g – see
Waddington 1863, pl. 9, no. 2; RGAM, pl. Suppl. A, no. 4 and Seltman
1933, pl. 56, no. 9).
O6 R4 a-Berlin, Löbbecke 1906 (16.90g-32mm-12h).
b-Vecchi (London), 14, 5 Feb. 1999, no. 518 (16.80g) = Vecchi (London),
16, 9 Oct. 1999, no. 189 (16.80g) = Berk, 116, 17 Oct. 2000, no. 274 (16.81g
– “probably the finest known of this issue” (Fig. 20)).
O6 R5 a-Gorny, 44, 4 Apr. 1989, no. 335a (16.95g) = Gorny, 48, 2 Apr. 1990, no.
347 (16.95g).
O6 R6 a-Lisbon, Gulbenkian Coll., no. 932 (16.99g-11h – see Mørkholm 1991,
pl. 52, no. 623).

(EMI), B and AP (in inner r. field)

- O7 R1 a-Berlin, C.R. Fox 1873 (16.97g-31mm-12h – see Waddington 1863, pl.
9, no. 2 [drawing]; Reinach 1888, pl. 16, no. 4 (Fig. 21)).
b-SNG BM 1025 = London, 1872-7-9-131 Wigan (17.00g-30mm-12h – see
BMC, pl. 8, no. 3; Head 1932, pl. 39, no. 2; Newell 1937, 42, no. 2; Jenkins
1972, no. 586; Davis & Kraay 1973, nos. 200, 201 and 203; Alram 1986,
no. 27 and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 1).
c-IGCH 237 (Sitichoro-Larissa Hoard 1968)? Spink, *NCirc*, 78 (3), March
1970, no. 15 (16.34g) = NAC, A, 27-28 Feb. 1991, no. 1412 (16.35g)
d-Leu, 33, 3 May 1983, no. 349 (16.91g-12h) = NFA, 16, 2 Dec. 1985, no.
181 (16.83g).
e-Superior Galleries, 12-14 Dec. 1987, no. 399 (16.79g).
f-Leu, 45, 26 May 1988, no. 191 (16.80g-12h).
g-Gorny, 55, 14 May 1991, no. 242 (16.74g (Fig. 22)).

(EMI), IA and B (in inner r. field)

- O7 R1 a-Paris, Pont 7 – B829 (16.96g-31mm-12h – see RGAM, pl. I, no. 7
(Fig. 23); Kraay & Hirmer 1966, pl. 210, no. 770; Green 1993, 350, fig.
121 [wrongly attributed to London]; Saprykin 1996, 2-3 and Oikono-
mides 1996, no. 178).

To be classified

- O8 R? a-St Petersburg, Hermitage? (see Zograph 1977, pl. 15, no. 2 [only the
obverse]).

- O9 R? a-St Petersburg, Hermitage? (see Zograph 1977, pl. 15, no. 3 [only the obverse]).

Drachms (16 coins, 5 obverses and 12 reverses)

Obv.: Idem.

Rev.: Idem (with a thunderbolt).

Without monogram

- O1 R1 a-SNG von Aulock, no. 3 (4.06g) = M&M, 52, 19-20 June 1975, no. 157 (4.10g (Fig. 24)).

(MT) (inner r. field)

- O2 R1 a-Copenhagen, acquired in 1972 (4.19g – see Mørkholm 1980, 71, no. 2) = Spink, *NCirc*, 80 (7/8), Jul.-Aug. 1972, no. 7161 (4.19g).
O3 R2 a-NFA, 8, 6 June 1980, no. 188 (3.97g (Fig. 25)).

Obv.: Idem.

Rev.: Idem (without thunderbolt).

(MT) (inner r. field)

- O4 R1 a-SNG BM 1026 (4.12g-12h) = London, 1938-10-7-130 Robinson (4.15g-17mm-11h).
O5 R1 a-Boston, MFA, no. 1353 – 35.184 (3.10g [sic!]-20mm – see Brett 1955, pl. 69 (Fig. 26)) = *Ars Classica*, 1, 4 Apr. 1921 (Pozzi Coll.), no. 2090 (4.01g-18mm) = *Ars Classica*, 10, 15-8 June 1925, no. 629 (4.01g-18mm).
O4 R2 a-New York, K (4.03g-18mm-1h).
b-Jameson Coll., no. 2152 (4.18g – see *RGAM*, pl. Suppl. A, no. 6 (Fig. 27)) = Sternberg, 27, 7-8 Nov. 1994, no. 5 (4.28g).
O5 R3 a-M&M, 41, 18-19 June 1970, no. 116 (4.07g) = Leu, 79, 31 Oct. 2000, no. 609 (4.08g-11h (Fig. 28)).
O5 R4 a-Lanz, 34, 25 Nov. 1985, no. 249 (4.1g-12h).
O5 R5 a-Brussels, de Hirsch Coll., no. 1413 – acquired to Hoffmann, March 23, 1882 (4.15g-20mm-11h – see *RGAM*, pl. Suppl. A, no. 5 (Fig. 29)).
b-New York, BYB 890 (4.11g [holed]-20mm-12h – see *SNG Berry*, no. 890 [4.12g]).
O5 R6 a-Aufhäuser, 16, 16-17 Oct. 2001 (Egon Beckenbauer Coll.), no. 84 (4.11g).
b-Kastner, 6, 26 Nov. 1974, no. 61 (3.29g [corroded edge]-11h) = *Athena*, 4 [after 1976], no. 19.
O5 R7 a-New York, BYB 891 (4.05g-18mm-12h – see *SNG Berry*, no. 891 [4.05g-12h]).
O5 R8 a-SNG von Aulock, no. 2 (4.07g) = Leu, 28, 5-6 May 1981, no. 126 (4.08g-12h).



Figs. 24-30. Drachms of Pharnakes I.

(MI) and Z (in outer r. field)

O5 R1 a-IGCH 1372 (Amasya Hoard 1860) Paris, 8 – Waddington, no. 111 (4.33g-17mm-12h – see Waddington 1863, pl. 9, no. 3 [4.29g – drawing]; RGAM, pl. I, no. 10 (Fig. 30) and Alram 1986, no. 28).

Mithridates IV (c. 169-150 BC)

Staters (1 coin)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (outer r. field) – ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (outer l. field). Hera standing facing; she wears a long dress and holds a sceptre in her r.; crescent and eight-rayed star in the outer l. field.

? (in outer r. field)

O1 R1 a-SNG von Aulock, no. 4 (8.53g – see Kleiner 1955, pl. 2, no. 12; Alram 1986, no. 23; Callataÿ 1997, pl. 50, no. R and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 3) = Vinchon, 24-25 Nov. 1994 (Velkov Coll.), no. 52 (8.49g-19.07mm (Fig. 31)).



Fig. 31. Stater of Mithridates IV.

Tetradrachms (14 coins, 6 obverses and 14 reverses)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (outer r. field) – ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ (outer l. field). Perseus standing facing front, wearing helmet, chlamys and winged sandals; he holds in his r. hand the head of Medusa and, in his l. hand, a harpa. Eight-rayed star and crescent above his head.

Without monogram

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| O1 | R1 | a-Berlin, 1876/617, acquired in Athens to Lambros (16.80g-35mm-12h – see Sallet 1877, 232 [16.85g]; Reinach 1888, pl. 16, no. 5 (Fig. 32) and RGAM, pl. I, no. 12). |
| O1 | R2 | a-Paris, 10 = Waddington, no. 112 (11.91g [broken]-12h). |
| O2 | R3 | a-Leu and M&M, 28 May 1974 (Gillet Coll.), no. 244 (16.83g-12h [enlarged ill.] – see Richter 1965, fig. 1927) = M&M, 61, 7-8 Oct. 1982, no. 132 (16.83g) = Leu, 72, 12 May 1998, no. 226 (16.84g-12h (Fig. 33)). |

(BAII) (in inner l. field)

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| O3 | R1 | a-New York, D. Kellad VII/40 (16.31g-35mm-12h). |
| O4 | R2 | a-SNG von Aulock, no. 6674 (16.87g – see Kraay & Hirmer 1966, pl. 210, no. 771; Alram 1986, no. 29 and Green 1993, 351, fig. 123) = Leu, 48, 10 May 1989, no. 209 (16.83g-12h (Fig. 34)). |

(IIAIZ) (in inner l. field)

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| O2 | R1 | a-M&M, 85, 11 Apr. 1997, no. 104 (16.94g) = Triton, 3, 30 Nov.-1 Dec. 1999, no. 468 (16.93g). |
| O2 | R2 | a-Paris, 9 – L173 (16.12g-34mm-12h – see Reinach 1887, pl. IV, no. 4; 1902: pl. 3, no. 1 and RGAM, pl. I, no. 11). |
| O2 | R3 | a-Hess, 208, 14 Dec. 1931, no. 519 (15.52g-33mm). |
| O2 | R4 | a-Lisbon, Gulbenkian Coll., no. 934 (16.98g-11h) = Ars Classica, 1, 4 Apr. 1921 (Pozzi Coll.), no. 2091 (16.98g – “le plus bel exemplaire connu”). |
| O2 | R5 | a-Lisbon, Gulbenkian Coll., no. 933 (17.08g-11h) = Jameson Coll., no. 2153 (17.09g – see RGAM, pl. Suppl. A, no. 7 (Fig. 35); Seltman 1933, pl. 56, no. 10). |



Figs. 32-38. Tetradrachms of Mithridates IV.

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| O4 | R6 | a-M&M, 47, 30 Nov.-1 Dec. 1972, no. 476 (16.32g) = NFA, 4, 24-25 March 1977, no. 232 (16.29g (Fig. 36)) = Sotheby's (New York), 4 Dec. 1990 (Hunt Coll.), no. 54 (16.32g-32mm-12h [enlarged ill.]). |
| O4 | R7 | a-Copenhagen, acquired in 1980 (16.97g – see Mørholm 1980, 71, no. 3 and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 11). |
| O5 | R8 | a-Boston, MFA, no. 1354 – 35.187 (16.89g-32mm – see Brett 1955, pl. 69 (Fig. 37)) = Ars Classica, 4, End 1922 (Grand Duke Michailovitch Coll.), no. 666 (16.90g-32mm). |



Figs. 39-41. Tetradrachms of Mithridates IV and Laodike.

- O6 R9 a-Berlin, Imhoof-Blumer 1900 – acquired in 1895 (14.77g [broken]-32mm-12h – see Imhoof-Blumer 1897, pl. 9, no. 14 [14.85g] (Fig. 38)).

Mithridates IV and Laodike (c. 162-150 BC)

Tetradrachms (5 coins, 2 obverses and 4 reverses)

Obv.: Draped busts of the diademed heads of the king and the queen to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ (outer r. field) – ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ (outer l. field). Hera (l.) and Zeus (r.), standing facing front; Hera holds a sceptre in her r. hand.; Zeus, laureate, holds a sceptre in his r. hand and a thunderbolt in his l. hand.

() (inner l. field)

- O1 R1 a-IGCH 1374 (Samsun Hoard 1900) Egger, 28 Nov. 1904 (Prowe Coll.), no. 957 (16g-34mm) = Jameson Coll., no. 1365 = SNG von Aulock, no. 6675 (16.02g) = NAC, 2, 21-2 Feb. 1990, no. 173 (15.99g – see RGAM, pl. Suppl. A, no. 8 (Fig. 39) and Mørkholm 1991, pl. 42, no. 624).
- O2 R1 a-IGCH 1374 (Samsun Hoard 1900) Paris, 11 – M4624 (17.05g-33mm-12h – see Reinach 1902, pl. 3, no. 3; RGAM, pl. I, no. 13 (Fig. 40); Regling 1924, pl. 42, no. 854; Seltman 1933, pl. 57, no. 1; Davis & Kraay 1973, no. 204-6; Kraay & Hirmer 1966, pl. 210, no. 772; Alram 1986, no. 30; Oikonomides 1996, no. 179; Callataÿ 1997, pl. 50, no. S and Mattingly 1998, pl. 56, no. 8).

- O2 R2 a-Leu and M&M, 28 May 1974 (Gillet Coll.), no. 245 (17.00g-12h).
 O2 R3 a-Münzhandlung, 10, 15 March 1938, no. 287 (16.81g) = *Crédit de la Bourse*, 21-22 Apr. 1994, no. 46 (16.70g (Fig. 41)) = *Parsy*, 7 June 2000, no. 30 (16.70g).
 O2 R4 a-IGCH 1374 (Samsun Hoard 1900) Lisbon, Gulbenkian Coll. 935 (16.95g-12h) = *Ars Classica*, 1, 4 Apr. 1921 (Pozzi Coll.), no. 2092 (16.95g).

Laodike alone

Staters (1 coin)

Obv.: Veiled bust of the queen to l.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ (outer r. field) – ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ (outer l. field). Double cornucopiae; six-rayed star above.

? (inner r. field)

- O1 R1 a-Tkalec & Rauch, 19 Feb. 2001, no. 97 (8.49g (Fig. 42)).

Tetradrachms (1 coin)²⁰

Obv.: Veiled head of the queen to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ (outer r. field) – ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ (outer l. field). Hera standing facing front; she wears a long dress and holds a sceptre in her r. hand.

- O1 R1 a-Paris, 12 = Waddington, no. 113 (14.63g [broken in 3 parts]-33mm-12h – see Reinach 1888, pl. 16, no. 6; Reinach 1902, pl. 3, no. 5; *RGAM*, pl. I, no. 14 (Fig. 43) and Callatay 1997, pl. 50, no. Q).

Mithridates V (c. 150-119 BC)

Tetradrachms (1 coin)

Obv.: Diademed head of the king to r.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (outer r. field) – ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ (outer l. field). Apollo standing l., his r. leg ahead; he holds a bow in his l. hand and a little figurine in his r. hand.

- O1 R1 a-Athens, given in 1976 by Euripides Seferiadis (15.92g-29mm-12h – see Oikonomides 1976, pl. 3, no. 29; Alram 1986, no. 30A; Callatay 1991, 34, no. 1; Callatay 1997, pl. 50, no. P (Fig. 44) and Oikonomides 1996, no. 180).

Forgeries

A fantasy described by Vaillant (1725, 187) “*ex cimelio cardinalis Maximi*” = “from the collection of Cardinal Massimo” and never seen again since. Monogram and ΓΟΡ



Fig. 42. Stater of Laodike (not to scale).



Fig. 43. Tetradrachm of Laodike.



Fig. 44. Tetradrachm of Mithridates V.

(= year 173 = 124 BC). See Eckhel 1794, 364; Mionnet 1807, 359-360, no. 5 and Suppl. 4, 1829, 465 ("Ce médaillon, publié par Vaillant dans son ouvrage posthume sur les rois du Pont, à en juger sur la gravure, paroît être de coin moderne"); Sallet 1877, 234; Waddington 1863, 221; Reinach 1888, 250 (n. 1: "On serait tenté de croire que notre pièce est un tétradrachme bithynien ou arsacide démarqué"); 1902, 59 and 1905, 117. But the legend is still problematic.

General comments about the catalogue

1) The first Pontic staters struck by Mithridates III (rather than I or II)

The sequence of reigns presented here is the same as the one established by Reinach with one noticeable exception: I prefer to attribute to the same

king, *i.e.* Mithridates III, the silver and the gold issues with Alexander types, dismissing thus any strike to Mithridates I. Reinach argued that 1) staters with the types of Alexander the Great were no longer struck long after the death of Alexander the Great and 2) the placement of the legend with ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ in the right field and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ in the left field is typical of the fourth century, to be replaced later by the reverse order.²¹ These two statements are broadly correct but with exceptions.²² Particularly interesting is no. 1014 (= Newell 1941, 1689) of the comprehensive catalogue of the Seleukid coins published by Houghton and Lorber (2002, 386 and pl. 51). This issue of staters, with the legend ANTIOXΟΥ (r. field) – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (l. field), has been attributed by Newell to Aspendos, a Pamphylian mint, either under Antiochos Hierax (c. 228 BC) or Antiochos III (in c. 203 or 197 BC). It is fair to recognize that, even if this attribution has been supported by Seyrig (1963, 52-56), it cannot be taken for granted. The Pontic staters look similar to this issue (including – but this must be coincidental – the two monograms in the lower fields).

Another remarkable feature of these first royal Pontic gold staters are precisely the control-marks. No less than 4 sets of control marks may be found on the Paris specimen (3 for the von Aulock specimen). This high number too looks to me a bit problematic with a date about 300 BC. Yet the more convincing argument for a later dating of these staters comes from Amisos. Indeed, the same four control marks of the Paris specimen may be found in the same places on a civic issue of *sigloi* of reduced (or “Rhodian”) weight in the name of Amisos.²³ In both cases, we find, on two lines, the letters Σ-KO and ME-ΓA. Since any coincidence may be discarded, we are forced to consider two consequences: first, the royal strike was performed in Amisos, not in Amaseia, then the capital of the Pontic kingdom, or Gazioura as proposed without conviction by Reinach (1888, 242). Second, this introduces some new evidence concerning the autonomy of the mint of Amisos. It may be that the Pontic kings did not entirely control the monetary strikes in the name of Amisos but they were at least able to requisition the mint for their personal needs.

The historical circumstances for this strike may have involved the events c. 220 BC, when Mithridates III tried unsuccessfully to seize Sinope. It may be tempting to connect, as Martin Price did (1991, 198-199), to the same event the Sinopean issue of Alexander staters. The two strikes would have had the same purpose: to pay the mercenary troops hired by both sides.

2) *The hypothesis of Harold Mattingly (Mithridates III, Pharnakes and Mithridates IV)*

In a short and highly provocative article, dedicated to the memory of Martin Price “who was never afraid of proposing an exciting new answer to an old problem”,²⁴ Harold Mattingly challenged the classical sequence of the Pontic

kings with his favorite tools: that is he introduced into the numismatic debate some epigraphic novelties and, at the same time, focused on the question of hoards either to dismiss or to make use of them. In this case, he noticed that “three of the very rare first tetradrachms attributed to Mithridates III were found in splendid condition in two Seleukid hoards from the period c. 160-156 BC” and that “now that we know that this king was dead by 196/195 BC”.²⁵ The hoards mention here are the Latakia hoard (*IGCH* 1544 – found in 1759 and the first hoard of Greek coins ever published!) and the Babylon hoard (*IGCH* 1774 – found in 1900). For Mattingly, the coins of Mithridates would not have been so fresh in c. 150 BC if struck in 200 BC or even before. Instead, he thinks that Mithridates III never struck any coinage and that coins attributed to him so far may be assigned as the first phase of the coinage of Mithridates IV. Then comes the joint coinage of Mithridates IV and his sister Laodike and finally the coinage of Mithridates IV alone.

This construction cannot be accepted for several reasons. The starting point is simply not true: the three tetradrachms coming from “Seleukid hoards” are *not* “in splendid condition”. Not only are they in a poor state of preservation (corroded [Latakia] or broken into 6 pieces [Babylon]) but they are also worn. I would add that, although the Babylon hoard (*IGCH* 1774) is supposed to come from official excavations, I have my doubts about it, at least concerning a possible burial date of c. 150 BC.²⁶ A misleading guide, it is by any standard a most atypical hoard, with several rare coinages and others which would be otherwise unattested so far east.

A second reason is that the portraits depicted on the tetradrachms of Mithridates III (Reinach’s classification) can hardly be compared with those on the coins of Mithridates IV. Conversely, the portraits for Mithridates IV alone are quasi-identical with those where he is flanked by his sister Laodike. As far as physiognomy is concerned, the sequence of issues advocated by Mattingly for the same king looks untenable (1-Mithridates III, 2-Mithridates IV and Laodike and 3-Mithridates IV alone). Not only are the portraits of Mithridates III and IV incompatible but, on his coins, Mithridates III looks appreciably older. From an iconographic point of view too, the Mattingly sequence goes against probabilities. More than an “interesting development”,²⁷ it is a most unlikely sequence which puts the most innovative type first (the pantheistic Asiatic divinity of Pharnakes), followed by the most conventional one (the Zeus Aitophoros of Alexander the Great).

As shown in Table 3, weights also favor the Reinach sequence since tetradrachms of Mithridates III are slightly heavier (median at 16.97g) than those of Pharnakes (median at 16.85g) or Mithridates IV, with or without Laodike (median at 16.83g). That makes perfect sense and follows the general tendency of a slow decrease in tetradrachm’s weights during the third and second centuries BC.

Table 3: Weights of the royal Pontic tetradrachms

Weight-classes	Mithridates III	Pharnakes	Mithridates IV	Mith. IV & Laodike	Total
[17.20-17.29g]	-	-	-	-	-
[17.10-17.19g]	113669	-	-	-	6
[17.00-17.09g]	39	0001	8	05	9
[16.90-16.99g]	0568	05679	478	5	13
[16.80-16.89g]	7	001378	0379	-	11
[16.70-16.79g]	-	49	-	1	3
[16.60-16.69g]	-	-	-	-	-
[16.50-16.59g]	-	5	-	-	1
[16.40-16.49g]	-	-	-	-	-
[16.30-16.39g]	7	5	12	-	4
[16.20-16.29g]	9	-	-	-	1
[16.10-16.19g]	-	-	2	-	1
[16.00-16.09g]	7	-	-	2	2
< 16.10g	14.93g	15.27g	15.52g		7
	13.31g	10.83g	14.77g		
			11.91g		
n	18	21	14	5	58
Mode	[17.10-17.19g]	[16.80-16.89g]	[16.80-16.89g]	-	[16.90-16.99g]
Median	16.97g	16.85g	(16.57g)	-	16.80g
Interquartile sp.	[16.33-17.12g]	[16.76-16.98g]	-	-	[16.36g-17.08g]

Finally, control-marks too militate against the Mattingly sequence, since, as noticed by Reinach, we may observe some identities between civic issues of Amisos and some royal Pontic issues of Mithridates III and Pharnakes.²⁸ The two monograms RA and EM may be seen on coins belonging to Amisos and Mithridates III. For the Amisos variety, Reinach made the adventurous hypothesis that the letters BA-ΛΛ above the two monograms may point to BA(ΣΙΑΙΣΣΗΣ) ΛΛ(ΟΔΙΚΗΣ).²⁹ This has to be firmly rejected. Unlike what



Fig. 45. Drachm of Amisos with the legend BA-ΛΛ.

was still supposed a century ago, these control-marks, as a rule, never refer to kings or queens.³⁰ In this particular case, the letters must be read BA-ΛΛ (and not BA-ΛA) (Fig. 45). On other varieties, we read BAΛ-ΛI³¹ or BA-ΛΛI³², a reference to a personal name.³³ Whatever the real date of these silver coins of Amisos (struck on a reduced “Rhodian” standard), it seems unlikely that they were as late as c. 170 BC (as required by the Mattingly sequence).

The conclusion is firm: the daring hypothesis of H. Mattingly is better to be forgotten.³⁴

3) A unique and problematic stater of Laodike

A unique and previously unknown stater of the queen Laodike (ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ – ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ) appeared in a recent auction sale catalogue (Tkalec & Rauch, 19 Feb. 2001, no. 97) (Fig. 42). This spectacular coin (which was bought for 220,000 Swiss Francs) has failed to receive any scientific comment so far. According to the cataloguer, it depicts the sister and wife of Mithridates IV, the daughter of Mithridates III, “als junge Frau”.

A question that always arises with such unexpected *unica* is that of their authenticity. In this particular case, the weight is perfect (8.49g) and the style of the engraving is plausible. We do not know about the die-axis (which must be at or near 12 o'clock) and we have no idea of the metal composition. But, for those who dare (or like) to doubt, there are reasons to be sceptical. The iconography of the reverse is problematic: a six-rayed star on top of double cornucopiae. The “dynastic badge” of the Mithridatids was, without exception, an eight-rayed star and a crescent.³⁵ To figure a six-rayed star would have had no meaning in this context. The double cornucopiae itself looks strange with only one bunch of grapes (instead of two) to the right and one fillet of the royal diadem (instead of two) to the left, just as if the engraver choose to adapt a Ptolemaic model without a true understanding of both contexts. The queen Laodike is said to be “epifanous”. It is worth noticing that this would be the only appearance of this epithet on a Greek coin for a queen.

The portrait of Laodike differs from the one found on the tetradrachms, even if we accept that she is pictured at a younger age here, while the style of this portrait with its large eyes looks more Ptolemaic than Pontic. Turning to the fabric, the surface of the reverse is extremely, astonishingly flat (as modern forgeries tend to be). Moreover, the coin is in nearly mint condition and well centred (a common placement on modern forgeries).

All in all, I would say that, if there is no definitive proof to condemn this unique stater of Laodike as a modern forgery, there is ample reason however to be very suspicious.

4) *The volume and diffusion of these royal Pontic coinages*

The die-study presented here does not lead us to suppose an abundant coinage for the first Pontic kings. Table 4 presents for each major issue of tetradrachms the frequency with which each obverse die is represented in the catalogue and an estimate (method of G.F. Carter 1983) of the original number of obverse dies (O), where 'o' is the number of attested obverse dies and 'n' is the size of the sample.

Table 4: Summary of the die-studies of the royal Pontic tetradrachms

	Mithri- dates III	Pharnakes	Mithri- dates IV	Mith. IV & Laodike	Total
Frequency	Obverses (no.)	Obverses (no.)	Obverses (no.)	Obverses (no.)	Obverses (no.)
1	2,5	2,4,8,9	3,5,6	1	10
2	-	1,3	1	-	3
3	-	-	4	-	1
4	1,4,6	5,6	-	2	6
5	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	2	-	1
7	-	-	-	-	-
8	3	7	-	-	2
n	22	24	14	5	65
o	6	9	6	2	23
n/o	3.67	2.67	2.33	2.50	2.83
O (Carter 1983)	7.2 (± 0.9)	12.1 (± 1.8)	8.7 (± 2.0)	2.8 (± 1.2)	30.1 (± 2.6)

The general ratio between the number of specimens and the number of obverse dies is not very high but never less than 2.33, a value high enough to give an idea of the original number of obverses.

No Pontic king seems to have put into circulation an abundant number of tetradrachms. With c. 12 obverse dies, Pharnakes comes first. All together, Pontic kings did not strike more than the equivalent of 30 obverses. That is,

in about 70 years (c. 220-150 BC), six times less than Mithridates VI Eupator in 30 years.³⁶ From Mithridates III to Mithridates IV, the average production of royal tetradrachms was thus only one fourteenth of that of Mithridates VI Eupator. A comparison with the Bithynian Kingdom is also impressive: there we know that no less than 450 different obverse dies may have been engraved for royal tetradrachms for the period 128/127-74/73 BC.

To put these numbers differently, the yearly production of the Pontic kings (between c. 220 and 150 BC), calculated in number of obverse dies for Attic drachms, was c. 1.7. For a postulated production of 20,000 coins per obverse-die, that makes c. 34,000 drachms a year (or 5 2/3 talents or the possibility of paying in new coins c. 113 qualified employees, as mercenaries at c. 300 drachms a year). Table 5 gives some yearly estimates calculated in number of obverse dies for Attic drachms.³⁷

Table 5: Yearly estimates for issues of Hellenistic royal tetradrachms (calculated in number of obverse dies for Attic drachms)

Kings or dynasties	Calculations (O x 4 / years)	Average
Tetradrachms of Alexander the Great (c. 332-290 BC)	c. 3,000 x 4 / 42	285.7
Demetrios Poliorketes (c. 306-287 BC)	229 x 4 / 19	48.2
Antiochos III (c. 223-187 BC)	c. 400 x 4 / 36	44.4
Kings of Bithynia (128/127-74/73 BC)	445 x 4 / 52	34.2
Mithridates Eupator (c. 97-67/66 BC)	190 x 4 / 31	24.5
Attalids (c. 263-190 BC)	206 x 4 / 73	11.3
Kings of Pontos (c. 220-c. 150 BC)	30 x 4 / 70	1.7

Admittedly, the sample gathered for the coins of the predecessors of Mithridates VI Eupator does not protect us against some biased information. What is to be done with issues attested to by only one specimen? Statistical methods are unable to give any estimate and, theoretically, one could postulate a huge but lost production for them. All the more so, since we have to deal with gold stater issues whose potential production may seriously affect this frame (for a similar productivity, which is not the best guess we can make, each obverse die engraved to strike staters has 5 times the value of an obverse die for tetradrachms).

Coin hoards are our best friends in safeguarding us against lost information. The list of hoards with royal Pontic coins before Mithridates Eupator is short (Table 6).

Table 6: Hoards with royal Pontic coins before Mithridates Eupator

IGCH 237 = CH IX 247 (Sitichoro or Larissa [Thessaly], 1968)	Burial date: c. 165 BC
1 tetradrachm of Pharnakes out of 2500-3000 silver coins (c. 1500-2000 Rhodian drachms)	
IGCH 1372 (Amasya [Pontos], 1860)	Burial date: c. 185-170 BC
4-5 tetradrachms and 1 drachm of Pharnakes out of 300+ silver coins (c. 200-300 Alexanders)	
IGCH 1374 (Samsun [Pontos], 1900)	Burial date: c. 150 BC
3 tetradrachms of Mithridates IV and Laodike (may be part of a larger hoard – Regling)	
IGCH 1544 (Latakia [Syria], 1759)	Burial date: c. 169 BC
2 tetradrachms of Mithridates III out of 92 silver coins (48 Alexanders)	
IGCH 1774 (Babylon [Babylonia], 1900)	Burial date: c. 155-150 BC (?)
1 tetradrachm for Mithridates III out of 100 silver coins (43 Alexanders)	

Except the Larissa hoard (Thessaly) found in 1968 with just one tetradrachm of Pharnakes, no reported hoard in this list was found later than 1900. The Babylon hoard, as already mentioned, is of no use – I think – with such an extraordinary content. This scarcity of results, in comparison with the hundreds of Hellenistic hoards found in modern Turkey (including many with silver royal issues for the third and the second century BC),³⁸ offers to a certain extent the proof that royal Pontic coins were never abundant.

A better proof is provided by large silver hoards found in Pontos without any royal Pontic coinage (Table 7).

Table 7: Hoards found in Pontos with no royal Pontic coins (before Mithridates Eupator)

IGCH 1369 = CH VIII 324 (Kirazlı [Pontos], 1939)	Burial date: c. 230-220 BC
13 staters (6 Alexander, 5 Lysimachos and 2 Seleukos II) and 822 silver: 740 Alexanders, 44 Seleukids, 31 Lysimachos, 2 Sinope, etc.	
IGCH 1373 = CH VIII 442 = CH IX 530 (Ordu [Pontos], 1970)	Burial date: c. 140-120 BC
207+ tetradrachms: 97 Lysimachos from Byzantion, 23 Seleukids (from Antiochos IV to Demetrios I), 20 Prusias II, 20 stephanephoroi of Athens, 15 Macedonian first Meris, etc.	

The Kirazlı hoard (IGCH 1369), found near Amasya in the territory of the village of Kürtler, already argued for this conclusion.³⁹ Buried in c. 230-220 BC, this deposit does not contain any Pontic coins. It is certainly worthwhile to add that, out of the 822 silver coins of the hoard, 636 (77.5%) received a chisel-cut. This phenomenon affects every kind of coinage, forcing G. le Rider to conclude: “Si nous admettons que les exemplaires de notre trésor étaient entaillés près de l’endroit où ils ont été enfouis, nous en déduirons que l’usage de la monnaie n’était pas encore très répandu au II^e siècle (*sic!*) dans certains cantons du territoire pontique”.⁴⁰ But the perfect documentation is to be found now in the Ordu hoard (the ancient Kotyora), found in 1970.⁴¹ Out of the 207 tetradrachms buried after 150 BC (140-120 BC?), there is still not a single piece struck by a Pontic king.

To strengthen the idea that royal Pontic coins were never struck on a large scale, we may also turn to the provenances of these hoards. Three out of the five recorded hoards (Table 5) have very distant provenances: Thessaly, Syria and Babylon. Moreover, Delian inventories mention twice a tetradrachm of Pharnakes: in the inventory of the temple of Apollo in c. 162 BC,⁴² and in the inventory of the temple of Artemis in c. 141 BC.⁴³ In other words, there is no reason to suppose that royal Pontic coins were kept for internal uses (and disappeared there, being massively melted down at the time of Eupator for example).

Finally, the absence of bronzes is another distinctive characteristic of the royal Pontic coinage.⁴⁴ Hellenistic monarchies were behaving differently, starting with the Seleukids and the Ptolemies and the huge amount of bronzes they put into circulation. Especially noticeable in this respect are bronzes of several denominations, including large ones, struck by the neighbouring kingdom of Bithynia during the second century BC.

A similar phenomenon may be observed for the cities of Pontos: with unimportant exceptions, Amisos or Sinope failed to strike bronzes before Mithridates Eupator. I have shown elsewhere how their silver issues, despite their civic appearance, were never put into circulation for trade activities or to facilitate the daily transactions of the city.⁴⁵ Under Persian rule, these civic silver issues were controlled totally or partially by a higher level of power than the cities (*i.e.* the satraps). With no bronzes and only large silver coins, Pontos remained from the fifth to the second century BC a poorly monetized area, where coins were not integrated into the domestic economy.

Conclusion

We may be confident, I think, that the predecessors of Mithridates Eupator never struck vast amounts of coins.⁴⁶ They did nothing in this respect to encourage trade or facilitate the small transactions of their citizens. They cannot be suspected to have ever had any policy of this kind.

The coinages they issued were intended for specific and limited purposes, most probably military ones. And, as is usual with royal Hellenistic issues, it is tempting to connect them with hired mercenaries who asked to be paid with coins. It is also likely that Pontos, as a country, was not a monetized area until the end of the third century BC. By monetized area, one understands an area for which a political entity is able to give legal tender (which means over-evaluated value) to a form of payment. Chances are few that this was the case in Pontos. As a consequence, this highly restricted use of royal coins requires us not to emphasize too much the propagandistic value of their iconography.

The final word will be on Mithridates Eupator. Considering the state of art of monetary matters he found in his kingdom when he became king, his achievements look even more impressive. He multiplied by ten or twenty the rate of strikes. His coins were the most precisely dated (by year and month) of the known world. From a numismatic point of view, his greatest achievement is elsewhere: there is no doubt indeed that Mithridates Eupator was behind the pattern of bronze civic issues sharing the same iconography. We ignore the question of what kind of agreement caused these pseudo-civic bronzes to be produced. Was it entirely favourable to the king or was it a matter of a subtle balance of power?⁴⁷ Considering that some places like Pimolisa or Talaura were fortresses and not cities or even villages, I am inclined to think that these strikes too had nothing to do with municipal autonomy but were intended primarily to pay soldiers in garrisons (and that is why these Mithridatic bronzes are so frequently found in the Bosporos).

*Appendix 1: Bronzes of Mithridates II of Kommagene
(c. 34-20 BC) sometimes attributed to Pontic kings.*

Obv.: Head with bashlyk to the l.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (above?) – ΜΙΘΡΙΔΑ ΦΙΛΟ (beneath). Club in a crown.

- O1 R1 a-Peus, 340, 2, Nov. 1994 (Jamgochian Coll.), no. 447 (3.72g).
See Beger 1696, III, 8 (with an attribution to Mithridates of Pontos) and Alram 1986, no. 248.

Obv.: Head with bashlyk to the l.

Rev.: Bee surrounded by a border of dots in an incuse circle.

- O1 R1 a-Peus, 340, 2, Nov. 1994 (Jamgochian Coll.), no. 334 (6,36g – attributed to Mithridates Ktistes of Pontos).

Obv.: Head with bashlyk to the l.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (in outer r. field) – ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ (in l. field). Standing Zeus to l.; he holds an eagle on his extended r. hand and a sceptre in his l. hand.

- O1 R1 a-Private Coll. (8.69g-20mm-12h).

Notes

- 1 For the sake of clarity, this article adopts the traditional numbering of the Pontic kings.
- 2 A tetradrachm of Mithridates III, a drachm of Pharnakes and a tetradrachm of Mithridates IV. He could also have added a tetradrachm of Pharnakes.
- 3 Mørkholm 1991, 131.
- 4 Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) is the author of *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-1855) as well as the wonderful *Nouvelles asiatiques* (1877). On these judgments by modern scholars, see Callataÿ 2003, 218-219 (with references to Reinach 1888, 248, Babelon 1950, 72-73 and others). We may add Reinach 1902, 53: "Mais aussi quelle différence entre les profils sans beauté, mais vivants, énergiques, presque brutaux, de ces Perses mal frottés d'un vernis hellénique, et les silhouettes affadies, déjà alourdies de graisse, d'un Ptolémée Philadelphie et d'une Arsinoé! C'est toute la distance entre une médaille de Pisano et un élégant chef-d'œuvre de Roettiers ou de Duvivier", and Davis & Kraay 1973, 266: "his portrait shows an ungracious and impatient face".
- 5 Green 1993, 350.
- 6 For the iconography of the Pontic coins, see recently Callataÿ 1991 (Mithridates V), McGing 1996, 24, 32-33, 35-36 and 40, and Erciyas 2006 (with caution), 15-17 and 125-129.
- 7 Reinach 1888, 233-234.
- 8 Eckhel 1794, 362-364; Mionnet 1808, 358-360; 1829, 464-465.
- 9 Depending on whether we accept the authenticity of the unique stater of Laodike, which appeared on the market a couple of years ago.
- 10 Tetradrachm of Pharnakes without monogram illustrated in Spanheim 1706, 481. This coin was seen "olim" by Spanheim at Cimmeliarcho Maecenatis Hetrusci, Leopoldi Cardinalis. Another coin very similar is in the Pembroke Coll. (see Mionnet 1807, 359, no. 4).
- 11 See *infra* for a comment on this unique stater.
- 12 Sestini 1794, 36-38.
- 13 Eckhel 1811, 125.
- 14 In 1898, describing the Waddington collection, Ernest Babelon placed the coins of Eupator under the title: "Mithridate V Eupator (121-62)" (Babelon 1898, 8).
- 15 Mattingly 1998.
- 16 It is best to forget the suggestion made, tentatively, by Köhne (1865, 263) and Reinach (1888, 242) that the letters ΓΑ may refer to the mint of Gazioura.
- 17 To most of us, consciously or unconsciously, the natural order is the one which begins with the simplest and goes to the most elaborate. Monetary types fall under the same assumption. It seems to us normal to place the coins with a head of Mithridates III first, and second the coins with his draped bust. For the same reason, Reinach placed first the Pharnakes tetradrachms without a thunderbolt upon the head of the pantheistic divinity and then the few specimens with the thunderbolt (Reinach 1888, 247). Notice that all the Pharnakes tetradrachms depict the head and not the bust of the king, which – according to the general principle described here – would mean a step backwards. Now, some reverses without a thunderbolt do not have any control-mark, which is never the case of the reverses with a thunderbolt and this encourages us to place first the coins with a thunderbolt. On the other hand, one could argue – although this kind of argument seems rather weak – that the king looks younger on a specific obverse-

- die without a thunderbolt. In the absence of a conclusive die-link, we do not know what the exact order was. The two may have been contemporaneous as well. This is possibly a bigger problem for our understanding of typology than it is for our historical understanding.
- 18 Waddington (1863, 220) wrote that the Hunterian tetradrachm served as prototype for moulded silver or gold specimens of Pharnakes such as those in the Pembroke coll. or that of the Grand-Dukes of Tuscany.
 - 19 For Reinach, the issue without thunderbolt comes first (Reinach 1902, 56, no. 2). I prefer the other sequence since 1) some coins with thunderbolt appear without monogram and 2) some monograms of the coins without thunderbolt were also used on coins of Mithridates IV.
 - 20 For Reinach, this Laodike was the wife of Mithridates V Euergetes and the mother of Eupator (Reinach 1888, 257-258; 1890, 50). The similarity of portraits with the Laodike associated with Mithridates IV speaks for a different attribution (McGing 1996, 35-36 and Callataÿ 1997, 240).
 - 21 Reinach 1888, 241 ("Plus tard, l'ordre inverse (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ Ε...) prévalut universellement et, au moins sur les statères d'or, l'autre ne reparut plus jamais").
 - 22 For late Seleukid staters of these types, see Houghton & Lorber 2002, pl. 34, no. 726 (Seleukos II), pl. 39, no. 847 (Antiochos Hierax), pl. 41, no. 873 (Antiochos Hierax) and pl. 51, no. 1014-1015 (Antiochos Hierax or Antiochos III?).
 - 23 Reinach 1900, 228-289; *RGAM*, 10, no. 53 and 60, pl. I, no. 1, and VI, no. 31; Malloy 1970, 3 and 7, varieties 7q and 7r.
 - 24 Mattingly 1998, 255.
 - 25 Mattingly 1998, 255 – with a reference to Tracy 1992, 307-313.
 - 26 Among the content of the Babylon hoard supposed to have been buried c. 155-150 BC, we find a late posthumous Alexander of Mesembria of Group 2 (Callataÿ 1997, 115), a late posthumous Lysimachos of Byzantion of Style 1 (Callataÿ 1997, 136), 2 tetradrachms of Kos, which are all better dated to a little after 150 BC.
 - 27 Mattingly 1998, 256.
 - 28 Reinach 1900, 226; 1902, 56-57; Malloy 1970, 7, no. 7g.
 - 29 Reinach 1900, 226-227 ("Je ne vois qu'une seule manière plausible de les compléter"); 1902, 56-57 – see also Erciyas 2006, 128.
 - 30 Reinach 1900, 227: "Ainsi les Amisériens, par une flatterie politique, avaient décerné à la reine de Pont la principale magistrature annuelle de la cité".
 - 31 Malloy 1970, 7, no. 7c.
 - 32 Malloy 1970, 7, no. 7f.
 - 33 Malloy 1970, 7, no. 7c-7h.
 - 34 The Mattingly order was rejected by Alan Walker (Bank Leu catalogues) but accepted by Erciyas 2006, 128.
 - 35 Concerning the many hypotheses for these symbols, see McGing 1996, 97, n. 51.
 - 36 Callataÿ 1997, 27 (c. 190 obverses dies for the years c. 97-67).
 - 37 See Callataÿ 2005, 84-87.
 - 38 Davesne 1990, 507-512 gives an overview (given before by Le Rider) of the most important published hoards buried in between 275 and 190 BC. Except for the hoard of Kirazlı, all these hoards were found far from Pontos.
 - 39 Le Rider & Olçay 1987; Davesne 1990, 507.
 - 40 Le Rider & Olçay 1987, 30.
 - 41 *CH* IX 530, see Boehringer 1975 and Arslan 1997, 1999 and 2000.

- 42 *IDelos*, no. 1408, face A, column II, line 4-5: τέτραχμον Φαρνάκειον, see Melville Jones 1993, 196-197, no. 265.
- 43 *IDelos*, no. 1444, face A, fragment a, line 17: Φαρνάκειον τέτρανομον, see Melville Jones 1993, 216-217, no. 280.
- 44 Lorenz Beger wrongly attributed a bronze struck at Pharnakeia under Mithridates Eupator to the king Pharnakes (1696, 271). For other bronzes wrongly attributed to Pontic kings, see Appendix 1: *Bronzes of Mithridates II of Kommagene (c. 34-20 BC) sometimes attributed to Pontic kings*.
- 45 Callataÿ 2002.
- 46 A similar conclusion already in Callataÿ 1997, 35, n. 44 and 238.
- 47 Concerning the identity of monograms between Amisos and some royal issues, Reinach wrote: "L'étendue des franchises accordées à ces communautés (like Amisos) explique leur attachement durable à la dynastie" (1900, 226). This is pure fiction.

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Abbreviations

- CH *Coin Hoards* 1-9 (1972-2002). London.
- IDelos A. Plassart, F. Durrbach et al. 1926-1972. *Inscriptions de Délos* 1-7. Paris.
- IGCH M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm & C.M. Kraay 1973. *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*. New York.
- RGAM W.H. Waddington, E. Babelon, & Th. Reinach 1904-1912. *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*. Paris.

The Administrative Organisation of the Pontic Kingdom

Jakob Munk Højte

In his account of the Kappadokian Kingdom in central Anatolia, Strabon (12.1) gives a detailed description of the administrative framework and its evolution from the Persian to the Roman period, but when he turns to Pontic Kappadokia, which constituted the core of the Kingdom of Mithridates VI, such a description lacks completely for the Hellenistic period. Since Strabon's *patria* was Amaseia in Pontos, his interests are often of a more private nature, such as praise of his home town and the merits of prominent persons in his family. When he does discuss administrative matters it exclusively concerns the organisation of the province by Pompeius and successive Roman interventions and adjustments.¹ Only in his description of Komana Pontike does he elaborate on the status of the temple state and its high priest under the kings. Other literary sources give only scattered and fragmented information, and we lack therefore a comprehensive account of the administrative structure of Pontos under the Mithridatids. In order to get an idea about how the kingdom was organised, it is necessary to look at a variety of sources including written accounts, inscriptions, topographical information, survey data and numismatic evidence.

Urbanisation and the role of cities

The first thing worth consideration is the importance of cities in the Pontic Kingdom and whether they functioned as administrative centres.

In Pompeius' reorganisation of the province Bithynia and Pontos, cities came to play a key role in the administrative system. Pompeius created a continuum of city state territories throughout the province. On the coast he could build on already existing *poleis*, the old Greek colonies, but in the interior he founded a number of cities: Pompeiopolis, Neapolis, Magnopolis, Zela, Megalopolis, Nikopolis, and Diospolis. It has been assumed that his reason for doing so was that no cities existed previously. To Reinach for example: "Städtische Centren waren in Pontos nur erst spärlich vorhanden".² In an administrative sense this may be true, but is it true in a demographic sense? Was urbanization in the interior at a very low level under the Mithridatids? If we look at Pompeius' foundations, most were in fact located in already populated places. Magnopolis was at the site of Eupatoria, a foundation of Mithridates,



Fig. 1a-d. Zeus/eagle type bronze coins issued at: a-b) Gazioura, c-d) Pimolisa (photos: J.M. Højte).

which he later himself destroyed because it had sided with the Romans. Zela already existed as a temple state, and Strabon's remark (12.3.37) that in earlier times the kings governed Zela, not as a polis, but as a sacred precinct must simply mean that it lacked the political institutions of a Greek city. Diospolis was at the site of Kabeira, where Mithridates had built a palace, which in all likelihood was an urban centre as well. At any rate, the nearby temple state of Ameria had a large population (Strab. 12.3.31). Although it is at present impossible to tell exactly how developed these three cities were under the kings it would seem that the primary change was that they were given the institutions and constitutions of Greek *poleis*. Only Pompeiopolis, Megalopolis and Nikopolis, all on the periphery of Pontos, seem not to have been placed in already existing settlements. We must therefore consider whether there could be other explanations than the previous lack of such, as to why Pompeius

founded cities in Pontos.³ It could be the personal ambition of the successful commander to become *ktistes* of cities in newly conquered territory. It could also be a deliberate attempt at breaking up existing administrative structures. As we shall see, this was certainly the case with the destruction of the many strongholds built by the Mithridatids in Pontos.

In her recent book “Wealth, Aristocracy and Royal Propaganda”, Erciyas makes a fine summary of the surveys carried out in Pontos to date. Although there are serious methodological problems in using and comparing the data of these surveys carried out for different purposes, with different methods, and at different levels of intensity, they overall seem to show a rather consistent picture of the settlement pattern.⁴ During the iron age, settlement was dispersed at many sites throughout the territory, while for the Hellenistic period, material has turned up at far fewer sites. Nearly half the iron age sites were abandoned by the Hellenistic period and only few new sites were established. Since the surveys give little information about site sizes, it is impossible to determine whether this indicates a decline in the population or whether it signifies contraction of the population into larger urban centres. Given the size of the armies that Mithridates VI was able to raise throughout the conflict with Rome we would tend to think the latter: that the population in the interior of Pontos primarily lived in cities.⁵ This fact is further emphasised, if we consider the survey data for the Roman period. In the territories of Amaseia and Amisos and not least in the territory of Sinope a notable increase in the number of sites can be registered with Roman remains, but no previous Hellenistic material. The same pattern can be observed in the interior of Paphlagonia as shown by the Paphlagonia Survey Project.⁶ It would thus seem that the settlement pattern of the Roman period was more dispersed than during the Hellenistic period. The notion that the population in the interior in the Hellenistic period lived in scattered villages as suggested by some literary sources is not supported by the currently available survey data.⁷

What was the attitude of the Pontic kings towards the cities and was urbanisation encouraged? A common trait of practically all Hellenistic kings was their desire to found cities in their own or a family member's name and this seems to some extent also to be the case also for the Mithridatid kings although relatively little information about city foundations is preserved. Pharnakeia must surely have been a foundation by Pharnakes I, located on the coast at Giresun, probably at the site of an already existing Greek city Kerasous. Another candidate is Laodikeia, which is probably to be located near Lake Stiphane. It is unknown which Laodike the city refers to, as all kings from Mithridates II to the VI, except Pharnakes I, was married to a Laodike. None of these two cities were turned into *poleis* in the reorganisation of Pompeius. One may wonder whether this was a deliberate choice. The only certain known foundation in Pontos under Mithridates VI was Eupatoria, which is situated just south of the confluence of the rivers Lykos and Iris in a highly strategic point at the crossing of the road going east-west

through Pontos and the route going to the coast through the narrow valley cut by the Iris river. Today the site is clearly visible in the landscape but it has never been excavated – by archaeologists at any rate – and nothing is known about the city except that it was turned into a *polis* by Pompeius and renamed Magnopolis.

Even though the evidence shows that cities existed in the interior and that the kings founded cities, there is no literary or epigraphic evidence to support the notion that cities were self-governed entities as was often the case in other Hellenistic kingdoms. We never hear of assemblies or councils and there are no known city magistrates. Of course this is an argument *ex silentio* and granted the body of epigraphic evidence, which typically would reveal such institutions, is restricted.

The “municipal” coinage under Mithridates VI

The only existing evidence that could suggest that some cities possessed a degree of autonomy are the so-called “municipal” bronze coins minted in the name of different localities during the reign of Mithridates VI. According to the old classification of Imhoof-Blumer,⁸ the coins were minted throughout the whole reign of Mithridates, but recently F. de Calataÿ has suggested that all the coins rather should belong to the period before the end of the First Mithridatic War.⁹

It has previously been thought that the coinage was part of a deliberate policy of Hellenization by Mithridates VI which included an attempt to promote Greek, *polis*-like structures in Pontos – particularly in the interior. The permission to allow cities to mint coins should foster local pride.¹⁰ However, there was beyond question a central authority with an organised political programme behind the coinage, as the coin types are the same for all the different mints (Fig. 1a-d).¹¹ This would seem to leave little room for autonomy. Furthermore the volume of the output of the individual mints differs immensely. If indeed they are different mints and not the product of a single or a few mints. This has to my knowledge never been established. A simple test would be to check whether the same obverse dies were ever used with reverse dies of different localities.¹²

Amisos by far struck the most coins. Perhaps as much as 60 or 70% of the total. Sinope likewise had a large output but the rest of the localities account for insignificant proportions. Clearly the coinage was not intended to serve the need for small denominations in the economy of individual *poleis*.¹³

It may be worth considering whether the coinage rather reflects existing administrative units within the kingdom with the issuing place being the administrative centre of each unit (Fig. 2). There were ten issuing places in Pontos as defined in the geographical sense by the Halys River: Amaseia, Amisos, Chabakta, Gazioura, Kabeira, Komana, Laodikeia, Pharnakeia, Pimolisa and Taulara and three further outside Pontos. Those are Sinope, the primary



Fig. 2. Map of Pontos showing issuing localities of "municipal" coinage.

royal residence, Amastris, an early possession of the kings, and probably Dia west of Herakleia.¹⁴

All the places striking coins, perhaps with the exception of Komana, are characterized by having a strongly fortified citadel. Two locations attract particular attention: Chabakta and Taulara. Chabakta can be identified with a fortress on a steep mountain situated at Kaleköy 10 km to the south west of Ünye, the ancient Greek city on the coast, Oinoe. There is nothing to suggest that there was ever a town in this place.¹⁵ Similarly Taulara, if identified correctly by Olshausen and Biller as a fortress situated at Horoztepe to the southeast of Tokat, does not seem to have been connected with urban structures.¹⁶ Both localities disappear completely from the sources after the fall of Mithridates. If the purpose of the coinage was to promote cities, the obvious choices for mints would in these two instances have been Oinoe and Dazimon instead. Furthermore, why did cities such as Side, Kotyora, Zela, Kromna and Phazemon not strike coins. A reasonable explanation could be that they were not centres for the royal administration.

Strabon on Kappadokia

Returning to Strabon and what he says concerning the administrative division of Kappadokia. Until Strabon's time, the Kappadokian Kingdom was divided into ten prefectures (*strategiai*) of equal size headed by a *strategos*. At some point, probably in the first century BC a part of Kilikia was added to form

an eleventh prefecture.¹⁷ On many occasions Strabon stresses the similarities between Pontos and Kappadokia, which, although from early on divided into two satrapies under Achaemenid rule, shared a common cultural and religious background heavily influenced by Persia. This similarity is underlined by several cross references between the two regions in his description. It is likely therefore, that both kingdoms should have had comparable administrative subdivisions. The division of territory into *strategiai* is also known from other Hellenistic kingdoms: the Seleukid, the Attalid, Ptolemaic Egypt, the minor kingdoms in Asia Minor as well as in the Parthian Empire.¹⁸ Bengtson in his thorough study of *strategiai* in the Hellenistic period concludes somewhat pessimistically, that it is highly probable that Pontos was divided into *strategiai* but that no evidence proves it.¹⁹ I suggest that the “municipal” coinage reflects the division of Pontos into *strategiai* and that the places of issue correspond to the seat of the *strategos*, who used the coinage primarily to pay for local troops.

Military and administrative personnel

Another way of investigating the administrative organisation of the kingdom is to examine the administrative posts and offices. The king was supreme in all military, judicial and religious matters but as most Hellenistic kings, Mithridates VI had a circle of friends (*filoi*) filling the highest posts in the administration. The sons of Mithridates also took part in running the empire and served both as generals and as satraps in the conquered territories Kolchis and in Bosporos. Apart from the sons we know next to nothing about the role of the other relatives of Mithridates VI. In a rare instance we hear that a military officer, Phoinix, was related to Mithridates VI, but the relation is not specified (App. *Mith.* 79).

For his article “Hellenisierungsprozess am Pontischen Königshof”, Olshausen also compiled a list of nearly all the known persons at the Pontic court, officials, and persons holding military commands.²⁰ There are two points concerning the list worth noting. First of all, nearly all the evidence pertains to the reign of Mithridates VI. Only four or perhaps five persons out of some 80 on the list served earlier kings. This is well in accordance with other testimony on the Pontic Kingdom. Since we largely lack local sources from the Hellenistic period, such as inscriptions, we only hear about Pontic affairs when events influenced the outside – and more specifically the Greek and Roman world. This leads on to the second point namely that the sources for the list are surprisingly limited and concentrate almost exclusively on the generals and the other military officers in the conflict with Rome. The remaining part consists of persons closely associated with the king: philosophers, a court musician, his perfumer and his personal physicians. Administrative and religious offices appear to be practically absent. Evidently eunuchs played an important role at the court and in the administration as they had



Fig. 3a-c. Pontic fortresses at: a) Pimolisa, b) Gazioura, c) Chabakta (photos: J.M. Højte).

in the Persian Empire: the best known is Bacchos, who was sent to kill the women in the palace after Mithridates had fled to Armenia in 70 BC. He was probably a personal attendant of the king, but others served as army officers and commanders of garrisons. Sometimes they are not mentioned by name, simply that they were eunuchs. Those mentioned by name had Greek names like Kleocharēs, Menophilos, Ptolemaios, and Tryphon, which may not have corresponded to their ethnic origin. The phenomenon could have been far more common than the list here suggests as the sources probably left out this particular information in a number of instances.

It is worth to consider more closely the two most commonly occurring titles *strategos* and *phrourarchos*. Both could signify a military as well as an administrative function, and at times it may be difficult to distinguish between the two. A *strategos* could be a general and a prefect. Bengtson discounted all the references to *strategoi* in the sources as evidence for *strategiai* in Pontos, on the grounds that all except one belonged in a military context. But this should not surprise us, since practically all our sources describe the period of the wars with Rome. The only *strategos* not mentioned in a specifically military context is Alkimos honoured in a decree found in Abonouteichos in coastal Paphlagonia.²¹ This inscription also has the rare feature of a dating to the year 161 according either to the Seleukid or the Bithyno-Pontic era and in addition mentions Mithridates V. Here Bengtson argues that Alkimos could be *strategos* of a Greek *polis*, and that the inscription therefore cannot be used as evidence for the administration of the kingdom. I think the distinction between the military and administrative functions of *strategoi* – and *phrourarchoi* for that matter – may not always be relevant when discussing the Pontic Kingdom as the two would often have overlapped. This was a result of the way the territory was controlled.

Bosporos

The region which may yield the best clues about the organisation of the territory of the Pontic Kingdom is the Bosporos. This region was incorporated into the kingdom after the campaigns of Diophantos before 110 BC and it is so far the most thoroughly investigated part of the kingdom. Here it has been noted that major changes occurred in the organisation of the landscape in the early first century BC after the area had been incorporated into the Pontic Kingdom.²² Previously the territory on both sides of the Straits had been divided among the Greek *poleis* and subdivided into land plots of a size that indicates ownership by individual families. This is particularly discernable on the Taman Peninsula, which was nearly completely divided into land plot with individual farmhouses. In the first century BC, *polis* territories were greatly diminished and the number of farms declined. Instead a new type of land tenure was introduced centred around fortresses.²³ These were usually built on easily defensible hilltops and had thick walls with towers, ditches

and ramparts. Apart from serving as defence against raids from local tribes they also controlled the agrarian territory and functioned as gathering points for agricultural produce. We have every reason to believe that this new type of land tenure was a direct derivative of the organisation of Pontos.

Pontos

When we turn to Pontos we find the same extensive network of fortresses throughout the country (Fig. 3a-c). The best impression of the network is offered by the map prepared by Olshausen and Biller.²⁴ The key importance of the fortresses for the royal administration is shown by the fact that after Mithridates had conquered Lesser Armenia he immediately began constructing strongholds (*phrouriai*) – no less than 75 according to Strabon (12.3.28).

The fortifications are often difficult to date, but most have one feature in common, namely one or more tunnels cut deep into the rock in order to reach a secure water supply (Fig. 4a-c).²⁵ There exists variations on the theme, but the similarity in construction suggests that they are contemporaneous and were part of a common design. These *phrouriai* in all likelihood constituted the core of the administrative system of the Pontic Kingdom serving both military and economic functions. In this respect the situation in Pontos probably reflected that in the Kappadokian Kingdom, where some fortresses were possessed by the king while others were given to his *filoi* (Strab. 12.2.9).

The fortresses had no place in the reorganisation of Pompeius, which was centred on self-governing *poleis*, and in fact he had many of them destroyed (Strab. 12.3.38), supposedly in order that they should not become hideouts for robbers. However they also posed a threat to the new regime as shown by the incident of Arsakes, the son of Pharnakes II, who attempted to regain power in Pontos. He sought refuge in the fortress Sagylion but was driven out because the water reservoirs had been filled with rocks. Their redundancy to the Roman administration may account for the poor state of preservation of the Hellenistic fortifications. In many places only late Roman and Byzantine wall are to be seen today.

Conclusion

Independent self-governing *poleis* seem to have played an insignificant role in the administrative structure of the Pontic Kingdom. The only places that enjoyed some form of independence were the temple states headed by a priest who controlled the revenue of the sacred lands and the temple servants. However, this does not mean, as it has often been put forward, that Pontos, and in particular the interior of Pontos, was devoid of cities. As suggested by the survey data available, the Hellenistic period is characterized by a contraction of the population into fewer and probably larger sites compared to the previous and the later Roman period.



Fig. 4a-c. Stepped tunnels at: a) Tokat/Dazimon, b) Gazioura, c) Chabakta (photos: J.M. Højte).



The sources offer little information about the administrative sub-divisions of Pontos, but it is reasonable to assume that the Pontic Kingdom like the Kappadokian Kingdom was divided into *strategiai*. Possibly the “municipal” coinage under Mithridates VI reflect these and the localities mentioned on the coins could be the administrative centre of the prefecture.

Notes

- 1 For Strabon’s approach in his account of Pontos, see Lindsay 2005, 180-199.
- 2 Reinach 1895, 252. Similarly Magie 1950, 180 and Jones 1971, 156.
- 3 For the question of the nature and purpose of the Pompeian foundations, see Fletcher 1939, 17-29; Dreizehnter 1975, 213-245.
- 4 For discussion of the methodological problems and a full bibliography of surveys, see Erciyas 2006, 52-61. One further problem with the survey data is that it often does not distinguish between the Classical and the Hellenistic periods.
- 5 Erciyas 2006, 61.
- 6 Matthews, Pollard & Ramage 1998, 195-216.
- 7 In particular App. *Mith.* 65 stating that Murena captured 400 villages belonging to Mithridates (contested by Glew 2000, 155-162) and the name Chiliokômon for the district northwest of Amaseia (Strab. 12.3.39).
- 8 Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 169-192.
- 9 Callataÿ 2005, 119-136.
- 10 Saprykin 2007; Erciyas 2006, 116. Contrary Callataÿ is of the opinion that the coins were struck for the purpose of paying troops.
- 11 For a table of types and presently known mints and volume of output, see Callataÿ 2005, 132.
- 12 Imhoof-Blumer (1912, 191) notes that the same die-cutter was responsible for the coins of both Amastris and coins with the legend ΔΙΑΣ using this as evidence for placing the mint in the Bithynian town Dia on account of its geographical proximity to Amastris.
- 13 Callataÿ 2003, 226 and his contribution in the present volume.
- 14 Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 191-192.
- 15 Olshausen & Biller 1984, 120 with references.
- 16 Olshausen & Biller 1984, 54-60.
- 17 Panichi 2005, 200-215.
- 18 Bengtson 1944.
- 19 Bengtson 1944, 265.
- 20 Olshausen 1974, 153-170. For an in depth discussion of the associates of Mithridates VI, see Portanova 1988.
- 21 Reinach 1905, 113-119.
- 22 Saprykin 2004, 207-210.
- 23 See Gavrilov in this volume.
- 24 Olshausen & Biller 1984.
- 25 The catalogue of Gall (1967, 504-527) included approximately 40 tunnels in Pontos and Paphlagonia. Many more were added by Olshausen and Biller (1984).

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The Rock-tombs of the Pontic Kings in Amaseia (Amasya)

Robert Fleischer

The five big tombs (Figs. 1-3) in the rocks above the city of Amaseia (Amasya) are the most impressive archaeological remains of the Kingdom of Pontos, and nearly its only preserved remains at all, if we leave aside the beautiful Hellenistic walls which remain from the *basileia* (Fig. 1, right side) in the same city and its acropolis at the top of Harşena dağı. Together with some other tombs in- and outside Amasya they represent the most recent group of rock-tombs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic age in Anatolia, following their forerunners in Urartu, Phrygia, Lykia, Karia, and Paphlagonia.

Amaseia was the capital of the dynasty of the Mithridatids for about a century, between about 281 and 180 BC. The five kings Mithridates I, Ariobar-



Fig. 1. Amasya, Tombs A-E (from the right to the left) (photo: N. Birkle).



Fig. 2. Amasya, Tombs A-C (from the right to the left) (photo: N. Birkle).



Fig. 3. Amasya, Tombs D (right), E (left) (photo: N. Birkle).

zanes, Mithridates II and III, and Pharnakes I all ruled here. Strabon, a native of Amaseia, gives a description of his home city and mentions the μνῆματα, the monuments / tombs of the kings, in the area of the *basileia* (12.3.39).

In September 2002 research into this area was carried out by the author together with architect, Falko Ahrendt-Flemming and archaeologist Nicole Birkle. Bay Celal Özdemir, of the Amasya Museum, was commissar and representative of the Turkish Government. Alpay Pasınlı, General Director of Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, provided us with permission to study the tombs. Our work was made possible by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft's program "Forms and ways of acculturation in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea-area in Antiquity". Additional support was given by Gerda Henkel Stiftung, Düsseldorf, and Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz. We wish to thank all of these institutions and individuals.

We first made elevations, ground-plans and sections, based on digital photography followed by photogrammetric elaboration using the program "Photomodeler" and finally drawn with CAD (Computer aided design). Digital reconstructions were executed by the archaeologist Annette Niessner. As an example the facade of Tomb A is shown here (Fig. 4).

The royal necropolis consists of two groups of tombs which we have called, starting from the right side, A-E. Tomb A, B, and C (Fig. 2) are situated in the east, close to the remains of the Royal *basileia* with well preserved Hellenistic walls (Fig. 1, right side), while tomb D and E (Fig. 3) are situated in the west. Tomb A is accessible from the *basileia* by a staircase which is cut into the rock. Another staircase leads to the higher level of tombs B and C. The way continues to the northwest through a tunnel. From its end one could climb up to the acropolis, passing a long and deep stepped tunnel used for water-supply, or walk down to the west to the entrance of another tunnel with steps inside and a staircase leading up to the ample terrace in front of tomb D. Another staircase, cut into the almost vertical rock in the form of a gallery (Fig. 5), leads up to tomb E.

At the time of the construction of the tombs, it was planned to surround all of them with corridors in order to give the impression of free-standing buildings in the rock. The prototypes for structures like this can be found in 4th century BC Karia, in Kaunos, Telmessos and other places.¹ But only the corridors of B, C (Fig. 6), and D were completely executed. Work on the corridor of A was begun, but soon given up because of the very crumbly rock with many fissures in it. The execution of the corridor of E was also suddenly given up before its completion. This happened evidently when Pharnakes I decided to move his capital from Amaseia to Sinope, which he had conquered a short time before, and which as an important sea-port with international connections was much better qualified to be the residence of the kings, in accordance with the increased political and economic role of Pontos. Consequently Pharnakes wished to be buried here, in his new capital.

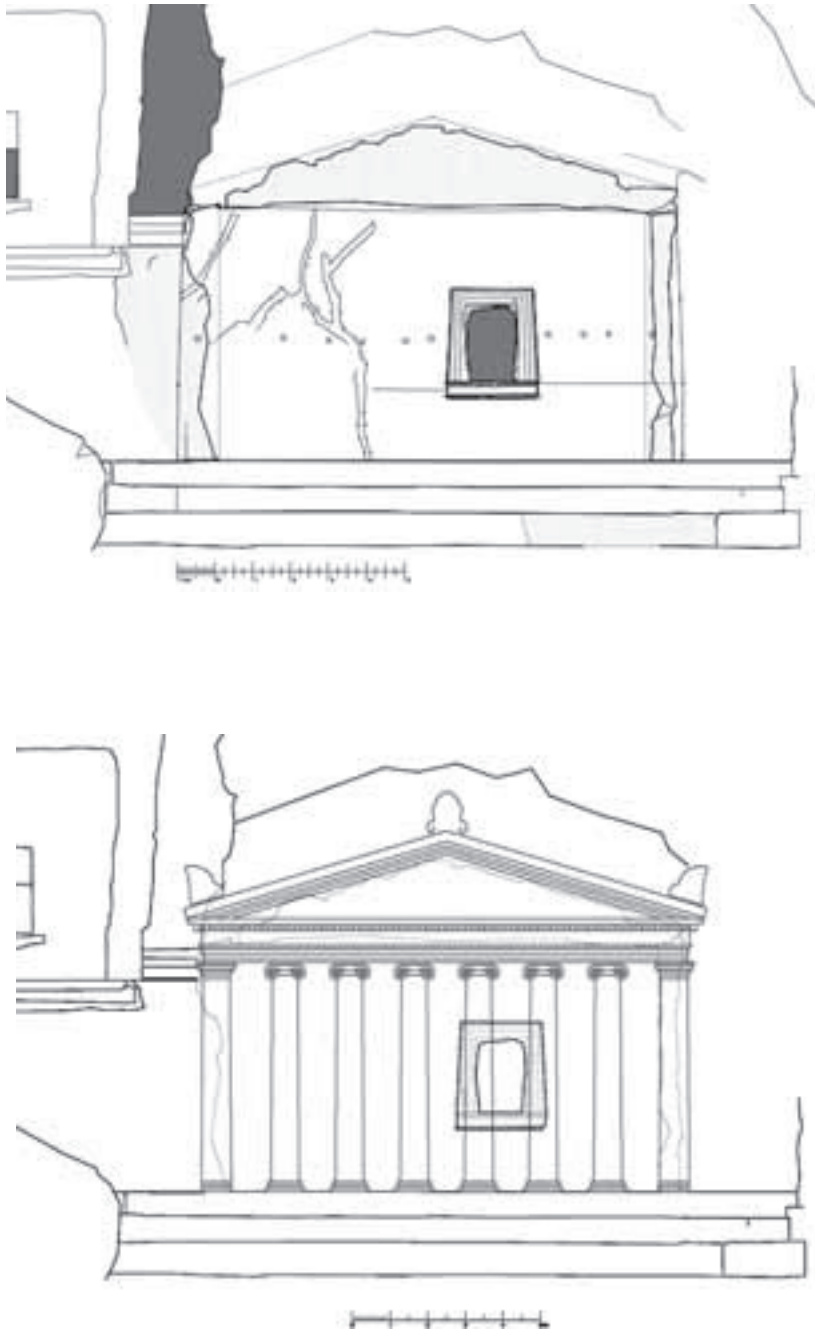


Fig. 4 a-d. Amasya, Tomb A, elevation, reconstruction, plan, section (F. Ahrendt-Flemming, R. Fleischer & A. Niessner).

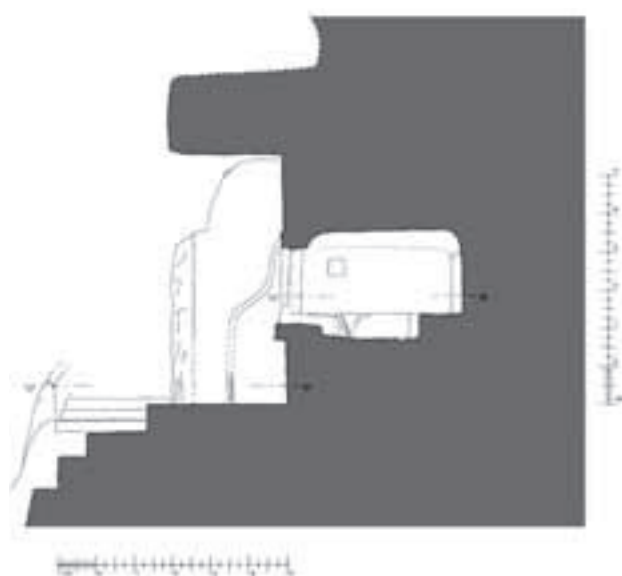
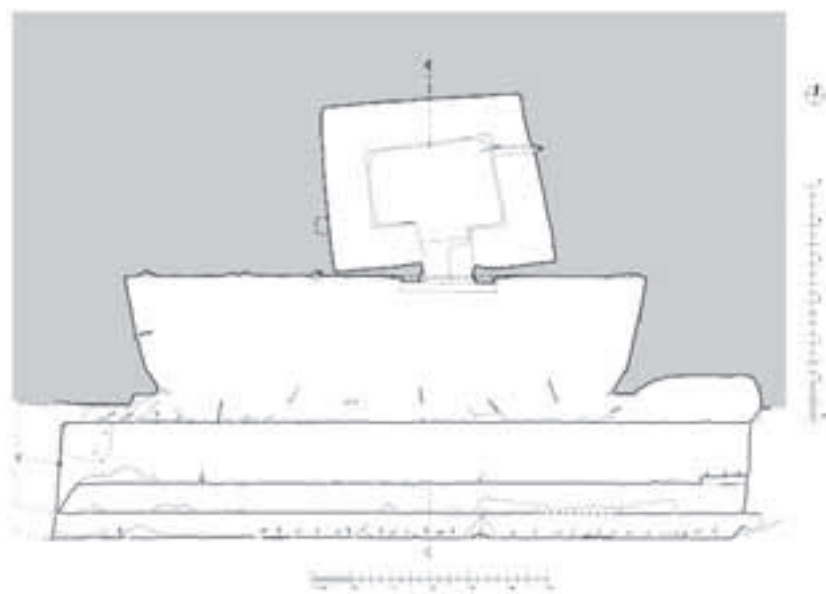




Fig. 5. Amasya, staircase from Tomb D to E (photo: N. Birkle).



Fig. 6. Amasya, corridors behind Tombs B and C (photo: N. Birkle).



Fig. 7. Amasya, Tomb A, chamber (photo: N. Birkle).

Another common feature of the five tombs is the high position of the entrances to the grave-chambers; they are accessible only with a ladder. It is very likely that this position was chosen according to Iranian rules of purity. One may compare the high entrances of the royal tombs of the Achaemenids from Dareios I to Dareios III in Naqš-e Rostam and Persepolis.²

The chambers are rather small, with or without benches along their sides (Fig. 7), intended to give space for only a single or at least a very limited number of corpses.

Research of the last century has not considered the appearance of the royal tombs in ancient times to be very different from their actual ones today: *Naiskos*- or *aedicula*-like structures without columns, with either a pediment or a kind of archivolt at the top.³ Only the traces of stone revetment, which covered the surface of Tomb E was always observed. But traces of columns were already noted 135 years ago by the French expedition of G. Perrot, E. Guillaume and J. Delbet⁴ – perhaps they were later covered with debris and no longer visible until recent times. These traces indicate that three of the five tombs had facades with columns: Tomb A (Fig. 4) had six, B and D four each. At the inner side of the right anta of Tomb B traces of an Attic base are preserved, which means that the four columns had bases of the same shape and Ionic capitals. We may assume that the facades of Tomb A and D were of Ionic order, too. Tomb C and E with their rounded tops did not have columns.

Many other parts of the tombs were made separately and connected with the surface of the rock by means of dowels and clamps of which traces are still visible: parts of the steps in front of the facades, parts of the antae, thresholds, and lintels of the doors etc.

In accordance with the shape of the corridors and some technical details of the execution it can be argued that the chronological sequence of the three tombs in the east was not A – B – C, but A – C – B. Tomb B was built as the last and placed between A and C with considerable effort. There was no more space left in the rocks above the fortified *basileia* area, and the later tombs D and E had to be placed at a long distance from them. Consequently the sequence of the tombs and their attribution to the five kings is as follows:

- Tomb A: Mithridates I
- Tomb C: Ariobarzanes
- Tomb B: Mithridates II
- Tomb D: Mithridates III
- Tomb E: Pharnakes

The tombs do not follow a linear, logical development: Hexastyle portico with pediment (tomb A), portico without columns and with round top (tomb C), tetrastyle portico with pediment (tombs B and D), and finally portico without columns with stone revetments and archivolt at the top (tomb E). This



Fig. 8. Amasya, Tomb of Tes (photo: N. Birkle).

development – rather a change between two forms – looks very unusual if we compare these tombs with the rock-tombs of other areas in Anatolia. In Phrygia, Lykia, Karia, and Paphlagonia the local forms disappear gradually; they are first enriched with some imported Greek forms and later replaced by an entirely Greek appearance. In Amaseia we are confronted with a development in the opposite direction. The form inspired by Greek temple architecture is finally replaced by the un-Greek form of Pharnakes' Tomb E, which set a new standard for rock-tombs in Pontos. It was imitated in and near Amaseia in the Tomb of Tes⁵ (Fig. 8) with its original large inscription and a second



Fig. 9. Lâcin, Tomb of Hikesios (photo: N. Birkle).

one from its later reuse, and in some minor rock-tombs, but also in the huge tomb of Hikesios near Lâcin, Province of Çorum, about 80 km west of Amasya, the biggest (nearly 13 m high) rock-tomb in Anatolia (Fig. 9).⁶ The origin of this form is not yet distinct. Due to its vault with an angle of 110° instead of a 180°-hemicycle it cannot imitate real architecture in stone; a building like this could not stand without additional support on both sides.

It is remarkable that the well-known rock-inscription (Fig. 10) is situated above the Tomb of Pharnakes.⁷ This inscription tells that the *phourarchos* (commander of the castle) (Me)trodoros dedicated an altar and a flower-bed for the king Pharnakes to the gods. This altar and flower-bed must have been located on the small plateau in front of the inscription. Steps in the rock, today partially visible, led to this place. If Tomb E really was Pharnakes' last resting-place, as has been projected, this dedication would have been near to his corpse.

We may ask why the development of rock-tombs in Pontos was so different from that in other landscapes of Anatolia. Looking at the coin-portraits of the Pontic kings before Mithridates VI,⁸ which are very unusual in the context of the Hellenistic world of the third and second century BC and bring to mind individuals of the Roman republic and late Hellenistic "*philorhomaioi*"-kings rather than contemporaneous rulers, one could assume that an anti-Greek and anti-Hellenistic attitude lay behind this development. Yet it has been



Fig. 10. Amasya, dedication for Pharnakes (photo: N. Birkle).

shown that this attitude did not exist. Pontic kings presented themselves as *philhellenes*, just like other rulers did.⁹ Maybe the new shape of Pharnakes I's rock-tomb, already preceded by Ariobarzanes' Tomb B, had its roots in some local traditions unknown to us.

The development of Pontic rock-tombs was cut off when Pharnakes I made Sinope his capital. No large rock-tombs can be found there, and the later kings, from Pharnakes I with his second and final tomb, which we have to assume, down to Mithridates VI, who was buried "in the graves of his ancestors",¹⁰ found their place most probably in *tumuli* or mausolea. In which way would the development have continued, if Amaseia had persisted as the capital down to the last, great king of Pontos to whom our symposion has been devoted?

Notes

- 1 Roos 1972, 90.
- 2 Schmidt 1970.
- 3 For example Gall 1967, 594-595.
- 4 Perrot, Guillaume & Delbet 1872, 383-385, pl. 76.1; 77.1,3; 79.1.
- 5 Fleischer 2005, 274, 278-279, 283, fig. 4.
- 6 Marek 2003, 32, 39, figs. 54-55; Fleischer 2005, 274, 278-279, 283, fig. 4.
- 7 OGIS I 573-575, no. 365; Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 114-115, no. 94.

- 8 Smith 1988, 113, 122, pl. 77. 9-12.
- 9 Olshausen 1974, 157-170; Callataÿ 2003, 220-222.
- 10 App. *Mith.* 16.113; Dio Cass. 37.14.1. For a different interpretation, see the following article by J.M. Højte.

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The Death and Burial of Mithridates VI

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Mithridates VI, king of Pontos, died in 63 BC in Pantikapaion. The circumstances surrounding his death are to some extent obscure. One tradition holds that he tried to commit suicide by poison, but that a long life of self-administered antidotes made him unable to fulfil his intention. In the end he needed the service of the sword of his Gaulish bodyguard Bituitus.¹ Another tradition holds that he was murdered by the troops that had deserted to his son Pharnakes (often called the second to distinguish him from his great-grandfather, the king of Pontos), who had joined a rebellion against the aging king instigated by the city of Phanagoreia.² The reason for the rebellion should allegedly have been the futile and hopeless plan of Mithridates to raise a new army with which he would attack Italy by way of the northern Black Sea and the Balkans.³ Pharnakes had the body summarily embalmed and sent off to Pontos with a request to be appointed king of his ancestral domain. Pharnakes evidently thought that Pompeius would appreciate his help in ridding him of Mithridates, and that his treachery towards his father would call for a reward. This was not the last time Pharnakes misjudged the intentions of a Roman general. Fifteen years later, by Zela, it nearly cost him his life when he tried to regain the Pontic throne in the aftermath of the war between Pompeius and Caesar.

Pompeius received the news of the death of his adversary, Mithridates, in the dessert south of Jerusalem, as he was advancing on the Nabataean Kingdom and its capital Petra. An odd place, to say the least, considering that the man he had been sent from Rome to capture, for nearly three years had ruled in the Bosporan Kingdom more than 1500 km to the north. Plutarch notes a certain irritation by Pompeius, which he ascribed to the awkwardness of the situation. Pompeius was in the middle of his afternoon exercise, and there was no tribunal from which he could address his troops.⁴ Perhaps his irritation ran deeper. The elimination of Mithridates terminated Pompeius' legal grounds of the Lex Manilia for campaigning in the East. He had no choice but to return to Rome and celebrate the triumph leaving the eastern frontier without a permanent settlement.

That Pompeius from early on had designs beyond capturing Mithridates seems certain. After he had routed Mithridates from Pontos rather quickly without much effort in 66 BC, he was surprisingly reluctant to pursue Mithridates, who had fled to Kolchis and held winter quarters at Dioskourias before continuing to Pantikapaion the following spring.⁵ Pompeius advanced

from Armenia into Albania and Iberia, while avoiding Mithridates in Kolchis. These expeditions do not seem to have been justified by military needs as some sources relate, but were rather aimed at extending Rome's, and not least Pompeius', sphere of influence by being the first to establish connections with kings, cities, and dynasts in these regions.⁶ Had Mithridates been the target, Pompeius could have employed the undisputed Roman supremacy at sea to cut off Mithridates before he reached the Kimmerian Bosphoros. Instead after meeting some resistance from the Albani, he abandoned his enterprise in Transcaucasus and turned south to grander exploits, conquering the East and becoming the new Roman Alexander. Mithridates could easily be picked up later on the way back to Rome.

There are different opinions as to the extent to which Pompeius practiced *imitatio Alexandri*. Devon Martin recently in an article argued that all instances of comparisons between Pompeius and Alexander could be attributed to slander from his opponents or to later authors' habit of *comparatio*.⁷ Pompeius himself never engaged in *imitatio* as Alexander had a very poor reputation in Rome. However, the sources Martin bases her argument upon are primarily Augustan and their negative attitude towards Alexander without doubt refers to Marcus Anthonius' extensive use of Alexander in his propaganda.⁸ Earlier in the century, Alexander was highly praised, and to my mind, there can be no doubt that Pompeius actively sought to imitate Alexander in both appearance and in actions. In this respect he was much like Mithridates, who even claimed descent from Alexander as well as the Persian king Dareios. Many examples of Pompeius' imitations of Alexander have been discussed previously, but more can still be added.⁹ One particularly interesting example concerning the burial of Mithridates has hitherto not been discussed in this connection. It is of some importance because it is not written into a context of *imitatio* or *comparatio* in the sources. In almost all other instances the authors relate that Pompeius' actions were intended to imitate Alexander, and in these cases we must of course be very skeptical about their authenticity, because it may be a result of later authors' *comparatio* rather than real *imitatio* by Pompeius.¹⁰

The body of Mithridates was transferred from Pantikapaion to either Amisos (so Plut. *Pomp.* 42.2) or Sinope (so App. *Mith.* 113) together with other dead members of his family, Roman deserters, and the royal paraphernalia. Pompeius journeyed hastily to the Pontic shore from Palestine, but by the time of his arrival the insufficiency of the embalming was becoming apparent. The body had begun to deteriorate and the face was no longer recognisable because the brain had not been properly removed. Pompeius refused to inspect the body himself, supposedly out of respect for the dead king.

Then Pompeius took the rather surprising decision to provide funds for a proper funeral for Mithridates. He was to be interred in the tomb of his forefathers. No adversary of Rome, and especially one who had fought so determined against Rome for such a long time, had received such an honour, and

with an heir to the throne still around, this was not an act without possible political consequences. There exist, however, a very good historical parallel. Alexander the Great had Dareios III interred in the ancestral tombs of the Persian kings outside Persepolis, and Pompeius undoubtedly had this incident in mind when he decided to personally see to the funeral of the Pontic king. By doing so Pompeius could relegate the philhellene king to an oriental despot, while he at the same time would appear as a new Alexander, liberator of the Greeks.

Where was the final resting place of Mithridates?

Although Plutarch and Appianos disagree as to where the body was initially sent from Pantikapaion, they agree that the royal tomb was at Sinope. Plutarch (*Pomp.* 42.3) briefly states that Pompeius, after having received the delegation from Pharnakes, had the body of the dead king sent away to Sinope without mentioning further details about the arrangement of the burial. Appianos, who assumed that the body was already in Sinope, informs us that the body was interred in the tombs of the kings. The word Appianos uses is the non-descript τάφοι.

The last source to mention the burial of Mithridates, Dio Cassius (37.14.1), does not specify where the funeral took place; only that he was laid to rest in the tombs of his forefathers, here described as ἡοῖα. The use of the plural has led to the assumption that Pharnakes I, the grandfather of Mithridates VI, had moved the primary royal residence to Sinope shortly after he had captured the city in 183 BC and had constructed a monumental tomb there – or that this was done during the short reign of Mithridates IV at the latest. Otherwise there could only have been one king previously interred in the royal cemetery.

At what time Sinope became metropolis of the Pontic Kingdom and what that implied in respect to its status and administrative function within the kingdom is hard to determine. We are told in second century AD sources that Mithridates made the city the capital, but it probably held prime importance and overshadowed the former capital Amaseia earlier than that. Mithridates was born in Sinope and this is also where he ousted his mother, Laodike, in 113 BC. But Mithridates and his predecessors did not reside there permanently. There were other royal palaces as well, and it is quite clear from the accounts of the Mithridatic Wars that Mithridates was accustomed to moving around in his domain. At Kabeira a palace with extensive grounds had been built by him, and another palace is known at Amisos, which seems to have been a very significant administrative centre. In Plutarch's account this is where Pharnakes first sent the body of Mithridates, and the city also seem to have possessed the most active mint.¹¹ He furthermore had a residence at Lake Stifane, and finally Strabon's account of his hometown Amaseia reveals that the palace there was not abandoned even if the city had ceased to function as the

primary royal residence.¹² Later during the Roman Imperial period, Sinope indisputably became the most important city in the region and it is quite possible that this has contributed to an overestimation of the city's importance within the framework of the Pontic Kingdom. I am somewhat suspicious about the correctness of the information the sources present about the burial place of Mithridates. The disagreement about where the body of Mithridates was sent and Dio's failure to give a location gives reason to believe that by the second century AD, details about the sequence of events was no longer readily available, and if Plutarch and Appianos had no exact knowledge, their obvious choice for a location would be Sinope.

Hellenistic royal tombs

If we for the moment accept Sinope as the burial place, what type of royal burial place should we expect Pharnakes I or his brother Mithridates IV to have constructed? Rock-cut tombs such as the royal tombs at Amaseia can easily be ruled out, as there are no suitable rock formations within or in the vicinity of Sinope. The *ἡρόιον* of Dio can be used to describe a variety of sepulchres but it regularly denotes tumuli. There are in fact tumuli around Sinope but according to Owen Doonan, who has surveyed the region around Sinope intensely over the past years, none of the tumuli would really qualify as the royal cemetery as they are relatively small and insignificant. Nothing like the tumulus Antiochos I of Kommagene constructed at Nemrud Dağı about two decades later than the death of Mithridates.¹³ This tomb and its attached sacred lands is exactly the type of monument we could have expected from the later Pontic kings, who like Antiochos claimed descend from both Alexander and Dareios and who seem to have followed a somewhat similar religious policy of advocating temple states and syncretistic gods.

Our knowledge of Hellenistic royal tombs is in fact surprisingly limited. One could in a sense say that the only royal tombs surviving intact are in fact the first and the last, namely those at Vergina normally associated with Philip II and at Nemrud Dağı for Antiochos I.¹⁴ No comprehensive study of Hellenistic Royal tombs has yet been made, but a brief survey of the available evidence gives an impression of large diversity in the choice of royal funerary monuments.¹⁵

One of the few recurring features is their proximity to the royal palace. This occurs in the Persian palaces at Pasargadae and Persepolis and to a lesser extent in the Macedonian cemetery at Vergina. The Ptolemies chose the same model in Alexandria for the tomb of Alexander, which continued as the burial place for the Ptolemaic kings. Indeed the tombs of the Pontic kings in Amaseia were also within the compound of the palace.¹⁶ Relatively little excavation has so far been carried out in Sinope and no parts of the royal palace has yet been found. If indeed the ancestral tomb was in Sinope, this should in all likelihood be the place to find it.

Amaseia

As suggested above, Plutarch and Appianos may be wrong in placing the tomb of Mithridates at Sinope. It is worth to consider whether he could have been buried in Amaseia. Strabon, in his description of his hometown (12.3.39), mentions the memorials of the kings but fails to inform about their discontinued use many generations before his own time. There can be no doubt that the tombs in question are the five rock cut tombs set high above the city on the right bank of the Iris, which also figure on early third century AD coins of Amaseia. The tombs are arranged in two groups of two and three and are of a type of tomb unique to Pontos in that the tomb chambers are cut free of the rock all around (Figs. 1-2). There exist further rock-cut tombs within the area of the palace and the acropolis, but apart from the one down the slope by the railway tunnel, the other tombs are rather insignificant.¹⁷

The prime argument against the continued use of the royal tombs in Amaseia has been that the five tombs, one supposedly being left unfinished, fits neatly with the information in Appianos, that there were seven kings of Pontos before Mithridates VI and thus four before Pharnakes. Supposedly Pharnakes made Sinope the capital of the Pontic Kingdom after having captured the city in 183 BC and consequently abandoned the already initiated building



Fig. 1: The royal tombs in Amaseia. The “unfinished tomb” to the left.



Fig. 2: The royal tombs in Amaseia. The three earliest tombs.

project in Amaseia.¹⁸ However, a number of objections can be raised against this interpretation. First of all, our knowledge about the Pontic kings prior to Pharnakes is scant at best. In fact as to the number of kings we rely primarily on the information of Appianos, and for one of the kings in the reconstructed line we possess no independent evidence for his existence.¹⁹ More importantly we do not know whether each new king constructed his own tomb. That was certainly the case with the tombs of the Persian kings near Persepolis, but these tombs were individualised with inscriptions and reliefs showing the exploits of the king. There are no signs that the tombs in Amaseia had any comparable decoration. This could have been painted, but there does not seem to be any trace of this, and on two other similar tombs in Pontos the name of the owner of the tombs was inscribed on the facade or on the rock face beside it.²⁰ This is not the case with the royal tombs in Amaseia. Furthermore the tombs were certainly made to accommodate more than one burial as the tomb chambers have cuttings for more funerary couches. The family tree of the Pontic kings, as we know it today from the sources, is very much a tree turned upside down with many branches at the bottom and thinning at the top.²¹ Of the families of the seven Pontic kings that preceded Mithridates VI, we only possess the names of four wives and three sisters – Laodike Philadelphos being both the sister and the wife of Mithridates V. In comparison Mithridates is known to have had no less than 18 children and he had at least six siblings. We have

Fig. 3: Cuttings for fastening architectural details on the front of the ante on the "unfinished tomb".



no reason to believe that the structure of the Pontic royal family was any different before the time of Mithridates VI. It is a matter of scarcity of sources. We should therefore expect each generation of the house to have consisted of quite a large number of individuals some of whom at least would be buried in the royal tombs. On this background, I do not think that we necessarily should expect a one to one relationship between king and tomb. Furthermore we do not know whether the tradition of burying the kings within the palace compound in Amaseia was initiated by Mithridates I. The earliest kings of Pontos could have been buried elsewhere. Instead of supposing that Mithridates I was the first to be buried in the rock cut tombs within the palace it is equally possible that it was Mithridates III.

Judging from the development of the architecture of the tombs, a chronological sequence can be established with the easternmost being the earliest

and the westernmost, the so-called unfinished tomb, the latest. Although the tomb chamber of the unfinished tomb unlike most of the others was not cut entirely free of the rock, other refinements show that the tomb must have been nearly completed when the cutting at the back was abandoned. There are for example cuttings around the facade for fastening metal adornments, which we should expect were among the final refinements of the tomb (Fig. 3). It can therefore not be excluded that the tomb was in fact used at some point.

Conclusion

There are three possible solutions to the question of the burial place of Mithridates VI: 1) he could have been buried in Sinope in a tomb constructed in connection with the royal palace there; 2) the royal tombs were always at Amaseia; 3) there was a royal tomb in Sinope, but Pompeius chose to bury Mithridates at Amaseia, as this would best resemble the example of Alexander. At the moment, I am most inclined to believe in the second possibility.

Apart from the question of the location of the tomb, the story of the burial of Mithridates is important because it strongly indicates that Pompeius did in fact try to imitate Alexander, who likewise provided a proper funeral for his adversary Dareios III. Pompeius' decision concerning the body of Mithridates VI was quite unusual for a Roman general, and the only reasonable explanation must be, that he had the example of Alexander in mind when faced with the question in Amisos in 63 BC.

Notes

- 1 App. *Mith.* 111.
- 2 Dio Cass. 37.13.
- 3 Sonnabend 1998, 191-206.
- 4 Plut. *Pomp.* 41.3-5; Greenhalgh 1981, 146.
- 5 McGing 1986, 164.
- 6 Braund 1994, 161-163.
- 7 Martin 1998, 23-51.
- 8 Michel 1967, 109-132.
- 9 Examples of *imitatio Alexandri* by Pompeius are discussed in Michel 1967, 33-66; Bohm 1989; Martin 1998, 23-51.
- 10 For the question of *imitatio* and *comparatio* in our sources, see Green 1978, 1-26.
- 11 Callataÿ 2005, 131-132.
- 12 For the royal palaces at Sinope: Diod. Sic. 14.31.1; Kabeira: Strab. 12.3.30; Amisos: Strab. 12.3.14; at Lake Stiphane: Strab. 12.3.38; Amaseia: Strab. 12.3.39.
- 13 Sanders 1996.
- 14 Stewart 2003, 54.
- 15 In addition to the ones mentioned here there exist a few other isolated examples of royal tombs. Seleukos I Nikator was probably buried in the vault under the Doric Temple excavated in Seleukeia in Pieria in Syria, the so-called Nikatoreion, but we have no reason to believe that this served as tomb for any later members of the

- Seleukid dynasty (Hannestad & Potts 1990, 116; App. *Syr.* 63). Outside Ephesos at Belevi a monumental tomb in the tradition of the Mausoleum in Halikarnassos was constructed at the turn of the 4th and 3rd century BC, which most likely belonged to an early Hellenistic king. Lysimachos the re-founder of Ephesos has been suggested but so has the Seleukid king Antiochos I (Praschniker & Theuer 1979). In Pergamon the Attalid kings were probably buried in the large tumuli at the outskirts of the town, but this has never been confirmed by excavation.
- 16 Nielsen (1995, 14) mentions tombs as a feature of several Hellenistic palaces. The palace in Amaseia is not included in the discussion.
 - 17 Jerphanion 1973, 5-10.
 - 18 Fleischer 2005, 273. The tombs in Amaseia are currently being investigated by a team lead by Robert Fleischer, see the previous article.
 - 19 Højte 2005, 137-152.
 - 20 Fleischer 2005, 273-284: the tomb of Tes on the outskirts of Amaseia and the tomb of Hikesios at Laçin.
 - 21 Olshausen 1978, 399-400.

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Monuments for the King: Royal Presence in the Late Hellenistic World of Mithridates VI

Patric-Alexander Kreuz

What was the Greeks' perception of the kingship of Mithridates, a ruler more or less from the fringes of a Hellenistic world once dominated by powerful kingdoms around the Eastern Mediterranean? Being a Classical Archaeologist, I was primarily associating royal self-representation or the dense monumental presence of Hellenistic rulers in the Greek centres of the Hellenistic period with this perception.¹ I wondered though if public monuments would give us information on specific Mithridatic aspects of royal ideology besides those stressed by the written sources (and from a period earlier than the Mithridatic Wars, when the antagonism between Rome and the Greek world and its ideological "embellishment" dominate our sources). Secondly, I was curious if these monuments might even provide us with information on how (and above all which) of these aspects were perceived by others and if this in turn might contribute to our understanding of an outsider's perspective, namely that of the "traditional" Greek world also affected by Mithridates' ventures.

But the evidence is disillusioning: we are confronted with an archaeological record that seems to be promising only at first sight. Apart from numismatic evidence and glyptic art, to which I admittedly will not pay attention in this article (neither are public monuments as such), only isolated and fragmentary evidence exists. Because of this, questions about the presence and appearance of Mithridatic monuments in the Greek world, the imagery chosen for them and, especially, the perception of their message can hardly be pursued. In addition, Pontic literary sources concerning royal self-presentation, for example, royal feasts, *pompai* or further types of royal communication are missing for the reign of Mithridates VI.

To address the – admittedly ambitious – questions outlined above the following remarks will be subdivided in two parts. The first will touch upon the literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence for honours and donations for or by Mithridates on a more general level. In the second part, I would like to focus mainly on one specific monument – to be honest, the only one well enough preserved to be consulted – before summing up with some concluding remarks.

Honours for Mithridates and benefactions by Mithridates

The lack of extant monuments for Mithridates from the territory of the Pontic Kingdom is a considerable limitation for our understanding of the royal image. But the evidence for Mithridates' *euergesia* in his kingdom or beyond in the Aegean world is also scanty. No royal initiatives comparable to the donations of buildings by Hellenistic kings, so common in the 3rd and 2nd century BC, are known.² Besides donations in favour of the Delian gymnasium 116/115 BC,³ royal *euergesia* is mentioned in connection with debt relief and the donation of money or grain.⁴ The Mithridatic dedications of cuirasses to the Panhellenic sanctuaries at Delphi and Nemea⁵ are to be explained in connection with the Mithridatic Wars.

Compared to that, we are much better informed about others honouring Mithridates. Already in 116/15 BC Mithridates and his brother were honoured with statues on behalf of the *gymnasiarchos* Dionysios on Delos,⁶ a result of their donations in favour of the gymnasium already mentioned. From about the same time – and from Delos, too – we know of a dedication to Zeus Ourios for Mithridates and his brother Chrestos.⁷ Also in Delos, in 102/101 BC an architectural monument was dedicated by the priest Helianax (see below). Furthermore, two dedications in honour of Mithridates by the priest Dikaïos, again in Delos (from the Serapeion, late 90's BC),⁸ and other fragments of inscriptions from Delos naming Mithridates can be added,⁹ as well as the dedication of an elaborate bronze vessel by the *eupatoristai* from the gymnasium, that reached Antium as Roman war booty.¹⁰ Moreover, inscriptions from Chios and Rhodos demonstrate the successful participation of the king (or, at least, of his horses) at equestrian games there,¹¹ and another inscription testifies to the honour of an eponymous *stephanephoria* awarded in Miletos in 86/85 BC.¹² Cicero finally mentions a statue erected in honour of Mithridates by the Rhodians *in celeberrimo urbis loco*.¹³

The concentration of monuments honouring Mithridates on Delos is obvious. As a traditional and Panhellenic stage for the self-representation of Hellenistic rulers, the island was a favourite place to erect honorary statues, monuments or buildings for or by members of the Hellenistic royal dynasties. From the period between 166 and 88 BC no less than around 50 royal portrait statues are known.¹⁴

It is remarkable, that the Mithridatic monuments on Delos – according to their findspots – apparently were not erected at the long established places preferred for royal monuments.¹⁵ Yet the fact that for the first time a Pontic king was markedly present in the context of an international centre, after only isolated donations by or honours to his predecessors Pharnakes I and Mithridates V,¹⁶ reflects the political importance of the king honoured in this way. At the same time, in addition to the fact of their mere existence, it is especially the imagery of such monuments that can serve as a prime source for royal ideology.

Portraits and portrait statues

First of all, the portraiture of Mithridates has to be considered, since at least some of the portraits regarded as portraying Mithridates might have belonged to statues erected in public.¹⁷ Yet due to missing inscriptions or incomplete statues, as well as our lack of knowledge about their exact contexts and the occasions for their erection, the majority of portraits are of only limited value as sources. Moreover, even their identification as portraits of Mithridates – based essentially upon numismatic depictions – is not unproblematic.¹⁸

Generally accepted seems to be the identification of the well-known portrait in the Louvre showing the king with a lions' scalp.¹⁹ But controversy exists over several other portrait-heads often connected with Mithridates.²⁰ Besides two portrait-heads in Ostia and Athens²¹ and three from Delos,²² portraits in Odessa, from Pantikapaion,²³ and also one in Venice representing him as Helios²⁴ have to be mentioned. The depiction as a beardless young man, the dynamic movement of the head and the hair with emphasized strands and a diadem unites them all; their reference to the portrait of Alexander the Great (especially striking in the coinage) is evident and has been noticed long ago.²⁵ But apart from these iconographic elements, the portraits mentioned above differ considerably from each other and are only loosely related. The identification with Mithridates therefore remains, in my opinion, at least arguable.

And yet it might still be possible – even if not provable – that some of these heads are comparatively free versions of Mithridates' portrait. It also has to be taken into account, however, that they might show other dynasts or – and this applies to the North Pontic pieces – one of Mithridates' successors there.²⁶ Since some of them referred to descendants of Mithridates, strong resemblances in the portraiture can even be expected in order to emphasise dynastic legitimization.

So, only some general ideological aspects, already known from other genres like the coinage, can be detected in the preserved portraits assumed to be those of Mithridates. The emphasis on his youth and energy testify to an orientation towards the charismatic royal portraiture and the characteristic traits of the Alexander portrait. In addition one might mention that – hardly surprising – according to their findspots portrait statues of Mithridates have also been erected outside his own realm, at internationally frequented places such as Delos and Rhodos. But the outward appearance and iconography of these portrait-statues remain unknown to us.

The Prometheus-group from Pergamon

It would be even more desirable to be able to connect the well-known group of sculptures from Pergamon with Mithridates and his residence there from 88-85 BC, as has been proposed already by Krahmer and followed by oth-

ers.²⁷ The group shows Herakles with the portrait features and the diadem of a king, about to rescue Prometheus in presence of the reclining Caucasus. The subject with its reference to Caucasus could be applied to Mithridates, and also the dynamic depiction of Herakles – recalling the Louvre portrait – could be interpreted in this way. In addition, the group would be connected closely with the king's court: it was found in the sanctuary of Athena, i.e. in the *basileia* on the Akropolis of Pergamon. The sculptural group therefore could be interpreted as a highly political honorary monument, symbolising the liberation of the Caucasus-region by Mithridates as Herakles or his liberation of the Greek world (or only Pergamon?) from the Romans (with the eagle as the opponent of Herakles).²⁸

Yet this identification remains hypothetical. Not only the hairstyle with its small and tight curls obviously bears no resemblance to the known portrait-features of Mithridates, but also the date of the group (it is generally assigned to the middle of the 2nd century / around 160 BC) contradicts such an interpretation.²⁹ Consequently, the Pergamene monument has to be ruled out as a source for Hellenistic royal ideology, at least for that of Mithridates.

Therefore, the only monument offering some clear information on Mithridatic kingship is – thanks to its epigraphic record and the pictorial evidence inferable from it – the monument erected for Mithridates on Delos in 102/101 BC. I would like to give more attention to this monument, since it was erected outside the king's realm and therefore might offer insights into external perspectives on his person and kingship.

The monument for Mithridates on Delos

This unique monument,³⁰ measuring only 5 x 3.5 m, was erected in the sanctuary of the Samothracian Kabeiroi³¹, i.e. it was not located at or in the vicinity of one of the traditional places preferred for royal monuments.³² As a striking addition to the older sanctuary, the positioning of the building strongly influenced the outward appearance of the place: placed right next to the original main building (temple? or banquet hall?) and concealing a substantial part of its facade, it was a clear eye catcher and surely attracted the attention of visitors to the sanctuary (Figs. 1-2).

The Heroon-like construction of the Ionic order opened with a *distyle in antis*-facade (with a widened distance between the two columns) to the south, i.e. towards the open square of the sanctuary (Fig. 3). Its opened front must have invited the sanctuary's visitor to enter the building, to linger there (in the shade) and to appreciate and contemplate the sculptural decoration adorning mainly its inner walls.³³ It consisted of a display of thirteen portrait-busts inserted in round shields: one of them in the *tympanon* of the façade, and twelve along the inner walls of the building (three along each side wall and six along the back wall; Fig. 4).³⁴ An inscription mentioning the name of the person depicted supplemented each portrait-bust, an invaluable source

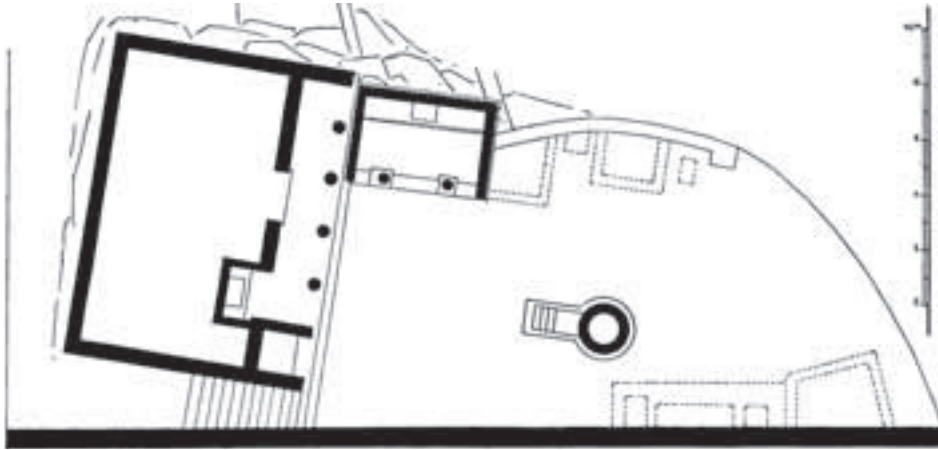


Fig. 1: Plan of the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi with the monument for Mithridates VI (Chapouthier 1935, fig. 107).



Fig. 2: The monument for Mithridates VI on Delos in its reconstructed setting (Chapouthier 1935, fig. 108).

considering the loss of most of the separately worked and inserted portrait heads. Finally, for the perception of the sculptural decoration the moulded bench (H: approx. 60 cm) running along the inner back wall of the building may have been of importance. Yet this bench not only served for seating (if at all). It is also usually considered as the location of an inscribed statue base mentioning Mithridates,³⁵ that, in turn, is commonly connected with a frag-

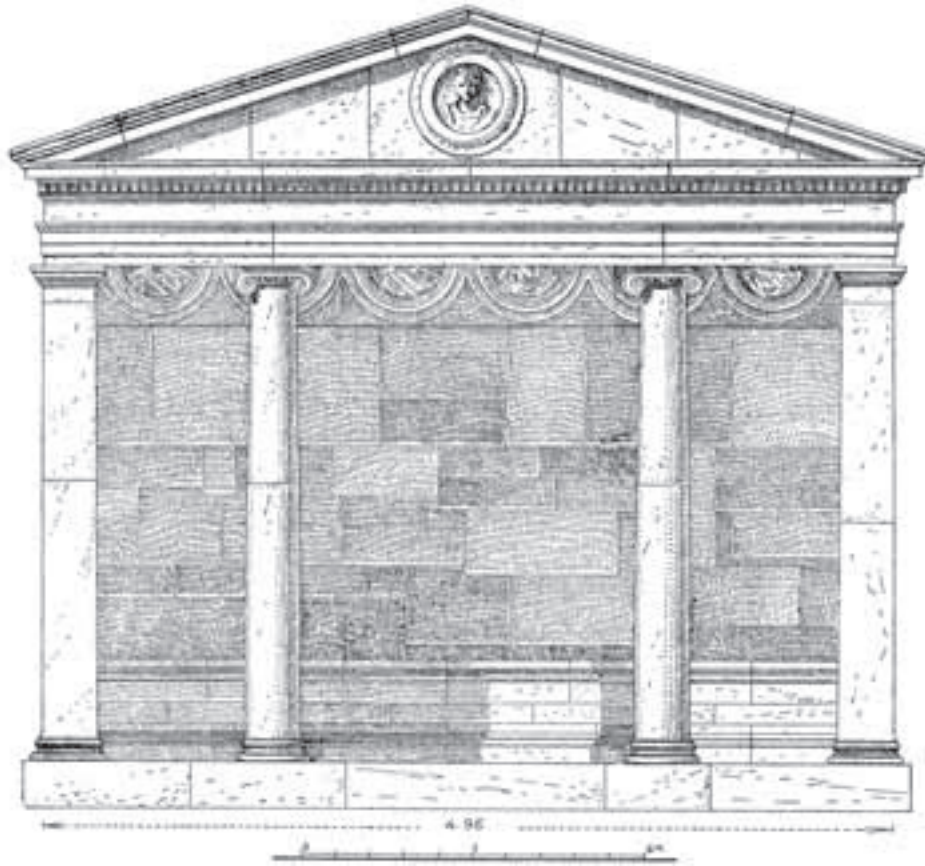


Fig. 3: The façade of the monument for Mithridates VI (Chapouthier 1935, fig. 56).

mentary cuirassed statue found in the sanctuary, showing him as a victorious commander.³⁶ A second, but free-standing inscribed statue base (H: 65 cm) indicates that at least one further statue of unknown appearance stood inside the building, probably in front of its western wall.³⁷

It was, however, the remarkable portrait-medallions that caught the attention of archaeologists and historians after the publication of the monument in 1935. Identified by the partly damaged inscriptions they can be examined as a complex portrait gallery, composed on the patron's initiative. Unfortunately, the iconography of the portraits is revealed by only one, heavily mutilated piece.³⁸ The portrait assigned to Diophantos clearly is part of, at least in the rendering of the hairstyle, the late Hellenistic portrait-tradition so well known from Delos. Furthermore, the parts of the busts still preserved show that all individuals wore a cuirass or cloak.³⁹

Who were these individuals? It is rewarding to give a list of the illustrious mixture of individuals on display. The most prominent place – in the tympanon and therefore dominating the façade – was occupied by an unknown

person from Amisos.⁴⁰ The portraits on the inner walls are, according to the generally accepted reconstruction: on the western wall (from the left) Gaios, son of Hermaios, from Amisos, *syntrophos* of Mithridates; an unknown person and secretary (*epi tou aporetou*) of Mithridates; and Dorylaos, son of Philetairos, from Amisos, nephew of Dorylaos Taktikos, an officer at Mithridates' court, *synthrophos*, commander of the lifeguard (?) and supreme commander (*epi ton dynameon*).⁴¹ On the opposite eastern wall a member of the court of the Arsakid king Mithridates II;⁴² again an unidentified person (inscription lost); and Papias, son of Menophilos, from Amisos, *philos* and physician of Mithridates.⁴³ The northern back wall includes: Diophantos, son of Mithares, from Gazioura; Ariarathes of Kappadokia, nephew of Mithridates and enthroned as ruler by him; the Seleukid king Antiochos Epiphanes; Asklepiodoros, father of Helianax, from Athens; again an unidentified person (inscription lost); and, finally, an official of the Arsakid court.⁴⁴ To sum up, depicted on the walls were leading functionaries and courtiers of Mithridates, but also foreign officials and even kings.

Yet how can this heterogeneous and – considering other monuments of the Hellenistic world – somehow irritating compilation (think of the court physician or the unique⁴⁵ combination of Greeks and Parthians in one monument) be interpreted?

The main inscription on the architrave is of central importance for our understanding of the monument.⁴⁶ It mentions the Athenian Helianax, son of Asklepiodoros, priest of Poseidon and the Kabeiroi at Delos, who erected the monument (in the inscription mentioned as *naos*) together with the *agalmata* and *hopla* (the portrait medallions?) *ek ton idion* on behalf of the Athenian and Roman people to the gods of the sanctuary and king Mithridates Eupator. The name of Helianax is also mentioned in each inscription belonging to the portrait medallions and on both statue bases, i.e. his person is connected to each part of the whole ensemble. Thus, the construction is neither a donation from the king himself, nor initiated by the inner circle of the Pontic court at Sinope. Therefore it does not represent *a priori* an ideological monument of the ruling Pontic dynasty. I would propose that, as a dedication by an Attic-Delian priest, it rather permits us to gain insights into an outsider's perception of – or even expectations towards – the king and his kingship (that, of course, in turn surely should have taken into account facets of his official image). But how can these be described?

An approach to the imagery of the monument

Considering the date of its erection the monument obviously does not represent any resistance to Rome. On the contrary, the inscription on the architrave includes the people of Rome besides the *demos athenaion*. Therefore, it is in complete accordance with the status of a "friend and ally of the Roman people" as claimed by Mithridates in the tradition of his father until 89 BC.⁴⁷

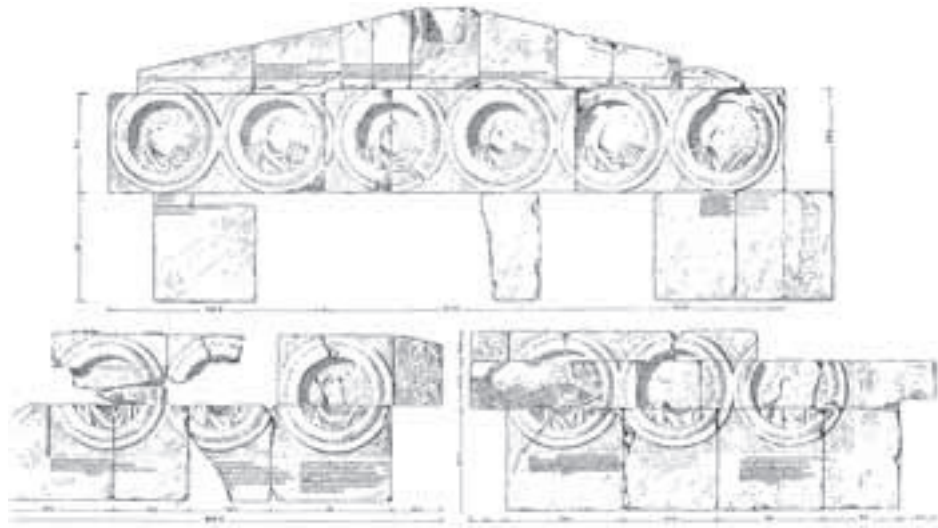


Fig. 4: The portrait-medallions of the inner walls (Chapouthier 1935, fig. 36).

The monument has usually been interpreted with direct reference to the literary tradition and numismatic evidence. Both emphasize the Greek-Persian character of his kingship as a central aspect of Mithridates' identity and ideology, especially obvious in the roots of the Pontic dynasty. Correspondingly the Delos-monument with its portrait gallery is regarded as an expression of the Greek and Persian background of Mithridatic kingship.⁴⁸

But the literary sources first of all emphasize the king's claimed origin from the Achaemenid dynasty (Kyros and Dareios) and (on his mother's side) from Alexander the Great and Seleukos.⁴⁹ Yet neither of these illustrious ancestors, nor any dynastic predecessors of Mithridates are included among the portraits. Apparently, a reference to the Persian-Greek roots of the kingdom and its dynasty was not intended. The monument was not one of the dynastic monuments so well-known in Panhellenic centres since the late Classical period, which portrayed the central figure and his ancestors as a genealogical legitimation of the central's figures rule.⁵⁰ All the individuals depicted are contemporaries of Mithridates, and a blood-relationship as a possible *leitmotif* is not discernible.

Since a Greek-Persian dynastic interpretation or reference to the dual background of Mithridates finds no explicit proof in the monument and therefore should be ruled out as its underlying message, I would like to take a second closer look at the portrait gallery from a different point of view. Obviously, the monument was not intended to present a uniform group of individuals, but rather suggested a certain variety and a deliberate heterogeneity, that must have caught the eyes of the ancient visitor too. The only common ground is the virtually omnipresent reference to Mithridates (in inscriptions and the statue), a message that might already be the principal statement.

This assumption takes added shape when confronted with the written sources concerning the royal court at Sinope. The depiction of two Parthians and a Seleukid recalls the allied, or rather allegedly allied, nations mentioned by ancient authors already early for the reign of Mithridates.⁵¹ Marriages of the Pontic kings with the Seleukids also indicate special contacts.⁵² On the other hand, the accumulation of – first of all Greek – courtiers and officials among the portraits (e.g. the court physician!) makes one think of the royal court characterised by Orosius for the later years of the reign of Mithridates and outlined by E. Olshausen.⁵³ Olshausen was able to show the considerable internationality of the Greek-dominated Pontic court during the reign of Mithridates: almost two-thirds of the court-elite were Greeks of various provenance, in addition to Romans, Kappadokians, and Thracians. Also noticeable is the colourful variety of functions and titles of these multiethnic courtiers and officials, among them *philoï*, generals, judges, philosophers, orators, physicians and even perfumers.

These sources allow us on the one hand to reconstruct a Mithridatic Kingdom embedded in an international network and being a member in the concert of the eastern Greek powers and their adjacent kingdoms. On the other hand, they verify a dominating influence of Greek educated circles at the king's court (undoubtedly promoted by the king himself), and, in correspondence, a cosmopolitic Hellenistic court culture open to ambitious men from all over the Greek world.

But the Delos-monument must not be understood just as an image gallery merely suited to illustrate these sources. On the contrary, its interpretation as an independent and contemporary source finds indirect – i.e. not explicitly formulated – confirmation in the literary and epigraphic sources. While Olshausen was able to extract such a picture from a variety of scattered evidence, we may consider the monument with its peculiar compilation of portraits as a contemporary reflection of Mithridatic kingship.

Attempting a conclusion

But how can these observations – admittedly focussed on the Delos-monument – contribute to our understanding of Mithridatic kingship or even its perception in the Greek world? To begin with the dedicating priest Helianax, the dedicated monument first of all is a personal statement of loyalty to Mithridates, which also suggests a certain relationship to the king. In this respect we may understand Helianax's donation as a kind of self-ascertainment of his nearness to the illustrious circle around the king (or at least a claim of such a position). At the same time, the monument aimed at increasing the prestige of Helianax himself not only on Delos, but certainly also at the Pontic court. In this regard the building *ek ton idion* is a particularly ambitious project, outreaching the honorary statues common in the late Hellenistic period by far.

But the Delos monument should not be interpreted as a genuine and explicit formulation of official Mithridatic ideologies created by the king or members of the royal inner circle. It is neither a reference to a special philhellenic initiative by the king, nor does it communicate aspects of the Greek-Persian dualism of his kingship so prominent in our sources.

The monument is rather a testimony to its time, when the Pontic Kingdom was, above all, a resourceful late Hellenistic kingdom. For the visitor to the sanctuary, contemplating the monument with its unique and heterogeneous portrait gallery, it might have evoked the impression of a specific Hellenistic quality of internationality and cosmopolitan Greek ambience. This in turn aimed at associating the international prestige and recognition of Mithridates and his rule, an important pillar of Hellenistic kingship, especially with the Greek world.

Here the initiator of the monument, Helianax, in his capacity as a non-Pontic elite exponent of Greek culture is again involved. Obviously, these traits of Mithridatic kingship viewed by him as especially worthy to be emphasised and praised, were – in his opinion – also suited to be presented to the international visitors of the Greek island of Delos. Last but not least this message was further underlined by his own credibility as a Delian priest from Athens.

So the monument reflects – and only at this point we may be approaching my initial optimistic idea – for ancient contemporaries perceptible qualities of Mithridatic kingship. Vice versa, monuments like the one erected by Helianax underline these qualities and verify a certain influence of them on the perception of Mithridates in the Greek world.

Notes

- 1 See for example the comprehensive works Hintzen-Bohlen 1992; Bringmann 1995; 2000; Ameling, Bringmann & Schmidt-Dounas 1995; Kotsidu 2000.
- 2 The extension of the refuge of the Sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos by Mithridates (Strabon 14.1.23) hardly resulted in any building initiatives, but should be seen as a merely symbolic act (in the tradition of Alexander the Great).
- 3 Reflected by the honorary statues for Mithridates and his brother Chrestos, erected by the *gymnasiarchos* Dionysios, son of Neon, in response to a donation to the gymnasium: *IDelos* 1560 = Ameling, Bringmann & Schmidt-Dounas 1995, 229-230, no. 191.
- 4 Donation of one hundred talents to support reconstruction works in Phrygian Apameia after an earthquake (Strabon 12.8.18); a package of donations promised to the Athenians in 88 BC (Ameling, Bringmann & Schmidt-Dounas 1995, 81-82, no. 36).
- 5 Ameling, Bringmann & Schmidt-Dounas 1995, 94-95, no. 48 (App. *Mith.* 112).
- 6 *IDelos* 1560.
- 7 *IDelos* 1561 = Kotsidu 2000, 456-457, no. *336, fig. 77-78 (marble stele?, Serapeion C).
- 8 *IDelos* 2039; *IDelos* 2040.

- 9 *IDelos* 1566 = Kotsidu 2000, 458-459, no. *339 (small marble pillar, Mt. Kynthos); Kotsidu 2000, 456, no. *335 (block from an architrave, Serapeion); *IDelos* 1564 = Kotsidu 2000, 457-458, no. *337 (statue base, Serapeion C); *IDelos* 1565 = Kotsidu 2000, 458, no. *338 (statue base), as well as, maybe, *IDelos* 1568 (from the Asklepieion: McGing 1986, 92, n. 20).
- 10 *IDelos* 1567 = Kotsidu 2000, 459-460, no. *340 (original Delian provenance hypothetical).
- 11 McGing 1986, 92, n. 21 & 23.
- 12 Kotsidu 2000, 399, no. 281.
- 13 Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.159.
- 14 Erciyas 2006, 154-155.
- 15 Preferred places were the area of the sanctuary of Apollon, the *dromos* between South-Stoa and the Stoa of Philippos, but also the area between Dodekatheon and the Agora of Theophrastos, see Kotsidu 2000, 519-520.
- 16 Donations: Ameling, Bringmann & Schmidt-Dounas 1995, no. 35 (Pharnakes I); nos. 190 and 316 (both Mithridates V); honours: Kotsidu 2000, nos. 43 and 147 (golden wreaths and statues of Pharnakes I and his wife Nysa).
- 17 This might also have been the case with the statues of Mithridates VI presented in Rome during the triumphs of Pompeius (statue made of silver; Plin. *HN* 33.151; of gold: App. *Mith.* 116) and Lucullus (gilded bronze statue; Plut. *Luc.* 37).
- 18 On the portraiture of Mithridates in general, see e.g. Smith 1988, 99-100 & 121-124, and Højte in this volume.
- 19 Smith 1988, 123, pls. 51, 52.1-2; Erciyas 2006, 148; McGing 1986, 99-101; see Højte in the following chapter (indicating a possible earlier date).
- 20 McGing 1986, 99-101; Smith 1988, 99-100; Erciyas 2006, 151 & 154-158.
- 21 Smith 1988, pls. 52.3-4 (Ostia); pls. 53.1-2 (Athens).
- 22 Smith 1988, pls. 54.6-7 ("Inopos-head"); pls. 55.1-3 (NM 429, from the sanctuary of Apollon) and 55.5-7 (Horned King, from the Dodekatheon).
- 23 Smith 1988, pls. 54.1-3 (Odessa); pls. 54.4-5 (Pantikapaion).
- 24 Krug 1969, 189-195.
- 25 Demonstrated in particular by Kleiner 1953.
- 26 Erciyas 2006, 158 (possibly successors, imitating the portrait of Mithridates).
- 27 Krahmer 1925, 202-203; Kleiner 1953, 88; Erciyas 2006, 151-154.
- 28 McGing 1986, 100.
- 29 Hintzen-Bohlen (1990, 145-156) and Fröhlich (1998, 262-264, no. 5 with older literature) argue against an identification with Mithridates, favouring instead a member of the Attalid dynasty.
- 30 For a comprehensive discussion on the Delian monument: Chapouthier 1935, 13-42; Risom 1948, 204-209; and recently Erciyas 2006, 135-146.
- 31 Chapouthier 1935, 79-92; Bruneau & Ducat 1965, 221-222, no. 93 (sanctuary of the Samothracian gods); 222-223, no. 94 (monument for Mithridates).
- 32 The cults of this sanctuary chosen for the monument – and therefore its erection there – have been associated with Mithridates and the Pontic Kingdom by Ballesteros-Pastor (2006), arguing for a specific significance of this location. Such an importance of the gods venerated in the Delian sanctuary in the Pontic Kingdom as well seems to contradict the study by Olshausen (1990, 1879) which mentions only isolated Pontic evidence concerning the Dioskouroi, and (1990, 1904), which points out the lack of numismatic and epigraphic evidence on a Pontic cult of the Kabeiroi (despite the place name Kabeira).

- 33 Although the main inscription on the architrave refers to the building as *naos*, it is not a religious building in the strict sense of the word. Neither the inscriptions nor the architecture of the building provide firm evidence for cultic worship of Mithridates, i.e. a ruler-cult. This is further supported by the lack of concrete traces of cultic activities (Erciyas 2006, 139). The term "*naos*" therefore refers mainly to the architectural appearance in a more general sense, not the specific function of the building as place for the cultic worship of Mithridates.
- 34 Chapouthier 1935, figs. 36-39 & 43; Risom 1948, fig. 3 & pls. 1-4.
- 35 *IDelos* 1563; Chapouthier 1935, 38, fig. 49; Risom 1948, 206. The inscription also mentions his *arete* and his *eunoia* towards the Athenian people.
- 36 The connection of the well-known cuirassed statue in the Delos museum (no. A 4173; Marcadé 1969, pl. 75) with the inscribed statue base supposedly erected in the building mentioning Mithridates has been challenged by Marcadé (1969, 331) who objects that the cavity of the base and the partly preserved plinth of the statue do not correspond. In addition, he assigns a second fragmented cuirassed statue to the monument (Delos Museum A 4242; Marcade 1969, 331-333, pl. 75). The existence of an additional cuirassed statue from the same context and the lacking fit of the first statue with its supposed base eliminate the necessity to unite statue and inscribed base and have led to the suggestion that both sculptures do not portray Mithridates at all but rather high-ranking Pontic officers (even if the statue A 4173 is clearly over life-size): Marcadé 1969, 331; Stemmer 1978, 139, nr. 139; F. Queyrel, in Marcadé (ed.) 1996, 198, no. 89. But even if we leave the two fragmented statues unconsidered, the inscription of the statue base *IDelos* 1563 mentions the name of Mithridates in the accusative also used in the medaillon-inscriptions to identify the persons depicted. In analogy we should expect a statue of Mithridates in the context of the monument, even if the statue itself may be missing.
- 37 Chapouthier 1935, 39, fig. 51 (in contrast to *IDelos* 1563 without mentioning Mithridates).
- 38 Risom 1948, Abb. 2; Gross 1954, figs. 4-5; Erciyas (2006, 140) considers the mutilation and destruction of the portrait-heads as an act of "*damnatio memoriae*".
- 39 Interpreted as Roman cuirass, *paludamentum*, and toga (for Greeks and Parthians!) by Gross 1954, 110 & 112-113 and followed e.g. by McGing 1986, 99-91 and Strobel 1996, 148, n. 20. However, the costume of the persons depicted in the medallions as well as the military garb of the statues connected to the monument have also been identified – more probable in this context – as a late Hellenistic cuirass and Greek cloak: Vermeule 1959-1960, 32, no. 1; Marcadé 1969, 320-321; Stemmer 1978, 139, n. 472; Marcadé (ed.) 1996, 198; Fröhlich 1998, 213-214, no. 5.
- 40 *IDelos* 1569; Chapouthier 1935, 36. The proposal of Erciyas (2006, 142) that the pediment portrait shows Mithridates himself finds no support in the accompanying inscription.
- 41 Gaios: *IDelos* 1570; Chapouthier 1935, 32, no. 1. The son of Antipatros: *IDelos* 1571; Chapouthier 1935, 32, no. 2. Dorylaos: *IDelos* 1572; Chapouthier 1935, 32, no. 3.
- 42 Erciyas (2006, 142) argues for the Arsakid king himself, although the inscription mentions the king in the genitive case and the depicted person in the accusative, as is usual in the inscriptions on the monument.
- 43 Member of the Arsakid court: *IDelos* 1581; Chapouthier 1935, 33-34, no. 10. Papias: *IDelos* 1573; Chapouthier 1935, 34, no. 12.

- 44 Diophantos: *IDelos* 1574; Chapouthier 1935, 32, no. 4. Ariarathes: *IDelos* 1576; Chapouthier 1935, 33, no. 5. Antiochos: *IDelos* 1552; Chapouthier 1935, 33, no. 6. Asklepiodoros: Chapouthier 1935, 33, no. 7. Official of the Arsakid court: *IDelos* 1582; Chapouthier 1935, 33, no. 9.
- 45 Erciyas 2006, 142.
- 46 *IDelos* 1562; Chapouthier 1935, 34-35; Sanders & Catling 1990.
- 47 App. *Mith.* 10, 12, 14, 56; the Dikaios-inscription *IDelos* 2039 (94/93 BC) also mentions *demos athenaion* and the Roman people. For Mithridates' father, Mithridates V, as a friend of Rome: App. *Mith.* 10.
- 48 For instance by Erciyas 2006, 142-143.
- 49 Just. *Epit.* 38.5, 38.7 (speech of Mithridates); App. *Mith.* 112. It goes without saying that these claims – already enunciated in a similar way by Mithridates' predecessors – mainly had a legitimising and ennobling, i.e. ideological, function and were not meant to proclaim a historical truth, see e.g. McGing 1986, 13.
- 50 E.g. in Delphi the Daochos-monument or in Delos the monument of the *progonoi* of Antigonos Gonatas.
- 51 The literary sources mention various allies of Mithridates, whether real ones or just claimed ones: Parthians, Medes, Armenians, Thracians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Bastarnai, Iberians and even Seleukids and Ptolemies: Memnon, *FGrH* 343 F 1, 22.4 (even if they seem to have a slightly different understanding of the alleged alliance: *FGrH* 343 F 1, 29.6); App. *Mith.* 13, 15.
- 52 Strobel 1996, 187.
- 53 Oros. 6.4.6; Olshausen 1974, in particular the catalogue of names.

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Abbreviations

- IDelos A. Plassart, F. Durrbach et al. 1926-1972. *Inscriptions de Délos* 1-7. Paris.
- IOSPE B. Latyshev 1885-1916. *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*. Petropolis (reprint Hildesheim 1965).

Portraits and Statues of Mithridates VI

Jakob Munk Højte

The problems inherent to discussing the portraits of Mithridates VI have recently been highlighted by two novel suggestions for identifications. The first concerns the so-called “Schwarzenberg Alexander” now in the München Glyptotek (Fig. 1). Erkingen von Schwarzenberg first published the portrait belonging to his private collection as a portrait of Alexander the Great by



*Fig. 1. So-called
“Schwarzenberger
Alexander” in München
Glyptotek (author’s photo).*



Figs. 2a-b. Tetradrachms of Mithridates VI. a) early portrait type before 85 BC. b) later portrait type after 87 BC.

Lysippos in 1967.¹ Several years later it was sold to the München Glyptotek, which lacked an Alexander in its extensive collection of portraits. The purchaser of course never questioned the identification. Other scholars have accepted it cautiously. Most objections raised have centred on its date and Lysippean origin. Lately, however, Lorenz has also questioned whether it portrays Alexander at all.² The shape of the head is different from the other known portrait types of Alexander, as is the rendering of the hair on the sides and in the back. The only structural resemblance to the portraits of Alexander is in fact the *anastole*. But several other Hellenistic kings employed this particular feature in hopes of emphasizing their relation to their great predecessor, among these Mithridates VI in particular. Indeed, comparison with the coin portraits of Mithridates (Fig. 2a-b) shows a certain resemblance – particularly with regard to the lower part of the face. The implication of this suggestion, if correct, is that Mithridates went much further in his identification with Alexander than previously assumed.

The other example is Bernard Andreae's suggestion in two articles that the small boy on the arm of a statue of Herakles in the Vatican in fact depicts Mithridates VI as the young Telephos (Fig. 3).³ The argument is that Mithridates VI resided in Pergamon in 88-85 BC; Telephos was the mythical king of Pergamon, so a connection between Telephos and Mithridates would legitimize his rule. Furthermore, Telephos was the son of Herakles. The Macedonian kings claimed descent from Herakles. Mithridates traced his lineage on his mother's side to Alexander, and both the literary sources and numismatic evidence show that Mithridates imitated his famous forefather, and in all likelihood also let himself be portrayed in the guise of Herakles. To add to the attractiveness of the theory, Andreae relates that Telephos was raised by a hind in one version of the myth. This identification with Telephos should suppos-

Fig. 3. Statue of Herakles in the Vatican Museum.

edly also explain the change of the reverse motif of the Mithridatic tetradrachms from Pegasos to a grazing hind (Fig. 4a-b). Several objections can be raised to this interpretation. For one thing, the grazing hind appears already on the reverse of the small series of Mithridatic drachms struck in 95 BC and on slightly later staters.⁴ This was seven years before Mithridates came to Pergamon. Secondly, the version of the myth where a hind acts as the foster mother does not seem to have been the favoured one in Pergamon. On the Telephos Frieze on the Great Altar, Telephos is fed by a lioness.

According to Andreae, the statue also conveyed an even more subtle message, as the learned spectator immediately would recall the Eirene and Pluto by Kephisodotos and thus be reminded of the speech of Mithridates to his troops transmitted to us by Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus,⁵ where he expresses his peaceful intentions towards Rome.

In the end, however, the argument rests on similarities in the rendering of the hair of the child and the hair of Mithridates VI on the early silver coinage. Andreae believes this similarity was so obvious that Sulla or more likely Pompeius took the statue as war booty, paraded it in triumph and finally had it installed in his theatre on the Mars Field. That is why the statue could be found on Campo dei Fiori in 1507.

As these two examples show, the field for identifying and interpreting portraits of Mithridates VI is wide open.⁶ This is not a problem particular to Mithridates but to all Hellenistic ruler portraits in general. One only has to recall the Terme Ruler in Rome that, at various times, has been identified as a large share of the potentates in the Hellenistic period, although to my knowledge never as Mithridates VI. At the root of the problem lies the lack of a stringent iconography in any other media than the coinage. Perhaps it





Figs. 4a-b. Tetradrachms of Mithridates VI. a) early type with pegasos (SNGCop 18, 234). b) later type with grazing hind (SNGCop 18, 233).

never existed – perhaps the preserved material is simply too small to reveal it.⁷

On this background it is reasonable to raise the question whether it is at all possible to establish a series of reasonably certain portraits of Mithridates VI besides the coin portraits.

Coin portraits

The tetradrachms of Mithridates VI basically show two different portrait types conveniently called “realistic” and “idealised” (Fig. 2a-b). Apart from a very brief overlap, the two types supersede each other in the Pontic mint in mid 85 BC after the defeat of Mithridates in the First Mithridatic War. However, the tetradrachms struck at Athens and in Pergamon already feature the new portrait from 87 BC.⁸

The first portrait struck from about 106 BC shows the king in his thirties in a veristic style.⁹ Compared to his distinctly Iranian-looking predecessors, the profile of Mithridates is more in accordance with royal Greek iconography of the period, without showing any of the peculiarities, like enlargement of the eyes or fluffiness of the face, that occasionally occur among other royal portraits. The hair is somewhat longer than usual and the coins often show heavy sideburns. These are, however, also found on contemporary coins of Antiochos IX. The nose is fairly short and he has a large upper lip. The hair projects in star like strands from a part at the back of the head and falls loosely to the back under the diadem.

Whereas the obverse cannot be said to carry any specific ideological references apart perhaps from its Greekness, the choice of Pegasos for the reverse motif clearly refers to the dual heritage of Mithridates, who claimed to descend from both Dareios and Alexander the Great (App. *Mith.* 112; Just. *Epit.* 38.7.1).

The myth of Pegasus was a perfectly Greek legend, which however had connections to Perseus, the mythical ancestor of the Persians. After Perseus had killed Gorgo, Pegasus flew out of the beheaded monster. Similar references to Perseus are found on many of the Pontic bronze coins.¹⁰ The eight-pointed star and moon sickle seen above the head of Pegasus is the emblem either of the land of Pontos or the Pontic royal house, and it appears on all silver and gold coins.¹¹

The later portrait type shows Mithridates younger and the process of rejuvenation progress over time. The features are softer and more idealised. The biggest difference lies in the treatment of the hair, which flows to the back in thin flame-like threads as if Mithridates is moving at great speed. Over the forehead the hair rises in clear imitation of the famous *anastole* of Alexander. Such clear imitations of Alexander are not common among Hellenistic royal portraits, but a similar attempt by the Seleukid king Diodotos half a century earlier had practically the same outcome.¹² Interestingly, neither Diodotos nor Mithridates chose to imitate the most common coin portraits of Alexander as Herakles.

The message implied by the portrait is to my mind straightforward. Mithridates was the new Alexander that had liberated or would liberate the Greeks from their oppressors, this time not the Persians but the Romans. The audience for this propaganda was first and foremost mercenaries fighting in his army and his allies among the Greek cities. Callataÿ has convincingly shown that a correlation exists between the minting of silver coinage and activities of war.¹³ The fact that this portrait type devised during his campaigns in western Asia Minor and in Greece and the new reverse motif became the standard type in the Pontic mint upon his return – and for the rest of his reign – shows, I think, that Mithridates pursued this line in his foreign policy till the very end.

Apart from the imitation of Alexander we know that from early on Mithridates used Dionysos extensively in his propaganda by taking the name Neos Dionysos.¹⁴ Several of the Pontic bronze coins carry Dionysic themes,¹⁵ but this element does not figure prominently on the silver coins. His epithet Dionysos used in inscriptions surprisingly never occurs on the coinage, but perhaps a reflection of Dionysos was intended with the new portrait type. The same could be true for the ivy wreath encircling the reverse motive on coins struck after 95 BC.

Portraits of Mithridates have been suggested on other coin issues as well. Coins imitating the tetradrachms of Alexander struck in Messembria and Odessos under Mithridates have been suggested to carry his portrait in the guise of Herakles, but in a large study of the coinage



Fig. 5. Pontic anonymous obol with possible portrait features of Mithridates VI.

the similarities have been shown to be only superficial and coincidental.¹⁶ I think the same can be said for the identification of the young man in a felt or leather cap on the anonymous Pontic obols as Mithridates (Fig. 5). The process at work in these instances seems to be that more or less portrait-like features sometimes blend into images of the gods and heroes. The artists may not have intended this consciously but simply let themselves influence by the current royal portrait. This ubiquity of the images was probably not unwelcome by the ruler, but to call them royal portraits is, I think, a misunderstanding.

Sculpted portraits

Among the sculpted portraits one stands out in particular: the marble portrait with lion *exuviae* in Paris (Fig. 6a-b).¹⁷ In many respects this portrait resembles the first portrait type. The profiles are nearly congruent: both have heavy brows and a pronounced chin, and the same long sideburns. The only objection one could raise is that if it wasn't for the identification with Mithridates we might have guessed the portrait to be somewhat earlier than Mithridates. While no one has seriously questioned the identification of the Louvre portrait, there is more reason to be cautious about the many other Herakles statues and statuettes that have followed in its slipstream.



Figs. 6a-b. Mithridates VI in lion *exuviae*. Louvre, MA 2321 (author's photo).

- Gilded Herakles statue found at Hadrian's Wall, identified as Mithridates because of the Eastern dress.¹⁸
- Bronze statuette in Napoli.¹⁹
- Fragmentary terracotta head with lion *exuviae* found in Sinope (Fig. 7). This could possibly be a portrait of Mithridates, but the state of preservation makes certain identification difficult.²⁰
- Bronze statuette found in Myschako in south Russia.²¹

The most discussed piece in this group of possible portraits of Mithridates is the Herakles from the so-called Prometheus group found in the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon (Fig. 8), which was immediately identified as Mithridates VI when found in 1925.²² Stylistically, however, the group has many technical affinities with earlier Pergamene sculpture such as the Telephos frieze and the small Pergamene *anathema*, and Hintzen-Bohlen suggested in 1990 that Herakles instead represents Eumenes II.²³ One definite attraction for identifying Mithridates with Herakles is that he was master of Kolchis and the Caucasus, where Herakles according to myth had freed Prometheus.

We are on safer ground with two portraits from the northern Black Sea region. One found in Pantikapaion (Fig. 9), definitely shows a royal figure with a sharply turned head.²⁴ Unfortunately, the whole upper part of the head is lost, and we cannot tell how the hair once was shaped. The other portrait in



Fig. 7. Terracotta head in lion *exuviae* found in Sinope (after Akurgal & Budde 1956).



Fig. 8. Herakles with portrait features from the Prometheus group from Pergamon, now in Berlin (author's photo).



Fig. 9. Portrait from Pantikapaion, now in St. Peterburg (author's photo).

Odessa Museum (Fig. 10), without provenience but most probably from the area, may have belonged to an acrolithic statue.²⁵ It has the same dramatic turn as the Pantikapaion head and a pronounced Alexander-like treatment of the hair that is reminiscent of the second portrait type. The same scheme is found in royal portraits found in Athens (Fig. 11) and in Ostia (Fig. 12).²⁶ All four heads belong to the late second to early first century BC and can be said to have a very general resemblance to the coin portraits of Mithridates without reproducing them exactly. The presence of two of them within the Pontic sphere of influence makes it probable that they portray Mithridates or alternatively one of his sons. The head in Athens is most often associated with Ariarathes IX, but the portraits on his coins are nearly impossible to distinguish from those of his father.²⁷

Statue bases found on Delos (see below) reveal that Mithridates had several portrait statues on the island. Although we would expect these to have been removed after the violent destruction by the Mithridatic troops in 88 BC, this may not have been the case. As Cicero relates in his speech against Verres, the Rhodians did not remove the conspicuously placed statue of Mithridates after his siege of the city (Cic. *Verr.* 2.65). No less than three portrait heads from Delos are commonly referred to as Mithridates. The first, a rather poorly preserved head made for insertion into a statue found in the sanctuary of Apollon has

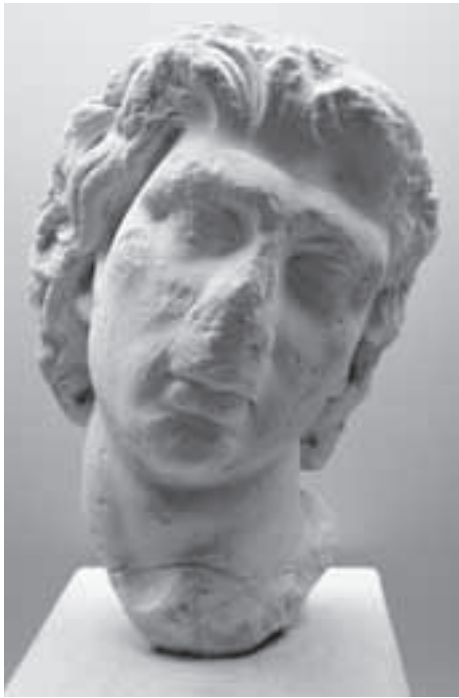


Fig. 10. Portrait in Odessa Museum (author's photo).



Fig. 11. Portrait in the National Museum in Athens, NM 3556 (author's photo).

many of the characteristics of the head in Ostia.²⁸ The second, the so-called Inopus head, named after its finding place, seems to be a hybrid between Alexander and another king.²⁹ The proximity to the Kabeirion where portraits of Mithridates definitely were erected makes him a likely but far from certain candidate. The third portrait, the so-called horned king,³⁰ I find very difficult



Fig. 12. Portrait from Ostia, now in Frascati (after Calza 1964, pl. 7).



Fig. 13. Portrait found on the acropolis in Pantikapaion. Kerch Lapidarium, inv. no. 1900 (author's photo).

to accept on account of the goat's horns. A few Argead kings, in particular Antigonos Gonatas, seem to have identified themselves with Pan, but there is no evidence to support the idea that Mithridates should have done the same.

To make the circle of previously identified portraits complete, I will mention Krug's identification of a second-century AD bust of Helios,³¹ which seems rather farfetched.

To the more probable portrait identifications can now be added a miniature head found in 1992 in Pantikapaion in an excavation of a small temple on the acropolis (Fig. 13).³² The head was found by the *anta*, but it is not entirely clear what its relation to the temple was. Even for a miniature portrait the facial features are somewhat summarily executed, but it seems to belong to the primary group of portraits of Mithridates; in particular, the Odessa ruler and the Ostia head show affinities. Although an arm was found with the head, we have very little idea about what sort of statue they belonged to. Drillings indicate that the statue was repaired or pieced together from different parts.



Fig. 14. Obol of Pantikapaion with Men with the Pontic symbol, crescent and six-rayed star.

There is furthermore a drilled hole on top of the head at the intersection of two grooves, and the back of the head was obviously not meant to have been visible. The portrait therefore carried some sort of headdress. One solution could be a Phrygian cap adorned with stars, like the one we see on a bronze portrait of Queen Dynamis in the State Hermitage Museum³³ and on coins struck in Pantikapaion with a figure of Men (Fig. 14).³⁴ The latter interestingly carries the Pontic symbol star and crescent to denote its origin. Other reconstructions for the headdress are of course also possible.

In answer to the question of whether it is possible to identify portraits of Mithridates VI, there is a small group of fairly certain portraits: the head with lion *exuviae* in Paris, the three heads from the northern Black Sea area, the Athens and Ostia heads, and possibly the two Delos heads. Beyond that, I think we move into the area of speculation, where we should be very cautious about drawing too far-reaching conclusions. The risk of circular argumentation is always near, as in the identification of the statues with lion *exuviae*.

Other sources for portraits of Mithridates VI

Literary sources³⁵

Statue in Rhodos

- Cic. Verr. 2.65: ..., though they hated that king as no other people did, laid no hand upon the statue of him, that stood in the most frequented part of their city, not even when that city was in actual danger. It might perhaps seem hardly fitting, when they were eager for the overthrow of the man himself, to preserve the image and likeness of him. But I found, when I was among them, that they have an inherited sense of the sanctity, as it were, of such things; and they argued thus,

that with the statue they had thought of the time when it was set up; with the man, of the time when he was fighting them and was their enemy.

Images in Lucullus' triumph

- Plut. *Luc.* 37: *A hundred and ten bronze-beaked ships of war were also carried along, a golden statue of Mithridates himself, six feet in height, a wonderful shield ...*

Images in Pompeius' triumph

- Plin. *HN* 33.11.54: *The view is held that the extension of the use of silver to statues was made in the case of statues of his late lamented Majesty Augustus, owing to the sycophancy of the period, but this is erroneous. We find that previously a silver statue of Pharnaces the First, King of Pontos, was carried in the triumphal procession of Pompey the Great, as well as one of Mithridates Eupator, and also chariots of gold and silver were used.*
- App. *Mith.* 116: *In the triumphal procession were two-horse-carriages and litters laden with gold or with other ornaments of various kinds, also the couch of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the throne and sceptre of Mithridates himself, and his image, eight cubits high, made of solid gold, and 75,100,000 drachmas of silver coin ...*
- App. *Mith.* 117: *There were carried in the procession images of those who were not present, of Tigranes and Mithridates, representing them as fighting, as vanquished, and as fleeing. Even the besieging of Mithridates and his silent flight by night were represented. Finally it was shown how he died, and the daughters who chose to perish with him were pictured also, and there were figures of the sons and daughters who died before him, and images of the barbarian gods decked out in the fashion of their countries.*

Ring of Aristion/Athenion

- Ath. 212d (Poseidonios of Apameia *FGrH* 3.266): *...; the house was decorated with couches elaborately spread, with paintings and statues and display of silver vessels. From it he emerged trailing a white riding-cloak, his finger encircled with a ring of gold with the portrait of Mithridates upon it; ...*

Epigraphic sources

Delos

- *IDelos* 1560. Circular statue base? (genitive case) erected by Dionysios from Athens for Mithridates and his younger brother Mithridates Chrestos.
- *IDelos* 1563. Statue base erected by Helianax in 102-101 BC in the monument for Mithridates on Mt. Kynthos. A headless statue possibly belonging to this base was found in the vicinity (see below).

- *IDelos* 1565. Statue base? (genitive case). Monument described by Cyriacus of Ancona.
- *IDelos* 1568. Statue base found in the Asklepieion.

Nymphaion

- *SEG* 37, 668. Statue base.

Possible headless statues of Mithridates

- Delos, Monument for Mithridates erected by the priest Helianax from Athens on Mt. Kynthos in 102-101 BC. Cuirassed statue with paludamentum (Fig. 15) that possibly belongs to the base mentioned above (*IDelos* 1563).³⁶ This portrait statue of Mithridates probably stood in the cella. Another portrait may have been inserted in the medallion set in the pediment.³⁷
- Melos. A colossal statue of a draped figure possibly Dionysos has been suggested to have carried a portrait of Mithridates VI, but no significant evidence has been brought forward to support the proposal.³⁸

Cameos and intaglios

Portraits on cameos and intaglios constitute a particular problem in relation to the portraits of Mithridates. First of all, no one has yet tried to compile this diffuse material. Secondly, there is generally a surprisingly low correlation between Hellenistic royal portraits on coins and on gems.³⁹ Gems belonged in the context of court art and, contrary to the public images, did not need to



Fig. 15. Delos, Sanctuary of the Kabeiroi. Base for Mithridates VI and headless statue shortly after the excavation.



Fig. 16. Gem in the British Museum with portrait comparable to the portraits on the later tetradrachms (after Walters 1926, no. 1228).

be easily recognizable. It is therefore extremely difficult to define what constitutes portraits and what constitutes images of divinities. Take, for example, Vollenweider's catalogue of the gems in Paris. Here no less than eight gems are said to carry representations of Mithridates, only one of which bears any resemblance to the coin portraits. The others depict children or divinities, particularly Dionysos.⁴⁰ Obviously there are also gems that have significance for the iconography of Mithridates. Examples include a gem from Pantikapaion,⁴¹ a layered sardonyx,⁴² a glass paste⁴³ all in St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, a gem in Paris,⁴⁴ and finally a gem in the British Museum, which is clearly dependent on the second portrait type of Mithridates (Fig. 16).⁴⁵

Much more work needs to be done with this material before their value for the iconography of Mithridates can be accessed properly.

Mithridates seem to have been a collector of gems himself. His collection ended up in Rome among the spoils of war taken by Pompeius. Pliny was, however, not too impressed by (the remains of) it (*HN* 37.11).

Notes

- 1 Schwarzenberg 1967, 59-118.
- 2 Lorenz 2001, 65-79.
- 3 Andreae 1994-1995, 111-122; 1997, 395-416.
- 4 Callataÿ 1997, 28.
- 5 Just. *Epit.* 38.4-7.
- 6 For previous work on the iconography of Mithridates, see Kleiner 1952, 73-95, Neverov 1971, 86-95, and Smith 1988, 99-100.
- 7 For the problem of inconsistent iconographies among Hellenistic ruler portraits, see Smith 1988, 27-31.
- 8 Callataÿ 1997, 23-24, 43.
- 9 Callataÿ 1997, 33-36; Pfeiler 1968, 75-80.
- 10 Perseus/pilei, Perseus/Pegasos, Athena/Perseus, Perseus/harpa. See Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 169-192; Callataÿ 2005, 119-136; Callataÿ 2007, 271-308.
- 11 For a discussion of the emblem, see Summerer 1995, 305-314.
- 12 Fleischer 2002, 68-70.
- 13 Callataÿ 1997, 52.
- 14 The earliest dated instance is the inscription on the monument of Helianax (*IDelos*, 1562), but the identification with Dionysos may be significantly earlier than this. However, the epithet is not used in the decree for Diophantos (*IOSPE* I², 352) from 114 BC or shortly thereafter.
- 15 Dionysos/cista mystica, panther/cista mystica, Dionysos/thyrsos. See Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 169-192; Callataÿ 2005, 119-136; Callataÿ 2007, 271-308.

- 16 Callataÿ 1997, 111. Note, however, McGing (2000, 375-382) for the opposite view.
- 17 First published as Mithridates VI by Winter (1894, 245-248).
- 18 Oikonomides 1962, 13-15.
- 19 Hafner 1954, 45-47.
- 20 Akurgal & Budde 1956, Taf. XIV; Summerer 1999, 131-132.
- 21 Trejster, Dmitriev & Malyžev 1998, 160-173; Treister, Dmitriev & Malyshev 1999, 487-507.
- 22 Krahmer 1925, 183-205.
- 23 Hintzen-Bohlen 1990, 145-156.
- 24 Nemirov 1972, 110-118.
- 25 Nemirov 1972, 110-118.
- 26 Calza 1964, 21, no. 12, pl. 7. The portrait from Ostia is now in Frascati.
- 27 Athens NM 3556. Schrader 1896, 281-283; Fleischer 2002, 69.
- 28 Athens NM 429. Michalowski 1932, 5-8.
- 29 Paris Louvre MA 855.
- 30 Delos Museum A 4184. Will 1955, 172-176 & pl. 15, who identified the portrait as Demetrios Poliorketes.
- 31 Krug 1969, 189-195.
- 32 Zin'ko (ed.) 2004, 185, no. 119 (head) and possibly p. 218, no. 151 (arm).
- 33 State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. ПАМ 1726; Vostchinina 1974, 194-196, no. 80.
- 34 Anochin 1986, 145, no. 201.
- 35 The literary sources for the portrait of Mithridates were first collected by Reinach 1895, 283.
- 36 Delos Museum no. A 4173. Marcadé (1969) argues against this identification on the basis of the poor joining of the plinth and the cutting in the base.
- 37 Chapouthier 1935, 35-36. Although the reconstruction proposed, somewhat surprisingly, rather points to an associate of Mithridates VI from Amisos.
- 38 Triante 1998, 167-175.
- 39 Smith 1988, 12.
- 40 Vollenweider 1995, 187-201, nos. 207, 208, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221. See also Vollenweider 1988, 266-268.
- 41 Nemirov 1968, 235-238; 1973, 41-45.
- 42 Furtwängler 1900, 158, pl. 32, no. 17. Layered sardonyx in St. Peterburg, State Eremitage Museum.
- 43 Neverov 1969, 172-175.
- 44 Vollenweider 1995, 198, no. 218.
- 45 Walters 1926, no. 1228. Transparent yellowish-green paste.

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Abbreviations

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Mithridates VI Eupator and Iran

Marek Jan Olbrycht

Mithridates Eupator's Black Sea Empire – some preliminaries

The defeat of Antiochos III and the subjugation of western Asia Minor upon the death of Attalos III demonstrated the seemingly absolute supremacy of Rome over the kingdoms of western Asia in the 2nd century BC.¹ The humiliation suffered by the Seleukid king Antiochos IV in Egypt in 168 BC known as the “day of Eleusis”, exhibits the dominant position of Rome in her relations to the kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean.² The main Roman ally in Anatolia, Eumenes of Pergamon, suffered a similar humiliation when he tried to appeal in Rome for aid against the Galatians (winter 167/166 BC).³ At the same time, another Anatolian ruler, Prusias II of Bithynia visited Rome in the dress of a freedman, and offered fawning servility to the Roman senate.⁴ With this as background, the vigorous, partially defiant and aggressive actions of Mithridates VI Eupator (ca. 120-63 BC) directed against Rome are most surprising.⁵ Eupator strove for a fundamental strengthening of his kingdom. Having gained control of almost the entire circuit of the Black Sea including the Bosporan Kingdom, Eupator focused on Anatolia. The rising power of Pontos inevitably led to a conflict of interests with Rome, which aspired to an absolute hegemony in Asia Minor.

Most of the political issues concerning Eupator's policy seem to be a well-travelled ground – much scholarly literature exists on Pontos and Roman involvement in Anatolia. But if scholarly perspectives are limited to the interplay between Pontos and Rome, no coherent reconstruction of the period can be achieved. There was another power in western Asia at that time which must be taken properly into account – the Arsakid Parthian Empire. Regrettably, in the scholarly literature on Eupator's reign, Parthia has received only peripheral and scattered treatment so far. Well known are the increasing Parthian-Roman tensions when Lucullus and Pompeius, fighting Pontos and Armenia, approached the Parthian borders at the end of the 70's and in the 60's of the 1st century BC. At this time Eupator tried in vain to drum up the active support of the Parthians against Rome. In scholarship, Pontic-Parthian relations of that period, when Parthian Iran had just begun to recover from the deep crisis of the 70's and remained rather inactive in its western policy, have often been extrapolated to the earlier decades of Eupator's rule without regard to the evidence. However, some sources point to the existence of vivid connections between Eupator and the Arsakid Empire under Mithridates II

(123-87 BC), one of the greatest Parthian kings. Parthian policies of this period saw the very first contacts of the Arsakid state with Rome. The position of Armenia, which remained a Parthian vassal for a long time, was also essential. There is, however, a tendency in scholarship to treat individual events in the relations between Arsakid Iran, Armenia and Pontos as unconnected, with no attempt to discover the deeper links between them. Any active policy towards Rome by Eupator would have been impossible if he had not had his eastern frontier bordering the Parthian sphere of influence, including Armenia, firmly secured. Generally, to demonstrate a valid picture of Eupator's policies, a balanced assessment of Pontos' allies in Asia, especially the Arsakid Empire, and Armenia under Tigranes must be achieved.⁶ The focus of this study is on the relations between Mithridates Eupator, Tigranes of Armenia, and Parthia under Mithridates II the Great and his descendants, especially in the 90's and 80's of the 1st century BC.

According to Strabon, the Kingdom of Pontos and its neighbour to the south, Kappadokia, developed from the two Kappadokian satrapies of the Persian Empire.⁷ In both areas, a strong Iranian influence is discernible in the culture of the Hellenistic period.⁸ Mithridates Eupator appealed to Iranian traditions in many ways, exhibiting in particular the Achaemenid roots of his royal family.⁹ These cultural and religious connections demand a separate treatment.

Mithridates Eupator's first greater military operations were in countries around the eastern and northern shores of the Black Sea.¹⁰ He then turned his attention to the Anatolian kingdoms.¹¹ Military operations against Paphlagonia and Galatia took place. The next step was an invasion of Kappadokia, a country which was to play a special role in the development of Eupator's empire.¹² The Pontic Kingdom was not able to achieve the status of a local superpower without subjugating Kappadokia, which formed a major state in eastern Anatolia. The conflict over Kappadokia was multilateral for king Nikomedes of Bithynia, a former ally of Eupator, became involved in it. Moreover, Rome had by then for nearly a century a special relationship with Kappadokia.

Parthia under Mithridates II the Great as the dominant power in western Asia

The Arsakid Empire became in the second half of the 2nd century BC a great state with power over a number of countries in Asia.¹³ The Parthians drove the Seleukids out of their satrapies east of the Euphrates.¹⁴ Under Mithridates II (123-87 BC),¹⁵ Parthia remained the paramount power in the area, with possessions stretching from Transcaucasia (including Armenia) to central Asia and the borders of India. Mithridates II conducted many wars against his neighbours, especially against the nomads of central Asia, and brought many new nationalities into the Parthian Empire.¹⁶ Mithridates succeeded in finally subjugating Charakene on the Persian Gulf.¹⁷ Moreover, he came into contact with the powerful Chinese emperor Wudi.¹⁸

An important step in the development of the Arsakid royal ideology was the emergence of the title "King of Kings" which followed Mithridates II's military and diplomatic exploits. The new title was used on coins and in inscriptions (in Greek ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ) as well as in written Babylonian records (*šar šarrāni*).¹⁹ It was a peculiar breakthrough in royal ideology in Parthia and in the entire East. Mithridates II made a stronger stand than his predecessors as heir and restorer of Achaemenid tradition.²⁰ Simultaneously, the *tiara* became the customary Arsakid headgear on coins.²¹ It should be stressed that other changes were also introduced in Parthian coinage under Mithridates II.²² These innovations need to be seen as interrelated. Thus Mithridates II proved to be a successful and talented ruler as well as a military commander who formulated a long-term strategic plan for Arsakid policy.

Parthian power under Mithridates II shifted towards Transcaucasia. In that region, it was Armenia, which played a special role in Arsakid policy. Armenia's strategic position between Anatolia and the steppes north of the Caucasus and Iran and its military and economic potential, were recognized by Mithridates II. That is why the Arsakids made the control of Armenia one of the fundamental targets in their policy towards Rome up to the end of the dynasty.²³ Mithridates II subjugated Armenia early in his reign around 120 BC. The defeated king Artavasdes delivered his son Tigranes as hostage to the Arsakids.²⁴

Parthian policy was also deliberately pursued in the direction of Syria. Claims to Syria were first made in Parthia directly after the Arsakid victory over Antiochos VII Sidetes in 129 BC.²⁵ A clear manifestation of the growing Parthian interest for Syria was the annexation of Dura Europos, a Seleukid centre on the Euphrates (in 114/113 BC).²⁶ At this time the Seleukids were weak and involved in never-ending internal conflicts and struggles for power in Syria against the Jews, Nabataeans, the Greek cities in Syria and Phoenicia and various local rulers. The Parthians intervened in Syrian quarrels in 88/87 BC, having supported the Seleukid ruler Philippos against his brother Demetrios. The latter was captured and sent to the Arsakid king who kept him in honourable captivity until he died a natural death.²⁷ Following this victory the Parthian nominee Philippos was established in Antiochia and ruled there for several years up to 84/83 BC, fighting against his petty rivals.²⁸

Parthian strategic planning under Mithridates II included Kommagene, a country between Syria, Kilikia, Kappadokia and the Euphrates river which had been a Seleukid possession.²⁹ Kommagene became independent in about 163-162 BC when the reign of Ptolemaios, a Seleukid governor who proclaimed himself king, began.³⁰ Under Samos (ca. 130-100 BC), Mithridates I Kallinikos (ca. 100-70 BC) and Antiochos I Theos (ca. 70-36 BC) the kingdom tried to preserve its autonomy despite pressure from its major neighbours. Kommagenian rulers attempted to maintain friendly political relations with the Seleukids. Thus, Mithridates I Kallinikos married Laodike Thea, daughter of the Seleukid king Antiochos VIII Grypos, and mother of Antiochos I of

Kommagene (ca. 96 BC). In making this marriage, the Seleukid king accepted the independence of Kommagene.³¹ The small kingdom controlled the strategic Euphrates crossings from Mesopotamia to northern Syria and Anatolia and was thus the favoured invasion route for Iranian armies moving west.³² The strategic merits of Kommagene did not escape Parthian attention as Arsakid activities in that country are well attested from the middle of the 1st century BC.³³ In all likelihood, the close political links between Parthia and Kommagene were established several decades earlier under Mithridates II the Great. But the evidence for this question requires re-examination.

Josephus offers an intriguing account of some Parthian activities in the regions to the west of the Euphrates.³⁴ According to his narrative, a queen named Laodike summoned the Seleukid king Antiochos Eusebes (ca. 95-92 BC) to her assistance,³⁵ but he was killed in battle with the Parthians.³⁶ There are other sources concerning Eusebes' career, which however contain contradicting data. Eusebios maintained that Antiochos X Eusebes was beaten by Philippos and fled to the Parthians, later returning to regain his kingdom from Pompeius.³⁷ According to Appianos, Eusebes was expelled from his realm by Tigranes.³⁸ Apparently both puzzling accounts, assigning Eusebes a very long life, result from a confusion of father (Antiochos X Eusebes) and son (Antiochos XIII Asiaticus) caused by their homonymy.³⁹ Generally, the account of Josephus on Antiochos X is the most reliable.⁴⁰ Antiochos X's death may be dated approximately to 92 BC.⁴¹

The most essential question concerning the passage by Josephus analysed above is the identity of Laodike. Apparently, she ruled a kingdom, which was invaded by the Parthians. Josephus' account implies that her country was located somewhere on the borders of both Parthia and Syria, probably on the Euphrates. Unfortunately, the phrase mentioning the nation ruled by Laodike is corrupted and the manuscripts transmit different versions. B. Niese's edition offers the form Σαμηνῶν, attested in one of the codices (Codex Palatinus), but other codices give different forms including Γαλήνῶν.⁴² A phonetical analogy for the form Σαμηνῶν is to be found in the term Σαμηνῶι in Stephanos of Byzantion (s.v.), who describes them as an "Arabian nomadic people".⁴³ Unfortunately, they are otherwise unattested. Some scholars maintain that the term Σαμηνῶι denotes the inhabitants of the Kommagenian city Samosata (named after Samos) and identify Laodike attested in Josephus with the Kommagenian queen of Seleukid stock Laodike Thea.⁴⁴ Regardless of the textual reconstruction of Josephus' account, the identification of Laodike seems highly probable.⁴⁵ Antiochos X rushed to Laodike's aid but was beaten and killed by the Parthians.⁴⁶ The conclusion is inevitable that in about 92 BC, the Parthians attacked Kommagene, subjugated it and killed the Seleukid ruler Antiochos, who was trying to help his relative Laodike. In other words, Parthian troops operated to the west of the Euphrates.

Kilikia is another territory to the west of the Euphrates, which saw Parthian activities in the 90's BC. Strabon maintains that the Parthians became

masters of Kilikia before the Armenians.⁴⁷ Some scholars link this evidence with Parthian actions in Syria in 88/87 BC.⁴⁸ But a more accurate date would be the period at the end of the 90's,⁴⁹ when the struggles between Rome, Pontos and Parthian dominated Armenia escalated. The operation in Kilikia may conceivably have been coordinated with the Parthian engagement in Kommagene and Parthian support for Tigranes' raids into Kappadokia in about 92 BC.

As a whole, the King of Kings, Mithridates II of Parthia, conducted an imperialistic policy in western Asia. Northern Mesopotamia and Dura Europos were incorporated into Parthia. To the west of the Euphrates, the Parthians were content with the establishment of protectorates. In many cases local vassal rulers (such as Philippos in northern Syria) were able to retain their thrones under Parthian suzerainty. Northern Syria and Kommagene remained for a time under Parthian control. Parthian military operations reached even to Kilikia. To the northwest of Kommagene and Kilikia, Kappadokia was of essential significance for any effective control of eastern and central Anatolia.

We have no proof that Rome appreciated the significance of Parthian advances in western Asia under Mithridates II. Apparently, Parthia received only intermittent attention from Rome. Strabon highlights the Roman neglect of the Parthian factor at this time and stresses "the Romans were not concerning themselves as yet so much about the peoples outside the Taurus; but they sent Scipio Aemilianus, and again certain others, to inspect the tribes and the cities".⁵⁰

It is relevant to this study to view the state of affairs in western Asia from the Parthian perspective. The growing power of Pontos, a kingdom bordering the Parthian dominated territories in Transcaucasia, must have attracted the attention of the Arsakids. Such interests were surely mutual for Mithridates Eupator strenuously strove to ensure support from kingdoms beyond the Roman sphere of influence. The Parthian Empire was certainly a desirable ally considering its resources, wealth, and military potential. Close relations between Pontos and Parthia were initiated prior to 102/101 BC. In that year, a *heroon* dedicated to Mithridates Eupator was erected on Delos. The monument is significant for many reasons, and offers evidence for Parthian-Pontic contacts. It was built in the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi by the Athenian Helianax, priest of Poseidon Aisios and the Dioskuroi-Kabeiroi. There were twelve relief busts inside the *heroon* and one in the *tympanon* of the façade. The reliefs are mutilated but can be identified by inscriptions which name several dignitaries and generals of Mithridates Eupator, including Gaius son of Hermaios, synthropos of Eupator, Dorylaos, chief of the bodyguard, Papias, Eupator's chief doctor, Asklepiodoros, Helianax' father, Diophantos, the general, Ariarathes VII of Kappadokia, Eupator's nephew. The only persons not belonging to Eupator's family, court or army were Antiochos VIII Grypos of Syria and two Parthian officials – envoys of the Arsakid King of Kings.⁵¹ Apparently due to

his Seleukid descendance, Antiochos VIII Grypos (126-c. 96 BC), an otherwise weak king, was held in regard by some rulers in the Levant and Anatolia. Grypos probably maintained friendly relations with Mithridates Eupator.⁵²

The Parthians were apparently envoys of Mithridates II, who is called King of Kings in one of the inscriptions.⁵³ The *heroon* was erected by a private individual, but Helianax can hardly have acted without agreement from Mithridates Eupator. The building was in fact intended as a propaganda monument for the Pontic king demonstrating his magnanimity and power documented by international links. The presence of the Parthian envoys at the court of Mithridates and the reverence shown them in the Delos *heroon* imply that Mithridates Eupator and the Parthian king cooperated already by 102/101 BC (as they did in the 90's), and that Mithridates Eupator had special relations to Parthia. Viewed from the Arsakid perspective, the strong Parthian interest in Anatolia at the early stages of Mithridates Eupator's career must be emphasised.

Tigranes II as a Parthian vassal and Pontic ally

To understand the political constellation in western Asia at the beginning of the 1st century BC, the position of Armenia should be analyzed. The Pontic Kingdom became neighbour of Armenia Maior after Mithridates Eupator acquired the eastern Anatolian country called Armenia Minor from its ruler Antipater.⁵⁴ Without securing the eastern frontier of his state, Mithridates Eupator would have been unable to conduct large-scale operations in Anatolia. Thus his interest in Armenia and its Parthian suzerain must have begun quite early. Parthian control of Armenia, dated from 120 BC onwards, may have compelled Mithridates Eupator to reach out to the Arsakid Empire. It seems therefore highly probable that one of the essential components in the Pontic-Parthian relations, established by 102/101 BC, was Pontic interest in receiving at least safety guarantees from Parthian dominated Armenia and Parthia herself.

In 95 BC, Tigranes ascended the Armenian throne.⁵⁵ After spending about 25 years at the Parthian court, he was released by his sovereign Mithridates II and appointed king of Armenia. The year 95 BC for Tigranes' accession can be surmised from Plutarch, who describes a meeting between Tigranes and Appianus Claudius Pulcher in the winter of 71/70 BC – by that time Tigranes had ruled for 25 years, thus he must have begun his rule in about 95 BC.⁵⁶ Strabon writes that Tigranes obtained “the privilege of returning home”, a statement underscoring his vassal status. On this occasion, the Arsakid king exacted the cession of the area called “Seventy Valleys” to Parthia – it was a peculiar reward or pledge.⁵⁷ The cession of that area and Strabon's phrase mentioned above imply that Tigranes was to be fully controlled by the Parthian King of Kings.

It is a commonplace that scholars overestimate Tigranes' position at the beginning of his rule.⁵⁸ The Arsakid Empire was at this time at the apex of

its power and it is impossible to see Tigranes as an independent ruler from the beginning. Obviously, at least two stages in Tigranes' career should be distinguished. In the first stage, encompassing a period beginning in 95 BC, he remained a faithful vassal of Parthia. This allegiance to the Arsakid king endured until the end of the 80's. In 83 BC Tigranes was still viewed as a Parthian vassal (see below). There is no evidence for any anti-Parthian action of Tigranes before 80 BC. The second stage saw Tigranes' independent policy and establishment of an empire, partially at the expense of Parthia.

There is evidence coming from Iran of a close connection between Parthia and Tigranes. According to the parchment from Avroman in Iranian Kurdistan, dated to 88 BC,⁵⁹ the second wife of Mithridates II, Aryazate surnamed Automa, was daughter of the "Great King Tigranes".⁶⁰ As the Parthian ruler is named in the text Great King of Kings, the hierarchy is maintained and Tigranes appears as a vassal. His title, however, points to the fact that he was respected by his sovereign, apparently due to his exploits achieved in full accordance with Parthian policy – otherwise the Parthian king would have removed Aryazate.

Justinus provides a hint that Tigranes' enthronement was not an accidental event but a well-thought out move made by the Parthian King of Kings to meet Mithridates Eupator's wishes. While mentioning Tigranes' accession, Justinus says that Mithridates Eupator "was eager to entice this man (sc. Tigranes) to join him in the war against Rome which he had long had in mind" (translation J.C. Yardley).⁶¹ The very next moves were Tigranes' invasion of Sophene and intervention in Kappadokia against Ariobarzanes, a Roman nominee. Moreover, Mithridates Eupator gave his daughter Kleopatra to Tigranes in marriage.⁶² All these facts testify to the existence of specific strategic planning on the part of the Arsakid King of Kings and his Pontic partner. Thus in 95 BC a new alliance was established that was to remain active for many years.

The first military action of Tigranes was the subjugation of Sophene in about 95 BC.⁶³ At this time, Sophene was ruled by Artanes or Orontes,⁶⁴ a descendant of Zariadres, a Seleukid general who made himself independent in about 189 BC. Sophene had often been a bone of contention between Armenia and Kappadokia.⁶⁵ The Sophenian dynast was probably not deposed by Tigranes but continued to rule as vassal of the Armenian king. It was only after Tigranes' annexation of Sophene that Armenia acquired a common frontier with Kappadokia and easy access to the Euphrates crossing at Tomisa, leading to Melitene and the Kappadokian hinterland.⁶⁶ The next operation of Tigranes was an invasion of Kappadokia itself (see below).

Tigranes' activities in Sophene, then in Kappadokia, and his close cooperation with Mithridates Eupator must have been undertaken on Parthian initiative; the Arsakid king, a politician of broader horizons, was surely aware of the Roman dominance in Anatolia and the Roman appetite for conquest. It is hardly a coincidence that when Tigranes came to Armenia, Mithridates

Eupator introduced a new era and began a new, aggressive policy directed against his Anatolian neighbours and Rome. Moreover, he made significant changes in his coinage. With the new alliance established, Mithridates Eupator was able to challenge Roman power in Anatolia. At the same time, the Parthians showed their interest in control of Syria, Kilikia and Kommagene. It is conceivable that the Parthians sought to secure their sphere of interest by annihilating – either through Pontos or Armenia – Roman influence in Kappadokia, a country stretching along the Euphrates and bordering on Kommagene, Armenia, and even Kilikia Pedias, i.e. areas which Parthia controlled or intended to subjugate. Thus, Kappadokia was of vital importance for Mithridates Eupator, Parthia and for Rome. It is thus of little surprise that Kappadokia remained the main area of dispute in eastern Anatolia in the 90's and 80's of the 1st century BC.

Mithridates Eupator versus the Arsakid Empire

Through diplomacy and his use of policy, Mithridates Eupator expanded Pontos' network of foreign connections. In the sources, Parthian Iran is mentioned as a major ally of Pontos. That Mithridates sought Parthian assistance against Rome, is strikingly confirmed by Memnon of Herakleia:

He [Mithridates] increased his realm by subduing the kings around the river Phasis in war as far as the regions beyond the Caucasus, and grew extremely boastful. On account of this, the Romans regarded his intentions with suspicion, and they passed a decree that he should restore to the kings of the Scythians their ancestral kingdoms. Mithridates modestly complied with their demands, but gathered as his allies the Parthians, the Medes, Tigranes the Armenian, the kings of the Scythians and Iberia.⁶⁷

Usually, this passage is treated with suspicion as a hollow propaganda claim. In my opinion, however, the account is consistent and reliable and gives essential evidence for Mithridates' special concern for his eastern neighbours and allies. Significantly, Parthia is the first kingdom named. The Medes are often mentioned in the sources separately from the Parthians for they formed one of the richest parts of the Arsakid Empire. This applies not only to Greater Media (with Ekbatana), incorporated into the royal Arsakid domain, but also to Media Atropatene, ruled by vassal kings.⁶⁸ Armenia was a vassal kingdom of Parthia at this time. Worthy of note is also the mention of Iberia.⁶⁹ In the late 2nd and early 1st centuries BC, the Iberians were probably dependent on Armenia, in other words they belonged to the Parthian sphere of influence. During the 2nd century BC, Armenia seized southern parts of Iberia.⁷⁰ When Armenia was subjugated by the Parthian king Mithridates II in about 120 BC, other Transcaucasian lands, including Iberia (and perhaps Albania), probably

also became Parthian vassals. A massive influx of Parthian coins from the time of Mithridates II into Armenia, Iberia and Albania⁷¹ suggests that these countries were simultaneously incorporated into the Parthian sphere of interest. The sources testify to the fact that Mithridates Eupator seized Armenia Minor and Kolchis,⁷² but that he did not try to penetrate and conquer Iberia. Apparently, the Iberian rulers of this time acted as Parthian vassals and supported Mithridates Eupator as his allies.

The passage in Memnon matches another account offered by Appianos who reports a speech, directed to the Roman generals just before the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War, by an envoy of Mithridates Eupator, Pelopidas. The ambassador, listing the Pontic allies and subjects, mentioned Kolchians, Greeks from the Black Sea, and the barbarians beyond them. Then he named as allies the peoples of the northern Pontic region – Scythians, Sarmatians, Taurians, Bastarnai, Thracians and all tribes roaming on the Tanais (Don), Ister (Danube) and Lake Maiotis (Sea of Azov). Lastly Pelopidas stated: “Tigranes of Armenia is his son-in-law and Arsakes of Parthia his friend (*philos*)”.⁷³ The list in Appianos, reflecting the state of affairs of 89 BC, is longer than that in Memnon but this is due to the fact that he includes a number of peoples from the northern and western Black Sea area. Appianos does not explicitly speak of the Iberians, but they may be included in the category of the tribes “beyond” Kolchis and the Black Sea Greeks.

According to the account of Poseidonios of Apameia, the supporter of Pontos at Athens, Athenion claimed that the Armenian and “Persian” kings were allies of Mithridates Eupator (in 88 BC).⁷⁴ His rhetorically embellished speech does not reflect the real nature of the relations between the Asian states for the orator maintains that the kings of Armenia and of the “Persians” served Mithridates Eupator as bodyguards. But it implies that in 88 BC close political links existed between Pontos, Armenia, and Parthia.

The evidence provided by Appianos, Memnon and Poseidonios is solid and there is no reason to doubt its credibility. The conclusion is inevitable that just before the First Mithridatic War, Mithridates Eupator was allied to Parthia and Armenia. Thus, any analysis of the political situation before the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War in 89 BC must include the Parthian factor. The Arsakid Empire with its vassal kingdoms, including Armenia, was enormously rich in financial resources. Mithridates Eupator was aware of the importance of this resource base for any serious conflict with Rome. He did his best in uniting the peoples around the Black Sea. At this time, however, Parthia was at her zenith and the support of the Arsakid King of Kings was vital for the Pontic ruler in planning greater military confrontations in Anatolia.

One of the eminent scholars studying Mithridates Eupator’s policy asked an important question: “What emboldened Mithridates to believe that he could secure decisive military victory where the Seleucids and the Macedonians had failed?”. The scholar, like many others, looked for an answer in the numbers of

his soldiers and ships.⁷⁵ The question applies, however, not only to his strength in armies but also to his financial resources and alliances. Mithridates Eupator put particular emphasis on financial preparations for war. In this connection, a glance at the royal monetary issues of Mithridates Eupator in the decade just before the first war against Rome is needed. In the period from May to November of 95 BC, the production of Pontic coinage rose steeply.⁷⁶ This increase took place while an alliance with Tigranes, supported by Parthia, was concluded and major military actions were in sight. Another apex in coinage production occurred in the year 92 BC, when Tigranes, supported by Parthia, intervened in Kappadokia, and Mithridates Eupator sent Sokrates Chrestos to subjugate Bithynia. In 89-88 BC, the issues became abundant in connection with the First Mithridatic War.⁷⁷

Pontos had some metal resources,⁷⁸ but the huge amount of gold and silver minted in the 90's and 80's BC may perhaps partially be explained by Parthian support. A perfect parallel is provided by Syria in 88-84/3 BC when the Parthian vassal Philippos minted a large body of coins,⁷⁹ incomparable with the modest emissions of his predecessors. It is worth noting that Parthian coinage under Mithridates II assumed the dimensions of mass production and Parthian coins poured into Armenia, Iberia and Albania.⁸⁰ Conceivably Mithridates II provided Pontos with additional resources to strengthen his Pontic ally in his military activities.⁸¹ This would be a resumption of old Achaemenid policies in Anatolia, the Aegean and the Levant, carried out by means of silver and gold.

Mithridates Eupator's and Tigranes II's military operations in Kappadokia

In about 100/99 BC, Mithridates Eupator killed his nephew, Ariarathes VII, and enthroned his own eight-year-old son known under the name Ariarathes IX in Kappadokia, with Gordios as co-regent. Nikomedes of Bithynia became involved in the conflict and appealed to Rome for aid. The Roman Senate ordered Mithridates Eupator to evacuate Kappadokia. Under Roman pressure, Mithridates withdrew his son and probably the allied Kappadokian noble Gordios.⁸² Finally, the Romans "allowed" the Kappadokians to choose a king, and Ariobarzanes (IX) was elected. The sources also speak of some support for Gordios as king in Kappadokia.⁸³ At this moment, in the middle of the 90's BC, Mithridates Eupator remained without allies in Anatolia, and his military ambitions must have seemed rather hopeless. The Pontic king heard the provocative warnings of Marius, visiting Anatolia, including Kappadokia and Galatia.⁸⁴

It was only after the Parthian supported Tigranes joined Eupator that the political play in Anatolia took a new, dynamic course. In fact, Arsakid support gave Mithridates new impetus for his foreign policy. Politically significant was the introduction of the so-called Bithynian-Pontic era in Pontos, attested to on coinage from 95 BC (year 202 of that era).⁸⁵ This measure must have

been linked with the start of a new stage in Eupator's policy. The dated royal issues of Mithridates Eupator show a number of new features. The obverse depicts the king's portrait, the reverse Pegasos or a grazing stag with a star and crescent in the field.⁸⁶

The support of Parthian dominated Armenia and direct Parthian aid were, actually, *conditio sine qua non* for Eupator's new policy, initiated in 95 BC. It was due to this support that the Pontic king "began to think in terms of war with Rome".⁸⁷ Pro-Roman Ariobarzanes, ruling in Kappadokia, was ousted by Tigranes in 95 or early in 94 BC in the interest of Mithridates Eupator, his Kappadokian ally Gordios, and Parthia.⁸⁸ Mithridates, convinced by the strength of his allies, took the initiative in Anatolia, showing disrespect for Roman demands.⁸⁹

The Roman reaction was to send Sulla to Asia. The real reason for the expedition was not only to reinstate Ariobarzanes but also to check Eupator's intentions. Sulla did not have a large army but made extensive use of his allies. After inflicting heavy casualties on the Kappadokians themselves, and even heavier casualties on the Armenians, who came to help the Kappadokians, he drove Gordios into exile and made Ariobarzanes king.⁹⁰ In Kappadokia, some Pontic troops also opposed Sulla but it seems that Mithridates Eupator tried to make his case there indirectly by appointing the Pontic commander Archelaos a general in Gordios' service.⁹¹ Sulla's main enemies were the Armenians and the Kappadokians from the anti-Roman faction.

The date of Sulla's expedition is disputed. For a long time, the year 92 BC was the common date used by scholars.⁹² E. Badian re-dated Sulla's expedition to 96 BC and this date is now widely accepted.⁹³ A.N. Sherwin-White proposed the year 94 for Sulla's mission in one work,⁹⁴ but curiously he seems to return to 92 or even 91 BC in other studies.⁹⁵ In the attempt to establish the disputed date one circumstance has been neglected so far; in all likelihood, Sulla's expedition was conducted in answer to Tigranes' intervention in Kappadokia. The date thus depends on the timing of Tigranes' enthronement and his intervention in Kappadokia. As stated above, Tigranes took the Armenian throne in about 95 BC. Then, after annexing Sophene, he invaded Kappadokia, apparently no earlier than in 95. Under such circumstances, the date 96 BC for Sulla's expedition is impossible to accept. Even the year 95 BC is rather improbable, taking into account the needed time for news of events in distant Asia to reach Rome and for the Romans to react to them. Under such circumstances, the year 94 BC seems to be the earliest possible date for Sulla's mission.^{95a}

An essential observation is that Sulla's action was the first instance since the peace of Apameia in 188 BC of a Roman army intervening in Anatolia.⁹⁶ It seems that the new policies of Mithridates Eupator, his alliance with Parthian-dominated Armenia and Parthia herself, as well as the intervention of Tigranes in Kappadokia surprised and worried the Romans. Their reaction was due to the emergence of a new active alliance that must have been perceived as

extremely dangerous for Roman interests in Anatolia. Sulla's expeditionary force reached to the borders of the Parthian sphere of influence. This is why Parthia's envoys intending to check Roman intentions approached Sulla.

Sulla and the Parthians in Kappadokia

While on the banks of the Euphrates, Sulla was visited by Orobazos, representing the Arsakid King of Kings Mithridates II.⁹⁷ Many misunderstandings arose during this meeting so it needs scrutiny. The Parthians wanted to discuss the possibility of entering into a treaty of friendship (*philia*) and alliance (*symmachia*).⁹⁸ As the newly appointed Kappadokian ruler Ariobarzanes accompanied Sulla, the conference probably took place in eastern Kappadokia in the area of Melitene, bordering on Sophene.⁹⁹ According to Plutarch: "Sulla put out three chairs, one for Ariobarzanes, one for Orobazos, and one for himself, and negotiated while seated between the other two. The Parthian king later put Orobazos to death for this".¹⁰⁰

Plutarch's account has been commented on many times. The *communis opinio* maintains that Orobazos was executed because he took a lower seat than Sulla or because the ambassador allowed Sulla to assume a position of primacy at the meeting by sitting in the centre.¹⁰¹ While focusing on Plutarch's ambiguous wording, scholars have overlooked an essential circumstance – the presence of Ariobarzanes, who had been deposed from the throne by Tigranes acting according to Parthian demands. Sulla had reinstalled him in Kappadokia. Orobazos' fault was thus his participation in negotiations with Ariobarzanes, who was a usurper in the eyes of the Parthian King of Kings. This is why the envoy was executed on the orders of his sovereign.

Another point should be stressed. After Sulla's intervention, no negotiations between Armenia and Rome were initiated, although the Armenians had been involved in Kappadokia. Instead of this, a meeting between Sulla and the Parthians was organized. The conclusion must be that Sulla saw no need to talk to the vassal ruler of Armenia because the real power behind him was Parthia.

There is no solid evidence for the often expressed assumption that a formal treaty was concluded between Sulla and Orobazos. Among the ancient authors it is only Florus who speaks rather incidentally of a *foedus* between Sulla and the Parthians.¹⁰² The not always credible Florus, writing a panegyric, apparently made an error, and ascribed to Sulla a treaty of the same kind as those that decades later were concluded by Lucullus and Pompeius.¹⁰³ The opinion¹⁰⁴ that the river Euphrates was made the common frontier in the alleged treaty between Rome and Parthia should be fully discarded.¹⁰⁵ As to Arsakid Iran, there is no evidence that Mithridates II considered himself bound by any kind of territorial restraints in his western policies. In the 90's-80's BC, Parthian armies crossed the Euphrates many times as in the 50's-30's BC. The fate of Syria, Kommagene and eastern Anatolia including Kappadokia was

in the decades of the 90's-80's not yet decided in favour of Rome. Recognition of the Euphrates frontier would have been a unilateral gesture of acceptance of Roman supremacy in western Asia by Mithridates II. As rightly remarked by J. Wolski: "The historians who put forward this claim were only following the old and well-established habit of belittling the Parthians, this time in favour of Rome".¹⁰⁶

Indeed, some scholars argue that Parthia under Mithridates II was a second-class kingdom weaker even than Armenia. A. Keaveney, for example, maintains that Parthia through negotiations with Sulla "attempted to hold the middle ground between great powers".¹⁰⁷ R.D. Sullivan expresses the opinion that: "The hopes of Mithridates II of finding in Rome a counterweight (sc. to Mithridates Eupator and Tigranes) received a rebuff in the behaviour of Sulla",¹⁰⁸ and that "Roman support of Ariobarzanes might indirectly protect Parthia from Eupator and Tigranes".¹⁰⁹ According to P.L. Manaserjan, Sulla and the Parthians negotiated an alliance directed against Parthia!¹¹⁰ This is a fully unfounded assessment. The sources contradict these views as Parthia under Mithridates II was a great power and even in times of crisis, Arsakid Iran remained a mighty state capable of stopping the Roman advances in Asia.

The Parthians closely followed affairs in Kappadokia for they stood behind Tigranes. When Sulla forced Tigranes to withdraw, the Arsakid king tried to determine Roman intentions towards Kappadokia, Anatolia, and Armenia. The Arsakid King of Kings became convinced that the Roman presence in Kappadokia was dangerous for Parthian interests in the neighbouring areas including Kommagene, Kilikia and Armenia. Thus, the anti-Roman actions in Anatolia were to be intensified by Pontos and Armenia acting as directly engaged powers, whereas Parthia supported their allies financially and took important actions to the south in Kommagene, Kilikia, and Syria. An agreement was concluded between the rulers of Pontos and Armenia that the subjugated cities and land should belong to Eupator, and the captives and all movable goods to Tigranes.¹¹¹ Justinus speaks of an alliance between Pontos and Armenia at this time. He is right – a new agreement was formed against Rome, whereas the former agreement of the year 95 BC was officially directed against local rulers of Anatolia including Kappadokia. The strategic planning of Mithridates Eupator, Tigranes, and the Arsakid King of Kings aimed at abolishing Sulla's arrangements in Kappadokia would inevitably develop into an open confrontation with Rome.

Further struggles over Kappadokia

Sulla's intervention in Kappadokia in about 94 BC caused a counterattack of the Arsakid king conducted by his Armenian vassal and coordinated with Mithridates Eupator's operations. Ariobarzanes was ousted by an army led by two generals named Bagoas and Mithraas in about 92 BC.¹¹² Ariarathes (IX)

was installed again in Kappadokia. The names of the commanders Bagoas and Mithraas are purely Iranian. They acted as Tigranes' general.¹¹³ Indeed they could have been Parthian officials in Armenian services, but they are otherwise unattested.

While Tigranes operated in Kappadokia, Mithridates Eupator sent Sokrates Chrestos, Nikomedes' own brother, with an army against Bithynia. Sokrates subjugated the kingdom. Appianos stresses that the actions in Bithynia and Kappadokia were simultaneous.¹¹⁴ Thus, we can discern a coordinated anti-Roman action of Pontos and Armenia in Anatolia. But the Parthians did not remain idle either. At this time they subjugated Kommagene (about 92 BC) and probably attacked Kilikia. It seems that Mithridates Eupator was now prepared for a full scale confrontation with Rome. His rear was secure, and he had huge financial and military resources at his disposal. The coin production was intensified in 92 and again from May-June 89 BC. It is plausible that this increased amount of minted coins was connected to military preparations.¹¹⁵

The Roman Senate ordered the restoration of Ariobarzanes in Kappadokia and Nikomedes in Bithynia. The Roman general Manius Aquilius reinstalled Ariobarzanes at the end of 90 or in 89 BC.¹¹⁶ According to Appianos, Mithridates Eupator had his forces ready for war, but did not resist the Roman actions,¹¹⁷ and he remained inactive even when Nikomedes ravaged western Pontos.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Mithridates Eupator had Sokrates killed in order to display his good will toward Rome. As to Kappadokia, Tigranes' troops apparently retreated from that country. Contrary to the Roman demands, the reinstated Ariobarzanes Philorhomaioi did not take part in the hostilities against Mithridates Eupator. The Pontic king entered negotiations with the Roman legates in Asia and complained of Nikomedes' hostile actions.¹¹⁹ The ambassadors of Nikomedes maintained that Mithridates Eupator stood in "complete readiness, as for a great and predetermined war, not merely with his own army, but also with a great force of allies, Thracians, Scythians, and all the other neighbouring peoples".¹²⁰ The passage points to the potential of Mithridates Eupator and his allies.

When the Pontic-Roman talks failed, Mithridates Eupator sent his son Ariarathes with a large army to seize Kappadokia. Ariobarzanes was quickly driven out.¹²¹ The sources make no mention of Tigranes' involvement in this action, but it cannot be excluded. Significantly, several years after this operation, Tigranes was persuaded by Mithridates Eupator to make an incursion into Kappadokia (78 BC).¹²² Thus, this country saw several joint Pontic-Armenian operations, but the testimonies often do not go into details.

Generally, Mithridates Eupator intended to eliminate any Roman threat to Asia Minor and showed eagerness for armed confrontation with Rome, but he "wanted to have good and sufficient cause for war".¹²³ At the same time, Mithridates Eupator tried to mislead Rome about his intentions.¹²⁴

The wars between Rome and Pontos and their implications

In 89 BC, Mithridates Eupator was at the height of his power. He was secure in an alliance with Parthian-dominated Armenia and Parthia herself. He had received support from many peoples, tribes and cities around the Black Sea. As a whole, a huge military force, numbering more than 200,000 soldiers, was at his disposal.¹²⁵ The Social War in Italy offered a good opportunity for anti-Roman actions on the part of the Pontic king in Anatolia.¹²⁶

The events of the First Mithridatic War (89-85 BC) are well known and there is no need to repeat this story.¹²⁷ While Mithridates fought the Romans, the Parthians intervened in Syria and made it their protectorate (88/87 BC). In 87, Mithridates Eupator's mighty ally, Mithridates II of Parthia, died. It was surely a blow to the Pontic king. Under Mithridates II's successors Parthia was to plunge into internal struggles till the very end of the 70's.¹²⁸

Mithridates II was followed by Gotarzes (Parthian Godarz), probably his son, ruling until about 80 BC.¹²⁹ The next king known from Babylonian texts is Orodes (Parthian Worod) mentioned in 80/79, 78/77, and 76/75 BC, who was probably a rival of Gotarzes.¹³⁰ About 78/77 BC, the throne of Parthia was taken by Sinatrukes, supported by the nomadic Sakaraukai, who reigned to 70/69.¹³¹ The evidence for the history of Parthia in the period 87-70 BC is scanty but the sources indicate devastating internal conflicts in the 70s. Moreover, Parthia remained involved in the struggles in eastern Iran and central Asia. More than twenty years after his appointment as vassal king of Armenia, the chance had come for Tigranes to take a leading role in the Levant and the adjacent regions. The crisis in Parthia offered a strong incentive for action and Tigranes now felt free to act against Orodes and Sinatrukes to expand his kingdom.

According to Justinus, the Syrians upon the death of Philippos (84/83 BC), exhausted by dynastic conflicts looked around for foreign kings, some being in favour of Mithridates (of Pontos?), others of Ptolemaios of Egypt. Finally, the Syrians settled on Tigranes, who "apart from his own domestic strength had the additional advantage of being an ally of the Parthians and a relative of Mithridates" (83 BC).¹³² The evidence is unambiguous – when Tigranes was proclaimed king in Antiochia, he was "still allied with the Parthians which was one source of strength that recommended him to the people of Syria".¹³³ Thus Tigranes seized Syria primarily by diplomatic efforts rather than military actions. But in this politically and ethnically divided country there were many petty rulers like Antiochos Eusebes who opposed Tigranes as they had opposed Philippos and others. This is why some sources speak of forceful action on the part of Tigranes.¹³⁴ The annexation of Syria was the decisive step made by Tigranes, who thereafter built a huge empire.¹³⁵ In the 70's, the Armenian king defeated Sinatrukes, a ruler supported by a faction of the Parthian aristocracy during the civil war in Iran.¹³⁶ At the same time, he recovered the "Seventy Valleys" and subjugated Gordyene, Osrhoene, Media Atropatene, and Nisibis. To the west of the Euphrates, apart from Syria, Ti-

granes annexed Kommagene, Kilikia Pedias, and parts of Phoenicia.¹³⁷ Then he took the title King of Kings attested in some literary sources and on coins.¹³⁸ It was also in the 70's that Tigranes founded his new capital Tigranokerta.¹³⁹ In this period, Parthia conducted no active policy in the west. The old alliance between Parthia and Pontos had ceased to exist.

During the Third Mithridatic War Mithridates Eupator sought closer ties to the Parthian kings Sinatrukes and Phraates III, but the Arsakids showed a marked reluctance to become involved in Anatolian quarrels. Mithridates Eupator requested Parthian help in 73 BC, but the aged Sinatrukes was unwilling to assist. Tigranes, after ignoring many entreaties from his wife Kleopatra, Eupator's daughter, eventually agreed to a renewed alliance with Pontos.¹⁴⁰ Lucullus devastated Pontos and drove Mithridates to take refuge with Tigranes in Armenia in 71 BC. By Tigranes' decision, Mithridates was kept 20 months in isolation.¹⁴¹ This action is an example of the fatal discord present among the Asian kings, which proved extremely favourable to the Romans.

When faced with a crushing defeat, Tigranes and Mithridates sent messengers to Parthia to obtain aid. Lucullus dispatched opposing legates asking that the Parthians should either help him or remain neutral. The Parthian king Phraates III made secret agreements with both the Armenian-Pontic envoys and the Romans (70/69 BC).¹⁴² Weight should be placed on the *Letter of Mithridates to King Arsakes (Epistula Mithridatis)*, assigned to Sallust,¹⁴³ as an informative source concerning Pontic-Parthian relations at this time. Allegedly Mithridates wrote the letter where he tries to induce the Parthian king Phraates III to become his ally. It seems that the letter reflects a genuine document found by the Romans in the personal archives of Mithridates.¹⁴⁴

The *Epistula Mithridatis* (3) tells of Arsakes' anger against Tigranes caused by a recent war between Armenia and Parthia. Mithridates appeals to Phraates III and seeks to persuade him that Tigranes is at his mercy and would accept an alliance on any terms the Parthian king might wish. The letter underscores Roman aggressiveness and the Roman desire for domination in Asia. Significantly, Mithridates brings Arsakes' attention to the Parthian resources of manpower and gold (16-19).

According to the *Epistula Mithridatis*, Mithridates proposed a strategic plan: it presupposed a close cooperation between the Parthians, operating from Mesopotamia, and Mithridates and Tigranes, attacking the Romans from Armenia (21). Strategically, it was a perfect concept, in fact imitating the plans carried out in the 90's BC, when Mithridates II ruled in Parthia and aided Mithridates Eupator.

In the *Epistula Mithridatis*, Mithridates warns that a war with Rome will be inevitable for Arsakes, for the wealth of Parthia would attract the attention of the Romans called *latrones gentium*. The letter's conclusion is a warning against the Arsakids' dilatoriness, which would lead to the defeat of the enemies of Rome (23).

All in all, in spite of Pontic and Armenian approaches, Phraates III remained reluctant to enter into the conflict between Tigranes, Mithridates, and

Rome. In 66 BC, Pompeius superseded Lucullus as commander in the East, and some military encounters took place between Parthia and Rome. At this time the power of Pontos and Armenia was already crushed, and Pontos was incorporated into the Roman Empire. Additionally, Rome subjugated Syria, which also became a Roman province. Armenia, although defeated by the Romans, was to play an important part in the struggles between Parthia and Rome for centuries.

Conclusions

Having gained control of almost the entire circuit of the Black Sea, Mithridates Eupator spent the last thirty years of his life engaged in a bitter struggle with Rome. In the meantime, the Parthians under Mithridates II turned their attention to the situation in Anatolia. Roman expansion was a danger for the Arsakid domination in Transcaucasia, Mesopotamia and northern Syria. If Parthia viewed herself as the genuine successor of the Seleukid Empire, she had a rightful claim to the countries in Asia south of the Tauros range, i.e. to Kommagene, Kilikia Pedias, and Syria. It seems that the Parthian king treated Mithridates Eupator as a natural ally in a position to counter the Roman expansion in Anatolia. In 95 BC a new political constellation, initiated by Arsakid Iran, and embracing Pontos, Armenia and Parthia, emerged in Asia, and the anti-Roman actions of the Pontic and Armenian kings were intensified.

All the activities of Tigranes in the 90's and early 80's BC show that he was at that time a Parthian nominee and a Parthian political agent. Through Tigranes' support for Pontos, the Parthians tried indirectly to counter the Roman advances in Anatolia and the planned Armenian operations in Kapadokia were against Rome's interests. Only from about 80 BC, when Parthia faced internal struggles, did Tigranes become independent. He took part in the internal Parthian conflicts strengthening his position at the expense of the Arsakids.

It was decisive support from the Parthians that prompted Mithridates Eupator to wage an open war on Rome in 89 BC. Politically and militarily the prospects for Pontos were good. Later, events took a turn for the worse, both in Pontos, and in Parthia. The civil war in Parthia, in which Tigranes was involved, annihilated the previous political constellation of the 90's and early 80's, in which Pontos, Armenia, and Parthia constituted a strong and very dangerous alliance for Rome.

The power of Pontos collapsed for several reasons, but an essential factor was that Mithridates Eupator was deprived of Parthian assistance in the 70's and 60's BC, and had to rely on his own and to some extent on Tigranes' resources. Mithridates Eupator, aware of Arsakid power, tried to renew the old alliance with Parthia but the new Parthian rulers, Sinatrukes and Phraates III, were far more passive in their western policy than Mithridates II. Until

the wars between Rome and Parthia under Orodes (57-38 BC), the Parthian strategic perspective did not reach beyond the Euphrates.

When in the winter of 69/68 BC Mithridates Eupator and Tigranes approached the Parthians with a view to an alliance, it was too late to stay the course of events and bring Roman military advances in Anatolia to a standstill. The Romans were able to secure their position in Anatolia and in Syria without Parthian countermeasures. Later they tried to crush and subjugate Parthia, but this proved impossible for Rome.

Notes

- 1 On Roman policy in Asia after 188 BC through the Mithridatic Wars, see Magie 1950; Badian 1958; Sherwin-White 1977b; 1984; Will 1982, 285-301, 379-385, 461-505; Gruen 1984, 529-610; Kallet-Marx 1995.
- 2 Polyb. 29.27; Liv. 45.12; App. *Syr.* 66; Joseph. *BJ* 12.244. Cf. Will 1982, 322-323.
- 3 Polyb. 30.19; Liv. *Per.* 46; Just. *Epit.* 38.6.4.
- 4 Polyb. 30.18; Liv. 45.44.4-21; Diod. Sic. 31.15.
- 5 Literature on Mithridates VI Eupator and the Pontic Kingdom is ample. See, e.g. Reinach 1890; 1895; Molev 1976; McGing 1986; Hind 1994; Strobel 1996; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996; Callataÿ 1997; Olshausen 1978; 2000; Heinen 1991, 2005a; 2005b; Saprykin 1996; Olbrycht 2004a; Højte (ed.) 2005.
- 6 Kennedy (1996, 73) formulates an essential observation concerning the political geography of the Parthian Empire stressing its connections to Syria and Anatolia.
- 7 Strab. 12.1.4.
- 8 See Panitschek 1987-1988.
- 9 See Bosworth & Wheatley 1998.
- 10 Heinen 1991; Callataÿ 1997, 245-264; Olbrycht 2004a.
- 11 Sherwin-White 1977b, 71-72.
- 12 On the history of Kappadokia, see Sullivan 1980; Henke 2005.
- 13 On the history of Parthia, see Debevoise 1938; Ziegler 1964; Schippmann 1986; Wolski 1993; 2003; Olbrycht 1998a; 1998b; 2003.
- 14 The efforts of Demetrios II and Antiochos Sidetes to recover the lost areas ended in disastrous defeats cf. Will 1982, 407-416; Olbrycht 1998b, 84-87; 2004a.
- 15 Just. *Epit.* 42.2.3. On Mithridates II, see Debevoise 1938, 40-50; Wolski 1993, 88; Olbrycht 1998b, 96-105.
- 16 Just. *Epit.* 42.2.4-5.
- 17 Schuol 2000, 299.
- 18 Olbrycht 1998b, 102.
- 19 Olbrycht 1998b, 103. The title “šar šarrāni” appears in the year 204 in the Seleukid era, i.e. 108/107 BC, cf. Oelsner 1975, 35, but it might have been introduced a year before. See also Frye 1984, 214.
- 20 Wolski 1964, 156-157; 1966, 74; 1977b; Olbrycht 1997.
- 21 It was Mithridates II (124/3-88/7 BC) who, having first worn a diadem alone, had himself pictured on coins in a Parthian type *tiara*. Cf. Olbrycht 1997.
- 22 One example was the final introduction of the ruler’s left profile on coin, in contrast to the Hellenistic practice, cf. Vardanian 1992.
- 23 On Armenia as a bone of contention between Parthia and Rome, see Wolski 1980a; 1980b; 1983; 1989; 1993; Chaumont 1987; Arnaud 1987; Olbrycht 1998b.

- 24 Strab. 11.14.15; Just. *Epit.* 38.3.1. On the war of Mithridates II against Armenia and its dating about 120 BC, see the excellent analysis by Schottky 1989, 219.
- 25 Just. *Epit.* 38.9.10. The validity of the claim is stressed in Wolski 1976, 202, n. 25; 1977a; 1989, 641-642.
- 26 Schippmann 1986, 527.
- 27 Joseph. *AJ* 13.14.3. Full analysis in Bellinger 1949, 76-79; Dabrowa 1992; Kennedy 1996, 78; Ehling 2008, 245-246.
- 28 The last coins of Demetrios are dated 88/87 BC, cf. Bellinger 1949, 77 and Hoover 2007, 293-294.
- 29 On the history of Kommagene, see Sullivan 1977; Wagner 1983; Dörner 1981; Weiskopf 1993; Facella 2006.
- 30 Diod. Sic. 31.19a.
- 31 *OGIS* 383; *IGLS* 1; cf. Grainger 1997, 48; Sullivan 1990, 65.
- 32 Strab. 16.1.22.23; 16.2.2-3; App. *Syr.* 48; Cic. *Fam.* 8.10.1; Dio Cass. 49.13; Plin. *HN.* 5.86.
- 33 Antiochos I arranged the marriage of his daughter Laodike to Orodes of Parthia (c. 57-38 BC), see Facella 2006, 136. In 51-50 BC, Parthian troops were allowed to cross Kommagene to raid Roman Syria, see Cic. *Fam.* 8.10.1, 15.1-2, 4.4. Even under the Flavian dynasty, Kommagene was suspected of favouring the Parthians, see Joseph. *BJ* 7.219.
- 34 Joseph. *AJ* 13.13.4.
- 35 On Antiochos X Eusebes Philopator, see Grainger 1997, 33 and Ehling 2008, 236-242.
- 36 A detailed discussion on the passage is offered by Dobiáš 1931, 221-223.
- 37 Euseb. *Chron.* 1.261.
- 38 App. *Syr.* 48 and 69.
- 39 Sources on Antiochos XIII Asiatikos are collected in Grainger 1997, 34-35.
- 40 Bellinger 1949, 75, n. 73; Ehling 2008, 241.
- 41 Bellinger 1949, 75, n. 73; Will 1982, 452; Facella 2006, 216. Euseb. *Chron.* 1.261 states that quarrels between Antiochos X and Philippos I started from the third year of the 171st Olympiad, i.e. 94/93 BC. Historical sources prove that Antiochos X ruled for some time at Antiochia but was driven out of the city, see Eus. *Chron.* 1.261 with Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 420 and Hoover 2007, 290. An market weight from Antiochia with the name of Antiochos (X) dated to the year 220 of the Seleukid era (Ehling 2008, 242) testifies that the city of Antiochia was controlled by Antiochos X in 93/92 BC. After 93/92 BC, no coins were minted in the name of that ruler. The fact that in the year 221 of the Seleukid era (92/91 BC) the mint of Antiochia began to issue coins in its own name (Hoover 2007, 290 & 295-296) implies that an essential political change took place in the city. All these facts suggest that Antiochos X was indeed killed in 92 BC (so Ehling 2008, 241). Hoover (2007, 293-295) tries to show that Antiochos X did not die in 92 BC but continued to rule over Antiochia for several years, probably to 89/88 BC. However, his arguments concerning Antiochos X and his successors including Tigranes are highly speculative for they contradict the data offered by literary sources. Cf. Ehling 2008, 250-256.
- 42 Niese (1955, XXI-XXII) discusses the textual transmission of the passage. Cf. Dobiáš 1931, 221-223.
- 43 Cf. Grainger 1997, 772. Dobiáš (1931, 223) accepts that the Samenoi were an Arabian tribe.

- 44 Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 420-421, 605 (drawing on A. von Gutschmidt 1888, 80).
- 45 Facella (2006, 216-217) is sceptical of Laodike's connection to Kommagene. According to Kennedy (1996, 78) she ruled a tribe in Syria.
- 46 Josephus does not mention Mithridates Kallinikos whose nickname suggests a militarily successful king. But in that age of petty rulers the name Kallinikos was quite often abused and referred to rulers without real significance. One can point to Antiochos XII Dionysios Epiphanes Philopator Kallinikos who ruled several years in Syria in the 80's and was killed in battle – see Grainger 1997, 34. The internal situation in Kommagene is not known in details, but there may have been many explanations for the fact that Kallinikos does not appear in Josephus' account. He might have been in Parthian captivity.
- 47 Strab. 14.5.2.
- 48 Bellinger (1949, 77, n. 82) maintains that the Parthians received "some concession" in Kilikia as reward from Philippos for their cooperation in Syria in 88/87 BC.
- 49 So Boucher-Leclercq 1913, 421, n. 2. He assumes that in about 92 BC, when Sulla came to Anatolia, the Parthians controlled Kilikia. Against Bellinger 1949, 75, n. 74.
- 50 Strab. 14.5.2. See also Diod. Sic. 33.28a-28b. Cf. Sherwin-White 1977b, 67, n. 39; Mattingly 1986.
- 51 On the monument, see P. Kreuz in this volume. Cf. McGing 1986, 90-91.
- 52 On Antiochos Grypos, see Grainger 1997, 31-32. Grypos is commemorated by several statues on Delos and he dedicated a statue to the Roman governor of Asia, Gnaeus Papirius Carbo. On Eupator's attempts to establish closer links to Syria, see App. *Mith.* 13.
- 53 *IDelos* 1581-1582. Cf. *SEG* 36, 741. Contrary to Huyse (1995, 102) the inscriptions do not refer to "Weihgaben zweier arsakidischer Würdenträger".
- 54 Strab. 12.3.28.
- 55 On Tigranes, see Geyer 1936; Manandian 1963; Chaumont 1985-1988; Manaserjan 1985; Schottky 2002; Garsoian 2005.
- 56 Plut. *Luc.* 21. Detailed discussion in Schottky, 1989, 216, n. 240. The date 95 BC is accepted by Geyer 1936, 970; Sullivan, 1990, 98; Callataj 1997, 274. Chaumont (1985-1988, 21) approves 95 BC, but she does not exclude the years 96 or 94 BC. Tigranes II died in about 55 BC (Cic. *Sest.* 59; Plut. *Crass.* 19) at the age of 85 (cf. Lucian, *Macr.* 15).
- 57 Strab. 11.14.15; Just. *Epit.* 43.3.1. According to Schottky (1989, 222), the "Seventy Valleys" were in Kaspiane – a plain on the Caspian Sea.
- 58 E.g. Sullivan (1990, 116) names several factors, which might have forced the Parthians to release Tigranes and remarks: "Mithridates II sought to tie himself firmly to Tigranes". It escapes my understanding how a mighty ruler like Mithridates II was forced to win favour of his vassal just placed on the throne granted by the Arsakid King of Kings himself?
- 59 The document is dated to the year 225, month Apellaios in the Seleukid era, which gives November of 88, see Minns 1915, 38.
- 60 Aryazate might have been Mithridates II's wife already prior to 95 BC, cf. Schottky 1990, 214.
- 61 Just. *Epit.* 38.3.1
- 62 Just. *Epit.* 38.3.2 links the marriage between Kleopatra and Tigranes with Tigranes' action in Kappadokia. On the alliance between Tigranes and Eupator, see Reinach 1895, 309.

- 63 For Tigranes' subjugation of Sophene, see Strab. 11.14.15; 12.2.1. Sullivan (1990, 99) rightly dates the event "soon after his accession". According to Manaserjan (1985, 109), Sophene's seizure by Tigranes was an anti-Parthian act, but this contradicts the historical reality.
- 64 Strab. 11.14.15 with Sullivan 1990, 99. Stephanos of Byzantion (s.v. Sophene) calls Sophene's ruler Arsakes, but this is probably a mistake.
- 65 Diod. Sic. 31.22.
- 66 The geographical peculiarities of the region are reported by Strab. 12.2.1. He underscores the links between Melitene, Kommagene, and Sophene. Cf. Sullivan 1990, 99.
- 67 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.3-4 with corrections by McGing 1986, 63, n. 85, and comments by Heinen 2005b, 83-87.
- 68 Cf. Olbrycht 1997, 44 (for Greater Media); Schottky 1989 and 1990 (for Media Atropatene).
- 69 For the history of Iberia, see Lordkipanidze 1996; Braund 1994.
- 70 Strab. 11.14.5. Cf. Braund 1994, 153.
- 71 Olbrycht 2001a; 2001b.
- 72 For Kolchis as part of Eupator's Empire, see Strab. 11.2.18; Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.3. For Armenia Minor, see Strab. 12.3.28. Cf. Molev 1979; Šelov 1980; Callataÿ 1997, 253.
- 73 App. *Mith.* 15.
- 74 Ath. 213a (Poseidonios of Apameia). Edelstein-Kidd. Cf. the comments in Desideri 1973; Kidd 1988, 874; Malitz 1983, 350. It was Athenion who made the first announcement in Athens of Eupator's victories over Rome at the beginning of the first war.
- 75 Sherwin-White 1977b, 72. He adds that "militarily the prospects were good" but Mithridates Eupator "miscalculated not only the effectiveness of the Roman war machine at the moment but the spirit of contemporary Roman imperialism" (73-74).
- 76 Callataÿ 1997, 273-274.
- 77 Cf. the table in Callataÿ 1997, 283. See McGing 1986, 86.
- 78 Callataÿ 1997, 242-244. Silver was mined near Pharnakeia, see Hind 1994, 135.
- 79 Bellinger (1949, 79) thinks that the Parthians supported Philippos in minting his "surprising amount of silver". Ehling (2008, 245) rejects the possibility that the Parthians supported Philippos financially and maintains that the bulk of Philippos' coinage were posthumous issues minted after the Roman annexation of Syria. However, the reason for the posthumous production of Philippos' coins under Roman rule, rather than of those of the last Seleukid king Antiochos XII, was apparently the fact that the issues minted by Philippos constituted the most important part of the late Seleukid coinages. On the coins minted in the name of Philippos from the 50s BC until the reign of Augustus reign, see Burnett, Amandry & Ripollès 1992, 606-607. See also Hoover 2004.
- 80 Olbrycht 1998b, 104; 2001a.
- 81 Sall. *Hist.* fr. 6.16 refers to large amounts of arms and gold in Parthia. Characteristically the letter, written in connection with the events of the years 70/69 BC (see below), puts emphasis on Parthia's wealth and huge resources.
- 82 For sources and references, see McGing 1986, 75-77.
- 83 Just. *Epit.* 38.2.8; 38.5.9; Strab. 12.2.1.
- 84 Plut. *Mar.* 31.1-2; Cic. *Brut.* 1.5.3. Cf. Kallet-Marx 1995, 245-247.

- 85 Callataÿ 1997, 29-52; Gabelko 2005, 152.
- 86 Callataÿ 1997; McGing 1986, 97.
- 87 The phrase is used by McGing 1986, 84.
- 88 Just. *Epit.* 38.3.2-3; App. *Mith.* 12.2.10. Callataÿ (1997, 274) places the action at the beginning of 94 BC.
- 89 Sherwin-White (1977a, 175) rightly observes that the open defiance of the Senate's decision in favour of Ariobarzanes by Mithridates Eupator "does not fit with his cautious attitude in these years". The explanation for this behaviour is the emergence of the new, strong alliance of Pontos, Armenia and Parthia.
- 90 Plut. *Sul.* 5.
- 91 Frontin. *Str.* 1.5.18 with McGing 1986, 78, n. 46.
- 92 Ziegler 1964, 20.
- 93 Badian 1959. This date is accepted by Keaveney 1981; Brennan 1992; Kellet-Marx 1995, 355; Wolski 2003, 76.
- 94 Sherwin-White 1977a, 173-183. He is followed by McGing 1986, 78-79 (he does not exclude 95 BC) and Callataÿ 1997, 205.
- 95 Sherwin-White 1977b, 72; 1984, 109-111.
- 95a But the year 93 BC still remains an option. 92 BC seems too late if one thinks that the Romans usually intervened without delay when faced with foreign threats in Anatolia. New arguments for the dating of Sulla's Kappadokian expedition to the period from 94 to 92 BC are presented by Dmitriev (2006, 296-297).
- 96 Sherwin-White 1977b, 72. See McGing in this volume.
- 97 Plut. *Sul.* 5; Liv. *Epit.* 70; Vell. Pat. 2.24.3; Festus 15.2. On the negotiations, see Dobiaš 1931, 218-221; Debevoise 1938, 46-47; Ziegler, 1964, 20-23; Keaveney 1981, 195-199; Wolski 1980b, 257; 1993, 92-93; 2003, 76.
- 98 Plut. *Sul.* 5.4.
- 99 On the meeting place, Ziegler 1964, 20, n. 2.
- 100 Plut. *Sul.* 5.4-5.
- 101 See, e.g. Sullivan 1990, 118-119.
- 102 Flor. 3.12 (in the account of Crassus' campaign against Parthia).
- 103 On the poor credibility of Florus' account on Sulla, see Ziegler 1964, 22. Oros. 6.3.12 speaks of two treaties between Parthia and Rome concluded under Lucullus and Pompeius.
- 104 Such a view is presented by Ziegler 1964, 22 and Keaveney 1981, 198.
- 105 In some sources, this river appears as the limit for Roman conquests under Lucullus and Pompeius, cf. Oros. 6.13.2: *vehementer increpitus est* (sc. Crassus by Parthian envoys) *cur contra foedus Luculli et Pompei (...) Euphratem transierit*.
- 106 Wolski 2003, 76.
- 107 Keaveney 1981, 199.
- 108 Sullivan 1990, 119.
- 109 Sullivan 1990, 118.
- 110 Manaserjan 1985, 115.
- 111 Just. *Epit.* 38.3.5. Justinus places this passage after Tigranes' first intervention in Kappadokia and before the First Mithridatic War.
- 112 App. *Mith.* 10. Cf. Just. *Epit.* 38.3.5. Callataÿ (1997, 276) proposes the summer of 91 BC. According to Dmitriev (2006, 297), the intervention took place "sometime from 91 to 89".
- 113 So Reinach 1895; Desideri 1973, 3; Manaserjan 1985.

- 114 App. *Mith.* 10.
- 115 Callataÿ 1997, 283-284.
- 116 McGing 1986, 79-80. Liv. *Epit.* 74 places the restoration of Nikomedes IV and Ariobarzanes between the events of 90 and 89 BC. Aquillius' army consisted of the forces led by the Pergamene governor Lucius Cassius, of the Galatians and Phrygians, see App. *Mith.* 10.
- 117 App. *Mith.* 11.
- 118 App. *Mith.* 11, 12-14; Liv., *Epit.* 74. Cf. Sherwin-White 1977a, 176.
- 119 App. *Mith.* 12
- 120 App. *Mith.* 13.
- 121 App. *Mith.* 15. See Hind 1994, 144.
- 122 App. *Mith.* 67. Cf. Plut. *Luc.* 26.1; Strab. 11.14.15, 12.2.9.
- 123 App. *Mith.* 11. Cf. McGing 1986, 82-84.
- 124 I agree with McGing's (1986, 87) statement: "This apparent compliance right up to the last minute can be regarded as tactical preparation for war. Eupator intended to lull the Senate and Aquillius into a false sense of security".
- 125 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.6: 190,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry; App. *Mith.* 17: 250,000 infantry, 50,000 cavalry, 400 ships, 130 chariots.
- 126 There were negotiations between the rebels in Italy and Eupator (Diod. Sic. 37.11).
- 127 See especially, among recent treatments, Magie 1950, 210-231, 1100-1110; Glew 1977; 1981; Sherwin-White 1984, 121-148; McGing 1986, 89-131; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996; Mastrocinque 1999; Olshausen 2000.
- 128 On the history of Parthia after Mithridates II, see Ziegler 1964, 20-32; Arnaud 1987.
- 129 "Arsakes called Gotarzes" and his wife Ashibatu appear in Babylonian texts dated 90-87/86 BC. Thus the reign of Gotarzes began as co-ruler of Mithridates II in 90 BC, see Olbrycht 1998b, 107. Some texts from Babylonia mention then king "Arsakes" for the period Nisan (April) 86-81/80 BC, see Oelsner 1975. This Arsakes is to be identified with Gotarzes, ruling after his fathers death.
- 130 Olbrycht 1998b, 109.
- 131 Olbrycht 1998b, 110-113.
- 132 Just. *Epit.* 40.1.1-3.
- 133 So rightly Bellinger 1949, 80. Cf. Sullivan 1990, 373, n. 8. The timing of Tigranes' intervention in Syria can be surmised from Just. *Epit.* 40.1.4 and App. *Syr.* 48.
- 134 App. *Syr.* 48 and Strab. 11.14.15. On Antiochos (X) Eusebes, see Grainger 1997, 33-34.
- 135 On Tigranes' empire after 83 BC, see Sullivan 1990, 102-105; Garsoian 2005.
- 136 This is implied by Sall. *Hist.* fr. 6.3.
- 137 Strab. 11.14.15; Isid. *Char. Mans. Parth.* 6; App. *Syr.* 48-49; Plut. *Luc.* 14.5, 21, 26; Eutr. 6.8.4; Dio Cass. 36.6.2; 36.14.2; Oros. 6.4.9. Cf. Geyer 1936, 971; Debevoise 1938, 51; Chaumont 1987, 420.
- 138 Chaumont 1987, 421. The title appears in Plut. *Luc.* 14.5; App. *Syr.* 48; Joseph. *AJ* 13.16.4; Just. *Epit.* 40.1; Eutr. 6.8.
- 139 Cf. Sullivan 1990, 101-102.
- 140 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 29.6.
- 141 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 38.1.
- 142 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 38.8; App. *Mith.* 87. Cf. Dio Cass. 36.1.2, 3.1. Cassius Dio underscores that there was a quarrel between Arsakes and Tigranes concerning

a territory subjugated by the Armenian king. On the negotiations, see Ziegler 1964, 24-25.

143 Sall. *Hist.* 4, fragm. 69 (Maurembrecher ed.)

144 The letter is based on a close knowledge of eastern reality and propagandistic notions. Pompeius captured the private archives of Mithridates at Kainon Chorion, see Plut. *Pomp.* 37.

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Abbreviations

- IDelos* A. Plassart, F. Durrbach et al. 1926-1972. *Inscriptions de Délos* 1-7. Paris.
- IGLS* L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, M. Sartre & P.-L. Gatiér 1911-1986. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Paris.

The Ambitions of Mithridates VI: Hellenistic Kingship and Modern Interpretations

Jesper Majbom Madsen

Introduction

In 88 BC Mithridates was on top of the world. He had just defeated Rome in a battle, where Roman and Bithynian forces had attacked Pontos on three different fronts, and consequently he conquered the Roman province Asia. Mithridates had proved his ability as a general and king in the eyes of his troops, his court and equally importantly in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, who apparently received him as a liberator freeing them from the Roman yoke (Just. *Epit.* 38.3; App. *Mith.* 3.21). In Athens Aristion and other influential men within the ruling political class now turned towards him and Pontos, as the power that was to free the Hellenic world from the rule of Rome (App. *Mith.* 5.28-29). It was Mithridates' finest hour. He stood forth as the ruler of an extensive and resourceful kingdom reaching throughout most of the Black Sea region, which offered many economic and demographic resources, and was allied to the king of Armenia Maior, another important power in the East. In contrast, Rome was troubled not only by the instability, which followed the Social War but also, and presumably more importantly, by the accelerating conflict between members of the ruling class. The Senate had announced a declaration of war against Pontos, but Sulla and Marius were fighting each other to obtain the command of the necessary forces.

At this stage Mithridates must have been self-confident and felt that the world lay at his feet. After Rome's fall from power in the region, he may easily have seen Asia Minor as a natural part of the Pontic Kingdom and he may not have felt terribly threatened by a Rome in internal dispute with an unclear situation in Italy.

Yet we should not mistake the outcome of the war and the responses from the Greek cities which followed, for Mithridates' political strategy prior to the attack of the Roman commissions in 89 BC. It has been a common assumption throughout modern scholarship that Mithridates was the aggressive party in the conflict. Mommsen, who firmly believed in the idea of Roman defensive imperialism, described Mithridates as an oriental despotic sultan whose lust

for power and conquest caused the outbreak of war in 89 BC.¹ This view was largely followed throughout the 20th century, where Mithridates, with a few exceptions,² has been presented as the aggressive party deliberately challenging Rome in a strategy, which, partly out of hatred of Rome and partly out of a desire to enhance Pontic influence in Asia Minor, aimed at a direct confrontation with the Romans.³

Another explanation for these wars has been scholars' view of Mithridates as the Hellenistic king who challenged Rome in an attempt to liberate the Greek world from Roman rule.⁴ Where Mommsen and later Bengtson described Mithridates as an oriental despot, with the traits of a sultan, the idea of a saviour king has a tendency to overemphasise the Greekness of Mithridates. As such, Mithridates was either seen in the light of an Osmanic and Eastern despot, who attacked the civilised West, or as a Greek fighting the barbaric and anti-democratic Romans to liberate the more sophisticated Greeks from their rule. Both views are much related either to their authors' contemporary views on the modern Osmanic state or to the idea of Rome as the violent, unsophisticated and undemocratic superpower dominating the world.

In a recent article published in the Black Sea Centre's Danish series, Professor Vincent Gabrielsen combines the question of Mithridates' ambitions with his role as a saviour king from the East. Gabrielsen argues, convincingly, for a more structural explanation to the Romano-Pontic conflict by pointing out that the essential aim of the Hellenistic kings was to maintain and enlarge their kingdoms in order to maintain a firm grip on power. Large or small, the aim, however, was the same, namely to extend their kingdoms as far as possible. Gabrielsen argues that Mithridates' quest to expand the Pontic Kingdom was notorious and that his imperialistic policies made him and Pontos a significant power in the East. As Mithridates became strong enough to challenge the Romans, he became ready to take over Rome's dominant position in Asia Minor and as the Greek cities in Asia grew increasingly tired of Rome and particularly Roman *publicani*, Mithridates had both an excuse and the power to step into the role of a saviour king, who came from the East to liberate the Greeks once again, this time from the Romans.⁵

As a natural consequence Mithridates' policy of expansion was bound to collide with Roman interests and war between Pontos and Rome was, in that sense, unavoidable. Gabrielsen raises the interpretation of the war between Rome and Pontos above the trivial discussion of whether Mithridates' policies towards Rome was forced by a general wickedness, an irrational and uncontrollable hatred towards the Roman people, or influenced by an extraordinary desire for power and conquest. Yet, Mithridates is still seen as the aggressive party challenging Rome's dominant position in Asia Minor in an attempt to overtake Rome's role and thereby as the one mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First Mithridatic Wars. It is undoubtedly correct that Mithridates was ambitious and under the same pressure to defend and ideally enlarge his kingdom as other Hellenistic kings. But the question that remains to be

answered is still, whether he in his political strategy deliberately aimed for a war with Rome that would end Roman rule in Asia Minor.

Ambitions and dreams

A realistic picture of Mithridates' ambitions and his opinion of Rome is difficult to come by. The available literary sources, mostly from the Roman period, are divided between Cicero's picture of Mithridates as the king who, driven by a desire for conquest, attacked Roman interests in the region (Cic. *Mur.* 11), and Plutarch's description of a victim of ambitious Roman senators and generals, who competed to obtain commands against powerful and prestigious enemies (Plut. *Luc.* 5.1, 5.6). Such complicated and immensely prejudiced assessments of the parties' responsibility and roles as victim or aggressor provides the best argument for seeking a structuralistic approach to the outbreak of the wars between Rome and Pontos.

Mithridates was no doubt both ambitious and eager to conquer the world. During the first 25 years of his rule he transformed Pontos from a smaller and relatively weak kingdom in the central and northern part of Anatolia, with close ties to Rome, to a large and much more autonomous power controlling most of northern and central Anatolia, Kolchis, as well as the northern and northwestern parts of the Black Sea region.⁶

It is also an obvious assumption that Mithridates hated Rome. How could he not? Had the Romans not taken Phrygia away from the Pontic crown after the death of Mithridates V? Did they not have the habit of interfering in what he must have seen as Anatolian affairs? Were they not simply the strongest power in the region? There is also every reason to believe that Mithridates, as his power in Anatolia and in the Black Sea region grew, hoped that one day he would enlarge his kingdom to contain all of Asia Minor, force Rome out of the region, and become the strongest power in the East.

But such assessments of Mithridates' dreams and ambitions remain assumptions, which may be of little value to the understanding of the conflict between Rome and Pontos or to the strategy followed by Mithridates in his attempt to make his kingdom strong enough to have a chance of survival. Instead of focusing on Mithridates' assumed dreams and ambitions or on his personal sentiments towards Rome, it may be more fruitful to direct our attention towards the policies actually followed by Pontos, as this may provide us with an idea of whether or not Mithridates aimed at a final clash over the control of Asia Minor or rather sought simply to establish a strong and vigorous Kingdom of Pontos.

Pontic policies between 115-89 BC

With his various attempts to take over Paphlagonia, Kappadokia, Galatia and Bithynia between 107 and 90 BC, Mithridates obviously did choose a policy

that eventually brought him on a collision course with Rome. The annexation of his neighbouring kingdoms may well be explained as part of a strategy to increase Pontic influence in Anatolia and thereby as an act resulting from the ideology of Hellenistic kings and their need to continuously enlarge their domains. Still, the expansion of the Pontic Kingdom in Anatolia need not have been part of a strategy aimed at eliminating Roman influence in Asia Minor. Closely analysed, Mithridates' imperial policy, between his accession and the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War, was not aimed at a final encounter meant to end Roman rule in Asia Minor. Instead, Mithridates orientated his expansions towards areas where Rome potentially would have few interests or limited reasons for objecting.

The first enlargement of Pontos, the takeover of Armenia Minor and Kolchis, was of little or no interest to Rome, just as Mithridates' assistance to Greek cities and his fighting of nomadic tribes in the north and northwestern parts of the Black Sea was unlikely to have caused much disturbance in Rome. Step by step, Mithridates had enlarged his kingdom significantly by placing by far the largest part of the Black Sea region under Pontic control without any serious objections from Rome. Mithridates had now transformed his kingdom into a significant power by expanding into eastern Anatolia and the northern part of the Black Sea region, away from Roman interests and the areas bordering the province of Asia.⁷

The first move of Mithridates that conflicted with Roman interests came in 107 BC with the joint annexation of Paphlagonia by the Bithynian king Nikomedes III and Mithridates.⁸ Unlike Mithridates, Nikomedes did not have the same options for expanding his possessions, as Bithynia lay squeezed in between Roman Asia and Pontos further to the east. Only Paphlagonia, at the end of the 2nd century BC a rather weak constellation, offered a realistic option for expansion and one that even permitted Nikomedes to conduct a military operation away from the Roman province. How well the two Anatolian kings coordinated their actions against Paphlagonia is difficult to say, but Mithridates used the opportunity to take over the most eastern part of Paphlagonia, which allowed him to further expand his kingdom, even in his home region, and prevent Bithynia's borders coming too close to the heart of Pontos.

Rome responded to the struggle for power in Anatolia by sending an envoy to demand a full withdrawal from Paphlagonia. But as Rome hesitated to back her demand with force, Nikomedes installed his son as the king of Paphlagonia while Mithridates moved into Galatia and added another territory to his Pontic Kingdom. Rome's unwillingness to force the kings to accept her demands has been explained as a matter of resources. The wars with Jugurtha in 107 BC and the Cimbrians in 104 BC are often seen as the main explanation why Rome did not move into Anatolia and re-establish control over Paphlagonia. The wars in Africa and against the German tribes proved to be militarily challenging as well as demanding of resources. The Jugurthan

War also further demonstrated the weaknesses within the governing classes of Rome. Seen in this light, it is no wonder that Rome did not try to force Bithynia and Pontos to comply with her demand for a full withdrawal and risk opening another area of instability in a zone, where Rome had few troops and depended on the loyalty of local kings. Paphlagonia was simply far too unimportant for a military intervention of this character.

Whatever reason Rome had for not putting force behind her words, she gave the Anatolian kings the impression that she was either unwilling or unable to interfere in Anatolia at least as long as her own province of Asia was not directly threatened. The Anatolian struggle for power was now taken to Kappadokia, where the longtime Pontic influence through Mithridates' sister Laodike at the end of the 2nd century BC was replaced by more direct Pontic control after the killing of King Ariarathes and the *de facto* rule of Laodike.⁹ When in 101 BC Nikomedes III approached Laodike with marriage proposals, Mithridates expelled the Bithynians and took over the control of Kappadokia. Once again Rome did not respond to Mithridates' expansion of Pontos and remained passive until 97 BC, where the Kappadokians revolted against Pontic rule.¹⁰ Both Nikomedes III and Mithridates then sent delegations to the Roman Senate to argue for their own particular right to Kappadokia, which gave Rome the opportunity to restate her demand for a complete withdrawal from both Kappadokia and Paphlagonia.

That the question of Kappadokia was taken up in the Roman Senate shows that Rome was still regarded as the leading power in Anatolia. Mithridates had without question the resources to put down the revolt, regain complete control in Kappadokia, and reject Bithynian influence. But the fact that he felt the need to have his annexation of Kappadokia approved in Rome strongly suggests that he, at the beginning of the 1st century BC, had no intentions of engaging in a conflict with the strongest military power in the region.

Rome's status as the strongest power in Asia Minor, and the eagerness of both Nikomedes III and Mithridates to maintain good relations with the Romans are further underlined by their withdrawal from the occupied territories. Certainly, Rome was less troubled at the beginning of the 1st century BC than she had been between 107-104 BC, but the kings, particularly Mithridates, who controlled the larger part of Anatolia and the Black Sea region, could have brought Rome's desire for a war in Anatolia to the test, had he wished to see how far Rome was ready to go. That he did not meet the challenge indicates that an ultimate contest with Rome was not the aim of Mithridates' strategy. His aim was more likely to maximise the extension of his Pontic Kingdom as far as possible, as had been the ambition of many other Hellenistic kings before him, but he did not wish to challenge Rome and Roman interests to the point of war. This strategy meant that Mithridates followed a policy that inevitably would collide with Roman interests and force him to comply with whatever demands Rome was ready to fight for. In other words, Mithridates' future expansion, at least in Anatolia, depended on the political situation in

Rome and her willingness or ability, at any given moment, to wage war on Pontos.

This strategy is even more apparent in the years leading up to the First Mithridatic War. Just after his loss of face in the Senate and his forced withdrawal from Kappadokia, the death of Nikomedes III in 94 BC and the alliance with the king of Armenia together with the outbreak of the Social War once again turned the balance of power in favour of Mithridates. A weak Bithynia and an alliance with Armenia gave Mithridates the upper hand in Anatolia at a time, when Rome was placed under severe pressure by the allies who for generations had constituted the military backbone of Rome's many victories. No matter whether the Italian allies wished to obtain full Roman rights¹¹ or to break the Roman domain,¹² the war represented a serious challenge to Rome, which could weaken her world domination or at least her ability to interfere in affairs outside Italy. By the late 90's BC the Kingdom of Pontos had become a major power in Asia Minor, strong enough to match Rome, at least in her present situation. A new attempt to carry out a longer lasting expansion of Pontos was now a realistic option. Mithridates sent Sokrates, the bastard son of Nikomedes III, into Bithynia to expel Nikomedes IV, and in Kappadokia Armenian forces moved in and replaced the king who was little more than a Roman puppet.¹³

The use of Sokrates and Armenia indicates that Mithridates did not want to play too direct a role in the attack on Bithynia and Kappadokia, but tried to place himself in a position free of blame by placing the overt responsibility on Sokrates and the Armenian king. Again, the strategy used underlines that Mithridates, despite his favourable circumstances, did not want to challenge Rome too openly. That Mithridates' annexation of Kappadokia and Bithynia was not an attempt to stir up a war with Rome is even further underlined by his complete withdrawal from Bithynia and Kappadokia when the Roman commission, sent to restore the kings, ordered him to re-establish the fallen kingdoms. Had a war with Rome been part of the strategy, it is difficult to explain why Mithridates would have withdrawn from Bithynia and left a strategically important position open to Rome; one that brought Roman forces in control of the Bosphoros and close to vital cities in the Pontic homeland.

The whole annexation of Bithynia and Kappadokia in 90 BC seems at first rather unclear and raises various questions. For instance, why did Mithridates take over the two neighbouring kingdoms, knowing that they had Rome's support, if he was not ready for a war with Rome? And, did he really believe that Rome would not see through the use of Sokrates and Armenia?

Such questions are difficult to answer, especially without seriously underestimating Mithridates' political understanding and talents as a regent. Today his strategy seems unfocused. If the plan was to avoid war, it failed utterly and the attempt to avoid war after the first withdrawals failed as well. Certainly, Mithridates did come out of the first battles victoriously, but before that his withdrawal exposed his kingdom to a situation, where Rome had a favourable

strategical position, which allowed a three front war to be waged on Pontos. If Mithridates aimed for war with the Romans in 90 BC, his pullback from Bithynia can only be judged as a serious lack of military judgement.

Admittedly Mithridates did make a series of inexplicable choices in the period leading up to the First Mithridatic War, but it may be too simplistic to see these actions as plain incompetence. Instead, it is better to look for a more rational explanation for Mithridates' decision to take over Bithynia and Kappadokia at a moment, when he knew Rome would strongly oppose his actions. It is still convincing to see the takeover of Bithynia and Kappadokia as a part of the Hellenistic king's imperialistic ideology and his policy to enlarge his kingdom as far as possible, as pointed out by Vincent Gabrielsen. But, Mithridates seems not to have desired a war with Rome, at least not in 90 BC, and was apparently more eager to avoid war than to wage it.

Instead, he tried to use what he believed to be a weak moment for Rome to take over the remaining two kingdoms in Anatolia, which would make Pontos the other major power in Asia Minor sufficiently strong to match Rome, which Mithridates, at the time maybe rightly so, expected to become less powerful due to the civil war. When considering Mithridates' ambition as regards to Roman Asia, it is essential to remember that he did not carry through an attack on Asia until he was attacked by the Roman commission, despite the fact that he knew the Social War had weakened Rome.

When Mithridates understood that Rome was not overrun by the *socii* but was ready to intervene in Anatolia, he tried to avoid the approaching conflict by pulling back from his new domains. He thereby placed himself in a vulnerable position accepting a political defeat to Rome in order to meet her terms: one that must have been noticed with interest by other players in the Anatolian sphere both inside and outside the Pontic domain. If he then finally chose to attack Kappadokia and thus went against demands from Rome, beginning the First Mithridatic War, it was because his kingdom and his royal prestige could not continue to bow to humiliation from the Roman commission members and the weak, although Roman affiliated, Nikomedes IV.

Roman ambitions

Their readiness to characterise Mithridates as the aggressive party challenging Roman rule has caused scholars to disregard and/or overlook Roman magistrates' and pro-magistrates' eager attempts to stir up and prolong the wars against Pontos. As argued above, the Roman commission headed by Aquillius and Cassius was responsible for the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War. By encouraging Nikomedes IV to attack Pontos in 89 BC and by attacking Mithridates when he later withdrew to his previous position in Kappadokia, the commission never looked for a peaceful solution. Instead they provoked Mithridates into beginning the war, which the Pontic withdrawal

from Bithynia and Kappadokia had started. When Mithridates to everyone's surprise won the first round and conquered Roman Asia, the Senate declared war on Pontos. But instead of approaching the danger as an urgent issue, members of the Roman elite felt secure enough to fight amongst themselves to obtain command of the Roman armies.¹⁴ Later, after the First Mithridatic War, Pontos was again attack by Roman forces, this time led by Murena who had been left behind to reorganise Asia. The so-called Second Mithridatic War is best described as a war of plunder, used as an opportunity to collect booty and enhance prestige, essential elements for succeeding in a political career. Mithridates hesitated to meet Murena in open battle and encouraged Sulla to respect the agreement between the Kingdom of Pontos and Sulla made in 85 BC. Only when a second attack by Murena convinced Mithridates that war was Rome's official policy did he move out to defeat Murena.¹⁵

The Third Mithridatic War opened with a Pontic attack on Bithynia, which after the death of Nikomedes IV had become a Roman province. It has been common practice to see this hostile move as part of a well-planned attack on Rome. Pontos was, no doubt, threatened by the Roman presence in Bithynia, which brought Roman forces closer to the Pontic interior and gave Rome control over the vital straits between Europe and Asia.¹⁶ Mithridates had, according to our sources, made an alliance with Sertorius, the general leading the revolt in Spain, and organised payment for his troops as indicated by a rise in the production of Pontic coins.¹⁷ Pontos was indeed prepared for a war on Rome, but to give Mithridates the entire responsibility for beginning this war is too simplistic. Mithridates tried to reach a peace agreement on two separate occasions: once, when Sulla was still alive, and again after the dictator's death. As part of the first attempt, the Pontic delegation was ordered to withdraw completely from Kappadokia. Later on, when a second delegation reached Rome, both the Senate and the consul showed no wish to make peace. Instead, Roman magistrates argued for a new war on Pontos, and Lucullus managed to shift his provincial appointment from the peaceful Gallia Cisalpina to a command against Pontos. The question of who was to command was part of the competition among Roman magistrates to obtain and secure their share of power in the new political situation emerging after the death of Sulla. If Mithridates did indeed make an alliance with Sertorius it is most likely to have happened after Rome refused to sign a treaty, something Mithridates may reasonably have seen as a declaration of war.

Two episodes challenge the view of Rome as the aggressor looking for an opportunity to wage war on Pontos and the attempt to view Mithridates as the more reluctant party trying to avoid open conflict. The first episode took place in 97 BC, when Rome ordered Pontos and Bithynia to withdraw from their positions in Paphlagonia and Kappadokia. If Rome politically and militarily was strong enough to force the Anatolian kings to follow her demands and if it is true that Roman magistrates were keen to wage war as a way to accumulate wealth and prestige, why did Rome not invade Pontos when the

political situation had become more settled after the Jugurthine and Cimbrian Wars? The other episode occurred during the Social War, when the Italian allies, according to Diodoros, approached Mithridates hoping to persuade him to join them.¹⁸ The Italian approach to Mithridates is interesting as it raises the question why the Italian allies asked him to join the alliance, if he did not at least appear as an enemy of Rome.

The situation in the early 90's BC was in many ways different than in the years just prior to the First Mithridatic War. Rome was in the middle of the Celtiberian War (98-93 BC), which certainly did draw on Rome's military resources. But it was not lack of interest that delayed Rome's attack on Pontos. According to Plutarch, one of the main reasons why Marius visited Anatolia in 99-98 BC was to stir up a war on Pontos, which could provide him with a new, important, and prestigious command.¹⁹ Mithridates did not fall for the trick and gave no excuse for Marius to argue for war. Whether Rome and her magistrates did regard Pontos and Mithridates as the perfect enemy already from the beginning of the 1st century BC is another open question. Mithridates was no doubt successful and resourceful, but he was also a client king with ties to Rome. A war on Pontos over eastern Paphlagonia, some of Galatia, and Kappadokia could lead to a much larger war jeopardizing both stability and Roman control over Anatolia in general. From the Senate's point of view this also required troops from the West, and there was no reason to risk war with an ambitious but also loyal and immensely resourceful king, who even showed Rome the respect of seeking her approval for his territorial gains; particularly not if the primary reason was to provide a forum in which Marius, no hero to the Senate, could regain some of his lost popularity with the Roman plebs.

The reasons why the Italian allies approached Mithridates are complex. If the story is more than just a convenient attempt to connect Mithridates to each and every alliance against Rome, it remains obscure why the Italian allies approached Mithridates and what they expected from this contact. In the last years of the war, the situation for the Italian alliance seemed more and more desperate, and they may have been looking for any help they could get. It was hardly any secret that the relationship between Rome and Mithridates had suffered from the Roman order to withdraw from Kappadokia, just as Mithridates improved his position after the death of Nikomedes III and the alliance with Armenia left the impression of a strong Pontic state. But if Mithridates was an obvious partner in a war on Rome, why was he not contacted earlier, when the Italian *socii* carefully planned the break with Rome? Mithridates never joined the Italian cause and the *socii*'s request, if it ever was made, is likely to have been a last resort.

In summation: Mithridates' policies towards Rome were in many ways defensive. Certainly his conquests, particularly in Anatolia, were against Roman interests. Yet it is important to stress that Mithridates did not attack the Roman Empire before the Roman commission and Nikomedes IV attacked his interests. When engaging in Kappadokia and Bithynia in 90 BC, Mithri-

dates did not launch an attack on Asia, but tried to conceal his takeover of the two Anatolian kingdoms through the use of Sokrates and Armenia. Had he felt strong enough to challenge Rome and at that time desired a war on Rome, this would have been the best time to strike Asia. Instead, Mithridates chose a strategy, where he accepted every demand Rome was ready to put force behind indicating that war with the Romans was to be avoided. What Mithridates aimed at was enlarging his kingdom as far as possible, without engaging in a war with Rome, something he knew had historically led to the destruction of the challenging kingdom. Mithridates was not simply a victim of Roman imperialism or the ambitions of Roman magistrates pursuing a political career in Rome. His attempt to enlarge his kingdom in Anatolia was bound to collide with Roman interests, particularly from the time he invaded Bithynia and turned his interest towards the borders of the Roman Empire. Yet, what seems equally clear is that Mithridates was not the aggressor that modern scholars have believed and believe him to be. The two images of the hateful king and the saviour king freeing the Greek world from the rule of Rome are exaggerated and do not take into consideration the actual policy followed by Rome and Pontos accordingly. As argued by Gabrielsen, Mithridates' strategy in Anatolia was influenced by both his own ambitions and local expectations to enlarge his kingdom, which takes us further than the trivial discussion of Mithridates as the wicked, hateful king. It is also convincing that an important part of his policy was the avoidance of a war with Rome. Today, in retrospect, this may seem naive. Yet at the beginning of the first century BC, when Rome had hesitated both in 107 and again in 101 BC and was further weakened by both the Social War and internal disputes, it may have been the right time not to attack Rome, which would have forced Rome to respond, but rather to attack the weak client kingdoms controlled primarily by the Roman nobility.

Notes

- 1 Mommsen 1925, 280-281.
- 2 Badian 1958, 289; Glew 1977, 404.
- 3 Reinach 1895, 294-295; Bengtson 1975, 252; McGing 1986, 85; Strobel 1996, 188; Hind 1994, 144-145.
- 4 Duggan 1958, 9; Antonelli 1992, 7.
- 5 Gabrielsen 2005, 35-38.
- 6 For a detailed account of Mithridates' conquests and extended political and military influence in Anatolia and the Black Sea region, see Hind 1994, 129-164.
- 7 Hind 1994, 139-140.
- 8 Just. *Epit.* 37.4.
- 9 Just. *Epit.* 38.1.
- 10 Plut. *Sull.* 5.3.
- 11 Cic. *Phil.* 12.27; see also Gabba 1994, 105, 118.
- 12 Mouritsen 1998, 136-137.

- 13 McGing 1986, 79; App. *Mith.* 2.10; Just. *Epit.* 38.3.
- 14 For a more detailed treatment of the First Mithridatic War, see Hind 1994, 144-149.
- 15 App. *Mith.* 9.65.
- 16 Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 217; Sherwin-White 1994, 233-234; Olshausen 1978, 432; Reinach 1895, 315.
- 17 Callataÿ, 1997, 341.
- 18 Diod. Sic. 37.2.11.
- 19 Plut. *Mar.* 31.

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Mithridates VI Eupator: Victim or Aggressor?

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Once he gets down to the events leading immediately to the First Mithridatic War, Appianos, often regarded as a not very good historian, presents a consistently coherent interpretation of events.¹ After initially acquiescing in the restoration of Ariobarzanes to Kappadokia, Mithridates expels him again, and Nikomedes from Bithynia. Manius Aquillius restores them, and when Nikomedes is forced by the Romans into a plundering raid of Pontos, he meets no opposition as Mithridates wanted “many and just complaints for war” (*Mith.* 11). Pelopidas, aware that the Roman officers wanted to start a war, pretended otherwise, to acquire “more, and more fitting, reasons for the coming war” (*Mith.* 13). He tells the Romans that Mithridates was not weak or unprepared to defend himself. The Bithynians agree. Mithridates, they maintained, had been plotting against Nikomedes for a long time; he expelled Nikomedes, whom you Romans confirmed on the throne, a move designed more against you than against us; he pays no heed to your orders, such as your ban on Asian kings entering Europe (his annexation of the Chersonese demonstrates that). Furthermore just look at his massive preparations, they urge: Thrace, Scythia, Armenia as allies, the Ptolemies and Seleukids being courted too, and a huge fleet. Against whom is this all designed? Not against us, but against you Romans. He is angry with you about Phrygia and Kappadokia, and he is afraid of your growing power. Such was the Bithynian case. After yet another Pontic invasion of Kappadokia, Pelopidas presents the Roman envoys with a summary of Mithridates’ complaints, coupled with a threatening inventory of Pontic military strength, and an offer to send the whole dispute to Rome for arbitration. But the Romans have made up their mind about what they are going to do, and Pelopidas is summarily dismissed. Appianos does not state it directly, but although the Roman ambassadors had said only that they would be restoring Ariobarzanes to Kappadokia, the positioning of the Roman allied forces (*Mith.* 17) makes it quite clear that they intended far more than this. Appianos had no doubt that the war was now about to begin.

After the war, Mithridates claims the Roman generals started it and he just acted in self-defence, out of necessity rather than design (*Mith.* 56), but Sulla will have none of it: you brought on the war, he says, by preventing the restoration of Nikomedes; you had been planning war for a long time hoping to rule the world: events in Kappadokia, Phrygia and Bithynia were

just excuses to cover your real intentions. The clearest evidence is your huge military preparations, when you were at war with no one, and above all the timing: you knew we were too preoccupied with the Social War to oppose you (*Mith.* 57).

Appianos' account may be coherent, but is it right? Standard analyses of events leading to the First Mithridatic War, while questioning particular aspects of Appianos' interpretation of what happened, tended until recently to accept it (more or less).² Serious shortcomings, however, in Appianos' version have been convincingly highlighted, particularly in relation to his scapegoating of the Roman commissioners in Asia Minor.³ For present purposes, however, my perspective is a Pontic one. The question I want to address is whether the picture of Mithridates, scheming hard to cast himself in the role of the aggrieved, but in fact with a long-standing desire for war with Rome, might be right, or is merely the interpretation of our sources looking back and confusing what happened with what was planned. Roman policy and actions, of course, come into play, but it would be possible for Appianos to misunderstand the Roman role in events, and still be correct about the ambitions of Mithridates. Karl Strobel has argued at length that Mithridates was fundamentally a compliant Hellenistic king, who respected the structures of the Hellenistic world, and was bent on avoiding open conflict with Rome; the real aggressor was Bithynia.⁴ In this article I will be challenging that position, and reasserting the older view of an ambitious Mithridates, who does move consciously, if carefully, to a show-down with Rome. I will be limiting my comments to the first war. There may have been particular circumstances leading to the third war, but both Appianos (*Mith.* 70) and Sallust (*Hist.* 4.69 Maur.) state that Mithridates regarded it as no more than a continuation of the first war, for which Rome was responsible. So the vital question is, who started it all?

It should be conceded at the outset that to argue that the ancient sources worked backwards from their general assessment of Mithridates to specifics, is a good starting-point for questioning their reliability. When you look backwards from the end of the story it is easy to see in Mithridates, as I have, "one of the most aggressive and determined opponents the Senate and People of Rome ever faced".⁵ I believe that is a correct judgement, but also very general, and possibly misleading, if it is taken to mean that right from the beginning of his reign Mithridates was bent on world conquest. While I did not intend it that way, the ancient sources probably did. They observed the conquests and violence of the first war and bitter determination of the king in the third war, and some deduced from this that he was a sort of eastern Hannibal, imbued with a deep hatred for all things Roman, and equipped with plans for war, right from his accession (App. *Mith.* 102, 109; Plut. *Pomp.* 41; Dio Cass. 37.11.1; Florus 1.40.15). They then filled in the details of their accounts retrospectively in line with this view. That could be how it worked – and the Hannibal part of the story certainly looks like retrospective myth-making – but the possibil-

ity remains that they got the aggressive Mithridates right, even if they overdramatised the picture.

The Mithridatic family background may provide a context for the outlook of Mithridates Eupator. Although they belonged to what was clearly a Persian family, it was generally agreed since the time of Meyer that claims to descent from Achaemenid royalty were propaganda, devised, particularly in the time of Eupator, to give the family added lustre and nobility.⁶ Bosworth and Wheately, however, have made a strong case that the family was directly related to Dareios himself.⁷ This should serve to remind us of the importance of the Iranian roots for Pontos and its most famous king, although that is not to say that Greekness and Alexander imitation were not a vital ingredient of Mithridates' identity.⁸ The Persian character of the kingdom is highlighted, for instance, by the temple of the Persian deities at Zela, which controlled extensive territory under the authority of the priest and where, Strabon tells us, the people of Pontos made their most sacred vows (Strab. 11.8.4, 12.3.37). Persian names are found scattered throughout the kingdom, and of course, Mithridates Eupator made sure to give all his sons good Persian names.⁹ He used eunuchs and had a harem (or at least practised multiple marriage), called his governors satraps, called himself, an inscription from Nymphaion seems to show, "great king of kings", sacrificed to Ahuramazda (evidently) on mountaintops like the Persian kings at Pasargadai.¹⁰ It is surely highly indicative of the Persian cultural character of the kingdom that he, and his predecessors, sought validation among their subjects through their family's claim to Persian descent. It may also explain the readiness of the Seleukid monarchs to marry into the Pontic royal family, a deal whose advantage to the Seleukids is by no means self-evident: it is easy to understand what Pontos got out of marriage alliances with the mightiest of Alexander's successor kingdoms, but not so obvious what the Seleukids thought they were getting. The answer of Sherwin-White and Kuhrt is attractive:¹¹ Pontic marriages offered them something of "the grandeur, hierarchy and courtly royal ideology of the Achaemenids". The Mithridatids got Hellenistic recognition, the Seleukids Iranian respectability.

This Persian element in the identity of Mithridates Eupator is important for its potential influence on his royal outlook. He was the descendant of mighty Achaemenid kings, for whom one of the characteristics of royal greatness was conquest. But Mithridates was no fool. He learnt from his grandfather, Pharnakes, that imperial expansion in Asia Minor was problematic, and he moved with care, although that in itself does not mean he lacked the sort of imperial ambitions that I am suggesting his Achaemenid family background might have given him.¹² What exactly Mithridates was thinking, for instance, when he invaded Greece during the first war, we are not told. There may well have been "a touch of improvisation about the operations",¹³ but the question of what he thought he was doing in Greece in the first place is rarely asked. With Rome still not responding to his conquest of Asia Minor, the opportu-

nity for further success offered itself. But why was Greece attractive? I have suggested that it might have been a mixture of aggressive defence – protecting Asia by fighting away from it – and the lure of his philhellenic image: the saviour of the Asiatic Greeks also saving the mainland Greeks. I would now add the possibility of Achaemenid thinking. This was the land Mithridates' great forbears Dareios and Xerxes (whose name two of his sons bore) aspired to conquer. By taking Greece was he trying to succeed where they failed?

This aggressive thinking would certainly not be entertained by the sort of compliant king, who, according to Strobel, fits in with the general trend of late Hellenistic history: Eupator's policy of avoiding direct confrontation with Rome, he argues, "coincided with the political structures developed within the Hellenistic world since the Peace of Apameia". He just wanted a nice secure Black Sea-based kindom "that respected Roman supremacy".¹⁴ I do not believe the evidence supports this picture of a neatly structured world in which everyone understood their place, played by the rules and "respected" Rome.¹⁵ To be sure, you could try to be "a good boy", so to speak, in this Roman-dominated world. The classic example is Attalos II of Pergamon, enunciating in his famous letter to the priest of Kybele the same sort of obsequious pro-Roman policy as that advocated by the Greek politician Kallikrates.¹⁶ But if some policy-makers felt that this was the most advantageous course to follow, there were just as many who did not. Antiochos IV certainly did not play by Rome's, or anyone else's, rules when he almost succeeded in conquering Egypt in 168 BC. When threatened unequivocally by C. Popillius Laenas (Polyb. 29.27), he made his calculations and backed off, but he had undoubtedly tried to extract the greatest possible advantage for himself out of Roman preoccupations in Macedonia. His decision to yield to Popillius was not based on a policy of avoiding armed conflict with Rome, merely on the self-interested consideration that war, at this time, was not worth the risk. Pharnakes did not recognise any rules either, when he made his challenge for dominance in Asia Minor. Demetrios, the rightful heir to the Seleukid throne, but held in Rome since 175 BC, defied Roman wishes by escaping in 162 BC, repossessing his kingdom and executing the Roman-approved Antiochos V (Polyb. 31.11-15; *I Macc.* 7-8; *Jos. AJ* 12.414-419; *App. Syr.* 47; *Diod.* 31.32). He also killed the Roman-backed pretender Timarchos, and the Jewish prince Judas Makkabaios, with whom Rome was supposed to have a treaty;¹⁷ and then installed Orophernes on the throne of Kappadokia. The Senate did not like any of this, but they made little decisive effort to stop it. They did become involved to the extent of proposing that Kappadokia be split between Ariarathes V and Orophernes, but they made no response when Attalos II of Pergamon used military force to re-establish Ariarathes on the throne.¹⁸

That was in 156 BC. In that year too Prusias II invaded Pergamon, and for a long time ignored the Roman embassies sent to stop the war, even maltreating them on one occasion.¹⁹ At about this time Ariarathes and Attalos displayed no hesitation in attacking the city of Priene, which appealed for assistance first

to Rhodes and then Rome (Polyb. 33.6; Ager 1996, no. 143). And while Pergamon and Bithynia were conducting their war, Rhodes and Crete were also engaged in a war (155-153 BC) that attracted little urgent interest in Rome.²⁰ In 149 Attalos II also invaded Bithynia to help Nikomedes II take the throne from Prusias II: there is no sign that he either asked permission from Rome or that the Senate reacted at all (App. *Mith.* 4-7).

I do not believe that there were any obvious late Hellenistic structures into which Mithridates' policies can be made to fit. The main parameters were obvious: the revolt of Andriskos, the Achaian War and the war against Aristonikos all demonstrated that however lethargic the Senate may have been about local, or even interregal, disputes, in Asia Minor and Greece, if you opposed Rome directly with military force, you were going to face her armies. That was absolutely clear, and if some thought it was worth the risk, others did not. How far you could go, short of outright military challenge, was difficult to gauge, but some Hellenistic kings, including most obviously Mithridates, tried to find out.

Pontic conquests in the Black Sea are seen by Strobel as not really relevant to the issue of Mithridates' ambitions in relation to Rome and world conquest, there being, as he claims, no Roman presence or interests there to limit Eupator.²¹ This is disputable. Macedonia's eastern frontier with the Thracians was of considerable interest to Rome. In 119, 114, 112, and 109 BC Roman armies were engaged, both successfully and unsuccessfully, with the Thracians.²² Roman interest in Thrace must have given them very serious concern about what was happening in the Black Sea, at least on its west coast. But Rome had shown concern with the area even earlier. In the treaty between Pharnakes and Chersonesos in 179 or 155 BC, both parties undertake "to maintain their friendship with the Romans and do nothing contrary to their interests".²³ Why did Rome have a relationship of *amicitia* with Chersonesos, if she had no interests in the Black Sea? Even if the Euxine might not have been central enough to Roman concerns for the Senate to threaten military action against a king of Pontos acquiring an empire and network of allies around almost its entire circuit, it would be hard to imagine that the Senate failed to take note, and was anything other than extremely concerned by developments in the region. And for our assessment of the overall character of Eupator's reign, his whole Black Sea policy can surely only be that of an extremely ambitious young monarch.

In Asia Minor Mithridates started with care, following the policy of his father Euergetes in seeking to exert indirect control in Kappadokia.²⁴ Justinus (38.1.1) says Gordios murdered Ariarathes VI at the instigation of Eupator. Strobel simply denies Eupator's involvement, attributing the murder to internal Kappadokian politics.²⁵ Gordios was such a close associate of Eupator afterwards, that Justinus' statement is certainly credible, although unprovable. There is no need to interpret this assassination as the beginning of a new expansionist policy, but we can note that Eupator acted swiftly. We are in about

116/115 BC, when he was still only in the process of establishing sole control in Pontos. This was a king who was not just going to let things drift along.

After this the evidence points to a policy of steady escalation. The invasion of Paphlagonia with Nikomedes III was blatantly expansionist (Just. *Epit.* 37.4.3; 38.5.4; 38.7.10). Sulla's anger at the timing of Mithridates' aggression towards Kappadokia and Bithynia at the beginning of the first war (App. *Mith.* 57), would surely have been echoed by Romans in the case of Paphlagonia too: the last decade of the 2nd century was a time when Roman security was gravely threatened in Africa, Sicily and northern Italy. The kings ignored the Roman order to restore Paphlagonia to its former state; Mithridates claiming a hereditary right to it, and Nikomedes installing his own son as king, but with the royal Paphlagonian name Pylaimenes. Not only did Mithridates pay no attention, he also occupied Galatia, Justinus (37.4.6) claims. As a bald statement, we can scarcely imagine Eupator occupying all of Galatia. Strobel explains the statement away: Eupator was anxious to protect the vulnerable west flank of Kappadokia, and perhaps Justinus' statement refers to diplomatic negotiations with the neighbouring Galatians.²⁶ That seems a possibility, but it is interesting to note that whatever it was Eupator did, Justinus explains it as another act of defiance towards the Roman ambassadors, who go home having been made fools of.

The next escalation is in Kappadokia. Nikomedes and Mithridates' sister, Laodike, make an alliance and take control of Kappadokia, but are expelled by Eupator, and Ariarathes VII restored. But this time Eupator insists on Gordios being received back. When Ariarathes refuses, Mithridates murders him, and copies Nikomedes' action in Paphlagonia by giving one of his own sons the Kappadokian royal name and installing him as Ariarathes IX with Gordios as *rector* (Just. *Epit.* 38.1). This is definitely one step further than simply continuing to control the country indirectly. And Mithridates does not seem to have been hesitant about throwing his weight around. When the legitimate claimant to the Kappadokian throne, Ariarathes VIII, sought to return, Mithridates sent an army to drive him off (*proelium renovat* – Just. *Epit.* 38.2.2). This was all beginning to attract Roman attention, and the manifestation of this growing concern was Marius' mission to the East in 99/98 BC. It has very much the same sort of feel about it as the "diplomacy" of C. Popillius Laenas in Egypt in 168 BC. The story, as it is told in Plutarch (*Mar.* 31.2-3), does not make a direct link between the mission and Pontic defiance of specific Roman orders; but once Nikomedes stirred the pot by claiming in Rome through Laodike that Ariarathes IX was not the legitimate king of Kappadokia, but that his candidate was, Mithridates' was, temporarily, stymied (Just. *Epit.* 38.2.3-4). Both kings were ordered out of Paphlagonia and Kappadokia. Eupator had just heard Marius' warning to be stronger than Rome or obey her orders, he had no ally in Asia Minor, and there was nothing distracting Roman attention elsewhere. Defiance would be foolish, so he complied. This was a clear decision to back off, but there is nothing about it that requires the conclusion that

it was based on an understanding of his position as a compliant Hellenistic king, who respected Roman dominance: it was simply a pragmatic decision, just like that of Antiochos IV in 167 BC, not to confront Rome on this particular occasion. He had pushed and found that he had come close to the limits of what was possible without war.

If he had genuinely wanted to avoid war with Rome, then his subsequent actions are impossible to understand. For, recognising the limits of his power, this was surely the time to rein in his ambitions and cool the temperature of his relationship with Rome. But he did the opposite: he continued to agitate. He immediately made an alliance with Tigranes of Armenia and, through Gordios persuaded him to invade Kappadokia and restore Ariarathes IX (Just. *Epit.* 38.3.1-3). This was exactly the same sort of meddling he had been doing before: he could not possibly have thought that he would get away with restoring Ariarathes IX and Gordios. So why do it? It can only be intentional provocation. The response was the sending of an army, under Sulla's command, to restore Ariobarzanes to the throne of Kappadokia.²⁷ Sulla's expedition was nothing short of sensational. There had not been a single occasion in the post-Apameia world when Rome had intervened militarily in the intrigues of the Anatolian kings. It is clear evidence that Rome had lost patience and would not countenance Mithridatic defiance; and its import must have been crystal-clear to Mithridates: Kappadokia was off-limits and any attempt to gain control of it would meet with an armed response. Eupator's Kappadokian policy had now reached an impasse. He had been threatened and had backed off; he had pressed further and Rome had sent an army. This was a decisive moment. In that moment there may be a clue as to how Mithridates' mind was working. For Frontinus reports (*Str.* 1.5.18) that Sulla had to fight against Eupator's general Archelaos in Kappadokia. It is a very brief notice without further contextual explanation, but if it is to be believed, Mithridates was only a hair's breadth away from direct military defiance of Rome.

Confirmation of his aggressive intentions is again provided by his next actions. After organising an assassination attempt on Nikomedes IV of Bithynia that failed (App. *Mith.* 57), he sent Sokrates Chrestos, a pretender to the Bithynian throne, to expel him and also secured the expulsion, again, of Ariobarzanes (Just. *Epit.* 38.3.4; App. *Mith.* 10). The armed expedition of Manius Aquillius to restore the kings of Bithynia and Kappadokia resulted. Strobel's claim that "Mithridates was evidently surprised and impressed by this determined Roman conduct" seems incredible to me.²⁸ Even if you argue that Sulla's expedition installed for the first time, rather than restored, Ariobarzanes, Mithridates must have known he could not get away with directly overturning Sulla's arrangements – arrangements put in place with armed force. In the light of this repeated provocation, Appianos' interpretation of Mithridates' war plans gains credence. To be sure, when Nikomedes and Ariobarzanes are restored Mithridates backs off again, and yet again, when Nikomedes is forced into a plundering raid on Pontos. But this was all just

a pretence, Appianos maintains: Eupator was really storing up “many and just complaints for war”. He takes possession of Kappadokia for one last time and sends Pelopidas off with a justification and offer of negotiation that he knew would be rejected. From a king truly seeking to avoid conflict with Rome, this repeated provocation is inexplicable. His apparent compliance in stepping back from the precipice on a number of occasions was precisely that – apparent. In reality he wanted war, but war on his terms, which were that Rome should be seen to be the aggressor and Pontos the aggrieved party: this would win him support in Asia for the major war he was now well prepared for. With victory over Manius Aquillius, the die was cast. Strobel has argued that the irrevocable break with Rome came only with the invasion of Asia, or with the Asian Vespers.²⁹ But if there was one clear lesson to be learnt in the post-Apameia world, it was that Rome would respond to warfare directed against her with uncompromising violence. A military response to the defeat of Manius Aquillius was a certainty, as Mithridates must have known.

Mithridates’ ambitious forward planning is also indicated by the subsequent course of the war. He occupied Kappadokia and Bithynia, then overran the Roman province, besieged Rhodes (unsuccessfully), slaughtered thousands of Romans and spread out over the rest of Asia before launching an invasion of Greece. Logistically, these were extremely demanding operations. There can be no doubt that he was well aware of the timing, that Rome could do nothing about him until the Social War in Italy had been won, but can we attribute all these Pontic campaigns solely to spontaneous opportunism? Huge forces were needed for these operations that could not be collected on the spur of the moment: a number of different army groups had to be recruited, fleets had to be built. This all took time. If he did not have ambitions that went beyond protecting Pontos and meddling in Kappadokia and Bithynia, careful to avoid conflict with Rome, how did it come about that he had such forces available? Sulla makes exactly this point (in the speech Appianos gives him – *Mith.* 57) and it is difficult to refute.

Mithridates’ relationship with Alexander the Great is also revealing of his ambitious nature. Justinus (38.7.1) says Mithridates traced his maternal line to Alexander and Seleukos; and, however bogus this claim, in the course of the conflicts with Rome the sources report actions of his that were designed to recall Alexander. At the beginning of the first war, for instance, he lodged at an inn where Alexander had once stayed (App. *Mith.* 20); he copied Alexander in giving money to Apameia for earthquake repairs (Strab. 12.8.18), and in extending the sacred precinct of the temple of Artemis at Ephesos (Strab. 14.1.23); when wounded in battle he showed himself to his troops as Alexander had done (App. *Mith.* 89); and on his death he had in his possession Alexander’s cloak (App. *Mith.* 117). To be sure, this could all be retrospective myth-making by later authorities; or if true, it might simply be that the attractions of Alexander as a model occurred to Mithridates once he had actually launched his invasion of Asia. One type of source material, however, argues

against such an interpretation – the royal coins: they seem to show that Alexander was already on Mithridates' mind by 95 BC.

The dated royal issues starting in 95 BC, clearly represent Mithridates as an Alexander figure. Fifty years ago Kleiner traced the heritage of the portrait back through the Roman provincial issues of Macedonia to the various "Lysimachean" coinages.³⁰ A glance at the plates of the Lysimachean types in F. de Callataÿ's important study (plates 32-39) demonstrates that there is no need to revise Kleiner's opinion: Mithridates was consciously placing his portrait in the Alexander tradition.³¹ It is interesting to note that the portrait on some of the later Alexander and Lysimachos issues from Black Sea cities (Odessos, Mesembria, Istros, Tomis, Kallatis, Byzantion) is so Mithridatic-like that scholars have long assumed Eupator is the man depicted: this would then reflect the extension of the king's power to these areas. Callataÿ has argued strenuously against this.³² Even if he is right, the similarity between the Alexander and Mithridates portraits is so striking that commentators have confused them: there can be little doubt about the dominating influence on Mithridates of the Alexander images. It is important to note that Eupator was also breaking with recent tradition in the Pontic royal house. The coinage of his father, Mithridates V Euergetes, is represented by a sole surviving coin (Callataÿ 1997, plate 50, no. P), which depicts Euergetes in a very similar manner to what we see on the coins of his uncle, Mithridates IV Philopator. Both are somewhat softer than the harsh and distinctly unromantic image that Pharnakes presented on his coins.³³ Eupator's portrait is radically different from all this: he wanted to present a new message on his coins, and the way in which the royal portrait now reflects the long, flowing hair and distant gaze of Alexander's portraiture makes it clear what he had in mind. By 95 BC, then, we can be sure that Mithridates was already aligning himself with Alexander; and probably even earlier: the same sort of portrait appears on undated coins of his, almost certainly from earlier in his reign.³⁴ With Dareios, Xerxes and Alexander the Great as ancestors, or merely claimed as ancestors, this was a king with glorious deeds in mind well before his break with Rome.

If coin types give support to the idea of an ambitious conqueror, the actual sequence of Mithridates' minting (his coins conveniently bear both year and month indicator) can be taken, although in my opinion mistakenly, to show the opposite. For although the royal issues start in May 95 BC, the pace of minting is quite slow until May and June 89, when there is a sudden surge. Callataÿ argues that this shows how Mithridates was taken by surprise by the beginning of the war and his mints forced into sudden and unexpected production. Before the third war, on the other hand, the big increase in output that occurs in 75 and 74 shows Mithridates preparing in plenty of time the invasion that he launches in 73.³⁵ I have explained in detail elsewhere why I do not believe you can draw such precise conclusions from minting patterns alone, why the equivalence between events and coining cannot be

that close.³⁶ This is not the place to repeat those arguments, but in summary, the problem lies with absences. Mithridates V Euergetes, for example, seems scarcely to have minted at all in his reign, but we know he recruited mercenaries in Thrace, Greece and Crete (Strab. 10.4.10), and he must have paid them. There is to all intents and purposes no numismatic evidence of Mithridates' extensive campaigns in the Black Sea region. After the first war and before the second, Appianos tells us (*Mith.* 64), Eupator prepared for war with the Kolchians and tribes of the Kimmerian Bosphoros. So large were the fleet and army he prepared that the suspicion grew they were aimed against Rome. There is no numismatic evidence of these huge military preparations. During the series of mostly minor disputes with Murena in 83 and 82 BC, known as the Second Mithridatic War, there was one serious battle when Mithridates drew up a large army and inflicted a sharp defeat on Murena (App. *Mith.* 65); but there is very little coining in 83, and none at all in 82. Immediately after that, Mithridates attacked the Achaians beyond Kolchis and lost two-thirds of his army (App. *Mith.* 67). There is no numismatic sign of that army either; nor of the two huge armies that were defeated in 86 at the battles of Chaironeia and Orchomenos. And after the heavy production of 75/74 BC, Mithridates virtually stops coining, even though he engages in a great deal of fighting in the remaining years before his death.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from all this is that there is no cast-iron connection between military activity and minting. The amount of money produced by the royal mints was, according to modern numismatic calculations, not even remotely sufficient to pay the number of soldiers reported in the sources;³⁷ and the varied content of coin hoards suggests anyway that Mithridatic troops were paid in a variety of currencies. When there was no production of royal issues, there was evidently enough money available. That the surges in 89 and 75/74 BC were connected with the First and Third Mithridatic Wars seems virtually certain, but the exact relationship of the coining with events is simply not possible to determine. The logistics of coin production were simple, and when he needed the money the king could, and obviously did, order the royal mints into immediate production. It was not a time-consuming task. Two months of intensive issuing gave him what he required: there was no need to store it up before it was to be used. Even though he was looking for trouble in the years before the war actually started, he had no exact schedule. His armies and his navy were ready. They had to be created well before the beginning of the war, and must have been paid a long time before 89 BC. We do not know in which month the war began, but as soon as the weather allowed Aquillius to manoeuvre his army for an invasion of Pontos, Mithridates finally had the opportunity he had been looking for, and decided that this was the time to strike. When his financial experts told him he needed more money to pay the troops, he ordered it up. Nothing requires the interpretation that a king determined to avoid war with Rome was caught by surprise.

Mithridates Eupator built an empire in the Black Sea, and, manifestly dissatisfied with the extent of his power in Asia Minor, tried to create one there too. The chronology of how his ambitions in Asia developed is not easy to establish. The ancient sources have him as a rabid world-conqueror, determined to confront Rome, from the very beginning of his reign. This is unlikely. When he came to the throne, he continued his father's policy of indirect interference in Kappadokia for a time, and he avoided reckless and unprepared conflict with Rome. But he did also continue to raise the stakes. When Sulla led an army to restore (or install) Ariobarzanes, Mithridates' immediate and long-term choices in Asia Minor were clear: back off, if he did not want to fight Rome; or keep pressing until the right opportunity to do so offered itself. Although Rome was an aggressive imperial power, the main objective of her policies abroad was to win obedience: Marius had enunciated this, Aquillius and his colleagues too – when they told Pelopidas not to return unless the king obeyed their commands (App. *Mith.* 16). The sources make it clear that the king had no intention of complying. His persistent refusal to accept Roman arrangements in Asia Minor, as he well knew, could only be seen by the Senate as provocation; his actions and his preparations are entirely inconsistent with a king who wanted peace with Rome. On the contrary he wanted war, precipitated on his own terms. The sources may pre-date and romanticise this plan – his gradual escalation of provocative actions could be taken to indicate initial caution – but they were right about Mithridates' aggression. And they were right about Rome's aggression too. In this conflict, neither side was an innocent victim.

Notes

- 1 For earlier views on Appianos, and an assessment of the *Mithridateios*, see McGing 1993, 496-522.
- 2 See, for instance, Reinach 1895, 110-115; Magie 1950, 206-211; Glew 1977, 397-398; Sherwin-White 1984, 108-131; McGing 1986, 72-88; Hind 1994, 140-144; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 81-89.
- 3 Kallet-Marx 1995, 250-260.
- 4 Strobel 1996, 55-94.
- 5 McGing 1986, vii.
- 6 Meyer 1879, 31-38.
- 7 Bosworth & Wheatley 1998, 155-164: discussed by Erciyas 2006, 9-13.
- 8 McGing 1986, 89-108.
- 9 From various points in Appianos' *Mithridateios* we can identify Ariarathes, Mithridates, Machares, Xiphares, Artaphernes, Dareios, Xerxes, Oxathres, Pharnakes, Kyros. I have elsewhere examined in more detail the cultural characteristics of Pontos: see McGing 1998, 97-112.
- 10 Among named eunuchs are Dionysios (App. *Mith.* 76-77), Bacchos/Bacchides (App. *Mith.* 82; Plut. *Luc.* 18), Ptolemaios (Plut. *Luc.* 17.4), Trypho (App. *Mith.* 108), Gauros (Val. Max. 9.2 ext 3). References to concubines (*pallakai*) will be found at App. *Mith.* 82, 85, 107; Plut. *Pomp.* 32, 36; *Luc.* 18; and to multiple wives at App.

- Mith.* 21. Satraps appear at App. *Mith.* 21, 22, 46, and in inscriptions: Welles 1934, no 73; *SEG* 38, 1108. The Nymphaion inscription (*SEG* 37, 668) is discussed by Vinogradov 1990, no. 589; Ballasteros-Pastor 1995, 111-117. Mithridates' mountaintop sacrifices are recorded by Appianos (*Mith.* 66, 70).
- 11 Sherwin-White & Kührt 1993, 38.
 - 12 On Pharnakes' war of aggression against his neighbours in Asia Minor from about 183-179 BC, see Burstein 1980, 1-12; Gruen 1984, 553-554; McGing 1986, 25-31.
 - 13 Sherwin-White 1984, 134.
 - 14 Strobel 1996, 86-87.
 - 15 For the extensive non-compliance of Greek states with Roman wishes in the period between the battle of Pydna and the Mithridatic Wars, see McGing 2003, 71-89.
 - 16 Welles 1934, no. 61 for the letter of Attalos; Polyb. 33 16.7-8 for Kallikrates' pro-Roman policy.
 - 17 Among the substantial bibliography on this "treaty", see Gruen 1984, 42-46.
 - 18 Gruen 1984, 584-585; Habicht 1989, 356-362.
 - 19 See Habicht 1956, 101-110; Gruen 1984, 586-589.
 - 20 Gruen 1984, 578-579.
 - 21 Strobel 1996, 66.
 - 22 See Kallet-Marx 1995, 223-227; 196-199 for Roman involvement in, and concern about, the area.
 - 23 *IOSPE* I², 402, the date of which is discussed fully most recently by Højte 2005.
 - 24 McGing 1986, 37-38, 82-88.
 - 25 Strobel 1996, 66.
 - 26 Strobel 1996, 74.
 - 27 I am aware that chronological uncertainty in the 90's BC admits slightly different reconstructions of events, but this does not materially affect my argument. The fullest, and best, assessment of the complicated evidence for the chronology of the 90's is now Callataÿ 1997, 186-214.
 - 28 Strobel 1996, 77.
 - 29 Strobel 1996, 87.
 - 30 Kleiner 1952, 79-80.
 - 31 Callataÿ 1997, 4-52, provides the best catalogue and photographs of the Mithridatic royal coinage, but in his integration of the various issues into the historical narrative, does not comment on the implications of the portrait. On the likeness with Alexander, see too Oikonomides 1958, 219-243; Ballasteros-Pastor 1996, 385; Erciyas 2006, 129-131.
 - 32 Callataÿ 1997, 111-112 with 112, n. 6; 145-147; 261. Although he provides a rigorous refutation of the *communis opinio*, I still think he is wrong; for my arguments see McGing 2000, 375-382.
 - 33 For good photographs, see Davis & Kraay 1973, nos. 200-203.
 - 34 Callataÿ 1997, 33-36 argues that they date to the last years of the 2nd century.
 - 35 Callataÿ 1997, 341.
 - 36 McGing 2000, 375-382.
 - 37 Callataÿ 1997, 389-415.

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Troy, between Mithridates and Rome

Luis Ballesteros-Pastor

Troy, because of its mythic past, became an essential point of reference for Greek and non-Greek conquerors, who had a desire to re-enact Homeric deeds and to establish a comparison with the heroes. Moreover, from Xerxes to Antiochos III, the sacrifice to Athena Ilias was a rite considered obligatory for those who wanted to conquer Asia from Europe or vice-versa.¹ Although the origins of this ritual could be related to the location of the city at the edge of both continents, it was thought that the goddess might give her approval to any military expedition that aimed to rule over the two parts of the world.² The two sides in the Mithridatic Wars were not oblivious to the value of repeating the efforts of the mythic heroes. Both Mithridates and his Roman enemies strove to be regarded as favoured by the goddess of Ilion.

As in the case of Alexander and Pyrrhos, Mithridates and the Romans had an ambivalent perspective regarding their own relationships to Troy.³ The king of Pontos aspired to be a new Alexander and a sincere friend of the Greeks.⁴ However, Mithridates ruled over peoples that, according to the legend, had helped the house of Priamos: Paphlagonians, Enetoi, Chalybes, Syrians and Amazons.⁵ In fact, Appianos (*Mith.* 67) mentions the Achaians that Mithridates fought in the Caucasus, referring to them as the descendants of Troy's enemies. The Romans had a similar situation: they proclaimed their Trojan origin, while at the same time, the Mithridatic War looked like a great crusade against the Asian peoples ruled by the Pontic king.⁶ The Romans admired Achilles' valour to such an extent that Virgil described Aeneas as a sort of "super-Achilleus".⁷ Furthermore, Achilles was very important because of the use of him as an example by Alexander, whom several Romans sought to imitate. Additionally, we must bear in mind that Troy's remote past involved a Greek heritage.⁸ Therefore, Aeneas' Trojan stock should have been compatible with a strongly Hellenized Rome, that wanted to be seen as a new Athens. In the same way, Mithridates, a descendant of Kyros, wanted to be considered as a defender of the Hellenic cause.⁹

Like other cities of the province of Asia, Ilion fell into Mithridates' hands during his first war with Rome.¹⁰ Afterwards, when the Romans had forced the withdrawal of the Pontic troops, the course of the war led two armies of the Republic to the city of Priamos: that of Fimbria and that of Sulla. After having murdered the consul Valerius Flaccus, Fimbria entered the province and fought with the Pontic armies.¹¹ In the course of events he reached Ilion, where the citizens had demanded Sulla's help. There are two versions of the

story concerning Fimbria's conquest of the city: Appianos and Cassius Dio on the one hand both tell how Fimbria tried to mislead the Ilions into thinking that he was a friend, alluding to the kinship of the Romans with the city. On the other hand, Strabon and Livy affirm that the city of Priamos was taken by force after eleven days of siege.¹² According to both traditions, the city was ravaged and burned after Fimbria entered it. Only the statue of Athena miraculously escaped from the fire. Shortly thereafter, Sulla took over the legions of Fimbria, who, abandoned by his soldiers, committed suicide in Pergamon. Sulla then tried to appear as a benefactor of Ilion, which was not punished with any fine as an amends for the sufferings of the city, and as recognition of the Ilions' kinship with the Roman people (App. *Mith.* 61; Oros. 6.2.11).

This episode can be viewed from different perspectives. In a general sense, the remaining accounts try to highlight Sulla's positive attitude when faced with Fimbria's *perfidia*. The Ilions would have preferred the favourite of Aphrodite rather than a seditious commander.¹³ However, the real situation might have been somewhat different: the cities of Asia had formerly denied help to the consul Valerius Flaccus, and made the decision to resist the Roman troops. Later on, those cities took a similar attitude towards Fimbria, who conquered Kyzikos and other *poleis* that were harshly treated to frighten the people of the province (Diod. Sic. 38.8.2-3; App. *Mith.* 53; Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 24.3). Ilion's attitude should be understood in light of the common behaviour of the cities of Asia at that time, when there may well have been a widespread fear of reprisals from the Roman side of the conflict (Cic. *Flac.* 61). Therefore, the decision of the Ilions was not the result of an attempt to resist a cruel general. It was just a pragmatic position, taken in an attempt to keep their city safe, and without any objection to the legality of Sulla's power.

The conquest of Ilion by Fimbria appears as a violent episode, in which the walls laden with history were demolished and the city burnt. Archaeological research has confirmed this fact although the actual destruction seems not to have been so extensive.¹⁴ What is more interesting for us is the account of the salvation of the statue of Athena Ilias. This can be understood as a fateful presage for Fimbria, because the goddess who had to recognize the conqueror of Asia turned her back on this general, predicting the fatal end of his adventure. It is clear that the main source for this episode are the memoirs of Sulla, because the dictator tried to highlight his helpful role in contrast to the cruelty of his opponent. Sulla tried to hide the glory of Fimbria, who wanted to be considered a general greater than Agamemnon, because he had done in eleven days what it took the son of Atreus ten years to accomplish.¹⁵

Sulla, having defeated Mithridates, also wanted to appear as the future master of Asia: this would have been another reason for the diffusion of the story of Athena's prodigy. Propaganda may have been spread which linked this general with the Homeric legend as a new Agamemnon. It is noteworthy that Licinianus (35 p. 26 Flem.) relates that the meeting between Sulla and Archelaos was not in Delion, but in Aulis itself, the place from which the Acha-

ian fleet departed for the rescue of Helene. Agesilaos had made a propitiatory sacrifice there before sailing to Asia, and from this same port other naval campaigns departed as well. The Romans knew of the port of Aulis: Aemilius Paulus visited it in 167 BC.¹⁶ As Sulla aimed to be a new Agamemnon, it was clear that he might wish to present Fimbria as the negative counterpart of the leader of the Achaeans.

Sulla should have favoured the city protected by Aphrodite, and, at the same time, the homeland of Aeneas, ancestor of the founders of Rome. This general, who claimed to be a new Romulus, did not hesitate to declare Ilion free from any punishment since this city had given glory and honour to the humble beginnings of Rome, the same origins that the Pontic propaganda strove to diminish.¹⁷ It is significant that Sulla's meeting with Mithridates took place in Dardanos, a city that, according to the myth, would have been founded by the ancestor of Hektor and Aeneas, that is, the oldest origins of the Trojan lineage.¹⁸ Dardanos had been declared free after the Peace of Apameia because of its relationship with the Trojans.¹⁹ Sulla could also compare his attitude towards Ilion with Alexander's exploits: the proconsul, in fact, had fought against some barbarian tribes who could be related to the Thracian peoples who were subdued by the Macedonian king.²⁰

From a different point of view, Appianos' account goes against the epic meaning of the Roman presence in Ilion at the time. We are facing here a hostile historiographical bias towards Rome. It is true that Fimbria took the city by a trick, what could of course recall the deeds of the artful Odysseus. However, in Appianos' source, the original meaning could have been different, namely that Fimbria was a perfidious man. He probably promised *amicitia* to the Ilions, who were convinced by those flattering promises (cf. App. *Mith.* 53). But Fimbria did not keep his word, and he acted as is related in Mithridates' propaganda against Rome.²¹ This behaviour contradicted the Romans' belief in their honourable way of fighting as compared to the tricks and stratagems used by the Greeks.²² Appianos (*Mith.* 53) also tells that Fimbria alluded ironically to the kinship between Ilion and Rome. That phrase would indicate that, according to Appianos' source, Fimbria did not believe in such a kinship: he merely used it to gain the trust of the Ilions. Appianos also comments explicitly that Fimbria did not respect those who had taken refuge in the shrine of Athena: thus, the Roman behaviour was similar to what the followers of Mithridates had done in the Ephesian Vespers.²³

Regarding the wonderful salvation of Athena's statue, Appianos relates that this prodigy could not have taken place, since Odysseus and Diomedes had carried off the image of the goddess more than a thousand years previously.²⁴ This remark seems also to have come from an account hostile towards Rome: Athena could not have been propitious to Sulla, or to Fimbria, or to any other Roman, who lied when they spoke about prodigies favourable to their purposes. The authentic Palladion was not in Ilion, and therefore the statue that miraculously had been preserved was, in the best case, a mere copy.

There are several links between that remark of Appianos and anti-Roman propaganda. We must bear in mind that some oracles negative to the Roman dominion announced that Athena would be the future avenger of Asia and Greece because of the sufferings inflicted by the Romans. In the wars between Rome and Antiochos III the Aitolians had formerly spread this theme, and it was probably elaborated on in the propaganda of Mithridates.²⁵ As proposed by Marta Sordi, the sacrifice of Scipio Africanus to Athena Ilias may have been a sort of expiatory ritual of Rome's triumph over Asia.²⁶ Perhaps the diffusion of a prodigy by Athena favourable to Sulla was a similar means to check the anti-Roman omens spread by the Pontic king. In the Third Mithridatic War, Athena appeared to the Ilians in their sleep, saying that she had helped the people of Kyzikos against Mithridates' siege (Plut. *Luc.* 10.3). Quite possibly the building of a shrine to Minerva by Pompeius after his eastern campaign was also not coincidental.²⁷

The Aitolians would also have insisted on the tale of the Palladion and the Aitolian Diomedes, who was likewise related to the hostility towards Rome.²⁸ On one side, Diomedes was the rival of Aeneas in the *Iliad*: the two heroes fought a duel in which the Achaian king wounded both his rival and Aphrodite (Hom. *Il.* 5.297-351; Verg. *Aen.* 11.277-290). On the other side, the theft of the Palladion proves that the Trojans could not have carried the image of Athena to Italy. The Palladion would have been considered as a symbol of universal power, and therefore it was very important for Rome to appear as the owner of the authentic image of Athena Ilias, which also confirmed the Trojan origins of that city.²⁹ Furthermore, Diomedes had been connected with the opposition to Rome since the fourth century BC: this hero was the presumed ancestral founder of certain Italian peoples and Greek colonies, and this gave them a glorious past.³⁰ There was indeed a tradition that considered Diomedes the founder of the shrine of Lavinium, which was linked with the Trojan roots of Rome.³¹

Just as the Pontic propaganda could have taken advantage of the oracles that announced Athena's anger against Rome, this passage of Appianos shows us how Mithridates, or his supporters, could have insisted on the importance of the legend of Diomedes. We do not know of any explicit assimilation between this hero and Mithridates Eupator, but both of them share common aspects: the winner of the chariot race in the funeral games celebrated in honour of Patroklos could be compared to the most skilful charioteer among the ancient kings.³² Diomedes was worshipped by the Italian Enetoi, and Mithridates ruled over the Enetoi who lived on the Black Sea.³³ The Pontic king, favoured by the Athenians,³⁴ could also have appeared as protected by Athena, the avenger of Asia over the Romans' greed for power and wealth. In the same way that Herakles had conquered Troy, Mithridates, as a new Herakles, became the master of the city of Priamos.³⁵

Appianos' allusion to the theft of the Palladion by Diomedes can also be related to the significance of this hero within some circles of opposition to

Augustus. Jullus Antonius, the triumvir's son, wrote an epic poem in twelve books entitled *Diomedia*, which presumably proposed a critical view of Augustus' rule.³⁶ This poem reflected a critical trend that was relatively widespread and inspired other poems with the same title, which have not survived.³⁷ The importance of Diomedes in the anti-Roman and anti-Augustan propaganda could have provoked different accounts in favour of or against this hero: for instance, in the *Aeneid*, Diomedes recognizes Aeneas' superiority,³⁸ and Athena shows her anger for the theft of her image, which could not be seen by mortals without punishment from the goddess.³⁹ In this work, Virgil makes a comparison between the honour of Nysos and Eurialos and the *perfidia* of Diomedes and Odysseus when they went to steal Athena's statue.⁴⁰ As Coppola affirmed, Antonius' *Diomedia* may have been a counterpart to the *Aeneid*, an alternative to the official myth.⁴¹ Furthermore, one version of the legend stated that the authentic Palladion had been preserved by the Athenians.⁴² This may have been a matter of pride for a city protected by Athena, a city that was accused of being ungrateful by Roman leaders such as Sulla and Caesar, and which on the contrary, had welcomed Mithridates and Marcus Antonius.⁴³

It is difficult to determine what could have been Appianos' source for this episode. It seems beyond doubt that it came from a writer critical towards Rome. It is hard to label him as "anti-Roman", because we do not know to what extent there were authors within the Empire who could openly claim that they wished the end of Roman superiority.⁴⁴ However, we must bear in mind that Augustus tolerated some dissident groups.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, among the possible authors within these circles, it is difficult to find a concrete person: Strabon is one possibility, as he wrote on Fimbria, although without giving any opinion about the Palladion and, at the same time, highlighting Augustus' euergetic attitude towards Ilion.⁴⁶ Another option is Metrodoros of Skepsis, who is always mentioned among the pro-Pontic historians, although we have little evidence concerning him, and far less concerning his work. Metrodoros may have been read by Timagenes, but we do not have any fragments from the latter regarding to the history of Mithridates.⁴⁷ I propose a different hypothesis: the source in question could have been King Juba II of Mauretania. There are several reasons for suggesting this writer: Juba might well have been involved in the dissident circles in Rome because of his personal experience. He was the son of a Pompeian king from an ancient lineage, and he came as a hostage to Rome, where he met several men who were in opposition to Augustus' government, men such as Asinius Pollio and Timagenes.⁴⁸ He also married Kleopatra Selene, the daughter of Marcus Antonius and Kleopatra, and he was deprived of his ancestral kingdom, which was turned into a Roman province.⁴⁹ Juba wrote on the First Mithridatic War, as Plutarch notes in his account of Sulla's campaign in Greece. That fragment of Juba offers a divergent opinion regarding the main historiographical tradition, represented above all by the memoirs of Sulla.⁵⁰ Moreover, Juba was most probably one

of the sources used by Pompeius Trogus for his account on Mithridates. We can deduce this mainly from the passage recounting the Pontic king's speech, preserved literally from Trogus by Justinus. In this discourse there is a passionate praise of Massinissa and a surprising defence of Jugurtha (Just. *Epit.* 38.6.4-6), which would have made no sense considering that Mithridates was delivering a harangue to an army of Asian troops. Trogus makes an allusion to the humiliating presence of Jugurtha in Marius' triumph, perhaps because his source Juba remembered his own experience as a child when he had to march among the prisoners of Caesar.⁵¹

Trogus seems to have used Juba as a source in other passages of his work as well. Both authors were "barbarians" (an African and a Gaul) with a wide knowledge of Hellenic culture. Analogies can be found between several expressions in Mithridates' speech and other phrases in Justinus' *Epitome*, but we also see evidences for this hypothesis in the content of this work. Trogus is the only source for several episodes of the history of Carthage, for instance the tale of Malchus (Just. *Epit.* 18.7), the reference to the Carthaginians' payment of tribute to the Numidians (Just. *Epit.* 19.1.3-5), and at least two passages in the *Epitome* in which we can detect the point of view of an African who was probably not a Carthaginian.⁵² The kings of Numidia had a long tradition as historians, which may have given Juba information that was unknown to other writers. For example, the name of Malchus, mentioned by Trogus, may be the Latin transcription of the Punic term "milik": thus, the word could reveal the use of books in the Punic language, which have not been preserved.⁵³ Trogus might have taken from Juba the description of the borders of the *oikoumene*. This king could likewise have been the Trogus' well-informed source on Parthian history recently suggested by Josef Wolski.⁵⁴ Juba also wrote a work entitled *Libyka* that provided important information on Mauretania,⁵⁵ and he may have been used as a source concerning Sertorius' campaign and Antaios' tomb in Tingis.⁵⁶ The ruler could likewise have been the source of Trogus for the legend of Gargoris and Habis, the kings of Tartessos (Just. *Epit.* 41.4.1-13). This would explain why such myth concerning civilisation were located on the far western border of the inhabited world. Leaving aside the fact that both Juba and his ancestors had visited Hispania, the closeness of Mauretania to the land in which this kingdom was located could be another reason for Juba's knowledge of those mythic rulers. The tale recorded by Justinus differs from all the other accounts of Tartessos, and provides prestige to the region around the Pillars of Herakles.⁵⁷

Juba could, perhaps indirectly, be one of the sources of Appianus' Mithridatic book, as well. The Numidian prince met both Timagenes in Rome, and Alexander Polyhistor, who wrote works on Bithynia, Paphlagonia and the Euxeinos.⁵⁸ Besides, Juba went to the East with Gaius Caesar, and was at the court of Archelaos I of Kappadokia, great-grandson of the Pontic general of the same name.⁵⁹ This king had been favoured by Marcus Antonius, but despite this he was kept on the throne by Augustus. When Kleopatra Selene

died, Juba married Glaphyra, Archelaos' daughter.⁶⁰ At the court of Mazaka, Juba also met Konon the mythographer (who wrote on Diomedes), and probably learned some of the information that was transmitted through the works of Appianos and Trogus.⁶¹ Regarding the first of these historians, there are scattered references in the Mithridatic book that could have come, at least in some cases, from a well-informed source for Pontic history, possibly Juba. Those references are, among others: the foundation of the kingdom by seven Persian nobles (as Arrianos relates on the Parthian empire),⁶² the mention of Mithridates Euergetes' conquests of Kappadokian territory (App. *Mith.* 12), the names of the Pontic generals who expelled Ariobarzanes I (*Mith.* 10), the sacrifices to Zeus Stratios (*Mith.* 66, 70), and the reference to Machares as *archon* of Bosphoros, a detail that reflects knowledge of the royal titulature of the Spartokids (*Mith.* 78). Furthermore, Appianos is the only source on the Ptolemaic princes caught on Kos by Mithridates (*Mith.* 23), and on the story of two Pontic princesses who were betrothed to Lagid princes (*Mith.* 111). This would have been a well-known episode for Kleopatra Selene. Appianos is also the only author who gives importance to the objects of the Lagid house, which were in the hands of Mithridates (*Mith.* 115), although this author doubts that the cloak worn by Pompeius in his triumph, taken from the royal Pontic treasury, were actually that of Alexander (*Mith.* 117). Appianos provides our sole reference for Pontic aid to Rome in the Third Punic War (*Mith.* 10). He is, together with Memnon, almost our only source on the Second Mithridatic War, a particularly shameful episode for Rome, which had as a background the dispute over territories between Pontos and Kappadokia.⁶³ Appianos records in this work several anti-Roman discourses: some of them could reflect the perspective of certain opposition circles in Augustan Rome.⁶⁴

Nor can we ignore that Appianos and Trogus are the only authors that compare Mithridates directly with Alexander, with the sole exception of a passage in Strabon where the Pontic king is mentioned together with Alexander and Marcus Antonius as a benefactor of the Artemision in Ephesos.⁶⁵ Appianos, however, seems not to hesitate when speaking of the Achaemenid descentance of the royal Pontic house and the Persian traditions in the Pontic kingdom (App. *Mith.* 9, 112, 115, 116, cf. 66, 70). These aspects are ignored by Strabon in his *Geography*, and likewise there are no references in this work to Zeus Stratios or to Persian *magoi* in Pontos.⁶⁶

If Juba received information from Archelaos or from Glaphyra, that would explain the favourable image of their forefather, the Pontic general, in Appianos' book on Mithridates. We know that king Archelaos wrote historical works.⁶⁷ It would be plausible that he wrote about his ancestor's role in the Pontic Kingdom. Archelaos and his brother Neoptolemos appear in Appianos (*Mith.* 18) as the protagonists of the first Pontic victory over Rome in 89 BC by the river Amnias.⁶⁸ Archelaos was the commander-in-chief of the Pontic invasion in Greece, whose development is recorded in detail by Appianos (*Mith.* 29-45; 49-51; 54-56). His account of the negotiations between Sulla and

Archelaos describes the later as an honourable man, who defended his king and criticized the Romans, in spite of the treacherous image that appears in Plutarch's *Life of Sulla* (App. *Mith.* 54-55; Plut. *Sull.* 22.5, 23.1-2). Perhaps Appianos summarized a speech of Archelaos to Sulla (*Mith.* 54), which was recorded in his original source. It is noteworthy that this author mentions the kings Eumenes and Masinissa at the meeting of the two generals (*Mith.* 55). This is another similarity to Trogus' speech, in which the help of those kings to Rome is exalted as well (Just. *Epit.* 38.6.3-5). In Appianos' account of the Peace of Dardanos there is an openly anti-Roman discourse on the part of Mithridates (*Mith.* 56), while in Plutarch, Sulla does not allow his enemy to speak and the king is clearly humiliated by the Roman general (Plut. *Sull.* 24.2-3).

There is further evidence to support this hypothesis. It is well known that Juba was an important source for Pliny, who took several observations on plants and animals from this ruler.⁶⁹ Therefore, it is remarkable that Appianos (*Mith.* 112) agrees with Trogus and Pliny that the length of Mithridates' life was 68 or 69 years. Justinus (*Epit.* 37.1.7) affirms that Mithridates fought against Rome for 46 years, and that the first war began after the 23rd year of his reign (*Epit.* 38.8.1). Those 23 years are identified here with the whole life of the king prior to this war (that would be an error of the epitomator).⁷⁰ The two figures again add up to 69 years. Appianos (*Mith.* 62) alludes to 24 years of peace in the Province of Asia prior to the beginning of the Mithridatic Wars, which recalls the 23 years of Justinus. Regarding Pliny (*HN* 25.2.6), some manuscripts record a reign of 56 years, which, added to the age of Mithridates of 11 or 13 years when his father died, also gives 67 or 69 years.⁷¹ Another interesting analogy between Appianos and Pliny is that they are the only sources that described the torment of Manius Aquillius, when Mithridates poured melted gold down his throat. That sort of torture is in fact a Persian tradition, which appears in certain episodes of the Achaemenid and Parthian history.⁷²

Juba had a special interest in Diomedes, and he wrote on the fellows of this mythic king, who were transformed into birds.⁷³ The Numidian recorded the hero's journey to Africa and his romance with the nymph Kalirrhoe as a parallel to the legend about Dido and Aeneas.⁷⁴ It has indeed been noted that some images of Juba represent him as Diomedes, and this may not be incidental.⁷⁵

To sum up, the legend about the theft of the Palladion by Diomedes, used by Aitolian propaganda against Rome in the second century BC, may have been repeated by Mithridates. Appianos' source on Ilion's history in the First Mithridatic War could have been king Juba II, an almost ignored author regarding the history of Pontos, but one who actually dealt with the struggle between Mithridates and Rome. The work of Juba may well have had an important influence on authors like Appianos and Trogus, who make no mention of their sources regarding Eupator's story.⁷⁶

Notes

- 1 Sordi 1982c, 140-149; Erskine 2001, 226-253, with sources and bibliography. On Alexander, see Prandi 1990.
- 2 Sordi 1982c, 143; Erskine 2001, 227.
- 3 On Pyrrhos, see Erskine 2001, 157-161. Alexander aimed to be a new Achilles, nevertheless, he could be regarded also as a descendant of the Trojans, because his mother was a princess from Epiros: Bosworth 1988, 39; Prandi 1990, 351.
- 4 On Mithridates' philhellenism, see in general McGing 1986, 89-108; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 402-416, 430-442; Ballesteros-Pastor 2006a.
- 5 The Pontic Kingdom included both Paphlagonia and Pontic Kappadokia, whose inhabitants were called Syrians. Strabon (12.3.19-27) presents an *excursus* to demonstrate that the peoples east of the Halys were engaged in the Trojan war. Mithridates ruled over Themiskyra, considered the homeland of the Amazons. The peoples who were living near the the river Thermodon, such as the Chalybes, were part of the Pontic army (App. *Mith.* 69). On the relationship between the Asian Enetoi and those from the Adriatic, see Strab. 4.4.1, 5.1.4, 12.3.8, 12.3.25; Malkin 1998, 234-257; Erskine 2001, 136.
- 6 This opposition between East and West appears in some passages from our sources for the Mithridatic Wars; as for example: the consideration of the Oriental troops as slaves (Plut. *Sull.* 18.5, 21; *Luc.* 28.7); the luxury of the clothes and weapons (Plut. *Sull.* 16.2-3; *Luc.* 7.3-5); the disorder and difficulties in giving orders to the troops (Plut. *Sull.* 16.4, 18.2; *Luc.* 17) the cowardice of the Asiatic men (App. *B Civ.* 2.91; Cass. Dio 36.19), etc. Furthermore, Mithridates is often represented in the image of an Oriental ruler.
- 7 Stahl 1990, 198-209. On Achilles as model for the Romans, see also Ameling 1987, 689-690; Seng 2003, 125-128.
- 8 Erskine 2001, 138-139. On Alexander's attitude towards Ilion, see Erskine 2001, 228-231.
- 9 On Mithridates' philhellenism, see above n. 4. On his Achaemenid lineage, see Diod. Sic. 19.40.2; Flor. 1.40.1; Just. *Epit.* 38.7.1; App. *Mith.* 9, 112, 115, 116; Sall. *Hist. fr.* 2.85M; *Vir. Ill.* 76.1; Tac. *Ann.* 12.18.2.
- 10 Erskine 2001, 238. Coins with the image of Pegasos have been understood as a symbol of Pontic rule over Ilion, although the evidence is not clear (Erskine 2001, 238, n. 59).
- 11 On Fimbria's campaign, see McGing 1986, 130-131; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 175-176; Callataj 1997, 320-324; Mastrocinque 1999, 60-62; Erskine 2001, 237-245.
- 12 App. *Mith.* 53; Cass. Dio fr. 104.7; Liv. *Per.* 83; Strab. 13.1.27; Oros. 6.2.11; August. *De civ. D.* 3.7; Obseq. 56b; *Vir. Ill.* 70.3; cf. *Luc.* 964-969; Erskine 2001, 239, n. 63.
- 13 Liv. *Per.* 83; (Fimbria) *urbem Ilium, quae se potestati Syllae reservabat, expugnavit ac delevit*. On Sulla's relationship with Venus, see Keaveney 1983, 60-64; Erskine 2001, 243.
- 14 Perhaps the sources exaggerated the destruction of the city by Fimbria, although the levels of burning are well attested (Erskine 2001, 242, with further bibliography). I am grateful to Prof. Brian Rose for the information about the archaeological remains from this episode.
- 15 Strab. 13.1.27. On the Homeric meaning of the campaigns of Lucullus and Pompeius, see Champlin 2003, 298.
- 16 Liv. 45.27.9; Erskine 2001, 87-88.

- 17 Just. *Epit.* 38.6.7; Sall. *Hist.* fr. 4.69.17M; Briquel 1997, 137-138. On Sulla as a new Romulus, see Martin 1994, 283-285.
- 18 Hom. *Il.* 20.215-218; Thraemer 1901a; 1901b.
- 19 Liv. 38.39; Erskine 2001, 175 with n. 57.
- 20 On Sulla's campaign in Thrace: Liv. *Per.* 82-83; App. *Mith.* 55; Vir. *Ill.* 75.5; Eutr. 5.7.1; cf. Plut. *Sull.* 23.10. On the relationship of Thrace and the Balkans with the Roman's *imitatio Alexandri*, see Suet. *Aug.* 94.5; Plut. *Aem.* 24.4; Coppola 1999. L. Sura, legate of C. Sentius (governor of Macedonia 93-87 BC) issued coins with the image of Alexander (Bruhl 1930, 205).
- 21 On the Romans' *perfidia* in the sources on Mithridates, see Sall. *Hist.* fr. 4.69.6-9 M; Just. *Epit.* 38.5.3, 38.6.3; App. *Mith.* 12, 15, 16, 56, 64, 65, 67, 70; Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 26.1; Strab. 12.3.33.
- 22 Brizzi 1999.
- 23 On that aspect of the Ephesian Vespers, see App. *Mith.* 23, 25, 58, 62; Posidonios, *FGrH* 87 F 36 *apud* Athen. 5.123b; cf. Sall. *Hist.* fr. 1.47 M; Ballesteros-Pastor 2005, 397. A similar kind of sacrilege is also related by Appianos regarding the proscriptions of Sulla (*B Civ.* 1.95).
- 24 Ziehen 1949, 172-174; Gantz 1993, 642-646; Erskine 2001, 117 with n. 109.
- 25 Phlegon of Tralles, *FGrH* 257 F 36; Gauger 1980; with further remarks in 1995, 54-57; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 398-402; Mazza 1999, 66-68. On the importance of Athena Itonia for the Aitolian propaganda, see Thornton 2001, 202, n. 94 (with further bibliography).
- 26 Sordi 1982c, 148.
- 27 In that temple was shown the inscription that described Pompeius' achievements in the East: Plin. *HN* 7.26.97; Diod. Sic. 40.4.
- 28 Coppola 1990b, 132.
- 29 Ziehen 1949, 182-185; Sordi 1982b; Coppola 1990b, 132; Wiseman 2004, 20-21.
- 30 On Diomedes' foundations in Italy, see Malkin 1998, 234-257. On his significance among the Italians fighting against Rome, see Coppola 1990a; 2002, 78; Pasqualini 1998, 667-668 (with further bibliography). Some of those places claimed to be the owners of the authentic Palladion (Ziehen 1949, 185; Erskine 2001, 140-142).
- 31 App. *B Civ.* 2.20; Pasqualini 1998.
- 32 On Diomedes: Hom. *Il.* 23.351-513. On Mithridates: Suet. *Ner.* 24.2; App. *Mith.* 112; Vir. *Ill.* 76.1.
- 33 On the Enetoi, see note 5. Our sources mention also some Enetoi near the Roman province of Macedonia, who were fought by Sulla (App. *Mith.* 55). On the meaning and use of those connections between peoples with the same name, see Yarrow 2006, 180-183.
- 34 On Athens and Mithridates, see Habicht 1997, 297-314; Ballesteros-Pastor 2005 (with further bibliography).
- 35 On Herakles, see Gantz 1993, 400-402; Erskine 2001, 63-64. On Mithridates' relationship with Herakles, see Ballesteros-Pastor 1995, 128-130. It has been suggested by Andreae (1994-1995) that this king ought to be identified with an image of Telephos, the son of Herakles and founder of Pergamon. There were also Pontic coin types with Athena's image (Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 176-177) although we cannot specify the meaning of this symbol.
- 36 Coppola 1990b. Our only reference is a phrase of Pseudo Akron in his commentary to Hor. *Od.* 4.2.33: *Heroico metro Diomedias duodecim libros scripsit egregios, praeterea et prosa aliquanta.*

- 37 Coppola 1990b, 134.
- 38 Coppola 1990b, 131, 133.
- 39 Verg. *Aen.* 2.164-175, 185-186, cf. 9.151. Nevertheless, Virgil presents the old Diomedes as a peaceful and wise hero, see Barbara 2006. Indeed, Augustus may have been represented in the image of Diomedes, see Landwehr 1992, 123-124.
- 40 Perotti 2000.
- 41 Coppola 1990b, 134.
- 42 Ziehen 1949, 176-179.
- 43 Habicht 1997, 360-365; Coppola 1997. On those accusations, see App. *Mith.* 38; *B Civ.* 2.88.
- 44 See the remarks of Edson 1961, 200-201; Goukowsky 2001, CIX-CX; Yarrow 2006, 283-341.
- 45 Yavetz 1990, 35; Toher 1990, 142.
- 46 Strab. 13.1.27. On Strabon's relationship with the circles of opposition in Augustan Rome, see Dueck 2000, 112-115. The influence of Strabon as a source for Appianos has been defended by Mastrocinque 1999, in particular 104-109, cf. the review by Ballesteros-Pastor (2007, 420).
- 47 On Metrodoros, see McGing 1986, 160; Portanova 1988, 334-336; Ballesteros-Pastor 1996, 393; Briquel 1997, 121-127, 150-152; Goukowsky 2001, CV-CVI; Yarrow 2006, 31-32. On Timagenes, see Sordi 1982d.
- 48 On all the influences that Juba may have received at Rome, see Roller 2003, 65-72.
- 49 See above all Roller 2003, in particular 84-90, 100.
- 50 *FGrH* 275 F 27 *apud* Plut. *Sull.* 16.4; Roller 2003, 168-169. This fragment discredited Aulus Gabinius (*cos.* 58), the legate sent by Rome to end the Second Mithridatic War, and the same Roman who defeated Archelaos, the grandfather of the king of Kappadokia who ruled in Egypt for six months (Strab. 12.3.34).
- 51 On Jugurtha: Just. *Epit.* 38.6.6. On Juba's presence in the triumph of Caesar: Plut. *Caes.* 55.2; Roller 2003, 59 on Mithridates' speech, see Ballesteros-Pastor 2006b.
- 52 Just. *Epit.* 19.1.4: *Sed Afrorum sicuti causa iustior, ita et fortuna superior fuit*, and 29.1.7: *apud Karthaginienes quoque aetate immatura dux Hannibal constituitur (...), fatale non tam Romanis quam ipsi Africae malum*. On the possible use of native sources by Trogus for his account on Malchus, see Ehrenberg 1928, 849; Gras, Rouillard & Teixidor 1989, 230-231. Nevertheless, Trogus mixed different traditions: see the negative image of Africa in Just. *Epit.* 32.4.11 (Syme 1988, 370, n. 60).
- 53 On this meaning of the name Malchus, see Krings 1998, 37 with n. 8, although this scholar refutes such an identification. On Hiempsal and his Punic books, see Matthews 1972; Roller 2003, 27, 68, 159. On Juba's knowledge of the Punic language, see Roller 2003, 166, n. 26.
- 54 Wolski 2003. On Juba's special interest in the borders of the *oikoumene*, see Roller 2003, 183-243. On the problem of Juba as source for Strabon, see Roller 2003, 164, n. 14.
- 55 On this work, see Roller 2003, 183-211.
- 56 See Rebuffat 1999. Plutarch (*Sert.* 9.6) does not explicitly mention Juba as his source, although this king must have been well informed about Sertorius in Mauretania (Roller 2003, 185), and wished to appear as a descendant of Herakles when the hero passed by this country. Perhaps Pliny's account concerning Antaios' foundation of Tingis (*HN* 5.2.3) may also have been taken from Juba.

- 57 The use of Juba as a source would confirm the hypothesis regarding the autochthonous character of the tale (Bermejo Barrera 1994, 80-81). Juba probably went to Spain with Augustus (Roller 2003, 72-73) and was honoured in Gades and Carthago Nova (Roller 2003, 156).
- 58 Roller 2003, 66-67. Appianos probably used Juba for his African book, see Goukowsky 2002, XLV.
- 59 Roller 2003, 212-226.
- 60 On the circumstances of this marriage, see Roller 2003, 247-249. On Archelaos, see also Sullivan 1989, 182-185.
- 61 Roller 2003, 26, n. 86. On Konon's account about Diomedes, see *FGrH* 26 F 1, 24. Archelaos was also a scholar, but only a few fragments of his works have been preserved (Roller 2003, 220-221).
- 62 *App. Mith.* 9; *Arr. Parth.* 2; Frye 1964, 42-43.
- 63 *App. Mith.* 64-66; Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 26.
- 64 *App. Mith.* 12, 15-16, 54, 56, 70, 98. Some of these passages only suggest the abbreviation of original discourses in Appianos' source. For an analysis of some of these speeches, see McGing 1992, 516-517.
- 65 *App. Mith.* 20, 89; *Just. Epit.* 38.7.1; *Strab.* 14.1.23.
- 66 That presence has been inferred by Mastrocinque (2005, 178-179).
- 67 Roller 2003, 163, 219-220.
- 68 We must note that in the battle the *phalanx* was commanded by Diophantos, who may have been an important general. Our further accounts of the Mithridatic Wars are focused on Archelaos and Neoptolemos, meanwhile Diophantos is occasionally mentioned in the battles against Fimbria (Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 34.4), probably because he remained in Asia as a commander of the Mithridatic army. The allusions to a Diophantos in the Third Mithridatic War cannot be easily assigned to the same person: Portanova 1988, 239-240.
- 69 For a discussion of those fragments of Juba taken by Pliny, see Roller 2003, 261-263.
- 70 *Just. Epit.* 38.8.1: *Sic excitatis militibus post annos tres et XX sumpti regni in Romana bella descendit*; Yardley 2003, 111.
- 71 The 11 years are recorded by Strabon (10.4.10); the 13 appear in Memnon (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.2).
- 72 *App. Mith.* 21; *Plin. HN* 33.14.48; Boyce 1975, 35. On other similar episodes recorded in classical sources, see *Flor.* 1.46.11; *Cass. Dio* 40.27.3; *Plut. Artax.* 14.5. For other interpretations of Appianos' account, see Amiotti 1979, 76. Appianos (*Mith.* 64) also describes the shackles of gold that Mithridates put on his eldest son, which may be considered another Persian punishment: *Hdt.* 3.130; *Just. Epit.* 11.15.1; *Curt.* 5.12.20; *Amm. Marc.* 27.12.3; *Oros.* 6.19; cf. *Tac. Ann.* 12.47.3.
- 73 *FGrH* 275 F 60 *apud* *Plin. HN* 10.61.126-127; Roller 2003, 209-210.
- 74 Coppola 1990b; Roller 2003, 209.
- 75 Landwehr 1992.
- 76 Justinus' *Epitome* does not allude to any specific author, and the only source mentioned by Appianos (*Mith.* 8) in his Mithridatic book is Hieronymos of Kardia, who has no relation to the history of Mithridates.

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The Earliest Application of Brass and “Pure” Copper in the Hellenistic Coinages of Asia Minor and the Northern Black Sea Coast

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Ancient coins were strictly standardized objects in which the newest innovations and achievements in the field of mining, metallurgy, technology, and metrology were concentrated. There were always special requirements for the issue of ancient coins: the best carvers were invited to make the manufacturing dies, and the composition of alloys and the weights and sizes of coins were strictly controlled. The ancient concept of a coin consists of three necessary attributes: good-quality metal, a certain design, and an established weight. The quality of the metal served to guarantee the authenticity of the coins and their ability to measure costs, serve as means of exchange and for accumulating wealth. In spite of the fact that the interest in studying alloys of ancient coins already has a long tradition in numismatic science, it is only now, with the introduction of modern, non-destructive, high-speed analytical methods, that researchers have the opportunity to carry out mass analyses of coin alloys, which are important for providing statistically corrected results. Now it is possible for data from the monetary alloys to be considered in numismatic studies alongside traditional metrological, typological, and die analyses.

Investigations of ancient coin alloys are of considerable importance for the history of metallurgy because unlike other ancient metal wares, coins represent independently dated material that make it possible to determine where and when a particular metal or alloy was used for the first time. Brass (Gr. *oreichalkos*), which is an alloy of copper and zinc, began being used in coins comparatively late, and the question about the beginning of its application is closely connected with the wider problem of the reasons for and time of the introduction of different copper-based alloys in coinage.

This study is based on analyses of coins from the collections of the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), the State Historical Museums (Moscow), and the Historical-Archaeological Museum (Kerch).¹ Analyses were carried out by means of two independent analytical methods: X-ray fluorescent spectroscopy and measurements of electrical conductivity of coins. The method of X-ray fluorescent spectroscopy has proven very useful in numismatic research² alongside neutron activation analysis.³ The method of electrical conductivity

has previously rarely been used for studying the alloys of ancient coins. Both methods of analysis are non-destructive, high-speed and complementary, and they make it possible to analyse not only the surface layer, but also, to some degree, the core of a coin. Several thousand coins from the main collection of the State Hermitage Museum, minted in the ancient Greek cities in the northern, western and southern Black Sea coastal areas, some areas of Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa have been investigated. One of the important research aims was to identify when, why and how new copper-based alloys (brass and "pure" copper) were introduced in the coinages.

Until the end of the 1960's, the common opinion was that the earliest application of brass was for the striking of coins of Augustus in 23 BC, when coins from two different alloys began being issued: asses from more or less "pure" copper and sesterces and dupondii from brass.⁴ However, already at the beginning of 20th century, analyses of the brass coins circulating prior to the age of Augustus were published. They were coins of the Roman proconsuls in Asia Minor in the years 45, 32, and 31 BC.⁵ Some coins of Julius Caesar can also be considered experimental issues from brass.⁶ Investigations carried out in the laboratory of the British Museum in 1970 showed however, that brass was used in coinage already in the 80's-70's BC, at least half a century earlier than previously thought.⁷ It was determined that the earliest coins from brass were minted during the reign of Mithridates VI in the Pontic Kingdom and in Phrygia and Bithynia. This conclusion was based on the analysis of 83 Hellenistic coins belonging to the coinages of Syria, Macedonia, Rome, Mysia, Phrygia, Pontos, Bithynia and Iberia of the 4th-1st century BC.

Ancient literary sources and results of modern research confirm that brass was a quite rare alloy in antiquity. P.T. Craddock has carried out thorough analyses of all available research results, and this shows that early regular use of brass in antiquity is recorded only for the area of Phrygia. Among the earliest objects are a handle in the geometric style dated to the 8th-7th century BC and Phrygian brass fibulae manufactured from an alloy of copper with 10 % zinc⁸ found in the excavation of the city of Gordion. The earliest application of brass in Etruscan objects probably dates to the 5th century BC.⁹

The earliest ancient Greek literary sources (7th century BC) refer to a copper-zinc alloy or *oreichalkos* (unlike *chalkos* – bronze or copper) as something special and expensive (Hes. *The Shield* 122; Hom. *Hymns* 6.9). Even in the 4th century BC, Plato in *Kritios* (*Criti.* 114e, 116b, 116d, 119c) describes *oreichalkos* as a very valuable material and relates that though gold was considered the most precious of all metals known to the inhabitants of Atlantis, *oreichalkos* followed right after it. Brass was apparently used rather seldom in Greece.¹⁰ In Bosphoros, brass became known in the 1st century BC. According to the investigations of M.J. Treister,¹¹ about 10 % of the analysed metal objects dated to this time were made from brass. In the 3rd century BC, only very few objects made from brass are known. Possibly, coins were the first mass-produced objects made from brass by the Greeks.



Fig. 1. Pontic anonymous obol "head in leather cap, l./eight-rayed star, bow, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 12447. "Pure" copper. 20.51 g.

As mentioned above, the question of the use of brass in ancient coinage is closely connected to the wider question of the use of different copper-based alloys – brass, copper and bronze – for striking coins of different face values. The results of numerous studies testify that before the turn of the 2nd and 1st century BC, the only alloy used for striking coins of the smallest denominations was bronze.¹² At this time the new alloys "pure" copper and brass began being used in the coinage. The study of the coins from State Hermitage Museum Collection revealed that perhaps the earliest coins struck from "pure" copper were the so-called Pontic anonymous obols of the type "head in leather cap/eight-rayed star" (Fig. 1). These have variously been considered to be coins of the satraps of Mithridates VI in Bosporos or in Kolchis¹³ or the coins of Mithridates VI himself¹⁴ or of his predecessors¹⁵ in Pontos. It has also been suggested that they were issues of the temple state of Komana Pontike during the early years of the reign of Mithridates VI.¹⁶

It is highly probable that the Pontic anonymous obols were issued in Pontos as additional means to cover the military expenses of Mithridates VI. The image of the head in the leather cap or *kyrbasia* usually depicted Persian satraps,¹⁷ and this tradition has deep roots going back to the 5th century BC.¹⁸ It may be possible to date these coins more accurately since they have similarities with coins of the Pontic cities of the type "head of young man/sword" (RGAM, 54, no. 30, pl. VII, no. 23). Recently, François de Callataj proposed uniting the coins of this type with the types "head of Perseus/Pegasus" (Fig. 2a) (RGAM, 55, no. 32, pl. VIII, no. 25-26) and "head of Dionysos/cista" (Fig. 2b) (RGAM, 53, no. 24, pl. VII, nos. 14-16) in the same issue.¹⁹ As will be shown below, the two last types of coin were made of "pure" copper and brass. One could thus suppose that the Pontic anonymous obols were struck at a time not too distant from the time these coins of the Pontic cities were issued, and that this was the first time the alloys, "pure" copper and brass were introduced in the coinage.

Pontic anonymous obols were probably overvalued coins. They were issued partly as a substitute for silver coins. Therefore, it was necessary to strike them from "pure" copper, rather than bronze, to distinguish these coins from the other regular issues and thereby decrease the risk of fakes. Perhaps they were issued in Pontos to be used in Bosporos, since four out of six coins with a known provenience have been found in Bosporos.²⁰



Fig. 2. a) Amisos, "head of Perseus, r./Pegasus, monograms". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 12056. "Pure" copper. 12.19 g. b) Amisos, "head of Dionysos, r./cista, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 33318. Brass. 8.40 g.

Thanks to the investigations of the British Museum Research Laboratory, it was discovered that several mints in Pontos and Paphlagonia (Amisos, Dia and Chabakta) simultaneously issued coins of the type "head of Perseus/Pegasus" (ca. 12.17 g) struck of "pure" copper and coins of the type "head of Dionysos/cista" (ca. 4.00 g) struck in brass (Figs. 2a-b). There also exist one further, rather rare type of coin, "head in wolf exuvie/Nike" (RGAM, 56, no. 38, pl. VII, no. 30), which was struck in brass. The investigation of the Pontic coins in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum confirms this result, and it certifies that in Pontos around 90-70 BC, coins of different face values struck in two different alloys were simultaneously issued. All other coin types in Pontos and Paphlagonia issued during the reign of Mithridates VI were struck in bronze with a small amount of lead added.

The coins of the type "head of Dionysos/cista" were possibly the earliest but not the only example of brass being used for coins during the reign of Mithridates VI. Starting in the 80's BC, some of the coins of Mysia and Phrygia were made from brass as well, and this appears to be connected to the expansionist policies of Mithridates VI.

In 89/88 BC, large parts of Asia Minor were conquered by Mithridates VI. He appointed regional and urban satraps to rule the newly acquired territories (App. *Mith.* 21). The coins issued in many mints of this period bear signs of Mithridatic influence not only in the choice of types, face values, and imagery, but also, as will be shown, in the choice of alloys.

Starting in 89/88 BC, a new style of royal tetradrachm began being issued in Pergamon. They are dated according to a new Pergamenean era, and specimens of the years from 1 to 4 are known. Together with the tetradrachms, coins from copper-based alloys were issued. The biggest denomination had on the obverse the head of Athens with the legend "Mithridates" below, and on the reverse a standing Asklepios with the name of the city below (Fig. 3a) (*BMC Mysia*, 127, nos. 129-134, pl. XXVI, no. 7). The results of the investigations in the laboratory of the British Museum and in the State Hermitage Museum has shown that the coins were struck in brass with a zinc content of less than 15 %. The coins of the other denominations, which are quite frequent,



Fig. 3. a) Pergamon, "head of Athena, below "ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ"/Asklepios standing". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 14395. Brass. 2.78 gr. b) Pergamon, "head of Asklepios, r./eagle on thunderbolt". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 14380. Brass, 7.81 g. c) Pergamon, "head of Athena, below inscription/owl on a palm branch". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 14415. Brass. 2.78 g.

were struck in copper-based alloys and bear the names of city magistrates. The images on these coins are connected with the cults of Athena and Asklepios (*BMC Mysia*, 135-138, 144-149, 151-157, 158-162, 163, 172-175, 183-184, 187-188, 195-204), and they date to 85/84 BC and later. Coins of some types (*BMC Mysia* 144-149, 187-188, 195-204) were produced from brass with a small amount of zinc (several percent), (Figs. 3b-c); the other coins were struck in tin-lead bronze. One may suppose that the tradition of striking coins in brass in Pergamon started during the reign of Mithridates VI. Perhaps this issue was connected to the victories of Mithridates at the beginning of the first war with Rome. Other regions of Mysia struck bronze coins with a large amount of lead (up to 27 %) as well.

There is a very interesting monetary series issued by Apameia from approximately 89/88 BC until the middle of the 1st century BC, which consists of coins of four different face values (*BMC Phrygia*, 74-75). This issue is probably connected to the military campaign of Mithridates VI in the year 89/88 BC. The coins of the highest denomination of this series are struck in brass and show "head of Athena/eagle on thunderbolt, meander, pilei" (Fig. 4) (*BMC Phrygia*, 77, no. 45, pl. X, nos. 4-5). The coins of the smaller denominations of the same issue are made of bronze.



Fig. 4. Apameia, "head of Athena/eagle on thunderbolt, meander, pilei". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 17060. Brass. 5.76 g.



Fig. 5. a) Akmonia, "head of Athena/eagle on thunderbolt, name of magistrate "ΘΕΟΔΩΤΟ"". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 16962. Brass. 7.58 g. b) Dionysopolis, "head of Dionysos/Dionysos standing, name of magistrate "ΜΕΝΕ[ΚΑ]"". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 17166. Brass. 9.47 g. c) Eumeneia, "head of Dionysos/tripod, name of magistrate "ΜΕΝΕΚ", below "ΑΣΚ"". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 17203. Brass. 7.33 g. d) Philomelion, "head of Nike, behind palm branch, stamp with eagle in round depression/two cornucopiae, eight-rayed star and crescent, below "ΣΚΥ"". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 17350. Brass. 9.39 g.

There are also coins made of brass in other cities in Phrygia: Akmonia (Fig. 5a) (*BMC Phrygia*, 4, nos. 1-2, pl. II, no. 6), Dionysopolis (Fig. 5b) (*BMC Phrygia*, 182, nos. 3-5, pl. XXIII, no. 3), Eumeneia (Fig. 5c) (*BMC Phrygia*, 211, nos. 3-6, pl. XXVII, no. 3), and Philomelion (Fig. 5d) (*BMC Phrygia*, 353, no. 3, pl. XLI, no. 12). As a rule, they are the coins of the highest denominations and they bear types with Mithridatic symbols (eight-ray stars, eagle on thunderbolt, head of Dionysos, and standing Dionysos with panther by his legs, as on the coins of Pantikapaion). Moreover, they bear the names of the magistrates with patronymics as on the coins of Apameia. It is thus possible to date the all these issues to the time of Mithridates VI.

In Appianos' description of the First Mithridatic War (App. *Mith.* 20), there is evidence to suggest that the first use of the new alloys was in fact related to the activities of Mithridates. Appianos testifies that in 89/88 BC, Mithridates captured Pergamon and moved his capital there (App. *Mith.* 52). And the issue of coins of the type "head of Athena/Asklepios standing" made of brass began to be struck here. We also know from Appianos that Apameia, one of the centres of the Roman province of Asia in Phrygia, had willingly gone over to the side of Mithridates, and it was probably for this reason that Mithridates donated 100 talents to the town to repair the damage done by an earthquake. Scholars have seen a connection between this and the beginning of the issuing of cistophori with the abbreviation ΑΠΙΑ.²¹ Besides silver coins, Apameia also issued the copper-based coins in four denominations mentioned above.

Mithridates himself led the advance into Phrygia, Mysia, and the Roman province of Asia (App. *Mith.* 24), and at the same time the towns of Akmonia, Dionysopolis, Eumeneia, Philomelion struck large coins in brass with Mithridatic images and symbols. Laodikeia on the Lykos, on the other hand, was probably the first town to oppose Mithridates and undergo a siege (App. *Mith.* 24; Strab. 12.8.16). It seems that Laodikeia did not receive any aid from Mithridates afterwards – in any case, there were no brass coins or coins with Mithridatic symbols. It seems reasonable therefore to attribute the introduction of brass coinage to the help of Mithridates to friendly cities, and hence to date their beginning closely to 89/88 BC.

From the very beginning, different alloys were used for coins of certain denominations, while different alloys were never used for coins of the same denominations. This made it possible to distinguish the coins of higher face values from the ones of copper-based alloys, which were used for smaller denominations. The brass coins could probably replace silver money, at least for inner-market payments.

The introduction of new alloys in the coinage was apparently dictated by the necessity of finding additional monetary resources to prepare for the large-scale military operations. It is most probable that these pioneer issues were introduced in the period of preparation for and the peak of the first war with Rome, which put pressure on all the resources available for Mithridates VI. The greatest quantity of tetradrachms of Mithridates VI was also issued during the years prior to the beginning of military campaigns. According to the study of Callataj,²² based on coins from the largest European numismatic collections, 55 tetradrachms are known from the period from 96 to 91 BC, while 145 coins are known from the shorter period from 90 to 87 BC. The issue of tetradrachms the following year was apparently determined by the continuation of the war with Rome. So, in 86 and 85 BC, a significant amount of tetradrachms (50 coins) was struck. Subsequently, the mints issuing silver coins slowed down for a number of years. In the period 84-77 BC, only 12 tetradrachms are known. A last peak of production coincides with the period of preparation for the third war with Rome in 76-74 BC, when 101 tetradrachms are known. Finally, the striking of royal tetradrachms came to a halt in 73-66 BC, a period from which only 11 coins have been found.

One of the main reasons Mithridates carried out military operations in Asia Minor was to gain control of the gold, silver and other metal mines situated in different parts of the area. It seems that the preparation for the war with Rome demanded such an enormous amount of resources from the Pontic king that he had to experiment with new monetary alloys to solve the problem of finding additional monetary sources.

Strabon (12.3.19) described Pharnakeia as a region known for its mines: iron mines in his times and previously also silver mines. Ancient mines of gold and silver are known near the modern villages of Giresun and Ordu in Pharnakeia. Copper mines are situated in Pontos and Bithynia, Paphlagonia,



Fig. 6. Bosporean anonymous obol,
"head of Dionysos, r./bowcase,
monogram". State Hermitage
Museum Collection, no. 27534.
"Pure" copper. 20.95 g.

Pharnakeia and Lesser Armenia.²³ Mixed copper-lead-zinc ores are known in only two places in Asia Minor. The first area, according to Strabon (12.3.19) and also to modern investigations, is situated in Chaldis south of Pharnakeia. The second is situated in Phrygia.²⁴ Strabon mentions that *oreichalkos* was manufactured from the ores found in the mines close to Andeira (Strab. 13.56). It is possible that the mines near Andeira can be identified with the mines at Balya Maden near Balikesir in north-western Anatolia.²⁵ Balya Maden is known for its silver mines, but poly-metallic ores, such as silver-ferrous galena and sphalerit were also mined there. The ores also have a rather high content of arsenic.

The experiments with new alloys also took place on the territory of Bosporos, on which the power of the Pontic king Mithridates VI was expanded towards the end of the second century BC. During the study of the Hellenistic coinages of the northern Black Sea another type of coin was discovered, which was struck in "pure" copper, namely the Bosporean anonymous obols with "head of Dionysos/bowcase" (Fig. 6). The fact that the Bosporean anonymous obols were made of "pure" copper was verified through the analysis of a large number of coins. In total 1163 Bosporean anonymous obols were analysed. Only seven of these (0.6%), all showing signs of overstriking, were made of bronze, the other 1158 coins were made of pure copper.

It seems reasonable to connect the issue of the Bosporean anonymous obols with the beginning of the reign of the son of Mithridates in Bosporos. Plutarch says that: "For he [Mithridates] himself had wrested Asia from the Romans, and Bithynia and Cappadocia from their kings, and was now set in Pergamum, dispensing riches, principalities, and sovereignties to his friends; and of his sons, one was in Pontus and Bosporus, holding without any opposition the ancient realm as far as the deserts beyond Lake Maeotis" (Plut. *Sull.* 11.2). Thus, during the period of the greatest success of Mithridates VI in the wars with Rome, i.e., 89/88 BC, one of his oldest sons, Mithridates the Younger, was satrap in Bosporos and Pontos. Probably the Bosporean anonymous obols were first issued in 89/88 BC. The many different monograms on them and the stylistic changes suggest a rather extended period of issuing of these coins. N.A. Frolova has counted 50 different monograms, many of which are similar to the monograms on the Pontic municipal coins.²⁶ It should, however, be noted that many of the monograms published by N.A. Frolova represent different spellings of similar names. This phenomenon is well-known from



Fig. 7. Monograms on the Bosporan anonymous obols.

the mints of many Greek cities during the Hellenistic period.²⁷ Grouping the monograms there are about 16 different groups left, which could correspond to approximately the same number of annual magistrates (Fig. 7). If magistrates changed annually, we can suppose that the Bosporan anonymous obols were issued for at least 16 years (in reality, we could probably increase this number to 20-25 years). If we accept 65 BC as the final year these coins were issued (the end of the rule of the son of Mithridates in Bosporos), then production must have started in the beginning of the 80's BC, possibly in 89/88.

Some of the monograms on the Bosporan anonymous obols corresponds to the monograms on the royal tetradrahms of the years 89/88, 87/86, 86/85, 79/78, 76/75, 75/74, and 73/72. Thus, it is possible to conclude that Bosporan anonymous obols were struck from about 89/88 BC to the end of the reign of Mithridates. Thus the introduction of the Bosporan anonymous obols corresponded to the above-mentioned series of Pontic coins, struck in brass and "pure" copper, and consequently, to the issuing of Pontic anonymous obols. The question of where the Bosporan anonymous obols were struck is still open. They may have been produced in Pontos and brought from there along with Pontic tetrachalkoi to be circulated on Bosporos. According to the observations of Ju.S. Kruškol and N.A. Frolova, many of the monograms on the Bosporan anonymous obols are similar to those on the Pontic and Bithynian municipal coins.²⁸ This could perhaps indicate that the same magistrates were responsible for the issuance of the Bosporan anonymous obols and the coins of the



Fig. 8. Bosphoran coins of the first Mithridatic period. a) Pantikapaion, "head of Dionysos/deer running, thyrsos". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27164. Silver. b) Phanagoreia, "head of Artemis/flower". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27362. Silver. c) Pantikapaion, "head of Poseidon/prow". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27137. Bronze. d) Pantikapaion, "head of Artemis/stag lying". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27138. Bronze. e) Phanagoreia, "head of Artemis/stag lying". Bronze.

cities of the Pontic Kingdom. It seems that during the reign of Mithridates, Bosphoran towns received the right to strike coins, but I agree with Callataÿ that the presence of the names of the towns does not automatically mean that they were autonomous.²⁹ Perhaps the Bosphoran towns had the same degree of quasi-autonomy as the Pontic cities.

The first Mithridatic issue in Bosphoros was silver coins of the type "head of Dionysos/stag running" (Pantikapaion, Gorgippia) (Fig. 8a). Some of these coins were overstruck on Amisean silver coins of the type "Athena/owl" (Fig. 9).³⁰ The silver of these coins was of the same good quality as that of the Amisean coins. Phanagoreia was striking silver coins with "head of Artemis/rose" (Fig. 8b). The early bronze coins of the types "head of Poseidon/prow" (Fig. 8c) (Pantikapaion) and "head of Artemis/stag lying" (Figs. 8d-e) (Pantikapaion, Phanagoreia) were struck in bronze with a small amount of lead, which is characteristic also for the Pontic coins. Therefore, it may be assumed that during the early period silver and bronze for Bosphoran coinage was delivered from Pontos.

Since some of the Bosphoran silver coins have been overstruck on Amisean drachms, this period should be dated until 96/95 BC, when municipal silver coinage apparently was stopped in Pontos and royal tetradrachms began being struck there.³¹ The start of the first Bosphoran period corresponds to the

Fig. 9. Amisos, "head of the nymph Amisa with turreted crown/owl". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 11944. Silver drachm.



first use of Dionysian symbols on the coinage, which can be dated to around 102/101 BC. This is when the name of Mithridates appeared with the epithet "Dionysos" for the first time on the monument in honour of Mithridates in the sanctuary of the Samothracian Kabeiroi on Delos.³²

The second period in the Bosphoran coinage starting around 96/95 BC, is characterised by types relating to Dionysos. Pantikapaion, Phanagoreia and Gorgippia issued didrachms of the type "Dionysos/wreath and bunch of grapes", drachms "Artemis/stag feeding", and hemidrachms "Dionysos/thyrsos", which were all made of poor quality silver. These cities also issued obols of the type "Men/standing Dionysos" and tetrachalkoi "Dionysos/tripod" (Fig. 10d-e). Almost all the coins have common monograms, and only three different monograms are found. Therefore the second period was probably rather short. The monograms on the Bosphoran coins are similar to the monograms on the Pontic coins of the types "Aegis/Nike", "Athena/Perseus", "Ares/sword", "Dionysos/cista", and "Dionysos/thyrsos". The silver alloy of the Bosphoran coins during this period is of a very bad quality. The alloy contains more than 50 % copper. Many of bronze coins of this period were overstruck on the Pontic obols "Athena/Perseus" and "Zeus/eagle", and tetrachalkoi "Aegis/Nike". We can date this period from about 96/95 BC, when the Amisean drachms stopped being issued to about 89/88 BC.

The beginning of the third Mithridatic period in the Bosphoran coinage (approx. 89/88 BC) is connected to the establishment of the son of Mithridates as ruler of Bosporos during the peak of the first war against Rome. Around 80 BC there was an anti-Mithridatic movement in Bosporos, which was stopped by Mithridates VI, who appointed another son, Machares, as the new ruler of Bosporos (App. *Mith.* 67). During this entire period from 89/88 BC until about 65 BC, no coins were issued with names of cities in Bosporos. Only anonymous coins were issued (Fig. 6), and these were circulated along with the Pontic coins, mostly Sinopean tetrachalkoi of the later type "Zeus/eagle". Thus, the numismatic data and historical evidence indicate that during this period Bosporos was a satrapy under the Pontic Kingdom. Bosphoran anonymous obols were overvalued coins and served to replace silver coins, which were not struck in Bosporos at this time.

The fourth period was very short, lasting only from 65 to 63 BC. All the Bosphoran anonymous obols were overstruck on coins of Pantikapaion of the type "head of Apollon/eagle". This is very easy to determine because the material of all of these coins is pure copper. Almost all the Pantikapaian tetrachalkoi of this period of the type "head of Apollon/tripod" were overstruck



Fig. 10. Bosphoran coins of the second Mithridatic period. a) Phanagoreia, "head of Dionysos/wreath and bunch of grapes". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27355. Silver drachm. b) Pantikapaion, "head of Artemis/stag feeding, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27158. Silver drachm. c) Phanagoreia, "head of Dionysos/thyrsos, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27404. Silver drachm. d) Pantikapaion, "head of Men/Dionysos standing, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27184. Bronze obol. e) Gorgippia, "head of Dionysos/tripod, monogram". State Hermitage Museum Collection, no. 27519. Bronze tetrachalk.

on Pontic coins of the type "Zeus/eagle on thunderbolt". No silver coins were struck in Bosphoros during this period.

After the death of Mithridates no more coins were struck in brass and pure copper for a period of time. Only during the time of the proconsuls C. Clovius and Q. Oppius in 45-44 BC, were brass coins issued again. They had a weight of 15 and 12 g., which corresponded to the weight of asses, but they were dupondii, so they had twice the value of an ass.

A quarter of a century later, Augustus started to issue brass sesterces and dupondii, as well as pure copper asses and quandrances. The transition to striking coins from brass and copper involved a transition to coins of conventional value. Brass and "pure" copper were chosen for this purpose because they were practically novel alloys for minting. Additionally, the complexity of the metallurgical process needed to produce brass and the scarcity of zinc ores, made it rather easy to establish a state monopoly on the use of brass exclusively in the coinage.³³ It was therefore possible to give the coins made from brass an artificially high value, and consequently they brought considerable income to the state.³⁴ Copper was chosen alongside brass because it had rarely been used before for striking coins, so it was a convenient material for overvalued coins.

This system worked so well that it existed for more than two and a half centuries throughout the vast territory of the Roman Empire. But it should be remembered that Mithridates VI, the greatest enemy of Rome, was the first to introduce a bimetallic system in copper-based coinage.

Notes

- 1 I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the keepers of the collections, N.A. Frolova and A.L. Žoltikova, for giving me the opportunity to carry out measurements of the compositions of the alloys.
- 2 Stos-Gale 1986, 978-1021; Bui, Calliari, Milazzo, Martini & Vismara 1993, 229-235; Hawken, Merrick & Metcalf 1966, 98-138.
- 3 Gordus 1967, 76-86; Beuchesne, Barrandon, Alves, Gil & Guerra 1988, 187-197.
- 4 Caley 1964, 45-68.
- 5 Bahrfeldt 1905, 42.
- 6 Crawford 1974, 11.
- 7 Craddock, Burnett & Preston 1980, 53-64.
- 8 Craddock 1978, 3-4.
- 9 Craddock 1978, 4.
- 10 Craddock, 1978, 4-5; Craddock 1977, 103-123.
- 11 Treister 1992, 91-92.
- 12 Treister 1992, 91-92.
- 13 Imhoof-Blumer 1890, 40; Imhoof-Blumer 1897, 254; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 81; Giel 1886, 4; Minns 1913, 287; Zograf 1951, 186; Kleiner 1955, 6.
- 14 Baldwin 1913, 284.
- 15 Kolb 1926, 26; Golenko 1969, 141, 144.
- 16 Saprykin 1996, 106-121.
- 17 There were also images of kings wearing tiara – for example Mithridates I Kallinikos of Kommagene on the bronze coins from the 90's BC (*BMC Galatia*, 104, nos. 1-3, pl. XIV, no. 7) and Mithridates II (Guadan 1957, 28-29).
- 18 Zahle 1982, 101-112.
- 19 Callataÿ 2005, 124-125.
- 20 Golenko 1969, 135.
- 21 Kleiner 1979, 122.
- 22 Callataÿ 1987, 55-66.
- 23 Jesus 1980, 397.
- 24 Jesus 1980, 397; Caneva, Palmieri & Sertok 1988; Cowell, Craddock, Pike & Burnett 2000.
- 25 Craddock 1988, 294-295.
- 26 Frolova 1996, 165.
- 27 Rogalsky 1975, 3-9.
- 28 Kruškol 1952, 140-141; Frolova 1996, 166.
- 29 Callataÿ, 2005.
- 30 Golenko 1969, 29.
- 31 Golenko 1969, 34.
- 32 Maksimova 1956, 203 and Kreuz in this volume.
- 33 Grant 1946, 88; Craddock 1978, 1.

- 34 Burnett, Craddock & Preston 1982, 267-268. The cost of *oreichalkos* was probably twice that of bronze, as it is possible to judge from the fact that Republican asses with a weight of more than 25 g., were transformed by Augustus to dupondii weighing 13.65 g. The weight of a dupondius from brass was considerably lower than the weight of two post-reform asses of copper, see Zograf 1951, 53; Grant 1958, 287; Grant 1946, 90.

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Abbreviations

BMC Mysia W. Wroth 1892. *British Museum. Catalogue of Greek Coins of Mysia*. London.

BMC Galatia W. Wroth 1899. *British Museum. Catalogue of Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia and Syria*. London.

BMC Phrygia B.V. Head 1906. *British Museum. Catalogue of Greek Coins of Phrygia*. London.

RGAM W.H. Waddington, E. Babelon, & Th. Reinach 1904-1912. *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*. Paris.

The Religion and Cults of the Pontic Kingdom: Political Aspects

Sergej Ju. Saprykin

In the religious life of the Kingdom of Pontos, we can see two main currents – the cults of Hellenic and local deities and the ideological propaganda closely connected with royal dynastic policy. With the exception of a few articles¹ and sections in monographs on the history of the Kingdom of Pontos, there is little literature on the subject and we lack monographic studies on Pontic religion (by “Pontic” I mean the Kingdom of Pontos). Scholars instead usually stress the political aspects of the royal propaganda of Mithridates Eupator connecting it with his anti-Roman activity before and during the Mithridatic Wars.² Some aspects of religious life and cults in Pontos have been touched upon in studies on terracottas, coins, reliefs, and inscriptions, but these studies have mostly referred only to the Greek cities of the Pontic kingdom.³ A complete study of cults and religion in the Pontic Kingdom as well as the basic points of royal Mithridatic propaganda connected with the popular cults throughout the whole state remains a task for classical scholarship.

The same is true for other regions included in the kingdom of the Mithridatids: in Bosporos we come across clear traces of Mithridatic, i.e. Pontic, religious policy even after the fall of Mithridates Eupator; clearly this policy survived throughout the course of the late 1st century BC and indeed endured until at least the mid 3rd century AD. Yet we still do not know what was the reason for the spreading of the Pontic cults there, the more so in that local Greeks and barbarians had their own cults and religious traditions since the time of the Greek colonization. One thing however is clear – in Olbia, Chersonesos, and the West Pontic cities the original Mithridatic, i.e. Anatolian, cults were very rare, unlike in Bosporos and the ancestral Pontic domain, including Kolchis, where the Pontic religious impact was much greater. At Bosporos this influence is confirmed by the spread of the cult of Ma – a female deity with a variety of functions of partly Hellenic, Iranian, and Anatolian origin – which had a temple in Pantikapaion (*CIRB*, 74: θεῶν τῆς Μᾶς καὶ Παρ(θ)έου), by the worship of Mithras-Attis in the first century BC to the first century AD⁴ and Mên, who appeared on the coins of Pantikapaion, Phanagoreia, and Gorgippia struck in the first quarter of the 1st century BC, showing the features of king Mithridates Eupator wearing a diademed Phrygian helmet.⁵ Anatolian and Iranian cults spread over the territory where Hellenic cults had been dominant since the Greek colonisation, and it is quite interesting to

study how they interacted with each other. Dionysos, a Hellenic god of fertility and wine-making, had a shrine in Pantikapaion, and was revered probably from the beginning of the 80's BC.⁶ A temple, where the god Dionysos was worshipped, appeared at the turn of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC in Vani.⁷ The establishment of these sanctuaries in Kolchis and Bosporos coincides with the surge of Mithridatic propaganda, based on the political and ideological exploitation of Mithridates Eupator as Dionysos just after the triumph of the king in Pergamon in 88 BC or slightly earlier.⁸ When Bosporos joined the Kingdom of Pontos, its monetary officials began in 100 BC to place the image and attributes of Dionysos on the coins of the main Bosporan cities, because the Pontic king was associated with this god.⁹ That is why some of the coins have the image of a young Dionysos with features of Mithridates Eupator. Dionysos appeared on coins parallel to the traditional Greek deities Apollon and Artemis, who were popular among the Bosporans.

The political aspects of Mithridatic religion in the Black Sea territories were deeply connected with the Pontic Kingdom, where the cult of Dionysos was used in the policy of the king, as is reflected on coins and terracottas. Dionysos and his attributes were stamped on royal and bronze coins: in 96 BC royal coins of Mithridates Eupator were decorated with an ivy wreath which testifies to the existence of a royal cult of Dionysos in Pontos and the identification of the king with this god.¹⁰ Early undated tetradrachms of the king depict him without an ivy wreath, and this fact allowed G. Kleiner to date the early royal series of coins to no later than 102/101 BC, when the cult of Dionysos officially became a royal one and the king began calling himself Mithridates Eupator Dionysos.¹¹ A head of the young Dionysos bearing an ivy garland together with his attributes *cista mystica*, *thyrsos*, and panther was shown on the coins of Pontic cities – Sinope, Amisos, Komana, Laodikeia, Kabeira, Dia, which F. Imhoof-Blümer dated to 105-90 BC (type "Dionysos/thyrsos") and 90-80 BC (type "Dionysos/cista mystica" and "panther/cista mystica"), while F. de Callataÿ dates the whole Dionysos series to 100-85 BC.¹² This seems to be correct, if it is taken into account that the adoption of the epithet "Dionysos" occurred not earlier than 102 BC. The appearance of the god on coins of the Greek cities of Pontos was due to the Philhellenic policy of Mithridates, who gave some political and autonomous rights to his Hellenic subjects just after beginning the expansion in Asia Minor. At exactly the same time the terracotta workshop at Amisos began to produce a great number of masks and terracotta figurines of Dionysos, Satyros and Silenos, which were widely spread throughout the whole territory of the Pontic state, including the North Pontic region and Kolchis.¹³ This was definitely political and ideological propaganda, which introduced the king as the New Dionysos, eager to free the Greeks from the barbarians and, to some extent, from the Romans. Thus since the last decade of the 2nd century BC the Pontic royal elite and the followers of the king tried to use religion and cults as a mean of propaganda to strengthen the power of Mithridates Eupator.

This tendency became evident soon after the Crimean campaign of Diophantos in 110-107 BC. In the decree for Diophantos from Chersonesos (110-107 BC) we hear nothing about Mithridates' epithet "Dionysos" probably because it had not yet been taken by the king (*IOSPE* I², 352). Yet already by 102-101 BC Mithridates took the epithet "Dionysos", as is shown by the inscription of the priest Helianax in the Mithridatic heroon on Delos.¹⁴ This epithet could have been adopted by Mithridates as part of his title after 106 BC when he began his expansion in Asia Minor as a first step in preparation for the future struggle with Rome. The political aspect of the cult of Dionysos in the Pontic Kingdom was strengthened when Mithridates attempted to annex Paphlagonia in 106 BC and both needed to control affairs in Kappadokia at the turn of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and captured Lesser Armenia and Kolchis.

Territorial expansion meant that the royal propaganda machine had to portray the king of Pontos as protector and liberator of the Greeks and the resident population by identifying him with the god who had mainly apothropaic functions and was widely worshipped as Saviour – *Soter*. Although this feature was applicable to the cults of numerous gods, popular in the Kingdom of Pontos, it was Dionysos who was chosen for official use. That is why our task here is to trace the influence of the main Pontic cults on Mithridatic propaganda as well as on the creation of the king's new image as Dionysos. I shall try to answer the question why Dionysos in particular was chosen as a chief official god of Pontos to express the ideological background of Mithridatic policy – to create a large kingdom on the basis of territorial expansion in Asia Minor and on the Black Sea.

Let us begin with the male cults in the Kingdom of Pontos. The most popular, and the chief, official god was Zeus, who was already a royal deity in the reign of Mithridates III. His image was shown on royal coins as Zeus Etaphore, sitting on a throne and holding a sceptre and an eagle as symbols of spiritual and universal power.¹⁵ The standing figures of Zeus and Hera, leaning on sceptres, are found on the tetradrachms of Mithridates IV and his wife and sister-queen Laodike.¹⁶ A single figure of Hera, in the same pose with a sceptre, appears on the coins of Laodike after she became a widow and for some time ruled alone until Mithridates V came to power.¹⁷ This means that Zeus and Hera, the supreme Olympic gods, symbols of power in the Greek world, were worshipped in the Pontic Kingdom already in the 3rd century BC, and became particularly popular in the 2nd century BC as the patrons of the ruling dynasty (Fig. 1). It proves that the cult of Zeus became official in Pontos under the early Mithridatids and that the god was viewed as a protector of the royal family, which suggests some degree of deification of the rulers on the base of this worshipping of Zeus and Hera. The latter is confirmed by a unique stater of Mithridates IV with the portrait of the king in a laurel wreath – a standing Hera with sceptre, star, crescent, and the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΘΡΙΔΑΤΟΥ, which G. Kleiner supposed to be a post-humous issue of this king by Laodike, who on her own coins had the same type of Hera, but without star and cres-



Fig. 1. Pontic royal issues with Zeus and Hera.

cent.¹⁸ If so, then Hera (and Zeus as well) was regarded as protector of the members of the dynasty. Zeus' cult continued to be official during the reign of Mithridates Eupator, as is evident from numismatics (Fig. 2). The majority of the copper coins from the so-called "quasi-autonomous" mints of Pontic cities bear the image and attributes of Zeus, inspired, of course, by the royal propaganda. The same follows from the sacrifices to this god as *Stratios*, i.e. Warrior and "god of armies", performed by the king in connection with his struggle with the Romans (App. *Mith.* 66, 70). Modern scholarship offers different explanations of this matter: some scholars suggest an Iranian origin of Zeus in Pontos akin to the Persian royal god Ahura-Mazda, others assume Seleukid influence on the cult, as the first kings of Pontos had dynastic links with the Seleukids.¹⁹



Fig. 2. Coin of Amisos with the type "Zeus/eagle on thunderbolt".

In tracing the origin of the cult of Zeus in Pontos and Paphlagonia, it should be kept in mind that the god was considered to be a protector and a saviour in different spheres of life for the local population in many areas of northern and eastern Anatolia. Zeus' epithets show the chthonic features of the god and demonstrates that he was considered as patron of certain regions in Paphlagonia: Zeus Karzenos in Karzena, Zeus Kimistenos in Kimistena, Zeus Bonitenos (*IGR* III, 90) in Bonita – in the last case he was considered a horseman and a sun-god with protective, soteric, and apothropaic functions, whose role was to guard and preserve the region, people, and villagers, just as Zeus Pappos in Bithynia. He was also worshipped as Koropidzos (in Kastamonu) – an epithet also taken from a place-name.²⁰ We also hear about some other local epithets of Zeus – Baleos, Sdaleites, Monios, Sarsos, Xibenos, Disabeites – all thought to be derived from local toponyms, showing Zeus as patron of villages, small towns, and ethnic communities (the suffix –ειτης is a witness of the ethnic character of the epithet).²¹ The soteric aspect of the god in northern Anatolia (and in some other parts of Asia Minor) as saviour and guard compares to the Hellenic cult of Zeus where the epithets Pater, Soter, Patroios, Ktesios, Erkesios, and Oikophylaks are used and the god worshipped as keeper and defender of the house, court-yard, plot, property, individual ownership, etc.²² Soteric features of Zeus were concentrated in the cult of Zeus Pyleios, popular in forts and fortified cities of the Pontic Kingdom, because the god Pylon in Pontos, as in Greece, was a keeper of gates and walls and a defender of forts, castles, and towns (*IGR* III, 110).²³ In Paphlagonia and Pontos, Zeus was thought to be a protector of regions and cities, because the local villagers were grouped into native or ethnic communities as the primary form of social organisation of peasants in Anatolia.

As the worshippers of Zeus were mostly peasants, *katoikoi*, villagers, and temple-servants, who worked on temple-lands, one of the chief functions of the god was his role as patron of crops and natural forces. Consequently Zeus was worshipped in Paphlagonia with the epithet Poarinos, as we see in an inscription from the city of Abonouteichos and on the city's rare coins of the Mithridatic period.²⁴ The epithet Ποαρινός comes from the word ποία, ποάριον (or Πόα) – “a grass” and can be compared with the hero Ποίας, son of Taumachos, father of Philoktetes, which makes him a patron of meadows and pastures.²⁵ As god of plants and nature he can be compared with Attis, a Phrygian companion of the Great Mother of Gods – Kybele, who had the epithet Ποιμήν or *Phrygius pastor*, worshipped as a patron of pastures, meadows and herds, i.e. a god of nature and vegetation. Poimen was popular among the Phrygian and Thracian population of northern Anatolia particularly in Maryandinia (*Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* 2.354), while the Greeks associated him with Zeus, as in Abonouteichos. In Çorum (Euchaita) in Pontos, Zeus was worshipped as a god of fertility under the epithet Epikarpios, connected with the Hellenic cults of the Eleusinian goddesses Demeter and Kore and with the Phrygian and Karian cults of the Mother of the Gods and Attis.²⁶ In Çerek he

was viewed as the patron of landowners, the protector, saviour and guardian of their fields and the conqueror of dark and evil; in Paphlagonian Zorah he appeared as protector, soter and guardian of families and privacy.²⁷ Zeus had an altar in Zela, and on local coins of the Roman period he was depicted as Zeus Nikephore (like Zeus Etaphore on royal coins of Mithridates III) with the epithet ΖΕΥΣ ΕΠΙΚΑΡΠΙΟΣ ΖΗΛΕΙΤΩΝ, which shows him as protector and patron of the city's community.²⁸ On other coins of the Imperial period the god holds a *grebe d'epis barbelé* as a deity of nature and crops.²⁹ Such attributes allows us to connect Zeus Epikarpios with the completely Greek cult of Zeus Karpophoros or Karpodotes – a fruit-bearing god.

Zeus' functions as patron of the country, villages, and crops along with his main feature of controlling natural forces lead to his chthonic and apothropaic character as soter and saviour. This is definitely linked with his epithets Ἐθέρι ἀλεξιχαλάζω,³⁰ which linkage also indicates a god of fertility linked with land-productivity, water, and the Eleusinian cults of Demeter, Eubouleios, and Ploutos. The epithet Ἐθέρι = Δίος Αἰθήρ > Αἰθέριος is usually met in Greece and in the Greek cities of Asia Minor along with the Hellenic gods Athena Pallas and Poseidon (particularly in Miletos, Mytilene, Kyzikos, Arkadia). This makes Zeus Αἰθήρ > Ἐθέρι ἀλεξιχαλάζω an originally Greek god, who was closely associated with Zeus Epikarpios (=Karpophoros or Karpodotes) and Zeus Soter. Zeus as god of recovery and protector from evil can be found in the cult of Zeus Bobeomenos in the region of Amaseia (derived from the verbs βέομαι – “I shall live”, βιώω – “to live”, “to survive”, “to recover”)³¹. Thus the god was a patron of human life and recovery, a role which corresponds to the fundamental religious nature of Zeus in Pontos, Paphlagonia, and Kappadokia as Soter and Epikarpios – a patron of fertility, vegetation, and crops, without which life was impossible. As Soter he was responsible for the life of the people. Returning to the above mentioned inscription from Çorum, it should be noted that the dedication was made by a priest of the Eleusinian, i.e. Hellenic, triad Demeter-Kore-Zeus. This was not only a gift to the fertile forces of nature, it was to a greater extent a reminder of the central point of the Eleusinian ceremony – to revive life after death, and this aspect is confirmed by the fact that, according to the inscription, the festival of the Eleusinian gods was celebrated before the day of the Phrygian Mother – Kybele, a goddess of fertility and recovery, popular among the Greeks and the local population of Anatolia.³² It shows the chthonic aspect of the cult and a kind of religious syncretism, where Hellenic deities retain a central role.

The cults of Zeus, the highest Olympian god of the Greeks, popular in the Pontic Kingdom as the protector of different regions, were united into one common cult of Zeus Soter – the Saviour. In Trapezous since the 5th century BC he was worshipped together with Herakles – the immortal hero, conqueror of death and mortality (Diod. 14.30.3; Xen. *An.* 4.8.25); in Havza a dedication to Zeus Soter was made for the recovery of a person³³ and here the god was associated with the popular Greek god Asklepios Soter – a patron of health in

charge of restoring life after serious illness. In the Kappadokian Kingdom, in the city of Anisa, we hear about the Soteriai – a festival in honour of Zeus³⁴, and the same holiday existed in Sinope already from the 3rd century BC.³⁵ It would hardly be a mistake to suggest a Hellenic origin for the Soteriai as well as to stress the Greek nature of the cult of Zeus Soter in Pontos, especially in the Greek cities of the kingdom.

These cults, however, were mostly private, while the official royal cult, as mentioned above, seems to have been the cult of Zeus Stratios. Appianos' description of sacrificial rituals for this god helps to establish the deities' real identity. Mithridates Eupator made sacrifices to him: "on a lofty pile of wood on a high hill, according to the fashion of his country, which is as follows. First, the kings themselves carry wood to the heap. Then they make a smaller pile encircling the other one. On the higher pile they pour milk, honey, wine, oil, and various kinds of incense. On the lower they spread a banquet of bread and meat for those present (as at the sacrifices of the Persian kings at Pasargadae) and then they set fire to the wood. The height of the flame is such that it can be seen at a distance of 1000 stades from the sea, and they say that nobody can come near it for several days on account of the heat. Mithridates performed a sacrifice of this kind according to the custom of his country" (App. *Mithr.* 66). In 73 BC before setting out for Paphlagonia the king made a similar sacrifice together with sacrifices to Poseidon to whom he offered a pair of white horses by throwing them into the sea (App. *Mithr.* 70). On the coins of the Imperial period struck in Amaseia, where a temple of Zeus Stratios had been erected,³⁶ one can see Zeus Nikephoros, Nike and Athena Polias closely linked with Zeus as patron of warriors and armies. The coins show a bonfire,³⁷ an eagle with open wings,³⁸ sometimes sitting on a fire, a tree, and a quadriga.³⁹ Some coins bear a two-storey bonfire,⁴⁰ a sacrificial animal – a bull, lying on the fire with legs up,⁴¹ while a life-tree, a symbol of royal power and good fortune, is visible near it. Clearly these are the attributes of Zeus Stratios, patron of the ruling Pontic dynasty, and the Amaseian coins undoubtedly reproduce a sacrifice to this god. It has long ago been suggested that in the Kingdom of Pontos Zeus Stratios was identified with Ahura-Mazda, a protector of the Achaemenids in ancient Iran, whom the Mithridatids regularly tried to imitate. In Persia this cult was also combined with the worship of Poseidon, as some scholars believe, basing their thinking on the abovementioned note of Appianos about the simultaneous sacrifices for Zeus Stratios and Poseidon.⁴² The quadriga with eight white horses, was also devoted to Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd), while horses were sacrificed to Zeus-Helios, whose quadriga, as ancient people thought, dwelt in the clouds over a bonfire with an eagle sitting on it (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.12; Herod. 7.40).

The sacrifices to Zeus Stratios were usually offered on hilltops or on the tops of mountains where sanctuaries were constructed. A temple of Zeus Stratios was located on a hill above Yassıçal, where the remains of a perimeter wall, pottery fragments, and three inscriptions mentioning Zeus

Stratios have been found. One of these inscriptions reads: Δὺ Στράτιος | Βασιλεὺς | εὐχῇ.⁴³ The second does not contain the name of the god but mentions a lifelong priest, who made the dedication from income from the god's (some scholars suppose Zeus Stratios')⁴⁴ temple (ἐκ τῶν τ[οῦ] θεοῦ). The third inscription was erected by the college of *archontes* on behalf of the *demos* of Amaseia.⁴⁵ From Phazemonitis (Çatalkaya) comes a dedication to Zeus Stratios made by Kyros (a Persian) and Philetairos (a Greek) from Klaros, where a well-known temple and oracle of Zeus was situated.⁴⁶ Thus Zeus Stratios was worshipped equally by the Iranian, Anatolian, and Greek populations, as well as by the Romans. The latter is confirmed by a dedication inscribed on an altar from Çalica, dated to 239/240 AD⁴⁷ and by a dedication to Zeus Stratios in Athens, offered by a group of citizens from Amaseia, two of whom were Greeks, one evidently a Roman and one probably of Anatolian origin. According to F. Cumont, Zeus Stratios was a protector of Amaseia, the early capital of Pontos, which explains the multiple sanctuaries of this god in the city and the surrounding area – near Yassiçal, in Çatalkaya on the plain of Chiliokomon, and to the north near Gökcebag (modern Zulu).⁴⁸

F. Cumont noted that the Greek settlers in Anatolia identified their greatest god Zeus with resident Anatolian deities, while the Mithridatids compared him with the Persian god Ahura-Mazda, which resulted in the syncretistic Greek-Iranian cult of Zeus Stratios with both local Anatolian and Iranian features. Local attributes, however, are largely lacking and we find mainly Greek features, particularly in the religious content of the cult. The Iranian element is only partially evident in the rituals: in particular there can be talk of the participation of kings in the sacrificial ritual, as in Persia under the Achaemenids, and the great role of fire during animal sacrifices. Yet this could simply be a coincidence, as fire was widely used in rituals in a variety of Hellenic cults. It could also be a kind of imitation of the Persian kings by the Mithridatids, who declared themselves descendants of the Achaemenids and Otanes, one of the Seven Magi. The affinity of rituals in the Persian cult of Ahura-Mazda and those belonging to the cult of the Greek Zeus made the two rather alike. But it is noteworthy that the kings of Pontos offered sacrifices not to Ahura-Mazda, but to Zeus, called Stratios in accordance with the Greek tradition, though the rituals on the whole remained Iranian. This suggests the Hellenic origin of the cult, which became official royal cult under the early Mithridatids. The city coinage of Pontos under Mithridates Eupator represents Zeus and his attributes (eagle on thunderbolt) as a Hellenic Olympian god (Fig. 2). Significantly, it is used in both the Hellenic *poleis* and in non-Greek communities such as Gazioura, Taulara, Pimolisa, and Chabakta.⁴⁹ Thus, it is apparent that the official propaganda of Mithridates VI used the Hellenic cult of Zeus in relation to all his subjects.

The Greek nature of Zeus Stratios is confirmed by the worship of the completely Hellenic god Zeus Strategos in the Greek *polis* of Amastris in

Fig. 3. A Relief with male deity from Zougo (chora of Amaseia).



Paphlagonia. Here Zeus Strategos and Hera were regarded as τοῖς πατρίοις θεοῖς, protectors and guardians of the city.⁵⁰ As F. Cumont confidently identified Zeus Strategos in Amastris with Zeus Stratios in Pontos,⁵¹ we should accept that both epithets belonged to the same god – saviour, guardian, and patron of armies and warriors. Both epithets are more expressive of Zeus as a Hellenic deity and less as an Iranian, which in Pontos and Paphlagonia is confirmed by the popularity of the Greek personal name Στράτος,⁵² by altars in the environs of Herakleia Pontike, by the cult statue in Nikomedeia in Bithynia, sculpted by Daedalos, as well as by the worship of the god by Eumenes from Kardia, a ruler in Paphlagonia and Kappadokia in the late 4th century BC.⁵³ The significance of the cult grew in the course of the wars conducted by the *diadochs*, when *polis* cults became secondary.

A late Hellenistic relief from the environs of Amaseia is noteworthy in this context. It shows an androgynous figure with a lightning bolt and a round shield, which has caused some scholars to consider it a local predecessor of Zeus Stratios.⁵⁴ Yet the image has no connection with Ahura-Mazda (Fig. 3). It was rather an attempt to reproduce a male deity as thunder-god and warrior, popular within the territory of Amaseia. The inscription on the base-relief can

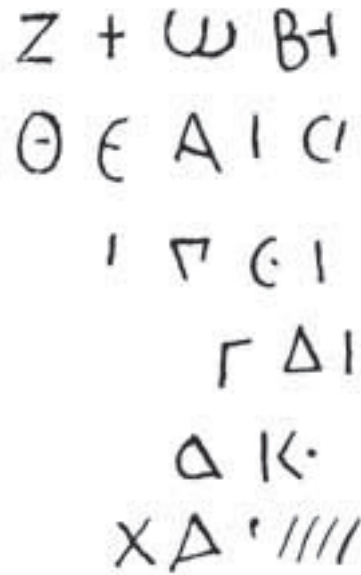


Fig. 4. Greek inscription on the Zougo-Relief.

possibly be read as Ζώβη θεαῖς Γέι (καὶ) [--- Ἀ]γδί[σ]τις ? ΧΔΙΙΙ, i.e. "Zobe to the goddess Gē and Agdistis (a gift) 14 chalkoi" (Fig. 4). Zobe is not the name of a local goddess, a patron of the village Zougo, as H. Grégoire and E. Olshausen supposed,⁵⁵ but most probably a personal female name (cf. *IOSPE* I², 105; 176: Ζώβεις Ζώβειτος, Ζώβεις Ζώβει (Olbia); *CIRB* 320: Ζόβην (Pantikapaion)).⁵⁶ Unification of Gē and Agdistis in one cult along with a male deity – a thunder-god and a warrior, who could only be Zeus Stratios, is quite explicable: Agdistis is a name of a Phrygian deity of fertility and vegetation in Pessinos, linked with Zeus, Attis, Kybele and Rhea; sometimes it was even an epithet of Rhea and Kybele as goddesses of fertility, soil and of all beings.⁵⁷ An offering to her along with Gē – the goddess of

the Earth who gives life and harvest, i.e. food for life, is also quite understandable. The myth about the birth of Attis was connected with Agdistis and Zeus, and that is why the warrior on the relief from Zougo can be identified with Zeus and Attis, an identification which corresponded to the religious notions of the indigenous population. The woman who offered the gift could have been a native of this region as the name suggests. The alteration of η > ε, as in the goddess' name Gē, is characteristic for Greek inscriptions of the late Hellenistic period, but the question remains as to what the ending of *Agdistis* in the dative case in local spelling was. According to the rules of the Greek language it should be Ἀγδίστιδι which we can possibly find in line 5 of this inscription. But another possible reading can be as follows: Ζώβη θεαῖς Γέι [Ἀ]γδί[σ]τις ΧΔΙΙΙ, i.e. "Zobe to the two goddesses Ge and Agdistis (a gift) 14 (chalkoi?)" with alternation τ > δ and incorrect changing of dative into nominative in the name of Agdistis. In any case the relief and the inscription does not appear to be evidence for the interpretation of the warrior as a local androgynous idol but rather as Zeus Soter, comparable to Zeus Epikarpios, Aither and Alexichaladzos, linked with fertility, or Zeus Stratios, protector and guardian of the Amaseian territory.

In Pontos, Zeus was a multi-functional god, who to a certain extent could be associated with Iranian deities like Ahura-Mazda and Mithras, but the Greek and Anatolian population of Paphlagonia and Pontos worshipped him foremost as a Hellenic god, who could be syncretised with Perseus, Mên-Pharnakou, and Dionysos. This is evident from the coinage: the double axe

was attributed both to Perseus, as seen on the bronze figure from Satala,⁵⁸ and to Zeus Stratios, akin to Zeus in Labraunda in Karia. Hermes-Mithras or more probably Mên-Pharnakou can be seen on royal coins of king Pharnakes I as his patron,⁵⁹ and he was depicted with a thunderbolt – an attribute of Zeus Stratios – on later coins of Mithridates Eupator, and with a bunch of grapes, which associates him with Dionysos. Mên-Pharnakou and Perseus on the coins of Pharnakes I and Mithridates IV⁶⁰ were a change from the sitting figure of Zeus Etaphore on the royal Pontic coins of Mithridates III, although Mithridates IV still continued to portray Zeus on his joint coin-issues with Laodike. This suggests the possibility of associating the royal, official Greek and half-Iranian cults of Zeus and Perseus (the latter was traditionally worshipped as a Greek hero who killed Medusa and was considered as the ancestor of the Persians) with Iranian Mithras and the Phrygian moon-god Mên. Already during the reign of Pharnakes I, but chiefly during the time of Mithridates Eupator, when the coins show the symbols of Dionysos (ivy wreath), Perseus (Pegasos), Zeus⁶¹ and Ares on bronze civic coins, we can see a certain unification of such male deities of the Greeks with Anatolian Mên as patron of king Pharnakes I. This syncretism was based particularly on Hellenic cults, chief in the royal ideology.

Zeus replaced the local gods from the second half of the 3rd century BC, as his cult became official and as he became associated with other male deities of Persian and Anatolian origin. The dominant Hellenic character of Pontic religion is emphasised by the fact that we find practically no traces of the cult of Mithras in Pontos, although this Iranian god by all means should have been a patron of the Mithridatids judging from their preferred royal name (“given by Mithras” > *Mithra-data*). The syncretism of Zeus with Persian gods but with mostly Hellenic features is found in the cult of Omanes – Iranian *paredros* of Anaitis > Anahita. In Kappadokia, Anaitis and Omanes had sacred places, *temene*, and temples where the *magoi* and *πύραιθοι*, “keepers of fire”, arranged sacred rituals. Here sacrifices were made by a priest using a kind of club, and beating the victims to death. At the festival of the sacred fire, *πυραθεία*, the *magoi* wearing high turbans of felt wrapped around their heads so that they reached down over their cheeks far enough to cover their lips, kept an eternal fire burning on the altar. During the ceremony *magoi* made incantations for a period of time, holding their bundle of rods before the fire and people in processions carried a wooden statue, *xoanon* of Omanes (Strab. 15.3.15). Omanes and another Persian god – Anadatos shared a temple with Anaitis in Zela, a well-known temple-state of the goddess in Pontos (Strab. 11.8.4). In Pontos, Omanes was associated with Zeus, as witnessed by a dedicatory inscription from Amaseia to *Διὶ Ὀμανῇ*,⁶² where the name of the Persian god was turned into an epithet of Zeus.

As mentioned above, the cult of Mên-Pharnakou, introduced by Pharnakes I with a temple in Ameria not far from Kabeira, continued also in the time of Mithridates VI, as Strabon says that the Pontic kings used to give a traditional



Fig. 5. Mithridates VI Eupator as Mên-Pharnakou on coinage from Pantikapaion.

oath there – “I’m vowing by the king’s Tyche and by Mên Pharnakou” (Strab. 12.3.31). Initially it seems to have been an Iranian cult, because of the correlation of the king’s Iranian name “Pharnakes” with the Persian *farrukh* which means “happiness”. Thus the name Mên-Pharnakou was translated as “Mên who possess happiness”. The association with Zeus, visible in the use of his attribute, the thunderbolt, is completed by the depiction of this moon-god as a horse-rider (like Mithras, who was worshipped as a rider in Trapezous)⁶³ and with a double-axe like Perseus. His link with Zeus

and Dionysos is reflected in the use of a bull as his animal attribute, while his closeness to Phrygian Attis is confirmed by a pine-cone – a sacred plant of Kybele’s son. The god’s responsibility for fertility and vegetation, which bring abundance, is evident from the *cornucopia* which Mên-Pharnakou is holding in his left hand on the coin of Pharnakes I. This also links him with Attis and Dionysos along with Zeus – gods of fertility and rich crops. As a moon-god Mên could defeat darkness and evil. Besides the bull and the horse, a cock was the sacred animal of Mên; this was also a sacrificial bird in the Persian cults of Mithras and Ahura-Mazda thus proving the Indo-Persian origin of this cult⁶⁴ and the association of Mên with Mithras and Zeus. This profound syncretism of Anatolian, Iranian, and Hellenic cults, particularly in the cults of Mên and Dionysos as gods of recovery and birth, allowed the royal propaganda to personify Mithridates VI as Mên-Pharnakou and Dionysos, as we see on Bosporan coins, minted in Pantikapaion (Fig. 5), Phanagoreia, and Gorgippia, where Mithridates Eupator as Mên-Pharnakou was shown together with the statue of a standing Dionysos holding grapes and a *thyrsos*.⁶⁵

Another deity, who had an official royal cult in Pontos, was Perseus, a mythical patron of the Mithridatids at least from the reign of Mithridates IV.



Fig. 6. Apollon-Perseus on royal coinage of Mithridates V.

The cult achieved its highest popularity in the time of Mithridates Eupator, when the royal tetradrachms and bronze city coins reproduce the hero's portrait and statue, his sacred attributes – Pegasus, winged *harpa*, *aegis* with Gorgon – and his female companion Athena.⁶⁶ Under Mithridates V when the Kingdom of Pontos turned its attention to the Greek cities and attempted to portray the king as protector of Hellenism in northern Anatolia and on the Black Sea, Perseus was associated with Apollon, the most popular Greek god in the Greek *poleis* on the Black Sea. On silver coins from Sinope dated to the 3rd century BC, we see a statue of a standing Apollon. The tetradrachms of Mithridates V Euergetes (Fig. 6), dated to 128 BC and 125/124 BC, show a statue of a naked deity, standing to the left, quite like the standing Apollon on the Sinopean coins (the only difference is that the Apollon on the coins of Sinope stands to the right). Unlike the statue of Apollon on the Sinopean coins, the god on the royal tetradrachms of Mithridates Euergetes holds a Scythian bow and a small figure of Nike (or another female deity, possibly Artemis or Athena). L. Robert assumed that Mithridates V had imitated the cult statue of Apollon of Didyma as it had looked in the 6th century BC. He believed that the king had reconstructed it as a gesture of respect for Athens, Delos and the temple of Apollon on Delos.⁶⁷ But nobody has paid attention to the fact that the head of the naked figure of the god on the royal coins of Mithridates V is covered by a leather cap, *kyrbasia*, much alike the headdress depicted on the so-called Pontic anonymous bronze coins. The bow in the hands of the naked god coincides with the bow on anonymous obols of the same series both in countermarks and as the main type (Fig. 7).⁶⁸ Pfeiler has convincingly proven that the portrait wearing a *kyrbasia* on the anonymous Pontic coins was that of the young king Mithridates Eupator. Contemporary coins of Amisos and Sinope with the head of a young man with a quiver wearing a Persian leather cap⁶⁹ probably also show a portrait of Mithridates Eupator (Fig. 8a). These important details mean that these coins were minted in the late 120's BC at the same time as the royal tetradrachms of Mithridates V, although they remained in use at a later date.⁷⁰

The types of anonymous Pontic obols are closely linked with Hellenic-Iranian-Anatolian deities of Pontos and the cult of Perseus in particular, revealing Perseus' relationship to such gods as Ma-Enyo-Bellona, Artemis, Athena, Anaitis, Kybele, Ares, Mên, Mithras, Helios, Attis, Zeus. The affinity in types between the anonymous bronze coins and silver tetradrachms of Mithridates V testifies to the royal character of the cult of Apollo-Helios-Mithras, which was not deprived of Perseus' influence, because the hero, according to royal propaganda, was the mythological patron of the Pontic kings, the direct suc-



Fig. 7. Mithridates VI Eupator as Apollon-Perseus on Pontic anonymous obols.



Fig. 8a-b. a) Portrait of Mithridates VI Eupator on bronze coinage of Amisos b) Mithridates VI Eupator as Perseus on the civic bronze coinage of Amisos.

cessors of the Achaemenids, and was worshipped as the official ancestor of the Persians and their kings.⁷¹ So, for political reasons Mithridates V Euergetes could well have depicted the Sinopean cult statue of the Greek god Apollon on his coins, having altered it slightly in order to give it the features of Perseus, who in accordance with official Pontic ideology was worshipped as a Greek and Iranian hero. This sculpture stood in Sinope in the temple of Apollon of Didyma in the place which had earlier been occupied by the statue of Apollon that was reproduced on the city's coins in the 3rd-2nd century BC. When Sinope became the capital of the Kingdom of Pontos, the king eventually proclaimed the cult of Apollon official and royal, but insisted on associating Apollon with Perseus, patron of the Mithridatic dynasty. This was done to promote the worship of this syncretistic cult throughout the whole state, although it was mainly directed towards the Hellenic population. This initiated the spread of the cult of Perseus-Apollon in Paphlagonia and in Pontic Kappadokia, which is reflected by the coinage of Amisos, Kabeira, Taulara and Sinope⁷² along with the anonymous Pontic coins where the god Apollon-Perseus (with the features of the young Mithridates Eupator) was given a half-Hellenic, half-Iranian image (Fig. 8b). The population, either following the royal official ideology and propaganda, or for personal reasons might have freely identified him with local deities like Mithras, Mên, Attis, the more so since the kings of Pontos refrained from spreading the Persian cults of Mithras and Ahura-Mazda. The Greeks were able to identify Apollon-Perseus-Mithras with Helios, the Sun, which would have been a good reason for Pontic officials to promulgate the idea of the deification of their ruler as the Sun god who brought light and freedom from evil.

The introduction of an official cult of Apollon by the Mithridatids of Pontos coincided with the proclamation of Sinope as the capital of their kingdom and with their change of policy towards philhellenism after the defeat of Phar-

nakes I in the war from 183 to 179 BC. Already Mithridates IV and Laodike had close connections with Delos. During the reign of Mithridates his nearest associates among the Greeks offered dedications to Apollon, Artemis and Leto on Delos, while Mithridates VI Eupator erected a temple on the island. This is why some coins of Amisos and Sinope during the rule of Mithridates Eupator bear the type "Apollon/tripod",⁷³ while the city coins of Pantikapaion during the Mithridatic rule over Bosporos retained Apollon, and the same city even put Apollon's head along with a feeding Pegasos on coins,⁷⁴ thus confirming the official Pontic association of Apollon with Perseus.

The association of Perseus with Apollon (= Helios/Mithras) and Mên-Pharnakou together with Dionysos was due to the syncretism of the popular cult of Zeus with Attis, since all of these gods were worshipped by the population of the Pontic state as gods of recovery and revival, conquerors of evil and enemies. This was the main point of the official Pontic ideology, which tried to portray the king as a man, called upon to liberate the Greeks and gather neighbouring territories in Asia Minor and on the Black Sea under his rule. This aspect of the political ideology of the kingdom was part of the philhellenic policy of the Mithridatids, which was begun already in the mid 2nd century BC and was actively pursued by Mithridates V and his son Mithridates VI. The latter, however, did not have the option of proclaiming himself a living Zeus, because this god was the highest of all the Olympian gods and goddesses and creator and patron of all spheres of life, and such a proclamation might have caused distrust among the population, particularly among those of local origin. To be proclaimed as Mithras or Ahura-Mazda was even more dangerous, as this might have raised the suspicions of the kings' Hellenic subjects, especially after the kings had started on a philhellenic policy directed against the Romans. So there was only one suitable solution – to declare the king a living Dionysos, the son of Zeus, who could be easily associated with many Anatolian, Hellenic and even Iranian gods and heroes, responsible for victory over evil, darkness and recovery. This god was equally important to the Anatolian population, who could unify him with Attis and Mên, to the Iranian and Kappadokian inhabitants who worshipped Iranian Mithras, Omanes, Anadatos, Perseus, and to the Greeks who worshipped Zeus, Ares, Herakles, Apollon, Helios, Perseus and Dionysos as well. The main idea of this political tendency was to deify the ruler who thus would seem to be a god or at the very least simply be associated with the god. This religious and ideological point was substantiated in the royal Mithridatic (i.e. Achaemenid) symbols – the star and crescent – which were linked with the cults of Mên, Mithras, Ahura-Mazda, and reflected their victory over darkness, i.e. evil, the main religious aspect of Persian Zoroastrianism. The general tendency of the religious policy of the Pontic kings was to make official only those cults of deities, both male and female, who were connected with military matters – battles, victories, the army and heroic deeds – together with rebirth and winning over death. These ideas are clearly observed in the cults of Zeus,

Herakles, Perseus, Apollon, Mithras, Dionysos, Ma-Bellona in Komana, Athena Polias and Nikephora, associated with Ma in Komana and Artemis, who also was closely associated with Ma. Even Anaitis, popular in Zela as a goddess of nature and love, like Aphrodite, had a common altar with the Persian war heroes Omanes and Anadates, and was a patron of the so-called Sakaiai – a festival, linked with the warriors, because it was organized by Persian generals and its participants wore the Scythian dress like the Saki – Scythian warriors (Strab. 12.8.4-5). Yet only the abovementioned male cults were the basis for the creation of the image of Mithridates Eupator as Dionysos – the son of Zeus. That is why the deification of the Pontic ruler has nothing to do with Seleukid influence – it was completely based on local tradition where the Greek cults were always primary in official royal propaganda. All these Greek cults, however, could easily have been unified with Anatolian and Iranian ones.

The popularity of gods in charge of regeneration and rebirth in northern Anatolia fuelled the legend that the statue of Serapis in Alexandria in Egypt was brought from Sinope under the early Ptolemies.⁷⁵ This myth is reflected by the spread of syncretistic cults of different male deities of regeneration in northern Anatolia: when the Egyptian cults of Isis and Osiris penetrated into Asia Minor in the late Hellenistic and early Imperial period, it was associated in Anatolia with local cults of Zeus Chthonios, Hades, Asklepios, Helios, Mithras, Attis, Dionysos and Mên.⁷⁶ At the same time the Pontic administration decided to use the popular idea of regeneration which was reflected in different Greek and Anatolian cults for political reasons, in order to create the idealised image of Mithridates Eupator Dionysos not only as a liberator, but also as protector of the state. That is to say that the king's deification was based on the close links between the worship of Dionysos, Zeus, Mên-Pharnakou, Helios, Apollon (=Mithras), Perseus, Ares, and Herakles. After the king's triumph in Pergamon in 88/87 BC his statues and busts, together with his portraits on coins, began to represent him with a new force as an idealised picture of the new god, just as the deified Alexander the Great, with features of Dionysos, as well as Mên, Helios, Ares, Perseus, and Herakles⁷⁷ – all deities and immortal heroes, connected with Zeus Stratios. Thus the ruler-cult was inspired by the idea of rebirth and protection.

The official cults and propaganda influenced the private cults within the whole Kingdom of Pontos including the region around the Black Sea. Among the terracotta figurines found on the north coast of the Black Sea we can find ones of Mên on a cock and Mên-Attis riding a galloping horse, dated mostly to the Mithridatic period and later, as well as several figurines of Mithras Taurochton in the costume of Attis killing a bull, together with clay masks of Dionysos and members of his retinue, produced in Amisos and in local workshops.⁷⁸ These cults were brought to Bosporos from Pontos, Armenia Minor, and Kolchis and followed the traditions and rituals common for their performance in Asia Minor (the costume of Attis!) rather than those of Kappadokia

and Iran. Among Bosphoran terracottas of the late 2nd century BC to early 1st century AD can be found a number of the so-called “warriors” – soldiers with shields of Galatian type, which they either hold or lean upon. Scholars have grouped these figures into two groups: warriors with a wreath and a cuirass, each leaning on a large shield of oval form with his left arm and warriors in Phrygian dress, wearing Persian or Phrygian leather caps, standing with their left arms on their hips, and leaning on their shields with their right arms, or holding their shields on their left arms with their right hands resting on the upper part of their shields (Figs. 9-12). Because the shield often looks Celtic, it has been supposed that these are genre terracottas, which show Galatian or Bosphoran mercenary warriors, or represent children or Erots with armament.⁷⁹ But many terracottas of this kind were discovered in graves and in domestic shrines, for example in the rural sanctuary General'skoe Vostočnoe in eastern Crimea,⁸⁰ where a variant of the type – Eros in Attis' Phrygian costume has been found. This confirms the sacred character of such figures which had soteristic or apothropaic functions. Sometimes these figures were found together with herms and terracottas of a standing Aphrodite or a Kybele sitting on the throne, as at the site Rassvet near Gorgippia. Here they surely represent the male partner of a female goddess of fertility and nature.⁸¹ One form of the shield held by the warriors resembles the shield of Ma on the cult statue in her temple in Komana Pontike and the shield of Athena Nikephora in Pergamon (Ma-Enyo-Bellona was worshipped in the Kingdom of Pontos as Thea Nikephora and Athena).⁸² Figures of “warriors” are known not only from Bosphoros but also from Armenia, Parthia, and Babylonia where they were inspired by local cults. So we can conclude that the warriors appeared on the north coast of the Black Sea from the Pontic Kingdom and were inspired by Pontic religion with its Iranian, Kappadokian, and Armenian cults such as those of Omanes, Anadates, Zeus, and Mithras.

In a religious sense these terracottas were closely connected with the popular Pontic cults of Perseus and Ares, which, as we have seen above, were partially royal. Ares – the Greek god of war – was popular in the Thracian and Iranian world, including the Sarmatians (*CIRB* 120: Pantikapaion, 2nd-1st century BC). In ancient Persia the god was linked with Veretragna, the Zoroastrian analogy of Herakles, who was a god of victory. In Bactria Ares' functions were equal to those of Sharewar. Ares was also worshipped in Kappadokia as a participant in the mysteries of Mithras. His iconography shows a young man in helmet and cuirass, with a shield placed on the ground and a spear in hand, wearing tunika and *chlamys*.⁸³ The Iranian world knew several images of Mithras and Sharewar=Ares was one of them. He stood close to Serapis who, on one hand, was close to Mithras, and on the other to Zeus and Osiris as gods of regeneration and nature. Some scholars have suggested that Serapis had more Iranian than Egyptian features. In Greece the same functions belonged to Apollon who was the Hellenic equal of Mithras, while the Iranians worshipped him as Kshatrapati or Satrap (in Palmyra known as



*Fig. 9. Winged Eros-Attis
with a shield. Terracotta.
Bosphoros.*



*Fig. 10. Attis-Mên (or
Mithras-Mên) with a shield.
Terracotta. Bosphoros.*



*Fig. 11.
Warrior
with shield.
Terracotta.
Bosphoros.*



*Fig. 12.
Eros-Attis
with shield.
Terracotta.
Bosphoros.*

Sadrapa – a warrior in armour with a shield and spear).⁸⁴ In Greece, in Elis, stood a bronze statue of a beardless man with crossed legs (the warriors on Bosporan terracottas stand in the same position) leaning on spear. Initially it was considered a statue of Poseidon, but later it was called Satrap (Paus. 6.25.6). Satrap > Serapis and Mithras had the same Phrygian or Persian leather cap, known also as the “hat of Perseus”, which was worn also by most of the “warriors” from Bosporos and Armenia. So the Bosporan “warriors” could be understood as Mithras, Serapis, Apollon, and Perseus who could defend, protect and guard a person and a family, as gods with real soteric functions. These gods could also help to achieve victory over darkness, evil and death – they were bearers of immortality. This is why the figures of “warriors” were put into graves and brought as gifts to the sanctuaries.

If Ares was linked with Mithras, who as god-protector was patron of warriors, then he can at the same time be linked with Attis, because in Bosporos, Mithras was shown in terracottas in the costume of Attis and sometimes holding a shield (Figs. 10 & 12). In the late Hellenistic period we often see a syncretistic cult of Eros and Attis, which is indicated by the wings on terracotta figurines of the latter god (Fig. 9).⁸⁵ As a male *paredros* of Aphrodite-Kybele, Attis-Eros was provided with soteric and apothropaic functions. This means that the figurines of warriors reflect a deep religious syncretism of different Pontic cults forming a group around Ares, Perseus, Mithras, and Attis – the latter connected with the Greek god Dionysos, who was also a deity of the official cult of Mithridates Eupator. All these male gods were associated with Zeus Stratios (or Strategos), who was given the features of a warrior defending the king, his house and his country. Association of these terracottas with Zeus Stratios or Strategos is confirmed by the abovementioned relief from Zougo near Amaseia, where we can observe a god much like Zeus-Attis with a shield and a battle axe (Fig. 3) and by coins from Kabeira, which reproduce a warrior in Phrygian or Persian cap holding a spear and an oval shield of the same shape as that of the terracotta warriors (Fig. 13).⁸⁶ A large shield and a pointed hat were the attributes of Perseus, connected with Apollon in Pontos, i.e. with Mithras-Helios, who in turn was closely connected to the Iranian war deity Omanes, worshipped in Pontos and Kappadokia as Zeus (see above).

Taking all this into account, we should say that the appearance of



Fig. 13. Zeus Stratios inside the temple in Kabeira. Coin of the Imperial period.

Bosporan terracottas representing Attis, Mithras, Mên and warriors with shields was due to religious syncretism and the spread of the official cults of Zeus Stratios and Dionysos under Mithridates VI. These figurines were popular among the soldiers and mercenaries who served in the Pontic army. They had different religious meanings, but their cults were mostly inspired by Zeus Stratios, protector and guardian of many spheres of life in the kingdom. The popularity of Zeus grew parallel to the spread of the cults of Dionysos, Perseus-Apollon, Mithras-Mên-Attis – official deities of the Mithridatids as basis for creating the image of a deified king.

There were three levels in Pontic religious ideology and royal propaganda. First the Hellenic, which played the most central role in the deification of the ruler, mostly in the eyes of the Greek subjects, for whom Mithridates Eupator was proclaimed Dionysos and was associated with Ares, Perseus, Apollon, Herakles, and Helios – all sons of Zeus, the main cult in Pontos since the early Mithridatids. Second the Phrygian-Anatolian, where Attis and Mên seemed to be the chief deities, and the latter was drawn into the royal cult, because Mithridates Eupator tried to associate himself with the local moon-god in order to rally the resident population around him. Third the Iranian which was perhaps the least important, as the kings of Pontos, though half-Persian by origin, were scared to declare themselves to be descendants of Mithras and Ahura-Mazda, having proclaimed instead that they were equal to the Hellenic and Phrygian gods and heroes, where Perseus was a compromise between Greek beliefs and the Iranian essence of the dynasty.

Notes

- 1 The most comprehensive is still Olshausen 1990, 1865-1906.
- 2 For example, Gaggero 1976, 89-123; McGing 1986, 89-95.
- 3 Kleiner 1955, 1-14; Price 1968, 1-3; Summerer 1999, 159-161; Erciyas 2006, 122-173. Very important are, of course, the commentaries of F. Cumont, E. Cumont, J.C.G. Anderson, and H. Grégoire on inscriptions and other archaeological finds, which they saw during their travels in Pontos (*Studia Pontica*, 1-3, 1902-1910).
- 4 Kobylina 1976, pl. XVIII.1, 27; XIX.1, 29.
- 5 Kobylina 1976, pl. XIV.1, 20a; Anochin 1986, nos. 201, 207, 210; Frolova & Ireland 2002, 19-20; *SNG Brit* IX.1, pl. XXXV, 936.
- 6 Zinko 2001, 311: the temple was built earlier, but functioned most actively during the rule of Mithridates Eupator.
- 7 Lordkipanidse 1995, 399.
- 8 Cic. *Flacc.* 60; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 1.6.2; cf. Athen. 5.212d.
- 9 The types with Dionysos and attributes of his cult appeared on the coins of Pantikapaion, Phanagoreia, and Gorgippia no earlier than 100 BC, which proves that the depiction of the god was closely connected with the proclaiming of Mithridates Eupator as Dionysos in 102 BC (Zograf 1951, 187; Frolova & Ireland 2002, 14-16).
- 10 *RGAM* I.1², 13-20, nos. 9-16.

- 11 Kleiner 1955, 1-21.
- 12 Callataÿ 2007, 273-308.
- 13 Finogenova 1990, 189-203; Summerer 1999, 43-46.
- 14 Durrbach 1921, no. 133.
- 15 RGAM I.1², 10-11, nos. 2-3, pl. I, 2-6; pl. Suppl. A, 1-3.
- 16 RGAM I.1², 13, no. 7, pl. I, 13; pl. Suppl. A, 8; *SNG von Aulock* I, pl. I, 2.
- 17 RGAM I.1², 13, no. 8, pl. I, 14.
- 18 Kleiner 1955, 14.
- 19 Olshausen 1990, 1899; for the Iranian nature of the god, see Højte 2004, 79-82.
- 20 Hirschfeld 1888, no. 61; Doublet 1889, 311; Legrand 1897, 98, no. 12; Mendel 1901, 24, no. 161; Kaygusuz 1984a, 63-68; Kaygusuz 1984b, 69-71; Donceel 1983, 21-22; Marek 1993, 89, 124, 180, 192, 193, no. 16, 95; Marek 2003, 106, abb. 149-152. The Greek origin of Zeus Bonitenos is confirmed by the inscription of 215 AD with a dedication to Θεῶ [π]ατρῶν Διὶ Βονιτηνῶ (Marek 1993, no. 95).
- 21 Marek 1993, 98, 178, 185, 186, no. 87; see also French 1996, 90, no. 9; Robert 1964, 36.
- 22 Boltunova 1966, 30; Boltunova 1977, 179.
- 23 Mitford 1966, 475-490; French 1996b, 94-95, no. 21; Olshausen 1990, 1894.
- 24 RGAM I.1², 167*, no. 1, pl. XVII, 6. Leper 1902, 158-162; Reinach 1905, 116.
- 25 Leper 1902, 158-162; Reinach 1905, 116; Saprykin & Maslennikov 1998, 408-410.
- 26 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, no. 189.
- 27 French 1992, 67; French 1996b, 88, no. 4. See also Doublet 1889, 310; cf. Mendel 1901, 28, no. 168; Cumont 1902, 314; Marek 1993, 193, no. 20.
- 28 RGAM I.1², 159, no. 3.
- 29 RGAM I.1², 160, no. 7, pl. XVI, 16; *SNG von Aulock* I, no. 142.
- 30 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, no. 114a; Reinach 1895, 78, no. 24bis; French 1996b, 85-97; Schwabl 1972, 262; Olshausen 1990, 1900.
- 31 French 1996b, 89-90, no. 8.
- 32 See the commentary in Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 189-190, no. 189.
- 33 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 42, no. 28; cf. Cumont & Cumont 1906, 130-132.
- 34 Curtius 1880, 646-651; Robert 1963, 456.
- 35 Robinson 1905, 332-333, no. 96.
- 36 Cumont & Cumont 1906, 145, 170-172.
- 37 RGAM I.1², 35, nos. 12, 14.
- 38 RGAM I.1², 36, no. 17.
- 39 RGAM I.1², 38, no. 32.
- 40 RGAM I.1², 42, no. 54.
- 41 RGAM I.1², 46, no. 78.
- 42 Cumont 1896, 137-138; Cumont 1901, 47-57; Cumont & Cumont 1906, 139, 170-175; Kleiner 1955, 10; Gaggero 1976, 107; Donceel 1984, 1984, 21; McGing 1986, 96.
- 43 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 150, no. 140.
- 44 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 152, no. 142.
- 45 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 151, no. 141.
- 46 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 166, no. 152; Hirschfeld 1888, 891-892, no. 72-73; Cumont 1901, 51-53; Cumont 1902, 53; French 1996b, 85-97; French 1996a, 73; Olshausen 1990, 1901.
- 47 French 1996b, 91, no. 11.

- 48 See Cumont & Cumont 1906, 139, 145, 174-184; Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 161-162, no. 146.
- 49 *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 1249, 1266, 1288, 1289, 1350, 1351.
- 50 *IGR* III, 89; see also Hirschfeld 1888, 876, no. 27; Kalinka 1933, 70, no. 17; Marek 1993, 98, no. 3; coins: *RGAM* I.1², 173*, nos. 52-54.
- 51 Cumont 1901, 50.
- 52 Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, no. 278b from Gazioura / Turhal.
- 53 Plin. *HN* 16.239; Plut. *Eum.* 17.
- 54 Cumont & Cumont 1906, 139; Olshausen 1990, 1901-1902.
- 55 On the discussion of how to read the name – Ζωβη or Ζιωβη and who it was – a deity or a dedicator, see Gregoire 1909; Anderson, Cumont & Grégoire 1910, 161, no. 146; Olshausen 1990, 1903.
- 56 Zgusta 1955, 998-999: this name seems to be Iranian; but see Zgusta 1964, 684 and Robert 1963, 538: as a name from Asia Minor; Tohtashev 1993, 182-183: takes the name Ζόβην from *CIRB* 320 (Pantikapaion) as Thracian or from Asia Minor, which is correct, because this conclusion corresponds to the dedication of Zobe from Amaseia to Agdistis – the Phrygian deity of Thracian origin.
- 57 Knaack 1894, 767-768; cf. a dedication from Bithynia by Publius Aelius Marcianus θε[αί] Ἀνγίστη (TAM IV.1, 63. Mendel 1901, 58: θεοί; Ἀνγίστεις means Kybele and Attis); see also dedications from Eumeneia (Lane 1964, 24, no. 12: a priest's inscription mentioning Zeus Soter, Apollon, Mên Askaneios, The Mother of the Gods Ἀγδίστεως, Agathos Daimon, Isis) and from Pantikapaion (*CIRB* 27: a votive to Ἀγδίστις > Ἀνγίσσα, 2nd century BC).
- 58 Cumont 1905, 181-189; Saprykin & Maslennikov 1998, 432.
- 59 *RGAM* I.1², 11-12, no. 4, pl. I, 7-10.
- 60 *RGAM* I.1², 12, no. 6, pl. I, 11-12.
- 61 *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 1034-1043. Zeus appeared on the coins of the city of Pharnakeia already in the reign of king Pharnakes I, its founder, in the first half of the 2nd century BC (*RGAM* I.1², 138, no. 2, pl. XIV, 16; *SNG Brit* IX.1, 1274 with incorrect dating to the mid 4th century BC).
- 62 French 1986, 277-285; French 1996b, 92, no. 15.
- 63 See *RGAM* I.1², 150-151, nos. 16-20, pl. XV, 20-22.
- 64 Lane 1964, 94; Haepereen-Pourbaix 1983, 236-247.
- 65 *SNG Brit* IX.1, no. 936.
- 66 *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 1212-1217 (Amisos), no. 1248 (Kabeira), no. 1253 (Chabakta).
- 67 Robert 1978, 151-162; cf. also Karamesine-Oikonomidou 1980, 149-153, fig. 49.1a; 51.10.
- 68 On the Pontic anonymous bronze coins, see Baldwin 1913, 285-313; Golenko 1969, 130-154; *RGAM* I.1², pl. Suppl. M, 10-24; *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 972-984, pl. XXXVII.
- 69 *RGAM* I.1², 62-63, no. 13, pl. VII, 6; 206, no. 58, pl. XXVI, 14; *SNG von Aulock* I, nos. 57-58; *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 1135-1138, 1523.
- 70 Pfeiler 1968, 75-78; Kleiner 1955, 6; Bohm 1989, 156-158.
- 71 Saprykin 1990, 32-34; Saprykin 1996, 107-120; Saprykin & Maslennikov 1998, 432.
- 72 *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 1135-1138, 1240, 1287, 1523.
- 73 *RGAM* I.1², 208, no. 71, pl. XXVI, 20.
- 74 *SNG Brit* IX.1, nos. 955-956.

- 75 Tac. *Hist.* 4.83-84; Plut. *Mor.* 361F = *De Isis et Osir.* 361, 984A = Soll. *Anim.* 36. 2; Clem. Alex. *Protrep.* 4.43 P.
- 76 Hornbostel 1973, 21-24.
- 77 Højte (ed.) 2005, 51-55; Erciyas 2006, 129-166. On the sculptural portraits of Mithridates VI as Herakles, Dionysos, and Helios, see Smith 1988, 99-100.
- 78 Vermaseren 1966, 47, no. 11, 12; Blawatsky & Kochelenko 1966, figs. 8-10; Kobylina 1976, 9, pl. XVIII.1, 27; XIX.1, 29; Košelenko & Maslennikov 2003, 184-186. For terracottas of Attis and Mên-Attis from Bosporos and Chersonesos, see Kobylina 1976, 23-26, no. 10-26, pl. XII-XVII. For new figures of Mên-Attis riding and Mithras-Attis murdering a bull from the Bosporan site Poljanka, see Saprykin & Maslennikov 1998, figs. 1.3, 3, 4; Maslennikov 2006, 93, pl. 18; 99, pl. 21; 109, pl. 26.
- 79 Kobylina 1961, 118, 119, pl. XXI, 2-3; XXII, 1; Pruglo 1966, 205-213.
- 80 It was found lying near the terracotta altar from the 1st century BC in the center of the *naos* (Maslennikov 2002, 176; Maslennikov 2007, 201, figs. 92, 1-4; 93, 11).
- 81 Kobylina (ed.) 1974, 50, nos. 1-2, pl. 58, 1-2.
- 82 The shield is visible on coins of Komana Pontike: RGAM I.1², 109, no. 12, pl. XII, 3.
- 83 Cumont 1896, vol. I, 143, 144; vol. II, no. 592.
- 84 Dupont-Sommer 1976, 660; Bivar 1991, 53-55.
- 85 Kobylina 1976, pl. XII.1, 18.
- 86 Price & Trell 1977, 97, fig. 174.

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Abbreviations

- CIRB V.V. Struve et al. 1965. *Corpus inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*. Moskva-Leningrad.
- IOSPE B. Latyshev 1885-1916. *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*. Petropolis (reprint Hildesheim 1965).
- SNG von Aulock I G. Kleiner 1957. *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. Sammlung v. Aulock I: Pontus, Paphlagonien, Bithynien*. Berlin.
- SNG Brit IX.1 M. Price 1993. *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The British Museum IX. Part 1: The Black Sea*. London.
- RGAM W.H. Waddington, E. Babelon & Th. Reinach 1925. *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure I, 1. Pont et Paphlagonie* (2nd edn.). Paris.



Characteristics of the Temple States in Pontos

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This study discusses temples belonging to gods of Persian and Anatolian origin in the Pontic Kingdom, which are distinguished from other temples because of their self-governing capabilities. These temples have sometimes been called “temple states” because they were self-governing units with their own authority, territories and revenues. There has been controversy over the issue of finding a proper term for these entities in Anatolia and they have been identified as both states and estates. The aim of this paper will be to introduce these structures and to offer possible explanations regarding their nature and function within the Hellenistic Kingdom of Mithridates.

The problem of terminology is not new as Strabon uses various terms to explain these unusual entities. At Ameria, for example, there was a community of sorts, which Strabon characterized as a “village city” (κωμόπολις).¹ This term was probably used to describe a village of considerable dimensions. As well, Strabon states that Zela under the kings was ruled as a “sacred precinct”,² while he uses the term *polis* with regard to Komana Pontike.

Introduction

Temple states are basically economically independent religious entities with self-governing powers. Their independent economy and autonomy differentiate temple states from other temples. It has been suggested that the phenomenon of temple states first emerged in Mesopotamia. The term temple state was originally suggested by Anton Deimel to describe temple centred authorities, and he also stated that the religious activity of the Sumerians was centred on these temple states.³ The main purpose of these Mesopotamian temple states was to organize the population to ensure efficient irrigation and agricultural activity on the temple property.⁴ Virgilio implies that temple states had developed complex systems of governing religious, political and economic affairs.⁵ According to Virgilio, there was a temple at the centre of the temple state’s religious, political and economic structure with long traditions and strong connections with the village, city or the state where it was located.⁶

The Anatolian examples were certainly not identical to the Mesopotamian ones since the conditions that shaped their development must have been vastly

different. Also there seems to have been a huge difference in the system of governance.

The first signs of temple states in Anatolia can be seen during the Hittite period. The area known as Komana Pontike in the Roman period was in fact the area named Kummami in the Hittite period. In this area, there was a temple dedicated to Ma in the Roman period and this same area was also the site of a temple dedicated to Hepat in the Hittite period. The religious centre and the most sacred area of the Kingdom of Kizzuwatna were likewise here. In this period temple states were not fully autonomous but had their own governmental structures.⁷ They were under the authority of the king and controlled by the Hittite governors. Other important cult centres of the Hittites were Zippalanda, Karahla, and Šamuha. These cult centres held festivals as one of their main official activities and these festivals were an important aspect of Hittite religious life. Festivals were the most important social occasion when extensive offerings were made to the gods. We also see that crown princes were assigned to serve as priests. The assignment of Hattušili III, the son of Mursili, to Šamuha where the god Ištar was worshipped can be seen as an example for this.⁸

Examples of temple states also appeared in Egypt. Well-designed land management systems have been observed in registrations of land divisions between royal, private, and sacred owners. A huge amount of land in Egypt belonged to the temples in the pre-Ptolemaic period. These lands were considered the estates of deities and the gains from these lands were considered sacred revenue.⁹ The Ptolemies probably took over this organization when they took power and they essentially left it unchanged.¹⁰ M. Rostovtzeff stated that, Seleukid Syria and Mesopotamia housed various temple states such as those in the interior of Asia Minor. According to him, these temple states, places like Baitokaike or Bambyke, were reorganized and received new names under the Seleukids.¹¹

The origin of the temple states of the Hellenistic period in Anatolia may possibly be traced back to the Hittite period, but the supposition certainly requires further investigation. To understand the temple states of Anatolia, three components need clarification: 1) The area around the temple providing revenues for it, called the temple territory, 2) the number of people working for and living around the temple, called sacred slaves (*hierodouloi*), 3) the role of the religious leader, called the priest.

Territories and revenues of temple states

The temple territories probably included lands belonging to the independent native population. Territories from villages, unions of villages and tribes were added to the temple lands.¹² Temple territories and their inhabitants (sacred slaves) whose sole role was to work for the temple, provided these temple

states with the resources necessary for their development. According to M. Rostovtzeff: “the territory and hierarchy of great, wealthy and influential sanctuaries that had many priests, impressive architecture and thousands of people who worked to serve were similar to that of a state”.¹³

It is most unfortunate that we have very little information about the temple states and their conditions during the Mithridatic era. Most of what we do have derives from the later author Strabon. The usual characteristics of a temple state can be determined from the testimony of Strabon describing Komana Pontike. In his testimony, Strabon states that although the inhabitants of the city were subjects of the king in general, they were in fact subjects of the priest in many respects. According to Strabon, the priest ruled over the temple and the temple servants, and he had control over the revenues gained from the temple territories.¹⁴

After the defeat of Mithridates, Pompeius rearranged the sacred lands of Komana, Ameria, and Zela. Zela’s borders were for example extended and it was transformed into a *polis*.¹⁵ In Komana, the Romans assigned priests to control the lands. Its border was expanded to such an extent that it encompassed an area that extended northwards to Magnopolis and Kabeira. Towards Zela and Megalopolis other additions were made to the territory. The priest Lykomedes who was known to be closely associated with the Romans was influential in this increase of territory.¹⁶

In Strabon’s description of Morimene in Kappadokia we come across information concerning the temple revenues. He states that in Venesa (Avanos) there was a temple of the Venesian Zeus, which had almost three thousand temple-servants and a sacred territory that was very productive, leaving the priest a yearly revenue of fifteen talents.¹⁷ The increase in temple territories tempted some administrators to plunder the temple revenues. Strabon’s account of Zela mentions such violations and the resulting reduction of the importance of the temple:

The large number of temple-servants and the honours of the priests were, in the time of the kings, of the same type as I have stated before, but at the present time everything is in the power of Pythodoris. Many persons had abused and reduced both the multitude of temple-servants and the rest of the resources of the temple (Strab. 12.3.37; Loeb translation).

The vast amounts of capital under divine protection caused the temples to play an important role in the economic life of the area. The revenue and taxes collected from the sacred territories and money deposited in these well-protected temples became a source for loans to both communities and individuals.¹⁸ There were many “temple banks” functioning in a similar way in Asia Minor.¹⁹

Priesthood

Priests were responsible for the administration of the temples and they came only second in rank after the king. The priest of Ma in Komana Pontike, for example, wore a diadem during the two annual *exoduses* of the goddess and came after the king in the hierarchy.²⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that the priesthood was a gift from the king. Dorylaos, who was a distant relative of Strabon, was given the title of high priest by Mithridates Eupator.²¹ There exists unfortunately no other information concerning the priests of the temples during the rule of the Mithridatids.

According to an inscription recorded by Waddington in Kappadokian Komana, a priest is identified also as a *Kataonian Strategos*.²² This means that the priest also had a role in governing.²³ The priest was responsible for the territory belonging to the temple and its collected revenue. Six thousand temple slaves from both genders were subject to the priest and the revenues gained from the temple territories were at the disposal of the priests. The priest, however, had no right to sell these temple slaves.²⁴ In the Roman period the priests were appointed by the Roman authorities.²⁵

Sacred slaves (hierodouloi)

One of the important components of the temple states were the sacred slaves (*hierodouloi*). In Strabon, the size and importance of temples were explained in terms of the number of *hierodouloi* inhabiting the territory.²⁶ Although sacred slaves were under the priest's authority, they belonged to the temple and the priest could not sell them. The best source of information and the most detailed record explaining the status and rights of the *hierodouloi* is an inscription set up by Antiochos I of Kommagene.²⁷ This document stresses the inviolability and protected status of the sacred slaves.

Apart from the sacred slaves, sacred prostitution was also important for the temples. In Strabon we come across some passages discussing the position of temple-prostitutes especially in temples dedicated to Anaitis and Ma.²⁸ While describing the city of Komana Pontike, he mentions that here was a multitude of women who made gain from their persons; most of them are dedicated to goddess.²⁹ These women dedicated to the goddess Ma, were probably prostitutes.³⁰ Furthermore, in his accounts on the sacred territory of Akilisene in Armenia, he relates that the daughters of Armenian nobleman offered their virginity to Anaitis as temple prostitutes.³¹ Herodotos likewise records sacred prostitution in Lydia³² and he mentions a similar structure in Babylonia organized for the goddess Mylitta (Aphrodite).³³

Deities and temples

When we shift back to the religious aspect of the temple states it is apparent that Anaitis, Ma and Men must have been very important for Pontos in general. The kings of Pontos evoked Men Pharnakou in the royal oath.³⁴ In particular, the Persian deities had importance for the official religious policies of the Mithridatic kings.³⁵

Zela and Anaitis

Anaitis was worshipped in Zela and the importance of Zela for the kingdom of Pontos was great. Sacred rites performed here were characterized by greater sanctity and it is here that all the people of Pontos made their oaths concerning matters of the greatest importance.³⁶ The temple of Anaitis and her altar shared with Omanes and Anadates were also respected by the Armenians, because the great goddess of Armenia was also Anahit or Anaitis. She had a temple at Eriza and the entire region of Akilisene was called Anaitike.³⁷ Anahita is well-known as a goddess of water and fertility.

The temple at Zela was dedicated to Anaitis and built probably in the late Achaemenid period, the 4th century BC.³⁸ The worship of the goddess Anaitis was first introduced to Asia Minor in the 6th century BC both officially and by private individuals.³⁹ It is possible that the temple was developed in time by the Pontic kings.

Our main source of information on the temple to Anaitis in Zela comes from coinage minted during the Roman Imperial period.⁴⁰ The temple was probably a hexastyle and founded on a low hill.⁴¹ Following the re-organization of Pompeius, Zela was transformed into a city by the addition of new territories and buildings. On the north-east side of the hill, where the temple stood, a small theatre was built partly of stone and partly of wood. The hill itself was carved out and included in the structure. The only remains of the theatre today are some seats carved out of the bedrock and some structures belonging to the orchestra. Other remains of the city include a tomb and some architectural fragments.⁴²

Strabon indicated that rituals held in Zela possessed great sanctity, and a traditional festival was celebrated only once a year.⁴³ We understand from Strabon that the temple in Zela was built to celebrate the defeat of the Sakai by Kyros. A festival was also organized for celebrating this defeat and it was named Sakaia.⁴⁴ Strabon indicates that this festival was a kind of Bacchic festival where: "men dressed in the Scythian garb, pass day and night drinking and playing wantonly with one another, and also with the women who drink with them".⁴⁵ This festival was also celebrated wherever a temple of Anaitis was present. From Strabon's statements on the subject, it may be suggested that this festival was Persian in origin. Also from his statements it might be possible to deduce that the temple of Anaitis was established under the rule of the Persians.

Strabon states that in earlier times, kings had ruled Zela not as a city but as a sacred precinct to the Persian goddess. A priest ruled over the whole area. This sacred territory housed many temple-servants and priests.⁴⁶ These characteristic of the organization of Zela show many similarities to Strabon's account of Komana's organization.

Komana Pontike and Ma

The account of the temple state of Komana Pontike shows that it also functioned as a busy market place for the people from Armenia. Komana Pontike is located near Yeşilirmak (Iris) River on a hill today called Hamamtepe situated 9 km northeast of Tokat on the Tokat-Niksar and Tokat-Almus highways.⁴⁷ The territory of Komana lay along the Iris, which provided both agricultural land and a means of communication with Armenia and with other cities of Pontos. Komana Pontike was a large and significant religious centre, located at an important crossroad on a dense trade network. It owed some of its significance to being the closest trade centre to Armenia Minor.

Inscriptions from Komana throw some light on the history of this temple state. A Roman bridge connected the hill, with the other bank of the river. A few courses of masonry with two re-used inscribed blocks on one of the pillars are still visible in the modern construction of the water regulator. One is still clearly visible during times of low water levels. From this inscription, dated to 161-169 AD,⁴⁸ we understand that the city of Komana had the right of "asylum".⁴⁹ Another important inscription was found by Wilson in 1958.⁵⁰ The inscription was placed on three architrave blocks of grey marble. This inscription states that the city of Komana had the rights of "sacred and inviolable" or "ἱερά καὶ ἄσυλος" in the early second century AD.⁵¹ The right of asylum was more an indication of the prestige of a sanctuary than of the importance of the city linked with it.⁵² It was not common practice for the Hellenistic kings to award this title. The title was probably not decided upon by a single king and it did not come from one authority. It was rather Greek public opinion that determined this and once given the title meant that its recipient was held as the highest source of law for deciding upon questions of civic status and entitlements in the Greek world.⁵³ For the Romans however, the title "sacred and inviolable" meant "the right of asylum", or refuge and immunity from the law, and was viewed with suspicion.

One of the most important temples of the Kingdom of Pontos was at Komana and was dedicated to the goddess Ma.⁵⁴ It was possibly surrounded by the royal fortresses, and was a town in which the servants of the goddess and the priests lived. As we can see by looking at the coinage, the temple was tetrastyle.⁵⁵ Six thousand sacred slaves were dedicated to the service of Ma by taking oaths and these worked the fields of the temple's sacred territory.⁵⁶ Festivals dedicated to Ma promoted trade and prosperity, and the female

prostitutes attached to the temple gave Komana the reputation of a minor Korinthos (Strab. 12.3.36).

The first appearance of the goddess of Ma in Anatolia is unknown.⁵⁷ Due to her warlike characteristics, the goddess Ma has been identified with Enyo and Bellona.⁵⁸ Ma carried the epithet of “invincible” and “goddess of victory” in Kappadokian Komana and in various inscriptions.⁵⁹ Strabon described the temple of Enyo in Komana Kappadokia as: “In this Antitaurus are deep and narrow valleys, in which are situated Comana and the temple of Enyo, whom the people there call Ma”.⁶⁰ On the coinage minted in Komana Pontike during the reigns of Caligula, Trajan and Septimius Severus we see that Ma is depicted holding a spear and a shield.⁶¹

Ameria and Men Pharnakou

The last temple state in Pontos was located near Kabeira (Kabeira was turned into a city by Pompeius called Diospolis). The “village city (κωμόπολιν) Ameria” in Kabeira hosted the temple of Men Pharnakou and the temple had many temple servants and the revenue from its sacred territory was controlled by the priest.⁶² According to Strabon this place was important for the Pontic Kingdom because kings of Pontos took their royal oath here as follows: “By the Fortune of the king and by Men Pharnaces”.⁶³ Worship of Men in Anatolia during the Phrygian period was very common. According to A. Erzen, the name Men does not come from Greek or Phrygian. The evidence rather points to a Hittite origin as a Moon god.⁶⁴ According to Lane there is an iconographic similarity between the Iranian Moon-divinity Mao and Men.⁶⁵ Men is mentioned in numerous Lydian inscriptions together with Artemis Anaitis, Thea Anaitis or Megale Anaitis.

On this basis it can be suggested that the Pontic Kingdom had had a strong Persian influence and the temple of Men Pharnakou is probably a reference to the reputed forefather of the Mithridatids Pharnakes, husband of Atossa, Kyros’ maternal aunt.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The origin of the concept of temple states in Anatolia is unknown. The records from the Hittite period indicate the existence of temple-centred administrations in Anatolia. However, this was not a system where the temple had full governmental power. Instead perhaps it was a variation of systems that changed through time. Our knowledge about the temple states in Pontos belongs to the Roman period so it is difficult to understand their earlier form. Although the concept of temple state derived from Mesopotamia, the temple states of Anatolia were administratively part of the Hittite state.

Later the Romans reorganized these native communities and transformed the temple states into *poleis*. The transformation of temple states with large

territories into cities by the Romans was an approach dependent upon the local situation. The local authority in Pontos that flourished under the Pontic Kingdom diminished when the province was re-organized by Pompeius. This re-organization included the transformation of settlements into cities and additions of territories. However, the organization differed depending on local conditions in the different cities and regions. Komana Pontika and Zela demonstrate these differences. The autonomy of the temple state in Komana Pontike and its territory was initially preserved, possibly in respect of its great sanctity and prestige. In fact, Komana was enlarged by the addition of new territories and given the right of *asylia*. However, the priest was appointed by the Romans. Zela, on the other hand, was transformed into a *polis* by Pompeius. This raises some questions about Pompeius' policy. Why did Zela not preserve its autonomy? Did Pompeius want to abolish the strong Persian elements in the cult at Zela, which were also an integrated part of the recently defeated kingdom?

Our main source, Strabon, is not sufficient to clarify the issue of temple states or estates. The term *κωμόπολις* used for describing Ameria seem to indicate that the village located near the temple became dependent on the city, while the term *ἱερός* used for Zela denotes a sacred territory or in other words a temple estate.⁶⁷ Finally Strabon simply calls Komana an *ἐμπόριον*. Surely these terms were coined after the reorganisation by the Romans. Their vagueness has given rise to discussions about the state or estate nature of these communities.

The concept of temple states varies according to both the region and period under consideration. For this reason, the term "temple state" should be re-conceptualized by considering the estate issue of temples. Our information about the state structures, like Zela and Komana Pontike, mainly derives from Roman sources but new archaeological studies may possibly be helpful in understanding their components and functions in the interior of Anatolia.

Notes

- 1 Strab. 12.2.6.
- 2 Strab. 12.3.37.
- 3 Foster 1981, 226.
- 4 Foster 1981, 227. Rostovtzeff also mentions that the management of the agricultural activities was viewed as a privilege in Ptolemaic Egypt and organized by the priests (Rostovtzeff 1941, 275).
- 5 Virgilio 1981, 49.
- 6 Virgilio 1981, 49.
- 7 Boffo 1985, 15.
- 8 Alp 2001, 141.
- 9 Rostovtzeff 1941, 280.
- 10 Rostovtzeff 1941, 281.
- 11 Rostovtzeff 1941, 511.

- 12 Broughton 1938, 641.
- 13 Rostovtzeff 1941, 505.
- 14 Strab. 12.3.37.
- 15 Strab. 11.8.4.
- 16 Strab. 12.3.34.
- 17 Strab. 12.2.6.
- 18 Magie 1950, 142.
- 19 For references to all "temple banks" in Anatolia, see Magie 1950, 142.
- 20 Strab. 12.3.32. Cumont (1918, 312) stated that the priest most probably had a guard of *doryphores*, while Fishwick (1967, 152) thought that the *doryphores* were the predecessors of the *hastiferi*, whom one should consider as guards of the goddess herself rather than of the priest.
- 21 Strab. 12.3.33.
- 22 Waddington 1883, 127; Strab. 12.1.2.
- 23 Boffo claimed that the priest had authority in local policy. This also relates to the throne-priest among the Hittites. To the Achemenids, "second in rank" implies a religious class in politics (Boffo 1985, 21).
- 24 Strab. 12.3.34.
- 25 Strab. 12.3.34.
- 26 Strab. 12.3.34; Rostovtzeff (1941, 280) claimed that all of the inhabitants of a temple state were counted as slaves of gods without regard to their professions. Minor priests such as keepers and feeders of sacred animals were also called *hierodouloi*.
- 27 Dörrie 1964, 85.
- 28 Strab. 11.14.16.
- 29 Strab. 12.3.36.
- 30 Detailed information for the institution of sacred prostitution see Beard & Henderson 1997, 480-503.
- 31 Strab. 11.14.16.
- 32 Hdt. 1.93-94.
- 33 Hdt. 1.199.
- 34 Strab. 12.3.31.
- 35 Mitchell 2002, 59
- 36 Strab. 12.3.37.
- 37 Russell 1990, 2682.
- 38 Boyce & Grenet 1991, 288.
- 39 In Anatolia, the cult of Anaitis can be identified with the cults of Artemis Anaitis and Artemis Persike (Corsten 1991, 164).
- 40 Price & Trell 1977, 102.
- 41 Wilson 1960, 215.
- 42 Wilson 1960, 215.
- 43 Strab. 11.8.5.
- 44 For the origin of the name of the Sacae and similar festivals, see Athenaeus 14.639; Boyce & Grenet 1991, 290.
- 45 Strab. 11.8.5. Loeb translation.
- 46 Strab. 11.8.4.
- 47 The survey conducted by D. Burcu Erciyas in 2004 gives the first precise archaeological information about the settlement, see "www.comanaproject.org".

However, the survey has not been able to locate the exact place where the temple stood.

- 48 IGR III, 106.
- 49 Ramsay 1882, 153. Ramsay also mentioned another inscription from Komana, which honours two consuls. Here the name of Hierokaisareia was given for Komana. The date of the inscription according to the local era is 103, which corresponds to the year 140 AD (IGR III, 105). Another inscription recorded by Reinach mentions that the councils of Komana and Neokaisareia honour the son of the archpriest Scribonius Pius (IGR III, 107).
- 50 Wilson, 1960, 233; for this inscription by the people of Komana honouring to the Emperor Trajan, see Rémy & Özcan, 1992, 119-124.
- 51 SEG 42, 339.
- 52 Broughton 1938, 710.
- 53 Rigsby 1996, 78.
- 54 For adopting the cult from Komana Kappadokia, see Strab. 12.3.32.
- 55 Amandry & Rémy 1999, pl. 2-7.
- 56 Strab. 12.3.34.
- 57 For the origin of the name of Ma, see Çapar 1995, 584; SEG 45, 187.
- 58 Çapar 1995, 584.
- 59 The inscriptions recorded by Waddington in Kataonia enlighten us about the epithets of the goddess (Waddington 1883, 127).
- 60 Strab. 12.2.3. Loeb translation.
- 61 Amandry & Rémy 1999, pl. 2.
- 62 Strab. 12.3.31.
- 63 Strab. 12.3.31. Loeb translation.
- 64 Erzen 1953, 5.
- 65 Lane 1990, 2170.
- 66 Lane 1990, 2171.
- 67 Strab. 12.3.37.

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Komana Pontike: A City or a Sanctuary?

Deniz Burcu Erciyas

Introduction

On the border of central Anatolia and the Black Sea region in Turkey there is a site, Komana Pontike, very little known to modern archaeologists and historians (Fig. 1). A mound rising on a natural hill forms the basis of what is considered to be the site of Komana. This hill stands next to the Yeşilırmak river (ancient Iris), 9 km from the modern town of Tokat, ancient Dazimon (Fig. 2). The ancient site of Komana Pontike has previously not been investigated properly but was identified by travellers through inscriptions and ruins found in its vicinity. Hamilton (1842), Hogarth and Munro (1893), Anderson (1903), and the Cumonts (1906) have described the ruins at and around Tokat and Komana in their published explorations, and Wilson (1960) compiled all



Fig. 1. Komana's territory during the re-organization of Pompeius (Marek 2003, 182).



Fig. 2. *Hamamtepe.*

of the information concerning Komana and the smaller settlements in its territory in his unpublished thesis. Marek (1993; 2003) has published two excellent volumes on Roman rule in Pontos and Bithynia, which provide useful information especially on the changing territory of the site throughout the Roman period.

Still, our knowledge on Komana basically comes from the ancient sources including Strabon, Appianos, Cassius Dio and even Procopius. Strabon, who was a native of Amaseia, another major Pontic city 70 kilometers NW of Tokat, is however certainly our best source. The description of Komana included in this article therefore, will be mostly based on the accounts of Strabon and early travellers.

Komana was an unusual settlement since it was a so-called temple state.¹ This meant that the settlement was a religious centre with a self-sufficient economy though probably supporting the kingdom in different ways. The land around the sanctuary belonged to the temple and was tilled by 6,000 serfs according to Strabon (12.3.34). The city was a very busy place with visitors from the surrounding area as well as from Armenia Minor. There were regular festivals during which women residing at Komana performed sacred prostitution.

The worship and celebrations at Komana resembled those at the sanctuary of Ma in Kappadokia. Strabon, in fact, considered the temple to Ma a copy of the temple in Kappadokia (Strab. 12.3.32):

... and nearly the same course of religious rites is practiced there; the mode of delivering the oracles is the same; the same respect is paid to the priests as was more particularly the case in the time of the first kings, when twice a year, at what is called the Exodi of the goddess (when her image is carried in procession), the priest wore the diadem of the goddess and received the chief honours after the king.

The sanctuary kept its semi-autonomous position throughout the rule of the Pontic kings and even under the rule of the Roman Empire.² The territory of Komana expanded under various emperors and its religious activities continued without interruption until the introduction of Christianity to the region.

The Archaeological Survey

The idea of conducting an archaeological survey at Komana developed during my doctoral studies, when I realized that there were two unique sites in the central Black Sea region in Turkey, Komana and Zela. These were sanctuaries with festivals, sacred slaves and prostitutes, which are common aspects of a number of sanctuaries in the Aegean. However, these were not linked to a large city as was the case for most similar religious centres in Anatolia such as Didyma near Miletos. This phenomenon led me to inquire into what sort of archaeological data would be recovered from these particular temple states.

The main objective of the archaeological survey project initiated in 2004 was to shed light on the settlement history of Komana through the ages and identify the physical attributes of the site. Komana, as a temple-state, must have had an unusual structure. Its independent political structure, the 6000 temple-slaves cultivating the land around the temple, its position as a religious and trade centre and the fact that it had visitors from the neighbouring regions must have required the city to have both special buildings that would be appropriate for a sanctuary and features such as fortifications that are regularly found in ancient cities. On the other hand, this rather unusual administrative system may have required a totally different structure than those suggested above that could only be revealed through surveys and excavations. This paper aims to identifying the settlement type of Komana through a review of the archaeological fieldwork.

The survey in 2004 only included archaeological investigations at and around the site. In 2005 and 2006 however, we were also able to conduct



Fig. 3. Pottery collected from the early Bronze Age site near Hamamtepe.

geophysical surveys at other potential sites in the area.³ Before the results are presented here, I would like to emphasize that the survey covered only a 2 km diameter area around the hill previously identified as the site of Komana, which today is called Hamamtepe.

Since the purpose of the preliminary survey was to illuminate the settlement history of the site, I will present the survey results in a chronological order rather than in the order of discovery.

The earliest pottery from the survey collection can be dated to the late Chalcolithic and Bronze Age. Towards the northwest of Hamamtepe west of the rock-cut graves there is a gentle slope on which pottery possibly dating to the late Chalcolithic or early Bronze Age was found (Figs. 3-4). No other archaeological material or architectural features that may be connected with the pottery could be detected at the site. The fact that it is a cultivated field probably explains the level of destruction and the lack of further evidence. Early Bronze Age pottery attested in the fields between Kılıçlı and Bula also on a slope could likewise not be connected to any other physical remains.

Several tumuli can be seen on the southern side of the Tokat-Almus road (Fig. 5). Our investigations began with the tumulus closest to the road, Karartıcitepe tumulus (Bademlitepe). This tumulus (663 m) is situated on a natural hill on the southern bank of the southern irrigation channel. Looters

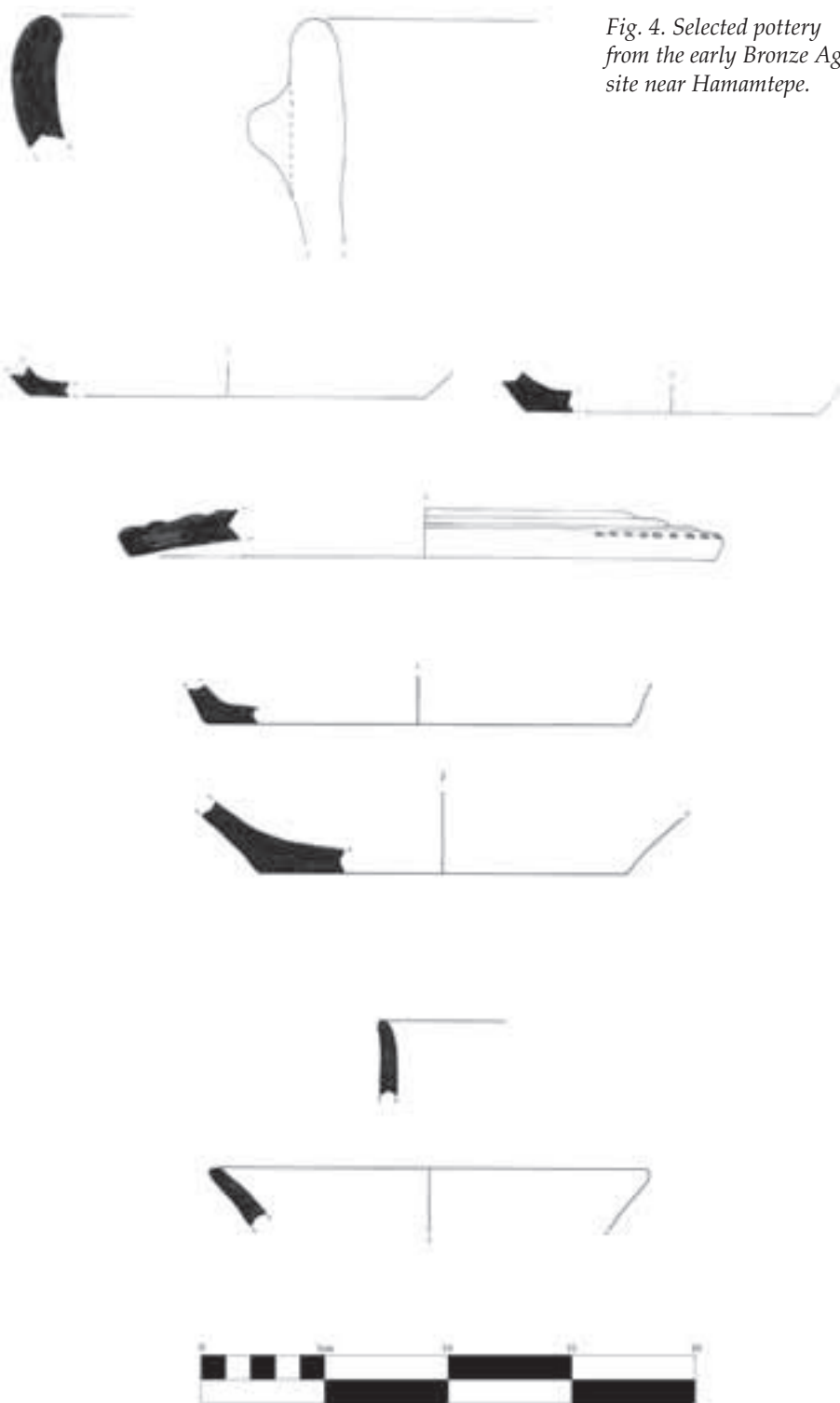


Fig. 4. Selected pottery from the early Bronze Age site near Hamamtepe.



Fig. 5. Tumuli in the vicinity of Hamamtepe on aerial photograph.

hoping to enter into the burial chamber from its side have dug holes both on its northern slopes, and on top of it, but we believe that they could not reach the grave. However, a plain sarcophagus was recovered from the vicinity, which could have been dug out from this tumulus. The pottery collected on the tumulus dates to the Iron Age but it may not necessarily date the tumulus itself to the Iron Age since the material may have been carried to the top of the mound from elsewhere (Figs. 6-7).

The period between the Iron Age and the 2nd century AD is not well-represented at Komana Pontike and even 2nd and 3rd century AD Roman



Fig. 6. Pottery collected from the Karartıcitepe Tumulus.

pottery could be found at only one site while small amounts were seen among Byzantine collections dispersed across the terrain.

The only archaeological feature that may possibly date to the Hellenistic period is a rock-cut grave already mentioned both by Hamilton and the Cumonts.⁴ This rock-cut grave and a türbe are the main attractions for any visitor to the area since they are the only visible remnants of the past here. The rock-cut grave is similar to the Pontic royal tombs with a temple façade and has a secondary inscription. Once, two columns stood at the front of this tomb, but they are now destroyed. There is a shield on the pediment. The entrance into the tomb is through a small window and the interior (2.34 m x 1.65 m) is plain. On the eastern side of the rock there is another grave without an architectural façade. Other fragments of inscriptions datable to the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods were also found in the villages around Komana.

The only site with significant amounts of Roman pottery is situated about 500 m east of Karartıcitepe tumulus (Bademlitepe) by the road on a flat area (Fig. 8). The pottery is spread in an area with a diameter of approximately 100 m, the centre of which has been disturbed by a high voltage electricity pole. The archaeological material comprises Roman ceramics including large pieces of *pithoi* to the west, and tiles and broken pieces of stone, possibly ar-

*Fig. 7. Selected
pottery from the
Karartıçitepe
Tumulus.*



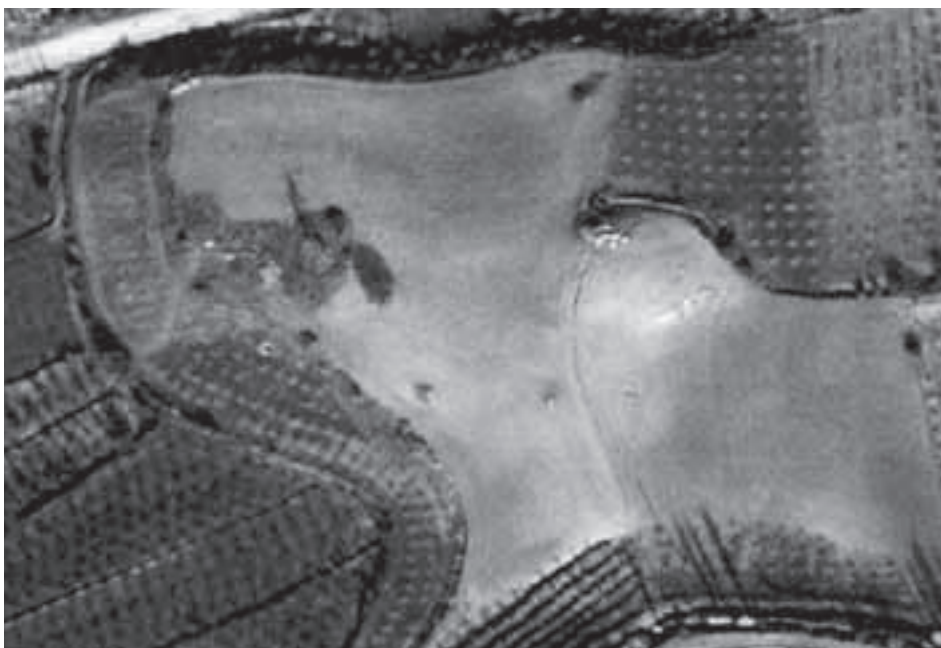


Fig. 8. The Roman period site at Nüğüçük.



Fig. 9. Pottery collected from the Roman period site of Nüğüçük.

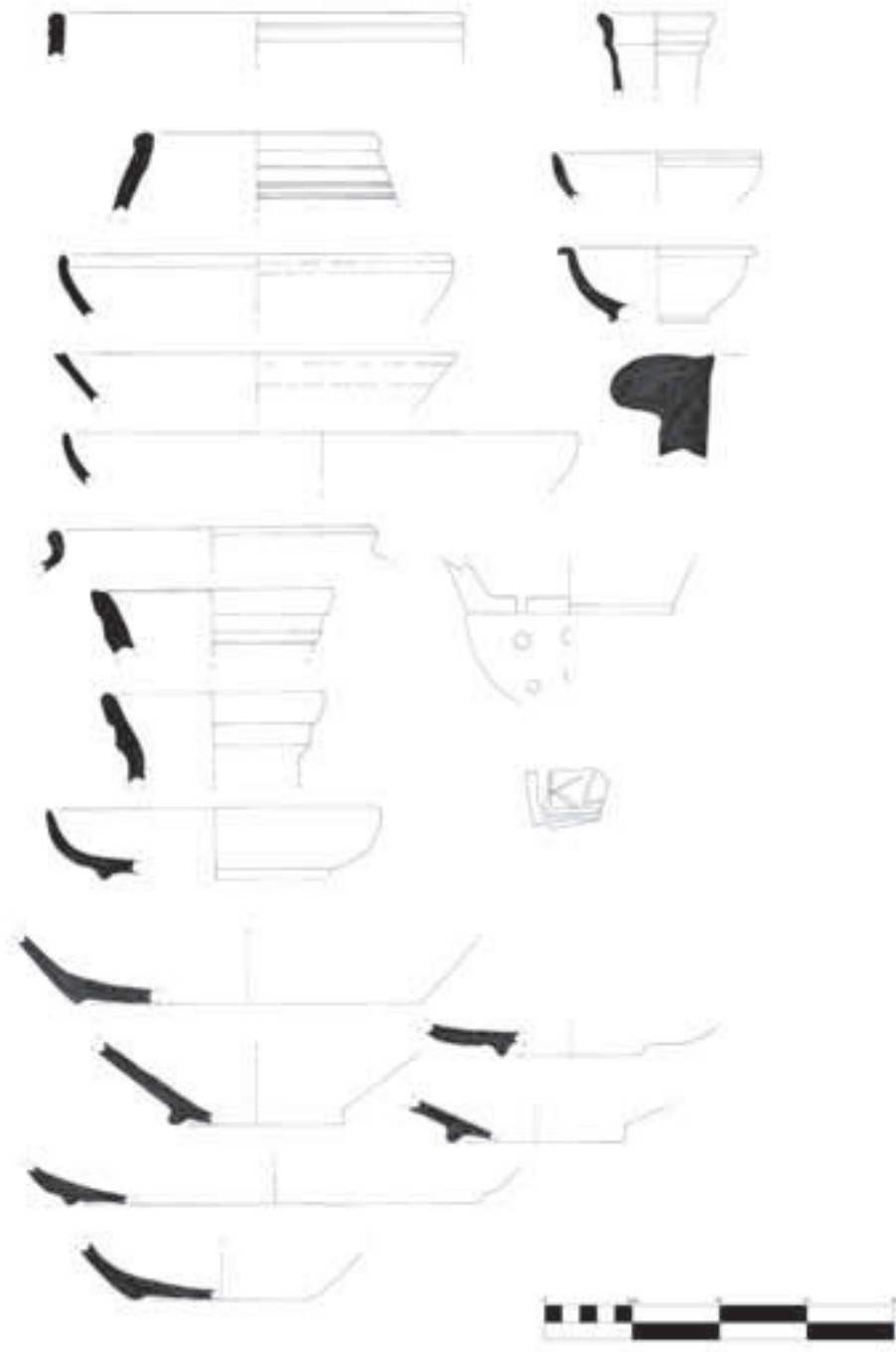


Fig. 10. Selected pottery from the Roman period site of Nügücük.



Fig. 11. Hamamtepe on satellite imagery.

chitectural material (Figs. 9-10).⁵ Illegal excavations in the area have revealed the foundations of a small structure and a barrel vault.

The archaeological survey at Komana in fact began at Hamamtepe which is 9 km northeast of Tokat, situated by Yeşilırmak river (ancient Iris), near the DSI Water Regulator with the expectation that we would find the centre of the Hellenistic/Roman site there. This hill had previously been identified as the site of Komana, on which the temple to Ma stood.⁶ Hamamtepe is a large hill (approximately 250 m x 150 m) in the shape of a triangle with its long side parallel to the river (Fig. 11). The larger section of the mound was once surrounded by a fortification or a terrace wall, parts of which still survive. The southern section of the mound was unfortunately badly damaged by the construction of the old Tokat-Niksar road and the water regulator. The archaeological material that is visible in the sections along the road and by the channel indicates that the natural slope of the hill once reached the channel, which is part of the regulator construction.

The walls around Hamamtepe are badly destroyed but the rough inner core made of large, irregular stones and mortar has survived in places (Fig. 12). One of these walls, to the southwest, extends outward in a rectangular form resembling a tower. The third wall, to the west of the city, also has an extension to the west. The walls seem to continue to the north, making a corner to the northwest. To the north, the wall also has an outer extension and continues



Fig. 12. The ruins of walls on Hamamtepe.

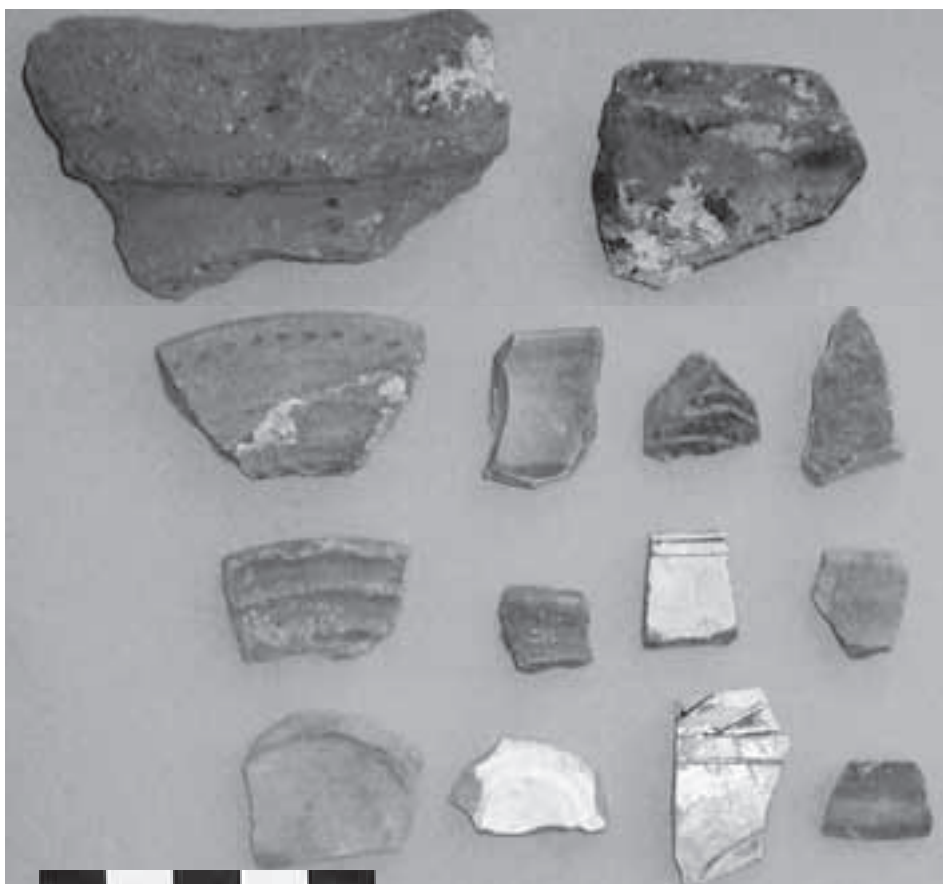


Fig. 13. Pottery collected from Hamamtepe.

in two rows. The wall is lost on the south side due to the damage caused by the road construction, while on the east side it has not been possible to detect the wall. An independent square structure, however, was found there. It was furthermore observed that the walls surrounding the hill were at places supported by the bedrock.

It is possible to identify structures with multiple rooms on the mound, but there are no ruins on the surface. The rooms can only be identified through lumps and depressions on the surface. Two structures each with six rooms could be identified towards the southern part of the hill. The gradiometer survey on most of the hill and the resistivity survey in three 20 by 20 meter squares confirmed that there were structural elements below the surface. The multiple layers of structures created a very blurry picture yet to be analysed further.

The pottery from the surface of Hamamtepe is mostly glazed pottery dating to the Byzantine and Ottoman periods while the few pieces from the trench possibly date to the Roman period (Fig. 13).

Not totally satisfied with our knowledge regarding Hamamtepe and its role within the site of Komana, we returned in 2006 and conducted a topographical survey. The main purpose of the survey was to create a digital terrain model of the mound to be utilized in future archaeological and geological studies. Our aims included:

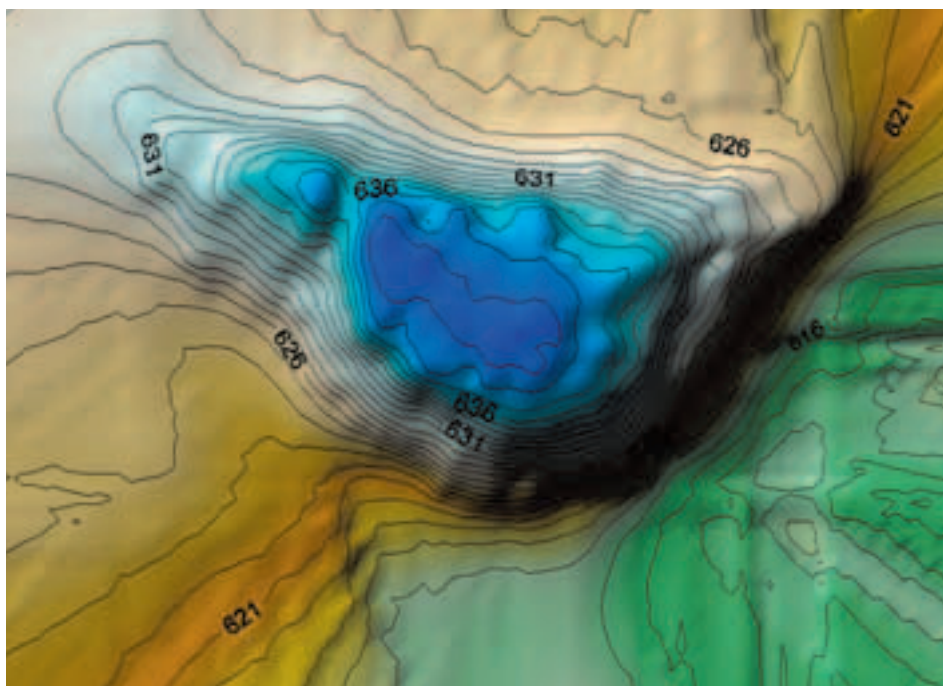


Fig. 14. Digital Terrain Model of Hamamtepe.

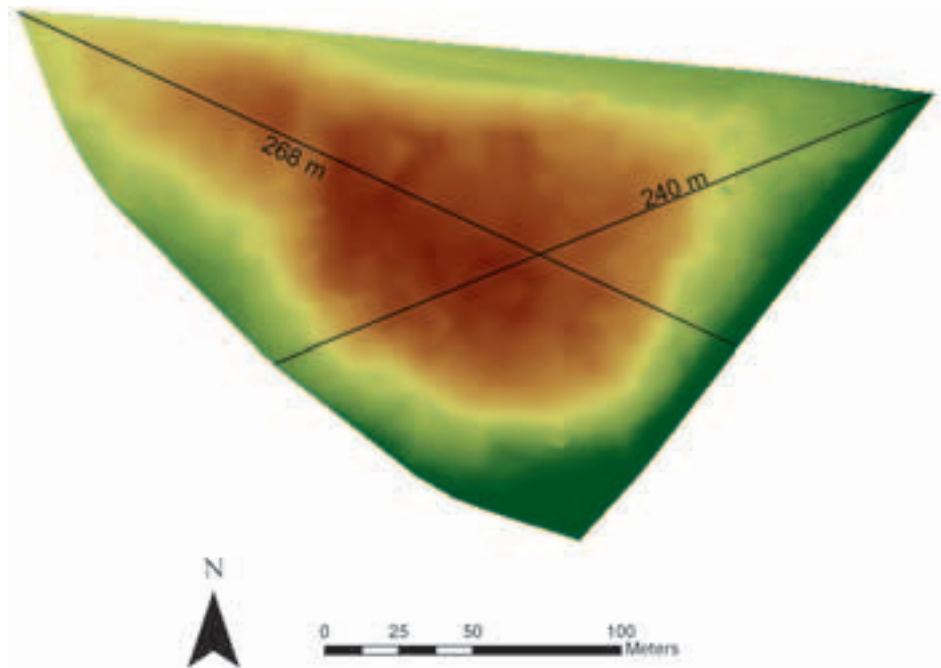


Fig. 15. Dimensions of Hamamtepe.

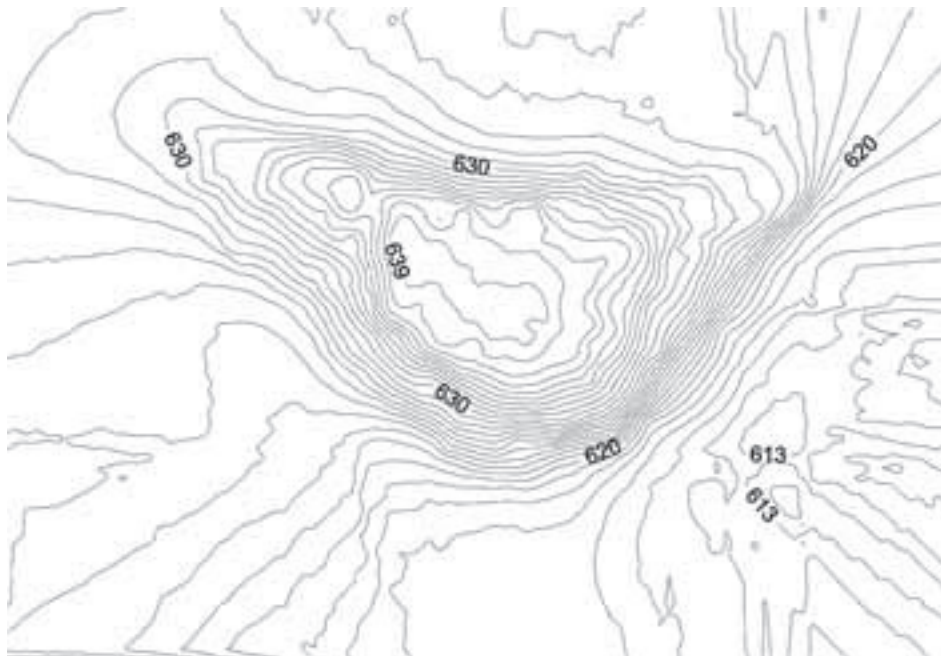


Fig. 16. Contour map of Hamamtepe.

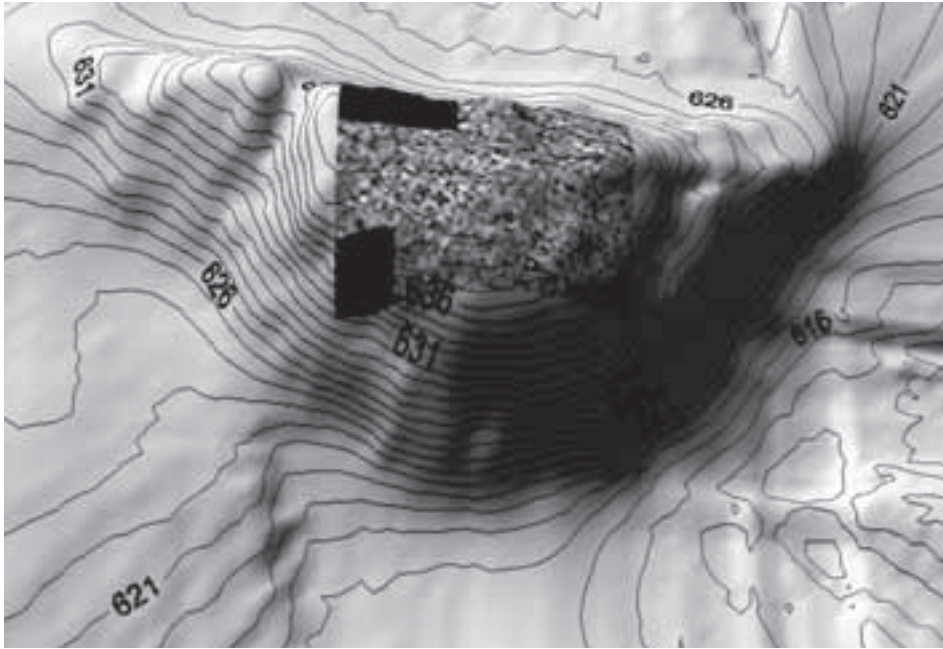


Fig. 17. Geophysical data overlapped with the Digital Terrain Model.

- Creating a Digital Terrain Model of Hamamtepe in order to understand the physical features of the hill (Fig. 14).
- Determining the limits of the hill (Fig. 15).
- Examining the relationship between the topography of the hill and the documented structures.
- Creating contour and slope maps (Fig. 16).
- Examining the geophysical data within a topographical perspective (Fig. 17)
- Meshing the satellite imagery with the elevation model, a study which is still in progress.

Also in 2006, we conducted a geophysical survey in a field just to the north of Hamamtepe in order to understand the possible extension of the buildings to the surrounding level areas. This gradiometer survey proved that there were indeed buildings near by the hill although the dates of these are difficult to determine. One of these was a large 30 by 35 meters multi-roomed building with possible hearths situated along the walls of the rooms (Fig. 18).

The area between Yeşilirmak and the old Tokat-Niksar road within the restricted DSİ land was also surveyed and a few architectural fragments and pottery were observed. Also within the restricted DSİ land, on the southern bank of Yeşilirmak, the area which today accommodates a swimming pool was investigated. None of the structures that are known to have been excavated

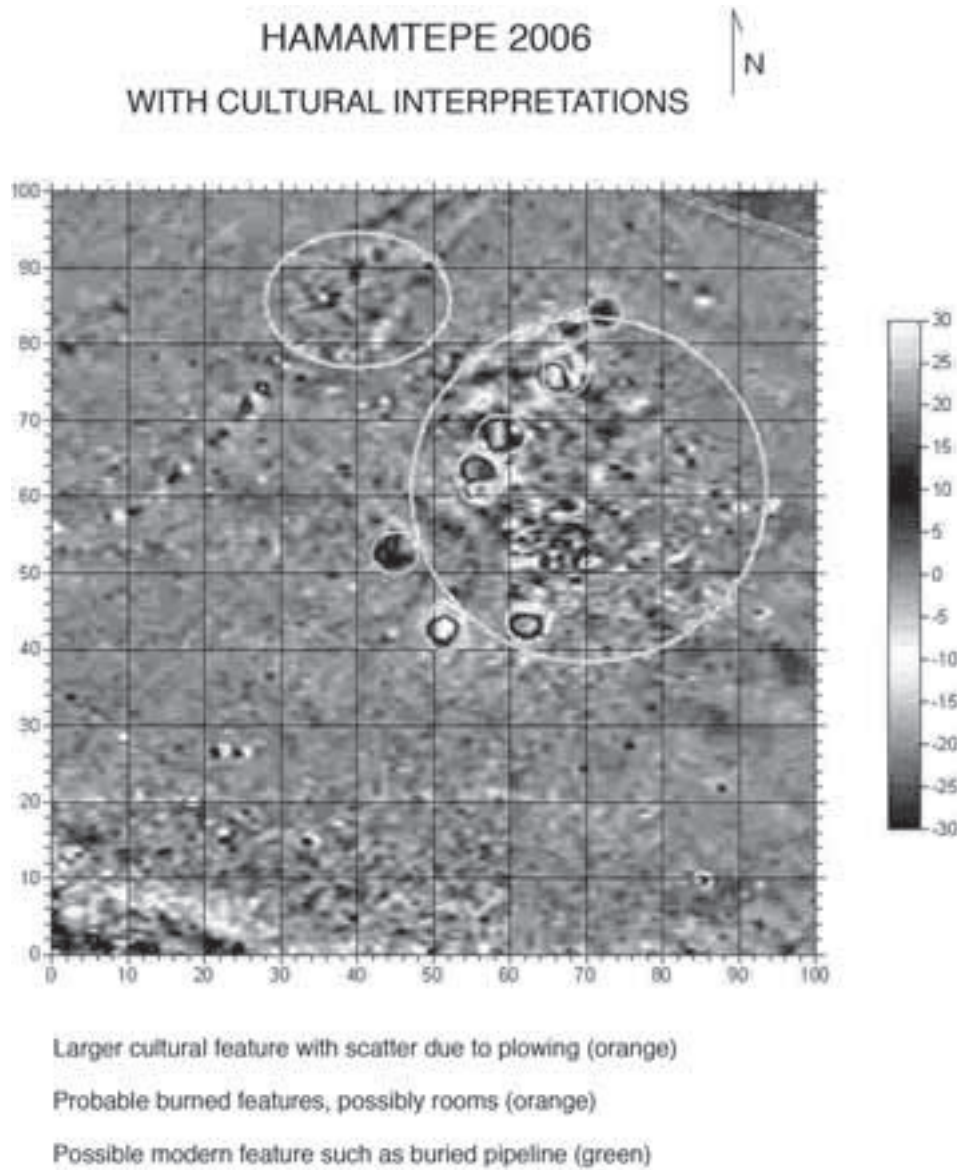


Fig. 18. Results of the geophysical study conducted in the field next to Hamamtepe (Produced by Dr. D. Monsees).

during the construction of the pool could be found today (Fig. 19).⁷ It is very likely that the structures then excavated were either destroyed or reburied. The DSI staff is not very clear about the fate of these buildings. The geophysical inspection in the area did not reveal any architectural remains.

The only valuable find within the restricted territory of DSI is the ruins of the Roman bridge mentioned by earlier visitors to the site.⁸ These ruins are built into one of the main walls of the water regulator and are very difficult



Fig. 19. An old photograph of ruins from the vicinity of Hamamtepe or Hamamtepe itself during the construction of the water regulator (from the archive of M. Cinlioğlu).

to identify unless the water is below a certain level. Only when the water is held within the Almus dam it is possible to see two blocks with inscriptions on them (Fig. 20). It is pleasing to be able to relocate these previously published inscriptions (*IGR* III, 106). Here, the name of the city appears as “Hierokaesa-



Fig. 20. Inscription blocks built into the foot of the Roman bridge that is now incorporated into the water regulator.



Fig. 21. The architrave in Tokat Museum.

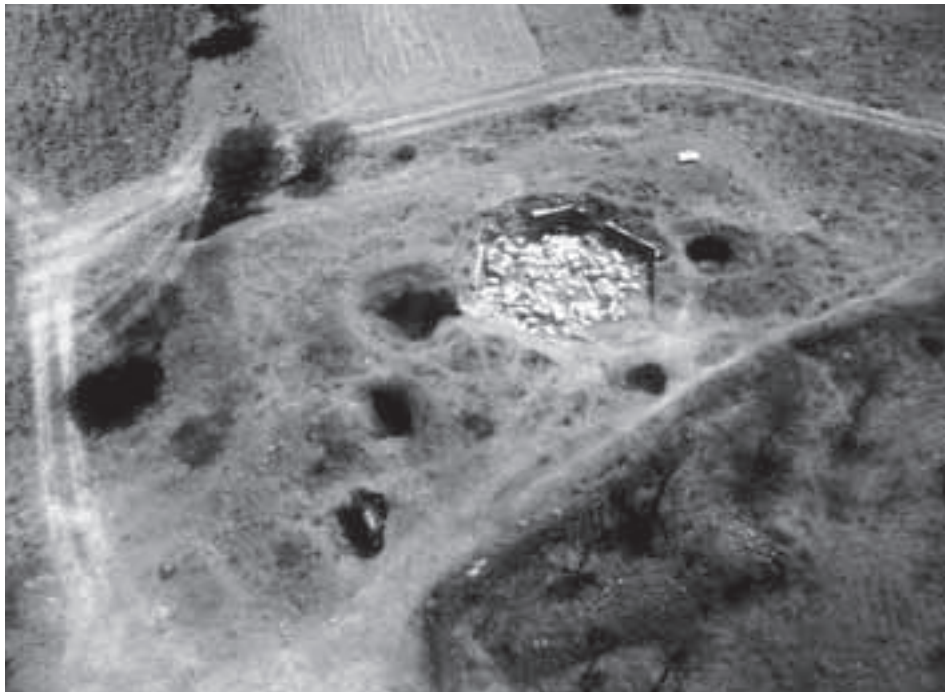


Fig. 22. The hexagonal pool near Bula village.

reion Komaneon" and the inscription has been dated to the 160's AD. Three pieces of an architrave were also found in the vicinity; these are now in the Tokat Museum (Fig. 21) and contain a dedicatory inscription to Trajan dated to 116-117 AD.⁹

The most surprising discovery in the vicinity dating to the Roman period was certainly that of a hexagonal pool made of nicely cut blocks (Fig. 22). Each side of the pool is 5 m long and the pool has a diameter of 10.55 m. Several of the blocks were carved to facilitate the flow of water into the pool. The illegal excavation trenches around the pool revealed large terracotta pipes, which must have brought water into the pool from the north in at least two places.

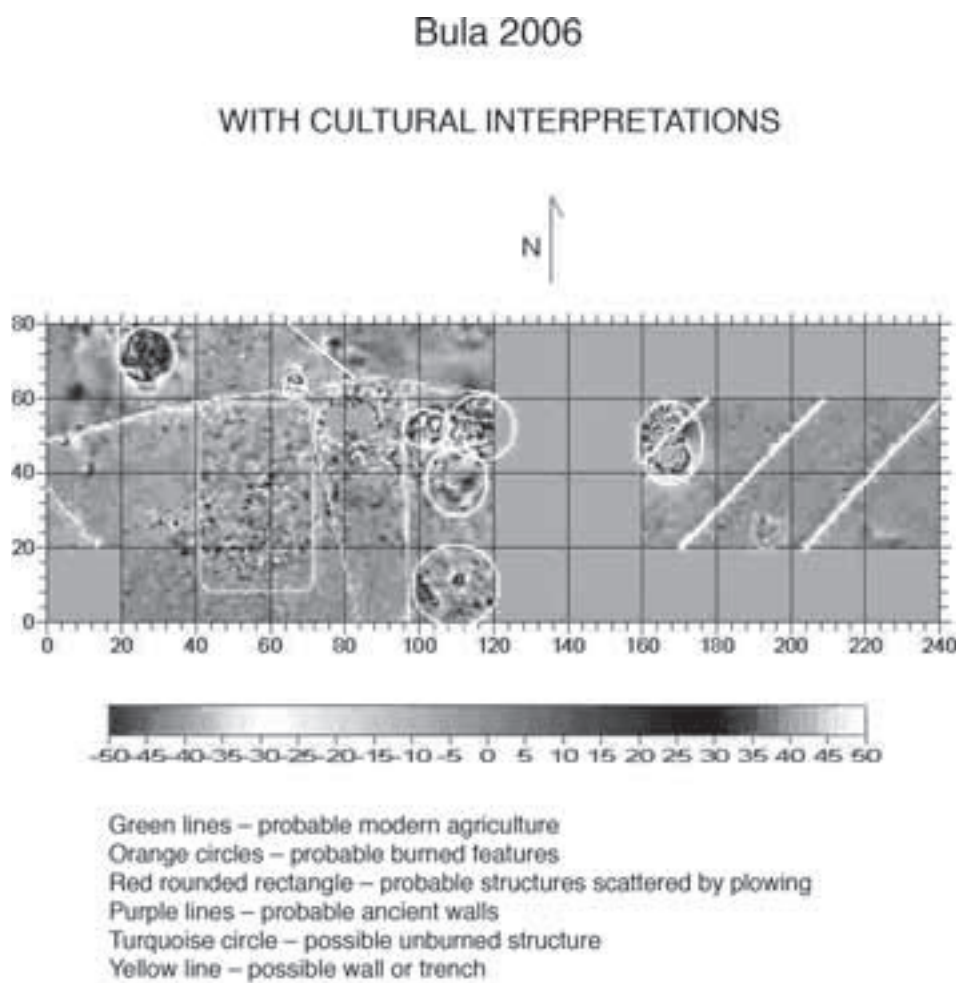


Fig. 23. Results of the geophysical study conducted around the Byzantine wall (Produced by Dr. D. Monsees).

There are also three outlets on the floor of the pool. This structure must date to the Roman period, and the pool was used as a water reservoir until 1955. This pool might have been part of a larger structure but our investigations in 2004 did not reveal evidence to support this proposition. So in 2005, we conducted geophysical prospection to the south of the pool. The gradiometer and resistivity survey revealed that there is a wall enclosing the pool on the west and south sides and other structures could be vaguely identified in the vicinity. Still the geophysics was not sufficient enough to suggest a larger complex. Maybe further investigation in the future could help us in understanding the structure better.

While the site of Komana remained a mystery for us, Roman *necropoleis* were among the most visible archaeological remains of the site. On both the



Fig. 24. Terracotta flowers from around the Byzantine wall.

southern and northern hills above every village in the 2 km long area it was possible to detect burial sites. As well in every village there were sarcophagus basins, a few lids and a number of grave *stelai*.

The immediate vicinity of Hamamtepe revealed a rich set of Byzantine remains. On the foothills to the north of Kılıçlı village a badly destroyed basilica with three apses, a small stone quarry with marks of tools on the rocks, and a Byzantine structure in the fields dug by the villagers were discovered.

On an exploratory trip to the hills behind the villages of Kılıçlı and Bula, our team discovered yet another possible Byzantine church at an altitude of c. 1000 m totally isolated in a forested area. Later, after the discovery, our geologist colleague Professor Vedat Toprak, while investigating the hills, noticed that the area with the church was in fact on top of a landslide deposit which created a level area suitable for habitation.¹⁰ The presence of a site there has not been confirmed, but it would be worthwhile to re-visit this place to do further investigations.

Below those hills we discovered in 2004 a Byzantine wall in a wheat field, which had been exposed as a result of illegal excavations. When we revisited the site in 2006 we sadly observed that the trenches were enlarged and the field was left uncultivated in order to hide the illegal digging activities. The structure now revealed to a greater extent seemed to be a much larger building than we first assumed and it was quickly disappearing. We decided to carry out geophysical prospection at the site in order to reveal the size of the building and to document this important site before it was completely destroyed. The gradiometer survey proved that there was extensive habitation in the area. Enclosures could be identified although heavily disturbed by farming and other activities (Fig. 23). During the survey we also collected more material from around the building. Especially terracotta objects with



Fig. 25. Decorated tiles from around the Byzantine wall.

tips in the shape of a flower and relief tiles suggested that the building was elaborately decorated (Figs. 24-25). A preliminary examination indicated that these terracotta flowers were part of the architectural decoration of mostly middle Byzantine period buildings.¹¹ Almost all examples still *in situ* derive from churches in the Balkans. These and the examples from Tekfur Palace in İstanbul are dated to the middle Byzantine period.¹² An exception is the Bibi-hatun Türbesi in Tokat, which is regarded as an early Islamic building. The preliminary study has shown that this kind of decoration was used on public buildings mostly in religious contexts or on imperial architecture. These observations seem to have improved our knowledge of Byzantine Komana. For my purposes, however, this find has another significance. In an area where there are no archaeological remains visible on the surface, the possibility of the presence of large structures buried under deep erosion and alluvial deposits – something which was initially contemplated – has been encouraging.

A view from the hills just to the north down towards the field with the Byzantine structure and the pool revealed that there are artificial terraces that

may have acted as settlement levels. Although it would be too immature to suggest this with the amount of investigation that has been carried out, it could be a guide for us in our quest to understand the settlement system at Komana.

Also during an exploratory visit to the town of Akbelen (or Bizeri as it was called until recently) 16 km to the northeast of Komana, further evidence for Byzantine period sites in the territory of Komana was found. Anderson who visited Bizeri in 1903 described an Armenian monastery, which contained a tomb, allegedly of St. John Chrysostom, the founder of the monastery.¹³ There are indeed architectural remains dating to the Byzantine period: a tile floor still in use and a large structure (of unknown date) with walls built of irregular stones that is claimed to be the monastery.

Conclusion

The first two seasons of survey at and around Komana indicated that the lands around Yeşilırmak especially towards the hills to the north and south were inhabited in different periods. So far we have been able to identify habitation in the late Chalcolithic, early Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. The exact location of Komana could not be identified and the exact function of the hill called Hamamtepe could not be understood. However, the Roman inscription built into the water regulator suggests the presence of a bridge from the hill to the other bank of Yeşilırmak, and photographs from the mid-20th century indicated that there were once monumental buildings in the area. The travellers' notes are also encouraging, especially those of Hogarth and Munro, who describe Hamamtepe as the temple mound with potential for excavation.¹⁴ Either the heavy alluvial deposits must have buried the remains or there must have been limited habitation in the immediate vicinity of Yeşilırmak.

The hills on the southern bank of the river and the hills to the north of Kılıçlı and Bula villages were covered with graves mostly of the Roman period and the tumuli on the peaks of many of the high hills further support the supposition that these areas, which are less suitable for habitation, were used as *necropoleis*. The northern side of Hamamtepe, to the north of the Tokat-Niksar road however, must have witnessed a certain amount of habitation especially during the late Roman and Byzantine times. Our investigations suggest that water was very important for the city and so in the future an examination of the water systems and their relation to agricultural activities might be useful. Also further study in the alluvial plain, an extensive survey in the larger territory of Komana and more geophysics will be necessary to understand the structure of this settlement better. Once the excavations begin and the survey is enlarged to the site's territory, we hope to shed light on the political, administrative, economical and religious organization at Komana and in Pontos, and maybe offer better explanations on the Kingdom of Mithridates

about which our knowledge almost only derives from ancient sources. Until then, the question regarding whether Komana was a city or a sanctuary will have to remain unanswered.

Notes

- 1 According to Virgilio (1981, 49), the temple-state was a very complex religious, political and economic structure at the center of which the temple stood; and this temple had strong traditions and a strict connection to the village, city or state.
- 2 Sökmen 2005, 24-28.
- 3 The funding for the 2006 fieldwork was provided by TÜBİTAK and METU Scientific Research Projects Fund.
- 4 Hamilton 1842, 350; Cumont & Cumont 1906, 253.
- 5 I would like to thank Dr. Jeroen Poblome for his preliminary examination of the pottery and his provision of a rough date.
- 6 Anderson 1903, 350; Cumont & Cumont 1906, 251; Wilson 1960, 231.
- 7 There are black and white photographs showing large in-situ building blocks that were excavated during the construction. Retired DSI personnel confirmed that archaeological material was revealed during the construction.
- 8 Anderson 1903, n. 313; Cumont & Cumont 1906, 251; Wilson 1960, 231.
- 9 SEG 42, 339; Wilson 1960, 233; Remy et al. 1990, 521.
- 10 I would like to thank Prof. Toprak for visiting the site and sharing his expertise.
- 11 Eyice 1959, 254.
- 12 Eyice 1961, 26-27; Filow 1919, 20-22.
- 13 Anderson 1903, 63.
- 14 Hogarth & Munro 1893, 735.

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The Antikythera Shipwreck and Sinope's Culture during the Mithridatic Wars

Attilio Mastrocinque

During the last years my curiosity has been kept alive by the research of Giovanni Pastore, a great expert in engineering, who has studied all the possibilities of an instrument, which was found in the shipwreck of Antikythera.¹ This instrument is a box into which a series of 31 gear wheels have been placed in order to make astronomic calculations with a precision and of a complication that one had thought could only be attained in modern times.² In the 1950's D. de Solla Price studied this machine and reached the conclusion that it was a sort of clock, which had been adjusted in about 80 BC.³ He put forward the hypothesis that two boards existed on the main surfaces. On the first side pointers indicated the placement of both the Sun and the Moon in the Zodiac, and on the other side other astrological conjunctions were shown. The pointers were moved by means of a driving wheel or handle. Michael T. Wright has recently put forward new results for the instrument, noting that it was more complex than was previously thought, since it is not complete and we do not know how many pieces are missing.⁴ According to his reconstruction, the first side of the instrument was used to indicate the motion of the Sun, probably following the heliocentric theory of Aristarchos, and the motion of other planets. The opposite clock-face was perhaps a year calculator, which gave equivalences between the Egyptian year and other calendars and allowed the calculations of eclipses. Ceramic finds in the shipwreck allow a dating of the ship and its cargo to the 70's of the first century BC.

This intriguing topic pushed me towards a reappraisal of what we know about Anatolian culture in the period of the Mithridatic Wars. I realized that it was possible to determine a precise date for the Antikythera shipwreck, to discover the name of the city where some of the statues and the machine were taken from, and indeed the name of the genius who devised the machine. To begin with though, I will describe in a few words the composition of the cargo loaded in the ship and the various modern hypotheses about its origin.

The shipwreck of Antikythera was discovered and its content partially recovered at the beginning of the 20th century. It was filled with Greek statues and it seemed likely that they had been stolen from one or more Greek cities during the period of the Mithridatic Wars. The masterpieces from this

shipwreck are kept and exhibited at the Archaeological Museum in Athens. The most famous of these is a tall, naked, bronze athlete, but other remarkable pieces have been recovered: three *epheboi*, one *kore*, one philosopher's head, two statues of Aphrodite, two statues and one head of Hermes, two statues of Herakles, four of Apollon, one of Zeus, one of Philoktetes, two of Odysseus, one of Achilleus, plus the remains of four horses of one quadriga, and many fragments of other statues.⁵

The chronology and the place of origin of the ship have often been discussed. Rehm recognised the importance both of the machine for astronomic calculations and of the inscribed materials for the dating of the shipwreck, but his conclusions, pointing towards a date of about 30 BC, have been proved false.⁶ Indeed recent research on the amphorae, ceramics, and glass from the shipwreck have given a more reliable date of about 80-70 BC.⁷

Another important shipwreck of the same period has been found on the Tunisian seashore, at Mahdia, and recently published. It was laden with a rich booty from Attica on its way to Rome after the pillage of Athens and Peiraieus by Sulla in 86 BC.⁸ Therefore it is probable that the Antikythera shipwreck is also evidence for an episode from the period of the Mithridatic Wars.

The cargo's place of origin has been supposed to be Paros, because the statues are made of Parian marble,⁹ but some scholars have proposed a Delian,¹⁰ a Rhodian, a Melian,¹¹ or an Argolic origin.¹² Fausto Zevi observed that the amphorae and ceramics suggest that the ship's cargo originated in the East Mediterranean, further east than Attica.¹³

Let us now take into consideration historical evidence concerning the 70's BC and the looting of masterpieces of art in Greece and Asia Minor. Memnon of Herakleia narrates the sad destiny of Herakleia Pontike after the conquest by Licinius Lucullus in 72 BC (*FGrH* 434 F1, 35.7-8):

Immediately Cotta sent Triarius to conquer the cities of Tieion and Amastris from Connacorex. He himself took the men who had surrendered to the Romans and the prisoners and treated them very cruelly. He was looking for treasure and did not spare even the contents of the temples but removed statues of men and gods, which were many and beautiful. He removed also the statue of Herakles from the agora, and every decoration of his pyramid, which was not inferior to any of the most famous sculptures in richness of materials, dimensions, harmony, beauty or artistry. His club was hammered and made of refined gold; a large lion's skin was draped on the statue, the quiver was of the same material and was filled with arrows and a bow. Many other beautiful and wonderful votive objects from temples and from the city were taken away ...

Cotta (...) sailed away with his fleet. Among the ships, which were bringing the booty from the city, some were overladen

and sank near the seashore, others were cast ashore by a northern wind near the city, and many of the cargo ships were lost (author's translation).

Lucullus was a cultivated plunderer, who had the opportunity to choose the cream of the art and wealth of many Anatolian cities, which had never previously been sacked. From Memnon we know that not all his booty reached Italy. Another source, namely Strabo, also supplies us with very important evidence concerning this booty. Memnon and Strabo were both of Anatolian origin and therefore it is plausible that they can bear reliable witness to the pieces of art that were removed during the Mithridatic Wars. Strabo, describing the city of Sinope and its history, states that:

The city was captured; and though Lucullus kept intact the rest of the city's adornments, he took away the globe of Billaros and the work of Sthenis, the statue of Autolykos, whom they regarded as founder of their city and honoured as god. (Strab. 12.3.11).

The conquest and submission of the Greek cities in Pontos happened between 72 and 71 BC, before the battle of Kabeira, and the sailing of the ship with Sinopean booty may be dated close to 71 BC. Strabo mentions only two works included in the booty: Billaros' *sphaera* and the statue of Autolykos by Sthenis, clearly because they were noteworthy and very famous. No other ancient authors mention Billaros' *sphaera*, and the reason for this, I believe, is that the ship, which was carrying it sank in the waters near Antikythera.

It is unlikely that two such machines used for astronomical calculations should have been carried by ships loaded with large quantities of spoils at the end of the 70's BC. In light of Strabo's passage and of the cargo of the Antikythera shipwreck, one has to draw the conclusion that the Antikythera astronomical machine is in fact the *sphaera* of Billaros. The ship must have sailed from Sinope in 71 BC with pieces of art from this city and possibly from other places in the area. The Antikythera shipwreck is an important testimony to the culture of Pontic Greek cities during the Mithridatic Wars. A study of the impact of Anatolian culture on Roman culture in the first century BC may be very fruitful. We know that Vergil, Ovid and other Augustan poets were influenced by Bithynian poetic tradition; we know that the library of Aristotle reached Rome from Troad after passing through Athens and Apellikon's library shelves. We can also put forward hypotheses about Anatolian influences on the Roman cult of Mithras.¹⁴ Yet on the whole little is known about the Anatolian art, science and religion, which reached Rome in this period. We can only guess that Roman culture received a new impetus from the arrival of artists, scientists, poets, philosophers, pieces of art, and literary works from Anatolia.

It is impossible to recognize the statue of Autolykos among the statues from the Antikythera wreck, because the iconography of this hero is scarcely

known and two different Autolykos are known in Greek mythology.¹⁵ Sinope was a city on the Pontic shore and therefore the Autolykos in question here had to be the fellow-soldier of Herakles during the war against the Amazons¹⁶ and the companion of Jason during the Pontic exploits of the Argonauts.¹⁷ He was considered to be the founder of Sinope, which he relieved from the Syrian occupation.¹⁸

One cannot say whether Billaros' astronomical calculator had to be used with a model of the cosmos, but this is highly probable. *Sphaera* was the common name for every model of the cosmos,¹⁹ both of planispheres made by scientists and astronomers, and of astrological boards for oracular purposes. One can get an idea of what an astronomical *sphaera*, like that of Billaros, was from Cicero's description in the *de Republica* of Archimedes' *sphaera*:

(*Philo is speaking*) ... I will tell you what I have heard from Sulpicius Gallus, who was a man of profound learning, as you are aware. Listening one day to the recital of a similar prodigy, in the house of Marcellus, who had been his colleague in the consulship; he asked to see a celestial globe, which Marcellus' grandfather had saved after the capture of Syracuse, from this magnificent and opulent city, without bringing home any other memorial of so great a victory. I had often heard this celestial globe or sphere mentioned on account of the great fame of Archimedes. Its appearance, however, did not seem to me particularly striking. There is another, more elegant in form, and more generally known, moulded by the same Archimedes, and deposited by the same Marcellus, in the Temple of Virtue at Rome. But as soon as Gallus had begun to explain, by his sublime science, the composition of this machine, I felt that the Sicilian geometrician must have possessed a genius superior to any thing we usually conceive to belong to our nature. Gallus assured us, that the solid and compact globe, was a very ancient invention, and that the first model of it had been presented by Thales of Miletus. That afterwards Eudoxus of Cnidus, a disciple of Plato, had traced on its surface the stars that appear in the sky, and that many years subsequent, borrowing from Eudoxus this beautiful design and representation, Aratus had illustrated them in his verses, not by any science of astronomy, but the ornament of poetic description. He added, that the figure of the sphere, which displayed the motions of the sun and moon, and the five planets, or wandering stars, could not be represented by the primitive solid globe. And that in this, the invention of Archimedes was admirable, because he had calculated how a single revolution should maintain unequal and diversified progressions in dissimilar motions. In fact, when Gallus moved this sphere or planetarium, we observed the

moon distanced the sun as many degrees by a turn of the wheel in the machine, as she does in so many days in the heavens. From whence it resulted, that the progress of the sun was marked as in the heavens, and that the moon touched the point where she is obscured by the earth's shadow at the instant the sun appears above the horizon. (Cic. *Rep.* 1.14.21).²⁰

Posidonios produced another mechanism of this kind.²¹ Examples of oracular *sphaerae* also include that of the Pseudo-Demokritos mentioned in a magical papyrus,²² two astrological boards from Grand,²³ and the bronze astrological board, which was used by bishop Sophronius in the middle of the fifth century AD.²⁴ Obviously, Billaros' *sphaera* ought to be similar to that of Archimedes, and the machine recovered at Antikythera has the means to move or to place the heavenly bodies in a planisphere.

The identification of Billaros' *sphaera* as the instrument in the Antikythera shipwreck allows a new evaluation of the cultural level of the Greeks on the Pontic shore, who previously had been an almost unknown part of the Greek world. It will be left to the specialists of Greek sculpture to place the masterpieces of the Antikythera shipwreck into the frame of Anatolian culture.

Notes

- 1 On which see Svoronos 1903.
- 2 Pastore 2006. A fragment of an inscription on the instrument seems to transcribe a passage of Geminus, an astronomer and mathematician who lived in Rhodes before 70 BC. It may be a guide to help the users of the instrument.
- 3 Price 1975. Further remarks in Bromley 1986, 5-27.
- 4 Wright 2003; 2004; 2005a; 2005b.
- 5 On the statues, see Bol 1972.
- 6 Rehm's theories were left unpublished but passed through G. Karo to Leroux (1913, 102) and Lippold (1923, 250, n. VI.6). Cf. Zevi 1966, 163.
- 7 Weinberg, Grace & Edwards 1965, with a review by Zevi 1966, 163-170.
- 8 Hellerkemper Salies (ed.) 1994, and especially, Himmelmann 1994, 849-855.
- 9 Rubensohn 1935, 49-69.
- 10 Bol 1972, 119-120.
- 11 See Bol 1972, 114.
- 12 Svoronos 1903; 1908, according to whom the ship was from the Constantinian age.
- 13 Zevi 1966, 165.
- 14 Cf. a recent contribution by Beck 1998, 115-128.
- 15 Touchefeu 1986, 55-56.
- 16 Hyg. *Fab.* 14; Plut. *Luc.* 23.
- 17 Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.955-961; Val. Flacc. 5.113-115.
- 18 Plut. *Luc.* 23. It is possible that Autolykos became the anti-Syrian hero of Sinope during the war against Antiochos I of Syria at the beginning of the third century BC.

- 19 Schlachter 1927, 29-31.
- 20 Translated by F. Barham. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.25.62.
- 21 Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.88.
- 22 *Papyri Graecae Magicae* XII, 352ff.
- 23 Abry (ed.) 1993.
- 24 Peterson 1948, 101-102.

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Bosporos under the Rule of Mithridates VI Eupator

Evgenij A. Molev

In the present paper I aim to investigate a single question in Bosporan history: the status of Bosporos in the Pontic state under the rule of Mithridates VI. Bosporos was incorporated into the Pontic Kingdom after the defeat of the Scythians under Saumakos in about 107/6 BC. Undoubtedly, the Scythian riot together with the death of the last Spartokid king changed the presupposed conditions of this incorporation. After the crushing defeat, Bosporos could no longer aspire to the role of a vassal kingdom, as Orešnikov supposed,¹ and as the issue was probably resolved by negotiations with Pairisades V. Nor could it be a vice-kingdom, as Reinach believed.² Both variants overlook one major point – the king was under the control of Mithridates and at the same time enjoyed his confidence.

According to Šelov: “Bosporos, which was united with Pontos by a personal union, continued to be an isolated political unit; its head was a special governor-general appointed by the king, whose sons in turn took on this role”.³ Being too young, however, the sons of Mithridates could not have governed Bosporos immediately after its subjection. The earliest mention of the fact that Bosporos was governed by the sons of Mithridates belongs to 87/6 BC (Plut. *Sul.* 11). Moreover, this passage tells us about the governing of both Pontos and Bosporos.

Gajdukevič offers a different opinion viewing Bosporos as a province or a satrapy within the Pontic Kingdom.⁴ The absence of sources related specifically to this issue though leads us to a renewed examination of the arguments that have already been put forward by researchers and an analysis of new findings.

First, there is no document testifying to the fact that Bosporos was an isolated state within the Pontic kingdom. The people of Bosporos do not appear as a single unit in the troops of Mithridates or among his allies. In comparison, Lesser Armenia, for example, provided separate allied troops headed by Mithridates’ son Arkathias during the First Mithridatic War. Apparently he was governing that state at that period of time (App. *Mith.* 17).⁵

Also, there are no sources which suggest that the governor-general of Bosporos, even if he was Mithridates’ son, had special rights which distinguished him from other satraps. Furthermore, the first son of Mithridates who governed Bosporos and Pontos took this position only after Mithridates

had moved his residence to Pergamon. The names of the governor-generals of Bosporos, who held the post before this son of Mithridates, have not been preserved. Apparently, these governors were insignificant for maintaining the status of Bosporos as a state within Pontos. The fact that the “ancient possessions in Pontos and Bosporos” were governed by a single person (as stated by Justinus) prompts us to believe that Bosporos was not an isolated unit within the kingdom of Mithridates.

Some indirect evidence proving the political status of Bosporos can be derived from the terminology used by ancient authors and in inscriptions. There is no document contemporary to Mithridates, in which he is called the king of Bosporos. Taking into account the frequent references to the hereditary nature of his power, this could seem odd. However, it only appears odd, as all the terms defining the kind of power the king of Pontos had over Bosporos emphasize its absolute and indivisible nature.

For instance, while speaking about the subjection of Bosporos, Strabon calls Mithridates “master (κύριος) of Bosporos” (7.4.3). This term stresses that the king wielded absolute power. However, it does not define this power’s political status.⁶ In the decree in honour of Diophantos⁷ and in the honorary inscription under the statue of Mithridates in Nymphaion,⁸ the power of the king of Pontos over Bosporos is defined by the term *πράγματα*. This term does not allow us to make any conclusions concerning the degree of isolation of Bosporos within Pontos. However, the comparison of these two documents does give us some ground for estimating the status of Bosporos within Pontos.

In the decree of the Chersonesians, Mithridates is called a “king” whereas in the inscription from Nymphaion he is called the “king of kings”. The chronological gap between these documents is not large. The statue of Mithridates must have been erected in Nymphaion soon after the victories of Neoptolemos in about 106/5 BC.⁹ Consequently, it was the subjection of Bosporos that provided the reason for including both his hereditary title (the King of Lesser Armenia) and the names of defeated enemies (Kolchis, Scythians and Bosporos) in the full title. Knowing that after its military subjection Kolchis was governed by a governor-general chosen by Mithridates from among his “friends” (Strab. 11.2.18), we can suppose that Bosporos was governed in a similar way. However, in an administrative respect Bosporos, unlike Kolchis, was not an isolated political unit but a new formation united with Chersonesos, a certain part of Scythia, and newly subjected tribes in Asia. Proof can be found in Strabon’s notation that the inhabitants of Taurika and the areas near Sindika paid tribute to the King of Pontos (7.4.6). Apparently, Pantikapaion became the center of this new province although there is no direct reference to this fact in the sources.

As Bosporos became an integral part of Pontos it became necessary to adjust its state system to the system of governing and law-making used in Pontos. According to the sources changes were made to various elements of

the former state system of Bosporos. In the subsequent history of Bosporos two new factors in its political life were of major significance. First, classical *polis* institutions (the council and the people) appeared; these were mentioned in the inscriptions from Gorgippia¹⁰ and Phanagoria.¹¹ These institutions are typical of Hellenistic city-states and Ju.G. Vinogradov believes that this and other acts of Mithridates denote the beginning of Hellenism in Bosporos.¹²

There was however a second factor which contradicted the traditions of Hellenistic states – the restoration of the home guard in the cities of Bosporos. Such military forces were placed in Olbia¹³ and Chersonesos¹⁴ as well as in Bosporos. This seems to contradict the policy of Mithridates, as the cities in his patrimonial kingdom according to Reinach and Griffith had long ceased to use such forces.¹⁵ In my opinion, however, Mithridates did not alter his views in this case but restored home guard in the cities of Bosporos after having evaluated the political situation in the region. On the one hand, the military campaign of Saumakos demonstrated the strong power of the barbarian (Scythian)¹⁶ element among the *chora* population on the European side of the Bosporos. This was the main element, which constituted the army of mercenaries belonging to the last Spartokids.¹⁷ The populations of the Greek cities, which were friendly to Pontos, could not withstand this army, as they did not have their own military forces.

On the other hand, the borders of Bosporos, which were constantly under attack, demanded better protection. In this connection the question of the correlation of the king's military forces in Bosporos with the home guard is of interest. The only direct source regarding this question is the decree in honour of the mercenaries of Mithridates from Phanagoreia, which dates from the year 210 according to the Pontic calendar (September 88-August 87 BC). A brilliant analysis of this decree was presented by Ju.G. Vinogradov.¹⁸ From his point of view, the mercenaries were a limited military force that the city of Phanagoreia had at its disposal and paid directly from its treasury. The number of these mercenaries was not large. The decree was adopted with the aim of granting civic rights to the mercenaries instead of paying them, as after the defeat of Mithridates' army in Greece in 87 BC, the king of Pontos had to increase the rate of the already huge tribute of Bosporos. Ju.G. Vinogradov also draws our attention to the fact that the list of new citizens and the grant of the right to purchase land was absent from the published document, which is characteristic of similar documents from the Hellenic period. He explains this fact by stating that this decree was an excerpt from a more detailed document.¹⁹

It is important to note that the documents of the Pontic Kingdom contain no information about the king placing detachments of mercenaries at the disposal of cities. In every case these detachments were kept and financed by the king and their commanding officers were subject not to the city but to the king. On the northern Black Sea coast this was stated in an inscription from Olbia (*IOSPE I*², 35).²⁰ That is why the arguments put forward by Ju.G. Vinogradov and obviously testifying to the absence of power of Mithridates over Phana-

goreian mercenaries can have another interpretation. We have no information concerning the role of the cities of the Asian side of Bosporos in the coup d'état of Saumakos, but we know that external threats continued along the eastern border of Bosporos after the victories of Diophantos. This can be clearly seen in the fact that in a short period of time another commander of Mithridates, Neoptolemos, had to fight back the onslaught of barbaric tribes.

Consequently, the presence of the mercenaries of Mithridates in Phanagoreia and not on the battle-fields in Greece is not at all surprising. Until Sulla had captured Athens (1 March 86 BC) and defeated the army of Archelaos near Chaironeia and Orchomenos, there was no urgent need to withdraw regiments from Bosporos or raise the *phoros* from the northern possessions. The phrases of the Phanagoreian decree tell us that the mercenaries served *together with the citizens* (συνστρατεύσασθαι), performed their duty towards the city (πεποιηκέναι πᾶν τὸ δίκαιον) and were friendly towards *their city* (πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτῶν πόλιν). It can be viewed as a confirmation of the fact that the soldiers had implemented the order of the king to protect the city and to behave properly with regard to the citizens. Understanding the phrase "their city" as the object to be protected is only natural taking into account the type of document. Moreover, the city became "their city" only after the decree had been published. So such a meaning of this phrase may not have been implied.

Thus, the content of the decree suggests that the most likely situation was that the Phanagoreian mercenaries (at least before they obtained Phanagoreian citizenship) were subject to the king and received payment from the king's treasury. Furthermore, the fact that they served together with the citizens implies that the citizens were given orders by the leader of these mercenaries. It is necessary to specify the purpose of the decree's adoption. The opinion of Ju.G. Vinogradov, who believed that it was based on the desire of the Phanagoreians to cut expenses connected with the *phoros*, is basically justified. However, the increase of the *phoros* could be compensated by granting civic rights to the mercenaries only if the payment for keeping them was included in that *phoros*, i.e. the money collected in Taurika and Sindika was directly spent on payment to the soldiers of the Pontic army, who served in the cities of the northern Black Sea coast.

S.Ju. Saprykin is of the opinion that Strabon's report of the tribute to Mithridates relates solely to the last year of his reign;²¹ if he is right, the tribute was paid on only one occasion. However, reference to the term *phoros* (7.4.6) testifies to the fact that Strabon meant regular and most probably annual tribute.²² It is difficult to assess how difficult it was for the cities of Bosporos to pay the tribute. A.A. Maslennikov believes that the 180.000 *medimnoi* of grain mentioned by Strabon could have been collected from the *chora* from one or two Bosporan cities.²³ If we take into account the growth of crafts and hunting in Bosporos during the Hellenic period²⁴ and the increase of money circulation,²⁵ 200 talents should be viewed as a substantial amount but not

“unbelievably huge”. Undoubtedly, even the increase of this *phoros* could lead the citizens of Bosporos to look for more suitable ways of implementing the demands of the king of Pontos. Granting civic rights to mercenaries was a possible solution. It would be understandable and even natural if this method was used throughout Bosporos. However, we have a decree from only one of the cities and we do not know the degree of autonomy they had for taking such independent steps concerning the payment of *phoros*.

In my opinion, this situation must be connected with the subsequent attack of Bosporos on Mithridates. This attack was launched before the end of the First Mithridatic War to judge from the report of Appianos (App. *Mith.* 64), Mithridates began to prepare for a war with Bosporos immediately after its end. The term Bosporanoi used by Appianos in this case makes it clear that he mentioned the inhabitants of the Bosporan cities. If we compare the testimony of Appianos, Plutarch and Cicero concerning the attack of Bosporos with the testimony of the decree of Phanagoreians, it seems possible that Mithridates was attacked not by the whole of Bosporos but solely by its Asiatic part. What is more, this attack was apparently initiated and led by Phanagoreia. This is proved by the fact that the Phanagoreians granted civic rights to soldiers and particularly to those serving with them for a long time. Moreover, while giving them various privileges they established the main condition of their service – their taking part in general recruitment. An indirect proof of the special status of Phanagoreia within the new province and the risk of rebellion against Mithridates at that time can be seen in the actions of the King of Pontos. In 63 BC, planning an invasion of Italy, Mithridates placed a garrison in Phanagoreia (App. *Mith.* 108) and not in any other cities of the Asiatic side of Bosporos.

It can of course be supposed that what the Phanagoreians had in mind was improving the quality of their defences against the neighbouring barbarian tribes. This is less probable, however, as defence of the external borders of the province was the duty of the governor-general and not of each separate city. The governor-general being incapable of suppressing the riot of Phanagoreians, his place was taken by a more authoritative governor – Machares, the son of Mithridates. The possibility of a successful attack on the part of the Phanagoreians is directly connected with the quantity and quality of the military forces of Mithridates quartered in Bosporos.

The question remains: how many mercenaries operated in Phanagoreia and on the northern Black Sea coast in general? The absence of a list of new citizens in the Phanagorean decree suggests, in my opinion, that their number was relatively high according to ancient standards. It can be derived from an Olbian decree in honour of an Amisean captain that the garrison sufficient for the defence of Olbia was transported on only one ship.²⁶ As we have no additional information about the size of this ship, we can suppose that it was an average trade ship, which could not have had more than 200 people on board.

Apparently, the garrison of Phanagoreia was not much larger. If we assume that the tribute of 200 talents mentioned by Strabon was used for keeping

the army of Pontos in the region and if we estimate the average daily payment to the mercenaries at 1 drachm, all the military forces of Pontos on the northern Black Sea coast will appear to have consisted of slightly more than 3000 people. The fact that these forces were sufficient to maintain the rule of the Pontic king is supported by the report of Strabon concerning the defeat of the Scythians and Roxolans by the army of Diophantos consisting of only 6000 soldiers. Moreover, it was reported by Josephus Flavius that the Roman supremacy on the Black Sea was maintained with 3000 legionaries and 40 ships (*Bell. Jud.* 2.16).²⁷ Judging from the number of buried treasures in the territory of the Asiatic side of Bosporos, the external threat to the new Pontic possessions was greatest there. It was there that the main forces of the Pontic military group had to be located. And it appears reasonable that they were won over to the side of Phanagoreians while the latter were planning an attack on the Pontic king.

It remains to be discussed why the Pontic mercenaries would have agreed to such an action. Upon assuming Phanagoreian citizenship, they might eventually have found themselves on the side of the enemies of Mithridates. Such a perspective would hardly have been acceptable for the natives of Pontos proper or other non-Bosporian regions, since this action would have put their relatives under threat of reprisals from the Pontic king, without any chance of defending them. It is most likely that the Phanagoreian mercenaries came from the Bosporan cities but did not possess full rights. Indeed, receiving full citizenship was an honour for them, especially in the context of the news concerning the defeats of Mithridates in his struggle against the Romans.

Thus we can say that after the establishment of the rule of Mithridates in Bosporos, the whole northern Pontic area was turned into a single administrative unit – a province of Pontos. It is most likely that Pantikapaion became its centre. This new part of the Pontic Kingdom was initially governed by a governor from among the king's "friends". Later, following the rebellion of the Bosporan people, Machares, the son of Mithridates, became the governor-general. A number of *polis* freedoms granted to the Greek cities of Bosporos are connected not only with the philhellenism of Mithridates, but with the desire of this Pontic king to standardize laws and strengthen the unity of the kingdom, as the Greek cities of Pontos itself already had the same privileges.

Notes

- 1 Orešnikov 1888, 100.
- 2 Reinach 1890, 221.
- 3 Šelov 1986, 567.
- 4 Gajdukevič 1955, 124.
- 5 Molev 1979, 186.
- 6 Gracianskaja 1988, 118-119.
- 7 *IOSPE* I², 352.

- 8 SEG 37, 668.
- 9 Molev 1980, 43-44; Vinogradov 1999, 18-19; Saprykin 1996, 149-151.
- 10 Saprykin 1986, 72.
- 11 Vinogradov 1991, 16.
- 12 Vinogradov 1993, 143.
- 13 Vinogradov 1989, 262.
- 14 IOSPE I², 352; Lomouri 1979, 147.
- 15 Reinach 1895, 254-271; Griffith 1933, 186.
- 16 Vinogradov 2000, 91-92.
- 17 Molev 1994, 124.
- 18 Vinogradov 1991, 14-33.
- 19 Vinogradov 1991, 30-31.
- 20 Molev 1976, 51-53; Vinogradov 1989, 252-254.
- 21 Saprykin 1995, 472.
- 22 Molev 1986, 177-178.
- 23 Maslennikov 1993, 391-394.
- 24 Šelov 1984, 182.
- 25 Molev 1994, 90-93.
- 26 IOSPE I², 35.
- 27 Rostovcev 1900, 140-159; Gajdukevič 1955, 89-90; Blavatskij 1985, 231.

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Abbreviations

- IOSPE B. Latyshev 1885-1916. *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*. Petropolis (reprint Hildesheim 1965).

Coin Finds from the Kuru Baš Fortified Settlement and Some Questions Concerning the History of Theodosia in the Late 2nd and 1st Centuries BC

Alexander V. Gavrilov

In 2003 V.V. Sadovskij, an inhabitant of the village of Nasypnoe in the Feodosija administrative zone, found the remains of a nearby ancient settlement and gathered some ancient coins there. Various collectors of antiquities from Feodosija and Saryj Krym have found a number of similar coins at the site (see catalogue).¹ The present author has summarized all of the accessible information on these coins and prepared casts and photos of some of them.² In addition, the site itself and its environments have been surveyed, its boundaries identified and the surface materials collected. The site was provisionally named “Kuru Baš fortified settlement” and the site will be referred to under this name below. This paper presents all the information now available on the numismatic finds from the site. These materials yield new and important data for studies of the history of the Bosphoros and Theodosia during the period from the end of the 2nd to the first half of the 1st century BC.

The site of “Kuru Baš fortified settlement” is situated 0.3 km northeast of the north-eastern limit of the village of Vinogradnoe in the Feodosija administrative zone and 0.7 km east of the fort of Kuru Baš (Figs. 1-2).³ It is located on a spur of the ridge of Tete-Oba, on a hill 197.5 m high. The territory of the site is partly covered by turf (mostly on the hill) and partly by a vineyard adjoining the hill to the southeast and west. Accordingly, this latter part of the territory is occasionally ploughed. No outer signs of the existence of any long-term buildings have been found on the hill but possibly they were destroyed in antiquity. From the foothills of this elevation, the steppe down to the Ak-Monaj Isthmus and the shores of the Gulf of Feodosija are easily observable. Visual communication from that part of the site is possible with the site of Sary-Kaja, the fortified settlement of Beregovoe I and Theodosia (which is visible 6 km to the southeast). Close to the settlement, the roads connecting Theodosia with the western territories of the peninsula ran along the northern foothills of the Tete-Oba ridge. Even now the roads follow the same routes, which are the most convenient for communication. Places situated similarly to our site were frequently used as sentry posts with watchtowers as a common feature.⁴ Judging by the concentration of surface finds and the topography of the site



Fig. 1. Schematic map of the south-eastern Crimea: 1) Kuru Baš settlement; 2) Frontovoe II necropolis.

Fig. 2. Topographic map of the north-eastern suburbs of Feodosija and adjoining areas: 1) Kuru Baš settlement; 2) fort of Kuru Baš. Scale 1:250.



situated on the hill, it seems that there really was a wooden watchtower here (as indicated by relatively numerous finds of bronze nails) as well as some other structures attached to it. In the south-western and western foothills (in the territory now occupied by vineyards) there was possibly a village. The surface finds come from a fairly large territory measuring about 200 x 200 m and are represented by fragments of amphorae, *lagynoi* with twisted handles, Sinopean tiles, querns made from Karadag trass, bronze nails and fibulae, and lead biconical sling shot weighing 58-60 g or occasionally 96 g (Fig. 3).⁵

Between the fort of Kuru Baš (194.1 m above the sea) and the fortified settlement of Kuru Baš (197.5 m above the sea), remains of the stone fences, which demarcated rectangular land-plots have been revealed on the north-

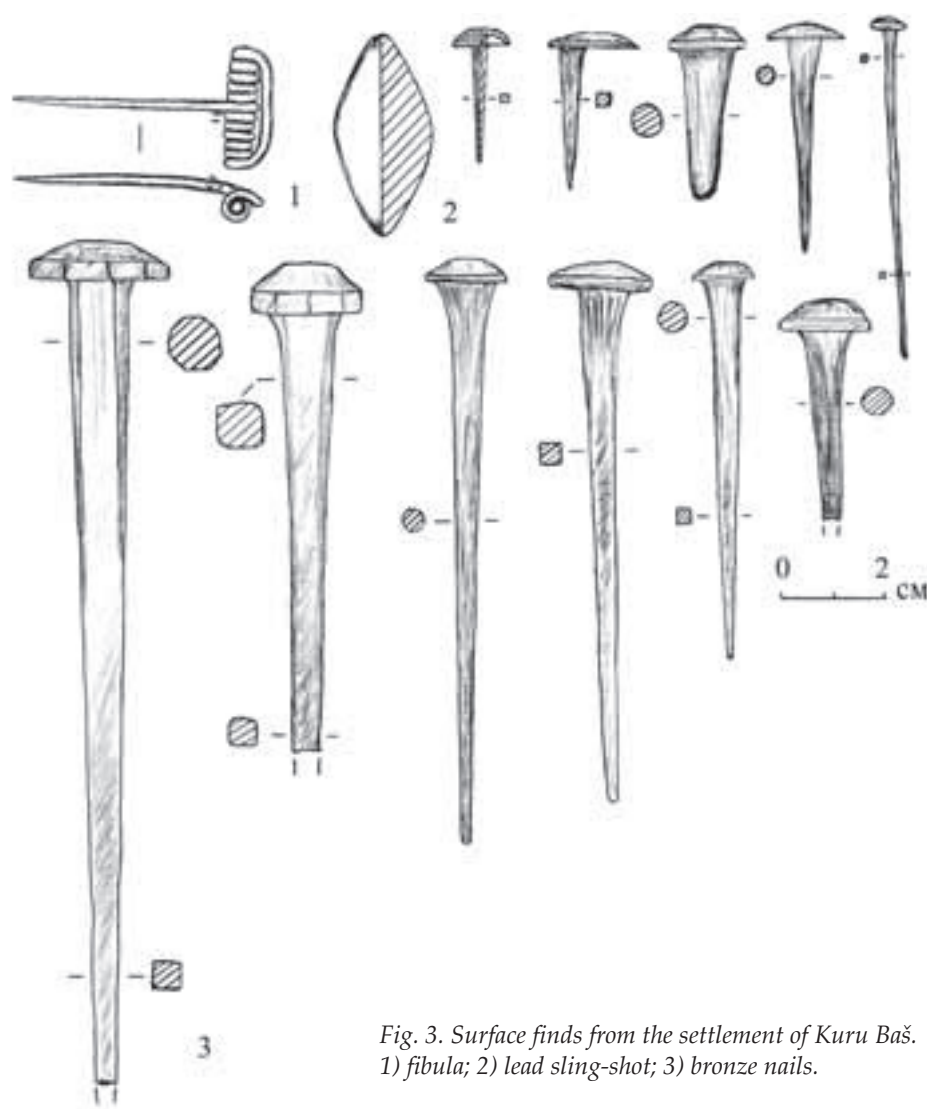


Fig. 3. Surface finds from the settlement of Kuru Bař.
1) fibula; 2) lead sling-shot; 3) bronze nails.

ern, relatively gentle slopes of the hill spur. These are preserved within a fairly small area in the form of strips (up to 2.5 m wide) of collapsed pieces of medium size, limestone rubble. The height of the ruins is not great, amounting to 0.3-0.4 m. Their orientation is south-north and east-west with slight deviations. The layer of *chernozem* inside the rectangles demarcated by the masonry is at present eroded and almost completely washed away, but it is possible that in antiquity it was brought to the plots from elsewhere. The land-plots proper may have been used for vine-growing since the slopes of the spur and the rocky soils are especially propitious for these crops. The land-plots revealed belonged probably to residents of the two settlements and are dated to the time of the quartering of the Pontic garrison here *i.e.* to the late



Fig. 4. Coins from the settlement of Kuru Baš. Mints: 1-6) Pantikapaion; 7) Rome; 8-20) Amisos; 21-23) Sinope; 24) Gazioura; 25) Pantikapaion; 26-29) Amisos; 30) Sinope; 31) Amisos; 32-35) Kappadokia.

2nd and early 1st century BC. Generally, the archaeological evidence shows that we are dealing with an unusual site on the northwestern approaches to Theodosia. The most ample information on the site is yielded by the coins found here – mostly in the foothill vineyards i.e. within the territory of the

ancient village. According to the finders of the coins, they were distributed rather sporadically throughout the territory, except for the obols “Dionysos/bowcase” that were concentrated in two spots: at the top and on the western slope of the hill (height 197.5 m).

The numismatic finds are represented by silver and bronze coins struck in Pantikapaion under the later Spartokids Peirisades IV and Peirisades V, by Roman Republican coins of the same period, by issues from the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator, as well as by bronzes of Sinope, Amisos, Amastris, Pharnakeia, Gazioura, Komana Pontike, Phanagoreia and Kappadokia from the 2nd half of the 2nd to the 1st half of the 1st century BC.

The earliest coins from the site under consideration are those of the coinage of Pantikapaion testifying that the settlement arose in the second half of the 2nd century BC. In particular, there are tetrobols of the “Head of Apollon/forepart of a horse” type (Fig. 4.1), obols “Head of Apollon/bowcase” (Fig. 4.2-3), quadruples “Head of Apollon/bow and arrow” (Fig. 4.4-5) and a dichalcon “Head of Satyros/pilei” (Fig. 4.6), which are attributed to the reign of Peirisades IV (c. 155-125 BC). We know furthermore that a diobol of the “Apollon/kithara” type⁶ and a pentobol of the “Apollon/tripod” type⁷ have also been found here. A Roman denarius (Fig. 4.7) of approximately the same date, may have come to the site slightly later.

The history of the appearance of these coins at the site seems to be as follows. Despite the upheavals, which took place in the northern Black Sea area in the second quarter of the 3rd century BC, Theodosia with its reduced *chora* continued, after a short interruption, to be part of the Bosporan Kingdom.⁸ As in earlier times, the *polis* functioned as a frontier city, since one could always expect attacks of nomads from the steppes – the Sauromatians and Sarmatians – while the nearby mountains of southeastern Crimea were settled by the sporadically unfriendly tribes of the Taurians and Scythians. That is why the defence of the possessions of the *polis* and the town itself became the primary task of the citizens and the Bosporan authorities. To counter this situation some already existing settlements were strengthened and new fortresses were built near the town. As a rule, the latter were situated at points, which had a favourable strategic position and were thus enabled to maintain control over the roads to the city. Apparently, construction of these fortresses situated in the royal lands around the perimeter of the city’s *chora* was carried out by the Bosporan administration headed by the governor. The fortification at Kuru Baš, it seems, was no exception.

After the abandonment of the settlements in the steppe zone of the region, the *chora* of Theodosia came to be limited by the ridge of Tete-Oba and the coastal lands around the Gulf of Feodosija. This line of defences is indicated by fortified settlements (Bijuk Janyšar, Kuru Baš, Beregovoe 1 and Frontovoe 2) located along the perimeter.⁹ Archaeological finds suggest that the settlements of Beregovoe 1 and Kuru Baš were founded as early as the 4th century BC, seemingly as settlements without defence works, and that they were fortified

already by the 1st half of the 3rd century BC. Thus mercenaries were probably quartered in the fortress of Bijuk Janyšar. These mercenaries received payment from the Bosporan kings on condition that they fulfilled their military service and they were allotted land-plots adjoining the settlement.¹⁰ Even today, the demarcating earthen banks made in the immediate vicinity of the settlement in the late 4th-early 3rd century BC in the northern foothills of the Bijuk Janyšar ridge are still traceable. These banks were constructed partly from the cultural layer of the settlement forming square land-plots distinctly discernible on the surface. In my opinion, these *kleroi* belonged to the inhabitants of the fortified settlement of Bijuk Janyšar since they are located so close to this settlement.

This system of defences at the approaches to Theodosia, on the western frontier of the Bosporan Kingdom, retained its importance and functioned with brief interruptions until the middle of the 3rd century AD. Moreover, finds of coins of the last Spartokids from the village of Kuru Baš along with other archaeological evidence suggest that the Theodosian line of defences was controlled by the Bosporan royal administration also prior to its inclusion in the Pontic Kingdom at the end of the 2nd century BC.

It is obvious, that the fort and the settlement of Kuru Baš situated close nearby constituted a single complex (Fig. 2). In addition, from the fort of Kuru Baš come numerous finds from the second half of the 3rd-1st century BC and the composition of the coin assemblages from the settlement and the fortress are similar, dating from the second half of the 2nd-1st century BC.¹¹ This fact suggests that in the second half of the 2nd-1st century BC the two sites both were occupied as a single interrelated complex. Protected by natural obstacles, Kuru Baš was excellently suited for a fortification, while the nearby village of Kuru Baš served as the residential area. The limited area of the fortress could hardly have had room for the community living there. All this obviously resulted in the synchronous occupation of the two sites during this period. It is appropriate to mention here that certain finds (tiles, fragments of painted stucco and a lamp-statuettes in the form of a satyr) from the fort of Kuru Baš suggest the existence of administrative buildings in the late 2nd-1st century BC.

During the same period, similar fortifications and farmhouses arose in the mountains and foothills of southeastern Crimea on the territory traditionally inhabited by the Taurians (Sary-Kaja, Karasan-Oba, Jaman Taš, Agarmyš, Mačuk etc.). Some of these were similarly constructed as refuges situated on heights difficult to access with nearby villages.¹² They were probably occupied predominantly by the local barbarian (Tauro-Scythian) population ruled by the *ethnarchoi*. Their population, apparently, was organised into rural communities, which controlled and cultivated the adjoining lands.

Another large group of coins found at the site are those of the Pontic Kingdom. Their appearance here was due to the following events. Tetrachalks of Amisos, Sinope, and Gazioura, particularly those of the "Ares/sword" type (Fig. 4.8-24) dated 111-105 BC; obols of Amisos of the "Athena/Perseus" type and quadruples of Sinope and Amisos "Aigis/Nike" (Fig. 4.26-31) dated 105-90

BC may have penetrated the settlement of Kuru Baš after the campaign of Diophantos against Bosporos in the beginning of the spring of 108/107 BC (*IOSPE* I², 352). During this campaign, Diophantos probably had to seize Theodosia by force and some fortifications on the borders of its *chora*.¹³ It is possible that during these events the Pontic army had a camp at the settlement of Kuru Baš that led to the appearance of relatively large quantities of these coins. It must be noted that the tetrachalks of Amisos of the “Ares/sword” type were minted during a fairly long period (111-90 BC), and, accordingly, they may be divided into an early and a late group. A wire fibula with a broad spring of 11 coils (Fig. 3.1) found at the site also belong to this period. Similar fibulae are usually dated to the last quarter of the 2nd century BC.¹⁴

Probably, the *polis* of Theodosia, ruled by one of the members of the reigning house of the Spartokids, did not recognize the new authority and supported Saumakos in his struggle for the Bosporan throne. This fact may have led to a confrontation between the Pontic expeditionary forces and the citizens of Theodosia. But even after the city fell, opposition to the authority of Mithridates VI was fairly strong and steady and continued throughout his entire reign as may be judged from the written tradition (App. *Mith.* 107-111). In addition, the barbarian threat and the frontier status of the *polis* compelled the king to keep some military forces in the region. In light of the circumstances, it would have been dangerous to base all of the military units within the town, wherefore certain points in its nearest neighbourhood were chosen for their disposition. The fort and the settlement of Kuru Baš obviously was one such point in the nearest *chora* of Theodosia. Such a practice of disposition of military forces outside rebellious cities was not uncommon. After the defeat at Tenedos for example, Mithridates VI quartered his army for winter not in Herakleia itself, but at the mouth of the Hypios River due to the presence of forces in the city dissatisfied with the policy of the king.¹⁵

After the inclusion of the area into the military and administrative system of the Pontic Kingdom, Theodosia probably housed the military governor of the district (*strategos*) and part of the garrison.¹⁶ A similar situation existed in Olbia, where the royal governor was simultaneously the *strategos* and the mayor of the city.¹⁷ The fort of Kuru Baš and the village of Kuru Baš supported the royal power and resisted the Theodosians’ tendencies towards autonomy and self-government as these citizens, apparently, had not abandoned their attempts at liberation. Another mission was to secure the *chora* of the *polis*. In this way Theodosia was kept under military control while its *chora* and the royal lands were protected from invasions of the Taurians and Scythians.

It should be mentioned that also in Pontos itself similar fortifications usually were placed in royal lands near towns as for example in Amaseia and Amisos. Here the cities’ territories were surrounded by royal fortresses, which were used to limit the growth of the possessions of those *poleis*. The royal power controlled the *poleis* using the commanders (*phrourarchoi*) of the garrisons and

special officials (*epistates* and *episkopes*) who supervised the execution of royal edicts, laws and payment of taxes. The residents of the fortified sites had been organized into economic and military communities according to the ethnic or tribal situation even before Mithridates VI came to power. They were probably independent in terms of their organization and administration acting as separate taxable units. Later, the inhabitants of the fortifications were included in the centralized administrative and territorial structure of the kingdom as military settlers. They owned land plots, which were taxed for the royal treasury. The Mithridatids made them their supporters in the struggle against other tribes; their fortifications became military and administrative centres. This centralized semi-military system of organization of land was established by Mithridates in other regions of the state and continued under his successors under the names of *strategiai*, *eparchies* or *dioikesiai*.¹⁸ Theodosia with its well-developed system of organization and administration probably was incorporated as a separate *strategia* into the administrative and territorial structure of Pontos.

It is known that the citizens of the Greek *poleis* included in the Pontic Kingdom were allowed to own lands. This right however depended on the king as the supreme landowner within the state. The sovereign could, if he wished, take away a land-plot from a citizen or, on the contrary, register a land-plot in someone's favour. This happened for example in Sinope, where Pharnakes I limited the area under the jurisdiction of the city to a narrow strip of land adjoining the city walls. The same also took place in Kabeira, Zela, and Komana Pontike.¹⁹

After the annexation of the Bosporos by Mithridates VI, those lands of Theodosia that had belonged to the royal house of the Spartokids (γῆ βασιλική) continued to be controlled by the royal administration. Thus the foundation of settlements and fortifications for Pontic soldiers on the royal lands was quite natural. One of such sites in the close vicinity of Theodosia, where Pontic detachments were quartered was evidently the already existing fort of Kuru Baš. This fact is an indirect indication that the *chora* of the *polis* of Theodosia (γῆ πολιτική) occupied only the area adjoining the ancient city.²⁰ The Theodosians probably continued to possess their private lands, which lay directly beyond the city walls.²¹ It is noteworthy, that the remains of some poorly discernible demarcation banks and terraces are traceable in the immediate proximity of the Quarantine Hill (the site of ancient Theodosia) near Cape Il'ja (in the area between the lighthouse and the water treatment plant).

The fact that Herakleia during the Roman siege of 72-70 BC sent embassies to Theodosia and Chersonesos with a request for food supplies (Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 1, 34.3) suggests that Mithridates VI Eupator had left a certain autonomy and the city's *chora* to the civic community of the *polis*.²² Apparently, even these minor rights were controlled by the Pontic garrison, detachments of which were deployed in the fortress and settlement of Kuru Baš. Since the *polis* was not entirely loyal to the king, it was granted no political privileges; in particular, it lacked its own coinage.

Archaeological finds suggest in addition that detachments of Pontic troops were settled in the fort of Frontovoje 2 situated on the Ak-Monaj Isthmus, in the fort of Beregovoe 1 on the coast of the Gulf of Feodosija, and at the settlement of Sary-Kaja.²³ The materials (fragments of Kolchian amphorae, a *lagynos* etc.) from the site of Beregovoe 1, in particular, are dated to the 2nd-1st centuries BC.²⁴ It is worth noting that in the late 2nd-early 1st centuries BC the quantities of amphorae and coins from Kolchis increased also at other sites on the northern Black Sea littoral.²⁵ This fact testifies to the intensification of trade between these regions and possibly to movements of military units within the Mithridatic state. Probably, a Pontic garrison was deployed in the same period at the fortified site of Frontovoje 2 since the finds from its necropolis of the 2nd-1st century BC include gravestones of earlier periods re-used for Greeks from Asia Minor – presumably soldiers of the Pontic garrison.²⁶ Pontic garrisons were also stationed at other strategically important points on the Crimean coast and in the inland areas of the peninsula.²⁷ The sites mentioned may be termed *phrourioi* – “fortresses with a garrison or guard” governed by a *phourarchos*, who also controlled the adjoining territory.²⁸ It is noteworthy that Sinopean coins of the “Zeus/eagle” type have also been found at the site of Mazanskoe.²⁹ This may suggest the presence of Pontic detachments even at a site situated in the foothills in the centre of the peninsula.

The drachms of the “Apollon/bowcase” type with the monogram Π (ca. 107-100 BC) belong to the first Pantikapaeon issues of Mithridates (Fig. 4.25). The two coins were both minted with a stamp previously unknown for this type of drachms.³⁰ Apparently, these drachms were brought to the site when it had already been used for several years by the Pontic garrison as a settlement and as a base in the region of Theodosia.

The drachm of Ariarathes VII Philometor (a nephew of Mithridates VI) (Fig. 4.32) was apparently minted in the last decade of the 2nd century BC. The drachms of the Kappadokian rulers Ariarathes IX Eusebes Philopator (son of Mithridates VI) (Fig. 4.33-34) and Ariobarzanes I Philorhomaioi (Figs. 4.35, 5.36) were issued, obviously, in the early 1st century BC before the beginning of the first Mithridatic War against Rome (89-85 BC) after which Kappadokia fell completely under the rule of Pontos.³¹ In the course of this war the state treasury of Kappadokia was probably seized by Mithridates VI and used for the maintenance of his armies and for payments to the mercenaries. At the settlement of Kuru Baš, these coins probably appeared slightly later – in the second half of the 80’s or beginning of the 70’s BC – as payment to servicemen settled there or they were brought by these from elsewhere. They probably testify that among the inhabitants of Kuru Baš there were soldiers from the armies, who had participated in the first war against Rome and later were relocated to the neighbourhood of Theodosia. The cast lead bi-conic sling-shots suggest the presence of a military division armed with slings (Fig. 3.2). Finds of similar sling-shots are well known in the northern Black Sea region; their weights vary from 25 to 234 grams and they bear inscriptions naming the slingers.³²



Fig. 5. Coins from the settlement of Kuru Baš. Mints: 36) Kappadokia; 37) Pantikapaion; 38) Gorgippia; 39) Pantikapaion; 40-41) Amisos; 42-62) Pantikapaion; 63-65) Amisos; 66-69) Sinope.

In the 80's and 70's BC, coins of Amastris and Pharnakeia were becoming ever more widespread in the Bosporos, but the Sinopean tetrachalks of the "Zeus/eagle" type still dominated.³³ Relatively large numbers of the latter have been found at the settlement of Kuru Baš (Figs. 5.66-69 and 6.70-77). The numismatic evidence from the site thus testifies indirectly to the increased



Fig. 6. Coins from the settlement of Kuru Baš. Mints: 70-77) Sinope; 78) Amastris; 79) Pharnakeia; 80-83) Pantikapaion.

volumes of provisions and other supplies sent (*inter alia* from Theodosia) to Sinope for the troops of Mithridates.

The tetrachalks of the “Dionysos/tripod with thyrsos” and obol of “Men/standing Dionysos” types minted by Pantikapaion (Fig. 5.39), tetrachalks “Dionysos/tripod with thyrsos” of Gorgippia (Fig. 5.38), obols of Amisos “Perseus/Pegasus” (Fig. 5.40-41), as well as tetrachalks of Amisos (Fig. 5.63-65), Sinope (Figs. 5.66-69 and 6.70-77), Amastris (Fig. 6.78) and Pharnakeia (Fig. 6.79) of the “Zeus/eagle” type current in the 80’s and 70’s BC suggest that the settlement continued to fulfil the same functions as before. In the 80’s-70’s BC, a number of monograms similar to those on coins of Amisos and Sinope are found on Bosporan coins. The most diverse examples were on obols of the “Dionysos/bowcase” type (Fig. 5.42-62). These monograms probably represented the names of the royal officials responsible for issuing coins in the Bosporos. Correspondingly, the entire series of the “Dionysos/bowcase” obols was of royal minting. In the Bosporos, large numbers of obols were issued, and therefore the requirements of the monetary market for larger denominations of copper were satisfied and accordingly imported Amisean obols of the “Perseus/Pegasus” type are rare.³⁴

During the last years of the reign of Mithridates VI and the beginning of the rule of Pharnakes II, mass overstriking of Pantikapaeon tetrachalks of the “Apollon/tripod” type upon Sinopean tetrachalks “Zeus/eagle” and of the “Apollon/eagle upon thunderbolt, star” obols (Fig. 6.80) upon anonymous obols “Dionysos/bowcase” was conducted in the Bosporos.³⁵ The reason for the overstrikes was evidently the fact that the newly re-minted coins were intended for circulation exclusively within the Bosporan market since Herakleia, Sinope, and Amisos by 70 BC had been taken by the Romans and had

lost their intermediary trade functions in the region. This situation disrupted established economic relations stirring up discontent among the Bosporan population and causing attempts to secede from Mithridates. Theodosia, however, remained under his rule until 63 BC and continued to be part of the Bosporos during the reign of Pharnakes II.

In 85-83 or in 83-81 BC the Bosporos was governed by Mithridates the Younger.³⁶ In 81/80 BC, after the end of the second war against Rome, another son of Mithridates VI – Machares was sent to the Bosporos and Kolchis as governor. During his government independent coinages in cities of the northern Black Sea littoral ceased.³⁷ During this period, the military settlers continued to occupy Kuru Baš receiving payment for their services. On account of the large number of the so-called anonymous obols “Dionysos/bowcase”³⁸ found (about 300 specimens according to the finders, Fig. 5.42-62), the garrison’s treasury may have been somewhere on the site.³⁹ Most of the finds were concentrated within two areas: on the top of the hill and on its western slope. The issue of these obols is dated rather loosely to 100-75 BC.⁴⁰ V.A. Anochin, however, dated this coinage to 80-65 BC, i.e. to the time of the rule of Machares – son of Mithridates VI – in the Bosporos.⁴¹ Judging by the quantity of the unspent obols, the settlement was abandoned possibly in the second half of the 60’s BC. This may have taken place after the treason of Machares and his escape from the Asiatic part of the Bosporos to the European side in 65 BC, after the garrisons supporting him had been defeated by Mithridates VI. Probably, the garrison of Kuru Baš along with Theodosia was faithful to Machares, and functioned as a base for the oppositional forces in that remote region of the kingdom. In 65 BC, the *strategoi* of the king had to seize Theodosia by military force (App. *Mith.* 107-108).⁴² These events determined the destiny of the fortress and settlement of Kuru Baš and they were destroyed (with part of the garrison treasury still intact). In my opinion, this is a plausible explanation for the great quantity of “Dionysos/bowcase” obols found within the limits of the site. However, the site was not abandoned completely. Kuru Baš continued to be occupied although on a much smaller scale.

During the rule of Asandros (46/45-17/16 BC) the Bosporos regained its power. Its swift economic advances are attested by regular gold minting, and by reconstruction of the military and administrative districts with corresponding fortresses in the royal lands. It is possible that the settlement of Kuru Baš was part of this process. The finds of “Apollon/drinking Pegasos” tetrachalks of Pantikapaion (Fig. 6.82) from the end of Asandros’ rule suggest that there were still dwellers at the site.

Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the possibility that the situation developed according to another scheme. In 48 BC, Pharnakes II, departing to Asia Minor for a campaign against the Romans, left as governor in Bosporos his trusted *ethnarchos* Asandros, who later usurped power. In 47 BC, Pharnakes, having been defeated by Caesar, returned to the Bosporos with a small contingent consisting of Scythians and Sarmatians. Having restored his power

within the territory of the European Bosphoros, he was killed towards the very end of 47 or in the beginning of 46 BC in a battle with the forces of Asandros. To judge from the fact that only a single obol “Male head/prow, trident” struck over that of an “Apollon/eagle seated upon thunderbolt” type belonging to the period of the archonship of Asandros (Fig. 6.81) has been found at the settlement, its destruction must be dated to 47 BC. This possibly took place after the return of Pharnakes from Pontos after his defeat at Zela, when he was forced to seize Theodosia and Pantikapaion by force. Probably during these events the settlement of Kuru Baš was also destroyed, its garrison having been devoted to Asandros. Apparently, the so-called anonymous obols of the “Dionysos/bowcase” type continued in circulation during the reign of Pharnakes and the beginning of the rule of Asandros, who both for various reasons did not coin small denominations. Therefore, the presence of a series of these obols at the settlement can indirectly attest its functioning even after the death of Mithridates VI. The fact that the obol of the “Male head/prow, trident” type has been found only as a single example suggests a short duration for and a small volume of that coinage. If so, these coins are not expected to be numerous anywhere. Thus, the settlement of Kuru Baš possibly survived until 47 BC. Which of the variants described is more preferable can be shown only by archaeological studies of the site.

It should be noted, that two coin hoards (with 66 and 1140 coins respectively) of similar composition have been found at the settlement of Poljanka on the coast of the Azov Sea on the Kerch Peninsula. This settlement was founded during the reign of Mithridates VI and flourished during the reign of Pharnakes II and the archonship of Asandros. Golenko and Maslennikov proposed that the hoards were the unpaid salary of the military settlers who lived there and were defeated during the raid of Pharnakes II from Theodosia to Pantikapaion.⁴³

The coin finds described suggest that Theodosia and its *chora* continued to be an important area of the Bosphoros both during the reign of the last Spartokids and under Mithridates VI. In the 2nd and 1st century BC, the territory controlled by the *polis* was relatively small being limited to a number of fortifications including the fortress of Kuru Baš and the nearby settlement. Apparently, the Theodosian fortified district continued to function up to the end of the 1st century BC when it was destroyed along with other cities of the Bosphoros during the short reign of Polemon I.⁴⁴ Possibly the abolishment of the *polis* was due to its relative remoteness, its frequent use by oppositional forces during the 5th and 1st century BC, and the continued aspiration of its citizens for independence. First to be demolished were the city’s fortifications, which potentially could have been utilised by opponents of the central authorities. Then the fortifications in the city’s territory suffered the same fate. The residents of the city were also annihilated or sold into slavery. For that reason nothing is known about Theodosia after the 1st century BC, and the written sources of the 3rd century AD refer to it as an abandoned town (Arr.

№ 1 本	№ 2 長	№ 3 月	№ 4 賣	№ 5 風	№ 6 風	№ 7 月	№ 8 買	№ 9 用
№ 10 月	№ 11 月	№ 12 Δ	№ 13 下	№ 14 賣	№ 15 Δ	№ 16 風	№ 17 賣	№ 18 賣
№ 19 風	№ 20 風	№ 21 風	№ 22 月	№ 23 風	№ 24 賣	№ 25 賣	№ 26 風	№ 27 風
№ 28 風	№ 29 風	№ 30 月	№ 31 月	№ 32 本	№ 33 月	№ 34 月	№ 35 月	№ 36 月
№ 37 Δ	№ 38 Δ	№ 39 賣	№ 40 賣	№ 41 風	№ 42 風	№ 43 風	№ 44 風	№ 45 風
№ 46 月	№ 47 月	№ 48 風	№ 49 月	№ 50 月				

Fig. 7. Monograms on coins from the settlement of Kuru Baš.

Per. 30).⁴⁵ Since Arrianos used information about Theodosia from an earlier source, his statement is additional evidence that the end of the *polis* Theodosia came in the 1st century BC. Undoubtedly, the site of Theodosia (on the hill called now Karantinnaja Gorka) continued to be occupied and used as a port and a marketplace for the population, which remained in its neighbourhood. However, the upland of the city for a long period continued to be part of the structure of the Bosporan Kingdom as the administrative district of Theodosia-Kafa with its own royal governor. However, the questions as to where the residence of the governor was, in which way the region was managed, where its borders lay and how they changed during the first centuries AD are still awaiting answers. It is obvious that these important problems can only be solved in the course of intensive archaeological studies of the “key” sites of that period in southeastern Crimea.

List of coins from the settlement of Kuru Baš

#	Attribution	Quantity	Date	Description and analogies
1.	Pantikapaion Tetrobol Silver	1	155-145 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Rev.: ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑΠΑΙΤΩΝ. Forepart of galloping horse right. 2.62 gr. Anochin 1999, 96, fig. 25.4.
2.	Pantikapaion Obol Bronze	2	155-145 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Rev.: ΠΑΝ. Bowcase. 2.50 gr; 2.82 gr. Anochin 1999, 96, fig. 25.6.
3.	Pantikapaion Tetrachalcon Bronze	2	155-145 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Rev.: ΠΑΝ. Bow with an arrow beneath right. 1.60 gr; 2.00 gr. Anochin 1999, 96, fig. 25.7.
4.	Pantikapaion Double Bronze	1	135-125 BC	Obv.: Head of beardless satyr wearing wreath, right. Rev.: ΠΑΝΤΙ. Pilei with two stars above. 2.50 gr. Anochin 1999, 96, fig. 25.12.
5.	Rome Denarius	1	132-105 BC	Obv.: COSO. M. F (M. Fabrinus?). Male head in winged helmet, circle of dots. Rev.: Two-horse chariot driven by standing warrior with spear and shield. Head of dragon above. CCN-ROM in exergue. Circle of dots. 3.82 gr. Mattingly 1960, 282-283, pl. VII.2, VIII.11, X.5.

6.	Amisos Tetrachalkon	12	111-105 BC	Obv.: Head of young Ares in helmet, right. Rev.: AMI-ΣΟΥ. Sword in sheath with belt. No monograms. One of the specimens is overstruck. 6.80; 6.95; 6.96; 7.20; 7.45; 7.50; 7.54; 7.68; 7.90; 8.44 gr. RGAM, 54, pl. VII.20; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 184; Zograph 1951, 237, pl. XVIII.21; Malloy 1970, 9, fig. 30-31; Golenko 1966, 143.
7.	Sinope Tetrachalkon	4	111-105 BC	Obv.: Head of young Ares in helmet, right. Rev.: ΣΙΝΩ-ΠΗΣ. Sword in sheath with belt. 6.60; 8.08; 9.45 gr. RGAM, 196, pl. XXVI.16. Rev. of the specimen weighing 9.45 gr: vine branch to the right of sword and "un aplustre" left. RGAM, 196, pl. XXVI, fig. 18.
8.	Gazioura Tetrachalkon	1	111-105 BC	Obv.: Head of young Ares in helmet, right. Rev.: ΓΑΖΙ-ΟΥΡΩΝ. Sword in sheath with belt. 6.61 gr. RGAM, 83, pl. XII.14; cf. Saprykin 1996, fig. 2.2.
9.	Amisos Tetrachalkon	2	111-105 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Zeus right. Rev.: AMI-ΣΟΥ. Eagle with opened wings seated upon thunderbolt, head to right, monogram no. 1 in the left field (an unclear monogram on the second specimen). 8.00; 9.00 gr. RGAM, 51, pl. VII.8, VII.9; Malloy 1970, 8, fig. 14.
10.	Amastris Tetrachalkon	1	111-105 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Zeus right. Rev.: ΑΜΑΣΤΡ[ΕΩΣ]. Eagle with opened wings seated upon thunderbolt, head to right, monogram no. 2 in the left field. 7.60 gr. RGAM, 195, pl. XVIII.13; cf.: Saprykin 1996, fig. 2.8, 2.8a.

11.	Pharnakeia Obol	1	111-105 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Zeus right. Rev.: [Φ]APNAKEIH[Σ]. Eagle with opened wings seated upon thunder- bolt, head to right, unclear mono- gram in the left field. 8.20 gr. RGAM, 99, pl. XIV.18.
12.	Pantikapaion Drachm	1	107-100 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Rev.: ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑ-ΠΑΙΤΩΝ. Bowcase, spearhead down to the left, mono- gram no. 3 below (previously un- known coin type). 3.44 gr. Anochin 1999, 106, fig. 27.1.
13.	Amisos Tetrachalkon	4	105-90 BC	Obv.: Aegis with Gorgon's head. Rev.: ΑΜΙ-ΣΟΥ. Nike walking with palm branch right. 6.35 gr, monogram no. 4 at the wing in the left field. 6.68 gr, monogram no. 5 at the knee in the right field. 7.46 gr, monogram no. 6 at the knee in the right field. 7.63 gr, the monogram is unclear. RGAM, 57, pl. VIII.1-4; Malloy 1970, 22, fig. 45d.
14.	Sinope Tetrachalkon	1	105-90 BC	Obv.: Aegis with Gorgon's head. Rev.: ΣΙΝΩ-ΠΗ. Nike walking with palm branch right. Monogram no. 7 at the knees in the right field. 7.05 gr. RGAM, 195, pl. XXVI.13; Malloy 1970, 22, fig. 45d.
15.	Amisos Obol	2	105-90 BC	Obv.: Head of Athena in helmet right. The helmet is decorated with flying Pegasos. Rev.: ΑΜΙ-ΣΟΥ. Standing Perseus with the club and head of Medusa in his hands. The body of Medusa below. Monogram no. 8 at the legs in the right field. 16.85 gr. On the second specimen the monogram is unclear, the weight is unknown. RGAM, 51, pl. VII, fig. 10; Malloy 1970, 8, fig. 16.

16.	Kappadokia Drachm	1	112/111- 101/100 BC	Obv.: Diademed head of Ariarathes VII right. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΙΑΡΑΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ. Athena standing left holding Nike and leaning on shield with the left hand. Letters ΓΛΙ in the left field. 4.10 gr. Head, 1963, 751.
17.	Kappadokia Drachm	2	101/100- 97/96 and 89/88-87/86 BC	Obv.: Diademed head of Ariarathes IX right. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΙΑΡΑΘΟΥ ΕΥΣΕΒΟΥΣ. Athena standing left holding Nike and leaning on shield with the left hand. 1. Monogram no. 9 in the right field; no. 10 in the left field; letters ΓΛ in the lower field. 2. Monogram no. 11 in the right field; no. 12 in the left field; letters ΓΛ in the lower field; monogram no. 13 in the right field near the legs of the goddess; monogram no. 14 in the left field near the legs of the goddess. Head 1963, 751.
18.	Kappadokia Drachm	2	96/95-93/92 BC	Obv.: Diademed head of Ariobarzanes I right. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΙΟΒΑΡΖΑΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙΟΥ Athena standing left holding Nike and leaning on shield with the left hand. Monograms in the lower fields: no. 15 right and no. 17 left. 3.97 gr; 4.20 gr (the monograms are unclear). Head 1963, 751.
19.	Pantikapaion Tetrachalkon	4	90-83 BC	Obv.: Head of Dionysos wearing wreath, right. Rev.: ΠΑΝ-ΤΙΚΑ-ΠΑΙ-ΤΩΝ. Tripod and thyrsos. Monogram no. 18 in the right field. 6.80 gr. Overstruck on a tetrachalkon "Ares/sword" of Amisos. Saprykin 1996, fig. 2.3; Anochin 1999, 107, fig. 27.18.

20.	Gorgippia Tetrachalkon	1	90-83 BC	Obv.: Head of Dionysos wearing wreath right. Rev.: ΓΟΡ-ΓΙΠ-ΠΕ-ΩΝ. Tripod and thyrsos. Monogram no. 18 in the right field. 9.30 gr. Anochin 1999, 107, fig. 27.21.
21.	Pantikapaion Obol	1	90-83 BC	Obv.: Head Men right. Rev.: ΠΑΝ-ΤΙΚΑ-ΠΑΙ-ΤΩΝ Standing Dionysos with thyrsos and grape in his hands; a panther left of Dionysos. Unclear monogram in the right field. 17.75 gr. Overstruck on obol of "Poseidon/prow" type (or type 201 over type 191 according to Anochin, 1986). Anochin 1999, 106, fig. 27.12.
22.	Amisos Obol	2	80-70 BC	Obv.: Helmeted head of Perseus right. Rev.: ΑΜΙ-ΣΟΥ. Drinking Pegasos. Two monograms in exergue. 12.50 gr, monogram no. 19. 12.70 gr, monogram no. 20. RGAM, 55, pl. VII.27; Malloy 1970, 21, fig. 33; Saprykin 1996, fig. 2.4.
23.	Pantikapaion Obol	about 300	89/88-75 BC	Obv.: Head of Dionysos wearing wreath. Rev.: Bowcase. Anochin 1986, 146, 212, pl. 40; Smekalova & Djukov 2001, 72. The weight of the coins varies from 12.61 to 17.70 gr; diameter 2.4-2.5 cm. Monograms are placed either in the left or right field. Presented below are the weights of and monograms on some specimens. Monogram no. 28 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 14.90 gr. Monogram no. 29 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 15.09 gr. Monogram no. 30 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 15.32 gr. Monogram no. 31 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 15.34 gr. Monogram no. 32 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 15.40 gr. Monogram no. 33 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 15.80 gr. Monogram no. 34 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 16.10 gr. Monogram no. 35 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 16.20 gr.

				<p>Monogram no. 21 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 12.61 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 22 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 13.45 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 23 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 13.62 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 24 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 14.00 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 25 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 14.30 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 26 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 14.80 gr., 17.20 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 27 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 14.80 gr, 15.09 gr, 15.70 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 36 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 16.50 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 37 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 16.60 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 38 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 16.80 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 39 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 17.27 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 40 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 17.52 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 41 in the left field; torch above the bowcase. 17.61 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 42 in the left field; sword above the bowcase. 13.10 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 43 in the left field; sword above the bowcase. 14.95 gr, 17.80 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 44 in the left field; sword above the bowcase. 16.70 gr.</p> <p>Monogram no. 45 in the left field; sword above the bowcase. 17.70 gr.</p>
24.	Sinope Denomination?	13	75/74 BC	<p>Obv.: Head of bearded Zeus or Apollon right.</p> <p>Rev.: ΣΙΝΟΠΙΗΣ. Eagle with opened wings seated upon thunderbolt.</p> <p>Monograms nos. 46-50 in the left field. Most of the coins have a star in the right field.</p> <p>The weight varies from 4.4-8.4 gr.</p> <p>RGAM, 194, pl. XXVI.6; Zograph 1951, pl. XVIII.22; Karyškovskij 1988, 104, fig. 13, 18; Anochin 1999, 107, fig. 27.24; Frolova & Ireland 1999, 236, pl. XV, XVI.</p>

25.	Pantikapaion Obol	1	65-63 BC	Obv.: Head of Zeus or Apollon. Rev.: ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑΠΠΑΙΤΩΝ. Eagle seated upon thunderbolt. 20.55 gr. Anochin 1999, 107, fig. 27.24.
26	Bosporos, Asandros Obol	1	50/49-48/47 BC	Obv.: Male head right. Rev.: Prow, trident in the right field. ΑΡΧΟΝΤΟΣ ΑΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Counter- marked by star on both sides. 16.92 gr. Overstruck on "Apollon/ eagle upon thunderbolt" obol (on type 214 according to Anochin 1986, 146-147). Anochin 1999, 118, fig. 29.2.
27.	Pantikapaion Denomina- tion?	2	37-27 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Circle of dots. Rev.: Feeding Pegasos left. Circle of dots. ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑ-ΠΠΑΙΤΩΝ 6.80 gr. Anochin 1999, 118, fig. 29.9.
28.	Pantikapaion Denomina- tion?	1	27-21 BC	Obv.: Wreathed head of Apollon right. Rev.: Prow. ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑΠΠΑΙΤΩΝ 4.90 gr. Overstruck. Anochin 1999, 118, fig. 29.10.

Notes

- 1 On 2 July 1998 Ukraine signed the European Convention on the preservation of our archaeological heritage, but illegal plundering of archaeological sites and antiquities still continues. Most archaeological sites are open to anyone who wishes to explore them with metal detectors. This situation has led to the fact that at practically every archaeological site metal objects have been removed from their contexts (the upper layers of the cultural level) going to the illegal market in antiquities. The site-preservation organisations and state administration bodies are taking only declarative measures on paper, and hardly promote real preservation of archaeological sites. Moreover, within the *chora* of Theodosia (modern Feodosija) for example, the local administration annually carries out unapproved earthworks heavily injuring archaeological objects. The legal base is poor and inefficient containing no clear wording of law, which would forbid such activities. Unfortunately, it is absolutely justified to claim that during the recent 15 years, archaeological science has been deprived of enormous amounts of important evidence, which could have served as the scientific base for reconstruction of many historical events. In other words, the scientific research base of historians and archaeologists has been severely harmed, and the destruction of our archaeological heritage continues both in the Ukraine in general and in Crimea in particular.

- 2 Gavrilov 2004b, fig. 104-105; Gavrilov & Šonov 2005, 392-398.
- 3 Gavrilov 2003; Gavrilov 2004a; Gavrilov 2004b, 175.
- 4 Bujskich 1991, 88; Maslennikov 1998, 111.
- 5 Gavrilov 2004b, fig. 75.16-28.
- 6 Anochin 1999, 96, fig. 25.5.
- 7 Anochin 1986, 143, fig. 5.172.
- 8 Recently new numismatic evidence has been obtained giving us grounds to state that in the early 260's Theodosia for a short span of time (ca. 15 years) restored its independence and a democratic form of rule. The city became an independent *polis* with its own coins circulating in its *chora*, see Gavrilov & Šonov 2007, 346-357.
- 9 Gavrilov 2004b, 29-33.
- 10 Katjušin 1999, 41; Gavrilov 2004b, 99.
- 11 Gavrilov 2004b, 32, 198-199.
- 12 Gavrilov 2004b, 27-29, 177.
- 13 Zeest 1953, 147; Katjušin 1998, 40.
- 14 Zajcev & Mordvinceva 2003, 152.
- 15 Saprykin 1986, 233.
- 16 Saprykin 1996, 220-221.
- 17 Krapivina & Diatroptov 2005, 69.
- 18 Saprykin 1996, 226, 241, 285.
- 19 Saprykin 1996, 218-219.
- 20 Gavrilov 2004b, 20.
- 21 Cf. Saprykin 1996, 243, 280.
- 22 Vinogradov 1991, 26.
- 23 Koltuchov 1999, 23; Gavrilov 2004b, 37.
- 24 Gavrilov 2004b, 34, fig. 79.1-8; cf. Cecchladze 1992, 103, fig. 7.1-5.
- 25 Vnukov & Cecchladze 1991, 175.
- 26 Korpusova 1972, 48; 1980, 148.
- 27 Lancov 2003, 47.
- 28 Maslennikov 1998, 180.
- 29 Communication of I.V. Šonov.
- 30 Anochin 1999, 108.
- 31 Saprykin 1996, 191.
- 32 Cf. Hellmann 1982, 75; Anochin & Rolle 1998, 837.
- 33 Saprykin 1996, 171, 180-181.
- 34 Golenko 1964, 61.
- 35 Saprykin 1996, 182.
- 36 Saprykin 1996, 177.
- 37 Saprykin 1996, 179.
- 38 Anochin 1986, no. 212.
- 39 Cf. Saprykin 1996, 217, 227.
- 40 Frolova & Maslennikov 1994, 186; Saprykin 1996, 179.
- 41 Anochin 1999, 109.
- 42 Saprykin 1996, 182, 244.
- 43 Golenko & Maslennikov 1987, 51-52; Maslennikov 1998, 128.
- 44 Cf. Saprykin 1996, 318; 2002, 219.
- 45 Golenko 1966, 142, 149; Zograph 1951; Karyškovskij 1988; Frolova & Ireland 1999; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, 169-192; Malloy 1970; Head 1963.

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Abbreviation

- IOSPE B. Latyshev 1885-1916. *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*. Petropolis (reprint Hildesheim 1965).
- RGAM W.H. Waddington, E. Babelon, & Th. Reinach 1904-1912. *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*. Paris.

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