# Pontus in Antiquity:
# Aspects of Identity

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is the presentation of the interaction between the successive inhabitants of Pontus in antiquity, indigenous Anatolians, Greeks, Persians and Romans. Limited archaeological evidence cannot determine the precise extent of interaction, although the available information substantiates the notion of a slow, but steady amalgamation.

Initially, the intermingling was based on mutual trading links. Although the Hellenic cultural element tended to surface, Eastern factors remained visible. The Mithridatic dynasty was established around the vicinity of Pontus, creating the 'Kingdom of Pontus' which reached its height under Mithridates VI. His administrative and military policy appears to have placed the foundations for the later, Roman corresponding structures. His policies-propaganda reflected the Graeco-Eastern image of a king, which appealed to the Greek and Persian-Eastern inhabitants of his kingdom, Asia Minor and, to a lesser extent, mainland Greece. This Graeco-Eastern image might have nourished the concept of a shared history among the inhabitants of Pontus. Their interactions appear to have given rise to an unnamed, local culture, which was enriched with the relevant Roman practices. Around the third century A.D., the Roman administrative patterns might have established an externally defined appellation. During Roman times, Christianity started to be established in Pontus. Although it was not yet a socio-political factor, its non-racial nature prevailed in later centuries. The influence of the Roman-Christian elements can still be observed in the modern Pontian identity.

In antiquity, (lack of) evidence indicates that no group defined themselves as 'Pontics' or 'Pontians' and an internally defined Pontic identity is unlikely to have existed. However, people associated themselves with the geographical area of Pontus, cultural and religious concepts were frequently amalgamated, while the notion of a common descent and a shared history might have been unconsciously fostered. These factors can assist in the understanding of the 'Pontians' today.

## *Acknowledgements*

This work is dedicated to my parents and sister. Without their love, and financial support, I would not have been able to finish this thesis. I thank them for a lifetime of enthusiastic encouragement. In the same space, I want to thank Ivan for loving me, for being there, for his encouragement and enthusiasm of "having two *doctors* in the family".

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Vera *Leonida* Stefanidou

# List of Plates

The black-and-white postcards are from the archive of Mr. Leonidas Stefanidis. The photographs are from the archive of Miss. Sonia Stefanidou. I would like to thank Mrs. Eleni Stefanidou, who patiently went through old boxes and piles of photographs and negatives until she found the exact material which I required in order to further illustrate my views.

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9. *S'a'tafia* (ibid.).
10. *S'a'tafia* (ibid.).

[1] The fez of the horse mummer indicates the Turkish ethnicity of the 'rider'. However, literary and archaeological evidence indicates that horse mummery was part of the cults of Demeter in some areas of Greece [Paus. 8.42.3 (Phigaleia in Arcadia), 8.25.4-6 (Thelpusa in Arcadia); Cook A.B. (1894) pp.149-150; Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.50-62; Lawler L.B. (1964) pp.70-71].

11. The Greek Orthodox Church has an active part at *s'a'tafia*. Until recent years, after the Mass, the priests of the community prayed on each of the graves individually. Today, they read the particular blessings at the courtyard of the cemetery but they still participate at the ceremonial feast (ibid.).
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I am grateful to my husband, Dr. Ivan Grey, for his assistance and patience in guiding me to use the necessary equipment which allowed me to produce these maps.

# Contents

# Introduction

In the year 1923, there was an exchange of population between the newly founded Republic of Turkey and Greece.[1] At that time, Chrysanthos, the last Metropolitan of Trebizond, guided some[2] of the Christians of Pontus to Greece. Although the country was alien to them physically, climatically, politically and linguistically, they regarded it as 'home'. This was because the "Pontian Renaissance" and the political vision of the *Megali Idea* had established the notion that Greece was their national homeland.[3]

From the 19th century A.D. onwards, the commercial activities of the Christian communities of the Black Sea in shipping, banking, tobacco-growing and manufacturing industries led to cultural and historical enlightenment.[4] After their training in Constantinople and Athens, intellectuals and teachers from Pontus set out to give to their fellow compatriots an ethnic national consciousness. Mainly due to their efforts, the Greek Orthodox communities around the Black Sea coasts, including Pontus, rediscovered their bonds with classical Greek antiquity and the Greek race.[5] In the newly founded Hellenic State, the vision of an extended, greater Greece encouraged similar notions. Politicians, intellectuals and the people considered that the geographical area, officially recognised as the Kingdom of Greece, was only part of *Hellas*. Towards the end of the 19th century, Eleutherios Venizelos and his vision of *Megali Idea* perceived Greece to include any land associated with Greek history and the Greek race, including Pontus.[6] The connection between the modern Pontians and the ancient Greek colonists of Pontus suggests an uninterrupted Greek presence

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[1] *Dictionary of TCH* s.v. Lausanne, Treaty of.

[2] For the Pontian Greeks who found refugee in the Soviet Union, see: Agtzidis V. (1991a), (1991b); Kaprozilos A. (1983), (1991); Kaprozilou M. (1988-1989).

[3] For the concept of *Megali Idea*, see: Kokkinos D. (1991) p.313.

[4] A similar enlightenment had happened in France in the 18th century.

[5] Bryer A.A.M. (1976).

[6] In 1921, Greece, with the permission of the Great Powers, invaded western Anatolia hoping to construct a 'Greater Greece' out of the ruins of the Ottoman empire. Although Pontus was part of the *Megali Idea*, Venizelos did not include it in the official Greek requests. The invasion ended with the Greek defeat at the battle of Dumlupinar in 1922. The treaty of Lausanne in 1923 settled the frontiers of the new Turkey, a country of Muslim religion and Turkish speech under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. At the same time, according to mutual Greek – Turkish agreement, the two countries exchanged populations according to religion; nearly 380.000 Muslims were forced to leave Greece and approximately 1.3 million Christians were expelled from Turkey [*Themes...* (1989) pp.253-326; *Dictionary of TCH* s.v. Graeco-Turkish War].

for nearly three thousand years, despite Persian, Mithridatic, Roman, Byzantine, Trapezuntine and Ottoman rule. The Hellenism of the Pontian culture was considered indisputable and for this reason, the Christians of Pontus were able to return 'home'. Recent studies provide evidence for the connection between Greek antiquity and the (modern) Pontian culture.[7]

Once they arrived in Greece, the Orthodox Christians of Pontus acquired the name *Pontioi*,[8] an appellation that indicated their geographical origins and implied a particular cultural identity. Although mainland Greece was considered as their national homeland, the Greeks from Pontus appear to have felt, and they were seen as, different from the Greeks of the Hellenic State. Nearly three thousand years of physical separation had created linguistic and cultural barriers which contributed to these feelings.[9] Nostalgia made the Orthodox Christians of Pontus call 'homeland' the place where they came from, the area of north and northeast Asia Minor. As time passed, they also organised cultural clubs and festival processions, promoted the production of drama in the Pontian language and published periodicals and books;[10] thus, they attempted to define their differences from the rest of the Greeks and not sacrifice their separate identity. The (modern) Pontian individuality is linked with the geographic area of Pontus and seems to have rested on the interactions of historical and cultural factors in the area. This thesis will examine these interactions in antiquity (eighth century B.C. – third century A.D.), trying to find possible links between the distinctive culture of the modern Pontians and that of ancient Pontus.[11]

The Pontians carry with them an antique and mixed cultural inheritance which cannot be placed under any single label. Pontian culture has undoubtedly strong links with the archaic Greek colonists, but it also received powerful influences from other peoples who came to establish themselves in the area. These additional factors are responsible for its individuality and uniqueness. The accumulation of Greek, Anatolian, Persian and Roman factors seems to have created an unnamed culture, which is externally-defined as 'Pontic culture'. Additional Byzantine, Arabic, Muslim, Christian, Ottoman and other influences transformed it into (modern) Pontian

[7] References on these studies will appear throughout the thesis, on the relevant subjects.
[8] Bryer A.A.M. (1991) pp.321, 324, 327.
[9] Kokkinos D. (1991) p.313.
[10] Fann P. (1991) p.340.
[11] No available evidence seems to indicate that a 'Pontic identity', analogous to the (modern) 'Pontian identity', existed between the eighth century B.C. and the third century A.D. As will be examined in

culture.[12] In antiquity, the terms *Pontios* (Pontian) and *Pontikos* (Pontic) existed simultaneously. However, they did not necessarily refer to the south and southeastern shores of the Black Sea and they had no attachment to political notions of nationhood. In any case, 'mere mortals' refrained from using the form *Pontios*, because it described gods;[13] after the coming of Christianity[14] and in modern times, the use of *Pontian* prevailed.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the way in which the mixed elements of ancient Pontus interacted, giving rise to an unnamed culture which seems to have formed the basis of the modern (Greek-)Pontian identity. The different origins of the inhabitants of Pontus and the society they developed, their economic and cultural life, as well as their laws and customs need to be examined. Such a study would appear difficult, because at present only a small fraction of the necessary archaeological evidence exists due to a lack of substantial excavations. Therefore, it is not always easy to verify the extent of interaction and current information mainly concerns the civic and cultural life of the cities and the higher levels of society. Nevertheless, the integration of the available historical, numismatic, literary and linguistic evidence substantiates the notion of a slow but steady amalgamation. In Chapter 1, the trading and financial advances of the early intermingling will be examined. The commercial relations between the Greeks and the indigenous Anatolian tribes appear to have had the potential to lead to cultural exchanges.[15] Although most evidence refers to the Hellenic cultural element, Anatolian and Persian influences are visible in the various institutions and the land-tenure practices of Pontus. In Chapter 2, the administrative and military issues of the Mithridatids, the so-called 'Kings of Pontus' will be

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Chapter 5, a similar concept might have emerged around the sixth century A.D. However, this would constitute a separate project, outside the chronological scope of this thesis.

[12] For discussions on the Pontian identity, see: Triantafyllidis P. (1866). An initial bibliography on the Byzantine, Ottoman and modern history and culture of Pontus might be: Apostolidou D. (1935), Agtzidis V. (1991a), Bryer A.A.M. (1975), (1980), (1991), Dawkins R.M. (1916), Ioannidis S. (1988), Miller W. (1926), Triantafylidis P. (1866) and Chrysanthos (1933). The Arheion Pontou has an international reputation as a journal devoted to the aforementioned issues. In addition, the Pontiaki Estia publishes scholarly but not technical articles of use to all those interested in the Pontian history and culture, whether or not they are professionally engaged in these studies.

[13] Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 270; Paus. 2.34.11; *CIG* 2076, 2077; Mitchell S. (2000) p.3. At Elateia in Phokis, one of the cult-epithets of Poseidon was *Pontios* (*CIG* 130).

[14] Euseb. *Chron. Eusebiana Supplementa* p.225; *SEG* 41.1859, 42.1061; Athen. 1.20c.

[15] According to Shelov, the intensive commercial relations between the cities of the Black Sea rim provided the initial necessary material conditions for political unification; as a result, he supported the notion that the area might be perceived as a "Pontic state", i.e. a single geographico-economic region under the rule of a monarch [Shelov D.B. (1986)]. It needs to be mentioned that the term "Pontic state" did not exist in antiquity, or at any other moment in the history of the Euxein; even so, the commercial and political ties between the cities of the Black Sea can be observed throughout antiquity.

analysed. The Mithridatic dynasty appears to have established itself, mainly around the vicinity of Pontus, Cappadocia and Paphlagonia. They created a kingdom which was called retrospectively 'Kingdom of Pontus'; it reached Colchis,[16] included Armenia Minor[17] and influenced most of the Black Sea rim, at least under Mithridates VI.[18] Their unifying administrative and military policy is extremely important, since it appears to have put in place the foundations for the analogous Roman structures. In Chapter 3, the Mithridatic policies in relation to Rome and the *poleis* of mainland Greece and Asia Minor will be discussed. Indirectly, these policies might have encouraged the inhabitants of the Mithridatic kingdom to perceive their myths of descent not as Greek or Persians, but as a shared history; this notion is also reflected in the genealogy of the Mithridatic dynasty. The Hellenistic – Persian self-image of the later Mithridatic kings will be further examined in Chapter 4, alongside the cultural amalgamation of the inhabitants of the kingdom. In combination, these factors appear to have encouraged the creation of a culture which was distinctive from the rest of the Mediterranean world, the unnamed Pontic culture. Finally, in Chapter 5, the association of the Roman administration, technology and civilisation with the inhabitants of Pontus and their culture will be analysed. In antiquity, the search for an 'ethnic' Pontic group, in any modern sense, is a vain one. Around the beginning of the Christian era, the term 'Pontic' was used to describe individuals and groups linked with the area of Pontus acquired by the Romans, and especially those who lived in the cities. It appears to have been an externally-imposed appellation with social and military associations; and soon after, it was also used for groups and individuals who were linked with Pontus before the Roman conquest. Overall, the examination of the various ancient cultural, linguistic and religious elements assists in the comprehension of the modern Pontian identity, which includes historical and cultural elements from the Byzantine, Ottoman and modern eras.

In Greek mythology, the offspring of Gaea, Pontos, was the personified deity of the sea.[19] Pontus - Ocean was described as *megas*, *apeiros* and *melas*,[20] qualities that are still readily identifiable on the sea east of Byzantium, which was thought of as

[16] Strabo 12.3.1.
[17] Strabo 12.3.1, 12.3.28.
[18] Eutropius 5.5 It appears that Mithridates VI had never completely controlled the region on the eastern side of the Euxine, below the territory of Gorgippia. He had troubles with the country of the Zygi (Strabo 11.2.13) or the Achaeans (App. *Mith.* 67, 102), who elsewhere appear as his allies (App. *Mith.* 69; Strabo 11.2.13).
[19] Hes. *Theog.* 126-132.

a remote and relatively unknown spot.[21] The first seafarers might have acknowledged these characteristics and, subsequently, called the particular sea 'Pontus'.[22] Its great depth, its dark and rough surface and the navigational difficulties it presented[23] made Pontus *axeinos – axenos* (inhospitable).[24] Nevertheless, at some point, the Greek disposition to flatter the bad spirits changed the adjective into *euxeinos*.[25] It has been suggested that the word might also be seen as the transcription of the Iranian *αχκçhαênα*.[26] The *euxeinos – axeinos pontos* might also be the equivalent of the Sanscritic *axein pant* (black road) which could explain the modern day use of the term 'Black Sea' to designate the 'Pont Euxine'. In addition, around the eighth century B.C., the sea of Pontus boasted impressive colonising and trading activities which transformed the perception of the environment from wild to hospitable.[27]

The idea of the mysterious, dark coasts[28] with their uncivilised inhabitants[29] seems to have reflected the poor navigating conditions of the sea, creating a feeling of insecurity in prospective settlers. Uniquely among the seas of the ancient world, the nautical geographical term of Pontus gave its name to the coasts that surrounded it.[30] The adjective *Pontikos - Ponticus* suggested a geographical place of origin,[31] as was the case for certain types of plants and fishes.[32] In turn, due to the geographical distance from the Mediterranean world[33] and the dark myths that surrounded the area, anything strange and alien came to be associated with Pontus,[34] possibly indicating the value and rarity of the product. *Ponticus* also described individuals or groups of people who used to inhabit the area and had come to Athens as visitors, traders,

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[20] Hes. *Theog.* 19; Homer *Iliad* 79, 350; Hdt 4.85.
[21] Pol. 4.38.11.
[22] Cic. *Tusculan Disputations* 1.39; Strabo 7.3.6.
[23] Hdt. 4.85-86; Strabo 7.3.6; Pol. 4.39.1.
[24] Strabo 7.3.6; Pindar *Pyth.* 4.203; Eur. *Iphig. Taur.* 253, 341.
[25] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 86; Skymnus *Periegesis* 731; Amm. Marcellinus 22.8.33. In modern times, the Greek euphemism changed *xydi* (vinegar) into *glykadi* (sweet one) and the narrow passage between Euboea and Attica came to be called *Euripos* (The Wide One).
[26] Glotz G. (1925) p.164 ft.45.
[27] Chapter 1 pp.13-18.
[28] Strabo 11.2.15, 12.3.18.
[29] Pol. 4.38.7; Strabo 7.3.6-7; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.8.33; Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 86; Pomp. Mela *De Chorogr.* 1.19.103.
[30] Ovid *Tristia* 5.10.1; Vitruvius 134.5; Mitchell S. (2000) p.1.
[31] Hdt. 4.23; Ovid *Tristia* 1.2.94; Arist. *H.A.* 600b14, 632b9; Macrobius *Sat.* 3.18.6-7; Athen. 1.51a.
[32] Athen. 1.53b, 1.53f; Pliny *NH* 15.18.65, 15.24.88-89; Horac. *Odes* 1.14.11-12; Dioscurides *Materia Medica* 1.125; West L.C. (1917) pp.46, 52; Magie D. (1950) pp.1073-1074 n.15; Savvidis Th. (1999) pp.160-162, 218-223, 226-227.
[33] Plato *Gorgias* 511d.
[34] Aesch. *Prometh.* 584.

philosophers or students.[35] It came to be used as a geographical reference and it also indicated a caricature and stereotypical image for the purposes of comedy,[36] at least around the fourth and third centuries B.C.

The term 'Pontic' seems to have been open to various interpretations at the same chronological period. 'Pontos/Pontus' has numerous meanings and connotations, general and specific.[37] Unfortunately, we cannot segregate the numerous uses of the term chronologically. For example, Florus[38] (second century A.D.) and the delegates of the "First International Pontic Congress" (1996)[39] considered that the 'Pontic races' and the 'Pontic areas' were the peoples and the domains of the Black Sea rim. Some fifth century B.C. authors referred to the term 'Pontus' as 'Black Sea',[40] while an inscription of the later second century A.D.[41] uses *Ponticus* with the meaning of "belonging to the Black Sea". Xenophon used the term 'Pontus' for both the Black Sea and the region along the south eastern coast.[42] The Greeks might have named the particular region after the sea, because they knew it better than the other coasts; it was also easier to gain access to when they came from mainland Greece and western Asia Minor. In this latter application, the authors of the Roman era[43] and the "Committee of Human Rights"[44] seem to have followed Xenophon. In modern Greece, Pontus denotes mainly the area between Cape Carambis, east of Sinope, and Batum.[45]

In this thesis, the term 'Pontus' indicates the coastal area from the city of Amastris to Colchis. The research cases frequently take into consideration the city of

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[35] Pomp. Mela *De Chorogr.* 1.2.14; Athen. 8.351c, 9.390a, 9.406e, 10.430a, 12.533e, 13.580f, 14.624a; Diog. Laert. 6.3, 6.9-10; Mitchell S. (2000) p.3. In his study on the foreigners who lived in Athens, Urdahl reported that people from "Paphlagonia, Pontos and Cappadocia" represented 14.39% of the studied examples of grave monuments. The names on some of the monuments seem to have indicated the Persian origins of the individual. It might be suggested that the first century A.D. inscription of "Augi Pharnacou Amisini" referred to a woman from Pontus with Persian-Hellenised origins [Urdahl L.B. (1959) pp.49, 33]. For citizens of Amisus who lived in Delos, see: *Ins. Delos* 1984, 2598.

[36] *PCG* vol.2 p.133 fr.198 (Alexis), vol.2 p.420 fr.190 (Antiphanes), vol.5 p.168 fr.7 (Epigenes), vol.7 p.776 fr.30 (Timocles). Towards the end of the fifth century B.C., Herodotus maintained that no intelligent people are known from the extended area of the Black Sea, with the exception of the Scythian Anacharsis (Hdt. 4.46).

[37] Bryer A.A.M. (2000) pp.1385-1387.

[38] Florus 1.40.1.

[39] Varna - Bulgaria 6-9 September 1996.

[40] Aesch. *Persae* 878; (possibly) Aristoph. *Wasps* 700.

[41] *CIL* 8.619 (Dessau 2747); Speidel M.P., French D.H. (1985) p.102.

[42] Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.15, 5.6.19. See also: Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 23 (geographical area), 25 (Black Sea).

[43] Marciani *Peripl.* 1.7; Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 25, 55; Scylax *Peripl.* 92; Strabo 12.3.1-2; Pomp. Mela *De Chorogr.* 1.2.10, 1.2.14, 1.3.15, 1.19.102, 1.19.108.

[44] Essay presented to the United Nations: E/CN.4/1998/NGO/24 (paragraphs 4 & 12), 24 February 1998, from the archives of the "Centre of Pontian Studies" in Athens.

Heracleia Pontica, which officially appears to have 'belonged' to Bithynia. It is almost impossible to establish the definite borders of the region in the south, in any chronological period,[46] although the cities of Amaseia, Zela and Pontic Comana seem to have been included. In antiquity, Pontus included the lands spreading from Paphlagonia[47] and Cappadocia[48] to Colchis. The choice of this area for this thesis is based on the geographical origins of the modern Pontians. After 1922, the people from north and northeast Asia Minor adopted the appellation *Pontioi* (*Pontians*) possibly, in order to be distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants of the Black Sea, the modern *Mavrothalassites*.[49] As a result, the focus is placed on the historical and cultural interactions in the north and northeast shores of Asia Minor, since the thesis also examines the possible links of the modern Pontians with ancient Pontus.

The words 'ethnic' and 'racial', which occasionally appear in this thesis, are not used in their modern sense, either as synonyms or as references to biological and social conceptions.[50] The attempts to determine an objective set of criteria which might act as a definition for an ethnic – racial group have been rather futile. These appears to be no objective classification concerning the way a man understands his identity or the way others perceive him. Scientists and scholars have invoked genetics, language, material culture,[51] ancestral values and religion[52] to define groups of people. For the same purpose, they have also utilised collective names, common myths of descent, shared history, distinctive shared culture or associations with a specific territory.[53] A community itself might have consciously attributed value to some of these characteristics in order to establish a communal identity. Frequently, this communal identity was constructed by contrasting the community, 'self', with another community, the 'others'. For example, during the fifth century B.C., the Greeks, the Athenians in particular, defined themselves by inventing the Persians as

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[45] *Themes*... (1989) pp.301-302; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 Map 1; Map 2 p.234.
[46] Topalidis P. (1929) pp.9-10; Map 2 p.234.
[47] Strabo 12.3.41.
[48] App. *Mith.* 9.
[49] c.f. Mitchell S. (2000) p.127.
[50] For an initial bibliography on these issues, see: Gellner E. (1978); Anderson B. (1991); Smith A.D. (1987); Laurence R. (1998b). cf. Hobsbawn E. (1992).
[51] e.g. Specific architectural styles, stylistic differences in coiffure, dress and jewellery or forms of bodily mutilation, like circumcision, tattooing or piercing etc.
[52] Hdt. 8.144; Arist. *Airs, Waters, Places* 12; Isocr. *Paneg.* 50.
[53] Smith A.D. (1987) pp.22-31; Laurence R. (1998b) pp.95-96. In antiquity, the ethnic map of the world tends to follow the geographical one. Still, the ancient authors appear to have taken into account the changes that took place between their time and the historical tradition (Pliny *NH* 3.5.39ff; Strabo 2.5.17; Hdt. 8.144).

the barbarian 'other'. This characterisation of the enemy served to forge a common identity among the Greeks and allowed them to unite.[54] Herodotus also seems to have perceived the 'other' world, the non-Greeks, like a mirror which reflects the Greek norms, in reverse.[55] The characterisation of 'the others', whether they were allies or foes, united a group, or a number of groups, since it defined who the group was; the construction of an externally-defined barbarian identity created a boundary which separated the Greeks and their way of life from the 'others'.[56] The various inhabitants of Pontus had their internally-defined identities. However, as new groups arrived in the area, the older groups seem to have formed into a 'native' group by contrast to the 'others', 'the newcomers'; simultaneously, they continued to define themselves through their ancestral identities. That does not appear to have been unusual; where the 'self' and the 'other' interacted closely, the boundaries which divided them could shift.[57] When neighbouring communities had hostile relations, they managed to find the issues which differentiated the 'self' from the 'other', identifying each other as 'the opposite'. Still, when these communities were on friendly terms, they would have looked for common attitudes and customs, defining the 'others' as 'part of themselves'.[58] It has been perceived that each 'ethnic' group might have overlapping identities; thus, by constructing outside groups in different ways, one can more easily express those various identities.[59]

Overall, this thesis agrees with the notion that an internally-defined identity is "socially constructed and subjectively perceived".[60] As such, someone is 'Pontic/Pontian' by virtue of believing and calling himself 'Pontic/Pontian', even if he never thought of the elements which constructed his identity. Attitudes, characteristics or customs, which he considers as natural, tend to appear as an unsolved mystery to the rest. For these reasons, identity is seen as a complex set of shared cultural forms, where the appearance of any of the above attributes is neither necessary nor sufficient on its own to define the set. Between the eighth century B.C. and the third century A.D., no individual or group used 'Pontic' as an appellation of

[54] Hall E. (1989) pp.1-2; Cartledge P. (1993) p.39.
[55] Hartog F. (1992) pp.5-6.
[56] Cartledge P. (1993) p.11.
[57] Dench E. (1995) p.11.
[58] cf. Dench E. (1995) pp.85-91 (Romans and Sabines); Marshall E. (1989) p.61 (Cyreneans and Libyans).
[59] Light L. (1981) pp.70-73; Hall E. (1989) pp.6-7.
[60] De Vos G.A., Romanuci-Ross L. (1995) p.350

his communal identity; yet, the mixed culture which became prevalent in ancient Pontus seems to be linked with the modern Pontian identity.

# Chapter 1

## The 'Early Centuries':
## Greeks, Anatolians and Persians in Pontus

The Black Sea is an integral part of the history and culture of Pontus. The date and circumstances of the first Greek contact with the Euxine, and consequently the Pontic shores, is a matter of considerable disagreement. The details of the Greek mythological tradition concerning the Black Sea and Pontus[1] suggest that the myths might have carried the memories of some of the (Proto-)Indo-European races. According to the plausible parts of the theory of Gamkrelidze and Ivanov,[2] these races moved from East to West. Having the region of Armenia and Caucasus as their so-called homeland, they might have passed on to mainland Greece through the area of Pontus.[3] This hypothesis appears to have provided a logical explanation for the Greek awareness of the Black Sea regions. The Pontic cities of Danae and Danati seem to have preserved the Sanscritic *danu* which might be linked with the Homeric term *Danaoi*.[4] Many gods of the Greek pantheon, like Dionysus and Prometheus, were closely connected with the areas of Colchis and Caucasus and the Argonautic expedition appears to have been regarded as the first of the Greek mythological cycles.[5]

The notion that the Argonautic expedition reflects the first attempts of the Greeks to enter the Black Sea, around the 13th century B.C. appears plausible.[6] The expedition could have been something more than a Bronze Age legend. The ship of

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[1] Justin 42; Hom. *Iliad* 2.851-857; Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 1.1-4; Strabo 11.2.19; App. *Mith.* 103. In a village east of Trapezus at the river Fourtouna, the villagers used fleeces in order to collect the golden dust brought by the river until the early 1920s [Lapsidis Od. (1985) p.8].

[2] Drews R. (1989) pp.32-35. For an overview of the labyrinth of hypotheses and assumptions for the roots and place of origin of the Indo-European races, see: Drews R. (1989) pp.25-35, 53-54.

[3] Drews R. (1989) pp.181-189.

[4] *HHN* (1971) vol.1 p.362.

[5] The earliest reference to Argo is in Homer (*Odys.* 12.70). For the Argonautic expedition, see: Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.*; Diod. 4.40ff; Hesiod *Theog.* 956ff, 992; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.

[6] Bibi-Papaspyropoulou A. (1985) p.188; Danov C.M. (1978-1979) p.159; Graham A.J. (1958). For the opposite notion, see: Carpenter R. (1962) p.59.

the Argonauts appears to have been a *penteconter*;[7] and in addition, before the beginning of the long journey, they have met at Iolcos, which has been subsequently identified as the northern Mycenaean palace centre.[8] The abundance of authentic geographical references in the work of Apollonius of Rhodes,[9] in combination with the modest archaeological finds,[10] support the reality of the legend. This evidence could offer a factual starting point for a theoretical case which suggests that Greeks and native peoples of Pontus had pre-colonial contacts. The existence of Greek names, like Antaravas (*Andreus*) or Alakshandu (*Alexandros*), in the Hittite records could indicate contacts between the two peoples in mainland Greece, in the Aegean islands or in Asia Minor as early as the 14th century B.C.[11] The mythological adventurers[12] soon became navigators who were looking for precious metals[13] and food supplies.[14] These primary interactions were an essential feature of the later Greek colonising movement,[15] since it is obvious that any serious colonisation requires previous knowledge of the land to be settled and of the people who already inhabit it.

A survey of the location of the Black Sea coastal Greek cities suggests that the Greek seamen had made the journey in stages, using regular anchorages around the Euxine and avoiding journeys straight across it, at least at the beginning. The fixed points of the most substantial promontories of the seashores, like Cape Jason east of Sinope, assisted in the estimation of nautical distances.[16] The promontories appear to have held a religious significance, since their impressive sight from the sea had suggested a sense of proximity to the gods.[17] In Pontus, a temple of Zeus seems to have stood on the eastern side of Cape Jason,[18] which appears to have been a religious centre of some significance up to the 14th century A.D.[19] The classical site of Kordyle

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[7] Apoll. of Rhodes (*Argon.* 23-233) enumerates fifty men-heroes to have participated in the expedition. Labaree B.W. (1957); Bibi-Papaspyropoulou A. (1985) p.184.
[8] Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 1.572, 1.906, 3.2; Drews R. (1989) p.192; *HHH* (1971) vol.1 p.238.
[9] e.g. Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.370, 2.401, 3.1220, 4.134.
[10] Danov C.M. (1978-1979) p.159; Graham A.J. (1971) p.37.
[11] Diller A. (1971) p.68.
[12] The 'adventurers' seem to have emerged again in classical times, when affluent individuals appear to have embarked on voyages of exploration and pleasure [Isocr. *Trapez.* 4; Hdt. 1.29; Danov C.M. (1978-1979) p.160].
[13] Tac. *Ann.* 11.34; Strabo 11.14; Justin 42.3.
[14] Chapter 1 pp.13-14.
[15] Graham A.J. (1971) p.37, (1990) p. 45.
[16] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 3, 17, 19, 32; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 17; Strabo 12.3.17.
[17] Malkin I. (1987) p.142. See also: Semple E.C. (1932) pp.16-34.
[18] Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.378, 2.1009.
[19] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 pp.119-120.

seems to have stood on the eastern shore of the Holy Cape.[20] Despite the lack of ancient evidence, the site might have had a religious significance. In modern times, the monastery of St. Phocas was situated there.[21] Since it is commonly accepted that Christian churches often stood on the ground of ancient temples, the monastery of St. Phocas might have stood on a site dedicated to a deity which protected the travellers and the seafarers. In addition, as the founding of a colony required traditional religious rituals,[22] it could be suggested that the edges of the Pontic capes held a navigational as well as a religious significance. Overall, unusual natural features evoked the sentiments of belonging; mountains, promontories, islands and groves of a foreign land were combined with the memory of a holy or heroic character and mythological or historical events, and so acquired a familiarity.[23] As such, a temple or a sacred altar at the edges of the Pontic promontories would have sanctified the area, minimising any fear of the unknown. The Black Sea appears to have been hostile,[24] when compared with the Aegean. A religious place under the protection of a familiar god or hero[25] would have sanctified the strange sea and land, as seems to have been the case with Cape Jason. It has always been assumed that the promontory took its name from the local exploits of the Argonauts;[26] however, Apollonius of Rhodes did not list the place among the several sites to which the hero gave his name.[27] Furthermore, some Greek colonies of the Black Sea honoured *Achilleas Pontarches* as a marine god as late as the first century A.D.[28] When a distant location was adorned with familiar cults and myths, sailors and prospective colonists found the comfort of something intimate in a foreign land. In a similar way, the consultation of

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[20] Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 24; *RE* vol.11.2 col.1386.

[21] According to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, St. Phocas was the first Bishop of Sinope and he died as a martyr during the reign of Trajan. A tradition places his martyrdom in the fourth century A.D., while others question the identification of Phocas – the Bishop of Sinope, with Phocas – the gardener. The cult of St. Phocas became one of the most popular in the Euxine. Like St. Nicholas in mainland Greece, he was the patron saint of mariners and merchants and he received an annual festival in his honour (22 September or 14 July). St. Phocas and St. Nicholas might be seen as the Christian equivalent of Poseidon [Farmer D.H. (1987) s.v. Phocas of Sinope p.355; Oikonomidis A.N. (1952) pp.187-188; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1933) vol.1 p.10, 71, 130].

[22] Hdt. 1.164, 5.42, 4.150-158; Thuc. 1.24, 6.3.1; Graham A.J. (1964) pp.25-28.

[23] Smith A.D. (1987) pp.189-190.

[24] Introduction pp.4-5.

[25] *SEG* 30.1452.

[26] Xen. *Anab.* 6.2.1 (most editors regard this part as an interpolation based on the geographical impossibility of the account); Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) p.119.

[27] e.g. *Argon.* 1.960, 1.988.

[28] *CIG* 2076, 2077; *IOSPE* 1.77-83 pp.110-121; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.9; Strabo 11.2.6; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 34; Ramsay W.M. (1928) pp.285-286. For the influences of the cult of Achilles by the native populations of north Black Sea, see: Burgess J. (2001).

the Delphic oracle[29] and the close relations with their metropolis[30] expressed their desire for stability and continuity. This desire is also indicated by the transfer of social and state institutions from the metropolis to the colonies.[31] The existence of these religious and civic elements indicate the persistence of the colonists in establishing themselves in a distant land, which was closely associated with the conceptions of the underworld of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.[32]

Despite the terrifying accounts, the first colonists seem to have discovered that the south shores of the Black Sea were not as threatening as they appeared. The mountains of the interior were dark,[33] but all the coastal land seems to have allowed the growth of olive trees;[34] a large number of weight-stones of oil-presses appear to have guaranteed their existence.[35] Olive trees, vines and their products were necessary for the livelihood of the inhabitants of mainland Greece.[36] The wealth of olive trees and vines made the plain of Phanaroea the best part of Pontus.[37] Xenophon had valid reasons for trying to persuade his men to establish a city in Pontus;[38] at the beginning of the 20th century, travellers still reported its abundance of grain, fruit, vegetables and tobacco.[39]

The initial reasons which triggered the primary trading movement were the various riches of Pontus, like wood,[40] slaves,[41] food supplies and metal ores. The first

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[29] Hdt. 5.42.

[30] Thuc. 1.24.2, 6.4.2. It has been suggested that the discovery in Miletus of an archaic temple of Aphrodite supports the notion that cults of Aphrodite might have promoted the close relations between the Ionian city and several communities of the Black Sea and the Propontis (*CIG* 2059; *IOSPE* 1.203, 2.28). Temples of Aphrodite have been discovered in Istria, Olbia, Kepi, Cyzicus and Naucratis, attesting to several cults of the goddess with local characteristics and variants [Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 3; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 17 (Bithynia). Strabo 11.2.10 (Phanagoreia); *CIG* 2108g, 2109 (Panticapeum)]. Greaves A.M. (1996)]. For the relation of Aphrodite with the sea, see: Farnell L.R. (1896) pp.636-638. One of her epithets was *Nauarchidi* (*IGR* 1.874); in the mainland Greek city of Hermione, she had an adjoining cult with Poseidon [Paus. 2.35.1, 2.34.10-11; Burkert W. (1983) p.211]. For the importance of Aphrodite in the Bosporan Kingdom, see: Ustinova Y. (1999).

[31] The original, democratic form of government of Heracleia seems to have suggested the period of the Megarian democracy (Arist. *Polit.* 1304b 31-35). That democracy soon changed into tyranny which was succeeded by democracy, or an "extended" form of oligarchy (Arist. *Polit.* 1305b 1-13).

[32] It has been suggested that the entrance of the underworld in the Odyssey was on the west shores of the Black Sea (Homer *Odys.* 11).

[33] Introduction p.5 n.28, 29.

[34] Strabo 12.2.1, 12.3.30; Savvidis Th. (1999) pp.122-124.

[35] Anderson J.G.C. (1903) pp.14-16, 55.

[36] Strabo 12.2.1.

[37] Strabo 12.3.30.

[38] Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.15-16, 6.4.3-7.

[39] Anderson J.G.C. (1903) pp.54-55.

[40] Hor. *Odes* 1.14.11-12; Strabo 11.2.17; Dengate J.A. (1973).

[41] Aristoph. *Hippeis* 1; *CF* fr.517. In later eras: Catullus 10.14-16; Pol. 4.38.4-6. Braund D. and Tsetskhladze G.R. (1989) discuss the slave-trade from Colchis, while Finley M.I. (1962) examines the slave trade from the north and south shores of the Black Sea.

Greek colonising activities might have been aimed at providing access to the regional sources of gold, silver, copper and iron;[42] it has to be admitted, however, that no evidence up to now has positively verified this notion.[43] The Greeks might have derived the word *chalyps* (steel) from the *Chalybes*[44] who were identified with the *Chaldaeoi*[45] and, possibly, with the Homeric *Chalizones.*[46] Their mines and forges seem to have been located between the city of Amisus and Colchis, which corresponds to the modern location of iron and silver deposits on the north coasts of Turkey.[47] The abundance of metal ores might explain the advanced metal craftsmanship of the natives from the Early Bronze Age.[48] It also caused the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. to regard the Chalybes as the best producers, and perhaps the inventors, of steel or carbonised iron.[49] Athens seems to have imported from the Pontic area not only metal ores, but also the basic food of the population, corn (bread)[50] and fish.[51] Indeed, until as recently as the 1980s, the Black Sea boasted an incredible abundance of fish.[52] The initial trading movements might have been triggered by the same factor which made the Athenians desperate to control the areas around Hellespontus, i.e. the role of the Black Sea as a source of food supplies and raw materials.[53]

The initially ambiguous information of the Greeks about the Black Sea and the inhabitants of its coasts appears to have been analogous to their uncertainty concerning the foundation dates of the colonies. The citizens of Trapezus do not

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[42] Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.375-376, 2.1001-1008; Hdt. 4.7; Homer *Iliad* 2.857; Pliny *N.H.* 7.197; Strabo 12.3.19.
[43] For a discussion on the subject, see: Drews R. (1976) p.28.
[44] Aesc. *Prom.* 714-715; Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 1.1323; Hecateus 203 (Jacoby); *LSJ* s.v. *chalyps*; Steph. Byzantii s.v. *Chalyves.*
[45] Strabo 12.3.19-20; Xen. *Anab.* 5.5.17.
[46] Homer *Iliad* 2.856-857.
[47] Drews R. (1976) pp.27-28.
[48] Lloyd S. (1967) pp.20, 24, 27-29.
[49] Aesch. *Prom.* 714-716; Apoll. *Argon.* 2.1001-1010; Pliny *N.H.* 7.197; Strabo 12.3.20-23.
[50] Hdt. 7.147; Lysias 22.14; Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.28; Savvidis Th. (1999) pp.56-58.
[51] Strabo 7.6.2.
[52] Ascherson N. (1996) p.4.
[53] The main source of information on the Athenian Black Sea expeditions (447 B.C.) comes from the cities of the west and north Black Sea coasts. By analogy, it might be suggested that something similar was happening in the cities of the south coasts. After the Persian Wars, Athens emerged as the heir of Miletus in the Black Sea. Pericles led expeditions on the Euxine in order to establish friendly relations with the existing cities, to found new colonies, like Athens (Pazar) and to re-colonise Amisus as *Peiraus* [Strabo 12.3.14; Head B.V. (1911) p.496]. The Greek Pontic cities seem to have favoured the Athenian friendship which helped them in re-establishing links with mainland Greece and Ionia (Athen. 8.351c-d; Diog. Laert. 2.43, 3.46, 6.3, 6.9; Isocr. *Antidosis* 224). The cities of Pontus appear to have been part of the Athenian Empire (*Ins. HP* p.55). However, the Athenians did not try to impose their

seem to have been certain of the legacy of the city, even in the fourth century B.C. Sinope appears to have been its metropolis,[54] but the Trapezuntines welcomed the citizens of an Arcadian Trapezus because they were the "citizens of their metropolis" and had the same name (360 B.C.).[55] No foundation tradition of the Pontic Trapezus pointed to such a relationship. Since no tradition was ever definite, all interpretations have had the potential to be credible. It appears improbable that a relatively unknown city[56] in a mountainous area had been able to establish a very early Black Sea colony; still, a tradition connecting the Arcadian Demeter and Poseidon[57] might have implied early Arcadian activities as mariners. The citizens of the Arcadian city were able to present themselves and be accepted as the ancestors of the founders of the Pontic city due to the same appellation.[58] If we accept that place-names were not coincidental, but an outward identity symbol for a community, a connection appears to have existed between the Pontic *Kromna* and the Peloponnesian *Kromnos*, or between the *Arcadias* of Peloponnese, Crete and Egypt.[59] The results of such research would be interesting, but it seems difficult, if not impossible, to find further evidence to support or dismiss these suggestions.

In a similar way, the links of the colonies of Pontus with the Argonauts and the Amazons[60] do not provide indisputable evidence that the factors which led to the colonisation movement were trade, the desire for land and metals or civic and cultural intolerance at home. Such links appear to have reflected the notion that the Greeks had pre-colonial contacts with the indigenous population of Pontus. A comprehensive and balanced approach to the course of the Greek colonisation in Pontus could not be based entirely on mere archaeological evidence; it needs to combine literary references, geographical understanding, knowledge of the indigenous population and evaluated assessments.

An overall picture of the assembled literary material seems to suggest that some of the Black Sea colonies had an early foundation date. Homer mentioned

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form of government there; they just wanted to control the sea-trade and the corn-route of the Black Sea (Pol. 4.38.3-10; Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.28).

[54] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.22.

[55] Miller W. (1926) p.8; Paus. 8.27.6.

[56] Hdt. 6.127.

[57] Paus. 8.25.5-7, 8.42.1.

[58] Another Trapezus was established near the Arabic Gulf (Steph. Byzantii s.v. *Trapezous*).

[59] Pyriovolis P.G. (1972) pp.20-22; Steph. Byzantii s.v. *Arkades, Arkadia.*

[60] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 22; Ps.-Scymnus 942-946.

locations north of Bosporus,[61] Hesiod referred to the Danube and several rivers of Pontus,[62] and a number of Greek traditions involved the Black Sea.[63] This literary evidence might be poor and sometimes vague, but it is very important, since archaeological discoveries have frequently justified it.[64] Almost a century ago, the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. were regarded as the accepted colonial foundation dates.[65] During the small-scale excavations at Sinope, most of the archaeological finds dated from the end of the seventh century B.C. Apparently they confirmed the view of Eusebius, who placed the second foundation of Sinope in 631 B.C. However, the Sinopean archaeological evidence has not allowed any final conclusions and the sporadic excavations have created doubts as to the earliest known material. For example, archaeological excavations point to an early fourth century B.C. foundation date for Gallatis.[66] It was previously claimed that its establishment took place in the late sixth century B.C.,[67] a few decades after the founding of its metropolis, Heracleia Pontica.[68] The current evidence from the west[69] and north[70] Black Sea coasts go back to the seventh century B.C. Unfortunately, in Pontus the starting date of systematic excavations is relatively recent. Archaeology has not yet established an early foundation date for a Greek colony. However, most modern scholars agree that the Greek contacts with the Black Sea and Pontus appear to have been consistent with an early foundation date for Sinope.[71] No verdict can be regarded as final, until the possession of more evidence from the Pontic region; still, an eighth century B.C. date might be suggested for the earliest Pontic settlements (*emporia* or colonies).

According to some ancient traditions, the name of the oikist of Sinope seems to imply an eighth century B.C. foundation date for the colony. The oikist of the city

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[61] Homer *Iliad* 2.851-857.
[62] *Theog.* 337-345.
[63] Eumelus 451 F.F2a, b (Jacoby); Paus. 2.3.10; Schol. Eurip. *Medea* 9; Hesiod *Theog.* 992-1002.
[64] e.g. Archaeology confirmed the comment of Livy (8.22.5-6) on Pithecusa.
[65] Eusebius *Chronicorum Canonum Liber* p.86 (Istrus), p.88 (Olbia – Borysthenis, Sinope). For Sinope: Hdt. 4.12; Ps.-Scymnus 942-952; Strabo 12.3.11.
[66] Hind J.G.F. (1984) pp.261-265.
[67] Ps.-Scymnus 763-64; Strabo 7.6.1, 12.3.6.
[68] Chapter 1 p.19 n.96.
[69] Apollonia, Mesembria, Odessus, Gallatis, Tomis and Istria: Avraam A. (1996).
[70] Olbia/Borysthenis: Hind J.G.F. (1997). Panticapeusm, Nymphaeum, Theodosia, Phanagoria, Hermonassa and Kepoi and their numerous satellites: Tsetskhladze G.R. (1997).
[71] Graham A.J. (1990) p.52; *HHN* (1971) vol.2 p.275; Tsetskhladze G.R. (1994) pp.115-117; McGing B.C. (1986) p.3.

was Autolycus from Thessaly,[72] suggesting that the first Greeks had arrived in the area even before the Homeric period.[73] Another (possible) founder was *Habrondas* or *Habron.*[74] He is reported to have had Milesian origins,[75] but the name has no apparent Milesian or Ionic connection;[76] it is linked with a Corinthian tradition from the eighth century B.C. According to the legend, Habron from Argos went to Corinth; later in life, the death of his grandson forced Archias to leave Corinth and go off as oikist to Syracuse.[77] Although the connection of the traditional oikist of Sinope with a Corinthian citizen might be incidental, Eumelus appears to have made a similar suggestion. He linked the foundation date of the city with its appellation, maintaining that Sinope was named after one of the daughters of Asopus whom Zeus transported there.[78] The effort of Eumelus to connect Sinope with Corinth could be explained by taking into account that he composed his *Corinthiaca* when the Bacchiads were claiming that they were the founders of Sinope. His early foundation date belies the tradition according to which Sinope was founded in 631 B.C.

Certain indications suggest that Corinth was the metropolis of Sinope. In particular, the relations of Sinope with her own colonies resembled the colonial relationship of Corinth with Corcyra. Sinope appears to have exercised a considerable amount of control over its colonies, like Corinth.[79] It claimed that it protected the interests of Cerasus, Trapezus and Cotyora in return for an annual tribute,[80] the practice being validated by the constant fear of attack by the native tribes.[81] Such practical reasons might have produced these exceptional arrangements. In addition, both cities seem to have had advanced naval contacts with areas beyond their horizon. The founding of Syracuse indicates that Corinth had acquired an early interest in the colonising movement. The city appears to have had advanced naval technology,[82] which might have allowed its early penetration into the Black Sea and the establishment of trading places and colonies. Corinthian pottery at the island near

[72] Plut. *Luc.* 23.4-5; Ps.-Scymnus 945; Strabo 12.3.11; Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 22.
[73] Hom. *Odys.* 19.392-466, *Iliad* 10.267; Burkert W. (1983) p.131.
[74] Ps.-Scymnus 947; *RE* vol.7.2 col.2155.
[75] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 22.
[76] Drews R. (1976) pp.25-26.
[77] *RE* vol.2.1 col.461.
[78] Eumelus F5 F 451 (Jacoby); Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.946; Schol. Apoll. of Rhod. 2.946.54c. In all probability, Eumelus identified Asopus with the stream between Sicyon and Corinth and not with the river of Boeotia.
[79] Thuc. 1.25.3-4.
[80] Xen. *Anab.* 5.5.7, 5.5.10.
[81] Xen. *Anab.* 5.5.23.

Cyzicus attests to the antiquity and the range of Corinthian trade.[83] Similarly, contacts seem to have existed between the Lydians and the people of the Sinopean Cape; according to Nicolaus of Damaschus the mother of Cyges, the king of Lydia (685-657 B.C.), was a Syrian native of Pontus.[84] A tradition which linked Corinth and Sinope had existed in antiquity.[85] Although it cannot prove conclusively the colonial connection of the two cities, it deserves consideration, until further archaeological evidence becomes available.

This tradition points to a foundation date around the middle of the eighth century B.C. and it corresponds to the Eusebian date of 756 B.C. for the establishment of Trapezus, which was a reputed colony of Sinope.[86] The cities of Amisus,[87] Cyzicus[88] and Heracleia[89] also had traditions of a double foundation. It might be possible that Cimmerian incursions destroyed certain Greek colonies in Pontus; when the raiders had been defeated and disappeared, the cities would have been re-established. The persistence in reoccupying older settlements might indicate the economic support these settlements offered to their mother-cities. Many colonies of the Black Sea, like Istrus, appear to have supported their *metropoleis* economically and to have depended on them politically. Miletus might have prospered partly due to its trading activities with its colonies in the Hellespont and the Black Sea.[90] When the Milesians realised the extent of the wealth they could acquire from the Black Sea and its shores, they seem to have established relatively small trading centres[91] in strategic places. The climatic regime of the Black Sea, especially the west and north coasts, might have initially discouraged an extended colonial movement, but the wealth of the region soon attracted prospective settlers. The *emporia* were soon developed into colonies, whose duty would have been to facilitate the trade and to secure supplies of food, ores and raw materials for their mother-city. These re-settlements appear to be an acceptable way of explaining the two dates for the foundation of Sinope, in the eighth and seventh century B.C. respectively.

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[82] Thuc. 1.13.2-3.
[83] Drews R. (1976) pp.25-26.
[84] Nicolaus of Damascus 90 F.F 46 (Jacoby).
[85] According to another tradition which linked Colchis and Corinth, the King of Colchis, Aeetes, had Corinthian origins [Epimenides 457 F 11 (Jacoby); Diophantos 805 F 1 (Jacoby)].
[86] *RE* vol.6a.2 col.2215.
[87] Theopompus 115 F 389 (Jacoby); Ps.-Scymn. 917-918; Strabo 12.3.14.
[88] *RE* vol.12.1 col.229.
[89] Strabo 12.3.4; *RE* vol.8.1 col.433-434.
[90] Strabo 7.6.1; Sen. *Cons. Ad Helv. Matrem* 7.2; Pliny *N.H.* 5.112; Graham A.J. (1964) pp.28, 109.
[91] Hdt. 4.17, 4.24, 4.108.

The *metropoleis* seem to have justified their control through fears harboured by colonists of attack from native tribes.[92] The Greek colonists of the north and west shores of the Black Sea remained on the coasts, inhabiting the physical periphery of a Scythian world. The Greeks might have had the cultural and trading allure of jewellery, decorated pottery and wine, yet they remained guests rather than dominators. The advanced literacy of the newcomers seems to explain the reasons that only Greek-Hellenistic versions of their relationship with the indigenous peoples have survived. On most occasions, the Greeks seem to have been precariously placed on the shores, and it was the natives who set the terms on which the colonies were established. Since in normal circumstances the colonies had no substantial armed forces of their own, and because of their distance from their metropolis, it was the natives who decided whether the colonies should continue to exist or not. Usually, the Scythians wanted them not only to exist but also to flourish. As a result, they frequently appear to have acted as hosts and protectors.[93] The result was the creation of societies of very mixed character, where Greeks were as likely to adopt Thracian or Scythian ways as their counterparts were likely to be Hellenised.[94] It has been proposed that the Black Sea had the unique tendency to create hybrid colonial societies, unlike any other area in the ancient world.[95]

It can be suggested that the Greeks who established the first colonial settlements in Pontus arrived there with the intention of creating permanent homes. From an early stage, the Greek communities of Pontus did not stay on the coasts, but spread up into the wooded valleys of the interior, forming close relations with the natives. During the early years of its establishment, Heracleia[96] seems to have been in close contact with the neighbouring Mariandynoi, sometimes through mountainous routes.[97] It also appears that the coastal city of Amisus had been purposely situated at the end of the trade route which emerged from the mountainous interior. The wealth

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[92] For the uncivilised inhabitants of the Black Sea shores, see: Introduction p.5 n.29.
[93] Strabo 7.303-4; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.5; Chapter 3 pp.83-84.
[94] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.7; Bylkova V. (2001).
[95] Mitchell S. (2000) p.4.
[96] Heracleia Pontica was founded around 560 B.C. It appears to have been a joint colony of Megarians and Boeotians [Ps.-Scymnus 975; Anon. *Peripl. P.E. 27*; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 18.10-11; Diod. 14.31.3; Ephorus 44a, b F 44 (Jacoby); Justin 16.3.4-7; Paus. 5.26.7; Ps.-Scymnus 972-973; Xen. *Anab.* 6.2.1]. However, a tradition of double foundation also existed. According to this tradition, the city was first colonised by Miletus and then by Megara and Boeotia (Strabo 12.3.4).
[97] Strabo 12.3.4, 14.5.23; Justin 16.3.7-8; Apoll. of Rhodes 2.752-760; Ephorus *FHG* vol.1 5.83; Steph. Byzantii s.v. *Mariandynia*; Burstein S.M. (1976) pp.6-11.

of the city originated from its natural resources and trade.[98] It might be suggested that Greek pottery from Ak Alan, a city nearly ten miles inland from Amisus, reflected the relations of Amisus with the interior[99] and the determination of the new colonists to establish themselves. The geographical position and the zeal of the new colonists caused the new, coastal Greek cities of Pontus to flourish, as becomes obvious in the cases of Sinope, Trapezus and Amastris.

Sinope, "the most noteworthy of the cities in the region",[100] appears to have dominated the trade of the south shore of the Black Sea and to have maintained extensive relations with the north coast as well as with the Greek world outside the Euxine. Its prosperity[101] resulted in the establishment of its own colonies at Cotyora, Cerasus, Pterion and elsewhere. Trapezus was also a large city, judging from the size of its acropolis.[102] Excavations and casual finds have revealed little of its early history. Still, it had its own coins from the fourth century B.C.[103] and it maintained trading links with the areas of Caucasus and the old kingdom of Urartu.[104] The important metal and timber resources of the Paryadres mountains, south of the city, explain the prosperity of Trapezus.[105] The reports of Xenophon on the food and wine it provided to his soldiers attest to its wealth.[106] Amastris seems to have enjoyed a similar prosperity, since its two harbours created ideal trading conditions.[107] The original settlers of the city came from Sesamos, Kromna, Tios and Kytoros[108] as well as Heracleia and Sinope. Settlers from the latter two cities appear to have manned the pottery workshops of Amastris, giving to the stamped amphorae similarities to and features of the Sinopean and Heracleian pottery samples.[109] The Amastrian stamped pottery appears to be a reliable source for studying the trading commodities of the city with the area around Chersonesus and its economic relations with the neighbouring Sinope and Heracleia, from which Amastris acquired the exported olive oil, salted

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[98] Strabo 12.3.15, 11.2.17.
[99] Boardman J. (1980) p.255; Tsetskhladze G.R. (1994) pp.116-117.
[100] Strabo 12.3.11.
[101] Daimachus 65 F 9 (Jacoby); Steph. Byzantii s.v. *Lakedaimon*; Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.15.
[102] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) p.191.
[103] Euaggelidis T. (1994) p.55; Head B.V. (1911) p.499.
[104] Boardman J. (1980) p.255.
[105] Strabo 12.3.18-19.
[106] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.22-23.
[107] Strabo 12.3.10.
[108] Strabo 12.3.10.
[109] Kac V.I., Pavlenko V.I., Sceglov A.N. (1989) pp.15-20.

olives and, possibly, wine.[110] Its trading activities would have made Amastris an important city, although the stamped legend *Amastrios*, in the nominative case, appears to have undervalued it. Usually, the stamped legends were in the nominative of the neuter gender or in the genitive in the plural, like *Thasion*, *Parion*, *Keracountion* and others.[111] Numismatic evidence and a comparison with the legend on Bosporan tiles of the third century B.C. suggest that the particular amphoras were manufactured in the palace workshops during the reign of Queen Amastris.[112] After the death of the Queen, the legend on the coins of the city changed to *Amactrieon*.

The persistence of the Mithridatic dynasty in incorporating the coastal Greek cities into their kingdom[113] further emphasises their significance. Mithridates I or Ariobarzanes incorporated Amisus almost immediately (about 255 B.C.) and quite successfully. When the Galatians ravaged the kingdom of young Mithridates II, Heracleia sent supplies to Amisus in order to relieve him.[114] Memnon maintained that the Greek city sent these supplies to the king and not to the citizens of Amisus. Sinope was another city which the Mithridatids prized highly. Mithridates II wanted to gain possession of Sinope from as early as 220 B.C. Most probably, he did not proceed to full military attack, although the Sinopeans were fearful that he might.[115] Pharnaces captured Sinope,[116] manifesting the growing power of his kingdom and providing one more excuse for the war against Eumenes.[117] The capture of Sinope must have been very significant for Pharnaces. Although he lost the war with Eumenes and despite the involvement of Rome, he managed to keep the city.[118] He also incorporated Cotyora and Cerasus, colonies of Sinope, into the kingdom. Their acquisition benefited the kingdom financially and their citizens were forced to provide settlers for Pharnaceia, the new city of Pharnaces.[119] Soon, almost the whole south coast of the Black Sea from Amastris to Cerasus was part of their kingdom. The Mithridatids took special care to acquire the coastal cities of Pontus. Their

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[110] Kac V.I., Pavlenko V.I., Sceglov A.N. (1989) pp.21-23.
[111] Head B.V. (1911) p.497.
[112] Strabo 12.3.10; Kac V.I., Pavlenko V.I., Sceglov A.N. (1989) pp.20-21.
[113] Chapter 2 pp.56, 69. The role of Mithridates VI as a liberator and protector of the Greek cities in the Black Sea and mainland Greece will be examined in Chapter 3.
[114] Memnon 16.1-2 F 434 (Jacoby).
[115] Pol. 4.56.
[116] Livy 40.2.6; Pol. 23.9.2; Strabo 12.3.11.
[117] For other reasons, like the earlier war between Prusias and Eumenes as well as the interference of Pharnaces in Galatia, see: McGing B.C. (1986) pp.26-27.
[118] Pol. 23.9.1-4
[119] Strabo 12.3.17.

incorporation into the Mithridatic Kingdom influenced the military and administrative policies of the Kings, especially Mithridates VI Eupator.[120]

The early colonists conservatively kept their ancestral manners and customs,[121] religion, language[122] and established institutions; thus the coastal Greek cities were able to influence considerably the policies of the Mithridatic dynasts and the non-Greek peoples with whom they came into contact. However, it is doubtful that their upholding of the traditions was the result of nostalgia, in the modern sense of the word.[123] Like all colonists, the Greek newcomers would have been "afflicted with" an awareness of the outside world; they would have known that eventually they would have to fight for ownership over the land and its riches. Feeling isolated,[124] they had constantly to remind themselves of who they were through their traditions. As a result, they were consciously dedicated to their ancestral customs and to the archaic structure of their cities until their incorporation into the Mithridatic Kingdom. Questioning the traditions might have opened a door to the unknown and thus, terrifying world of the 'others'. They were more numerous than the colonists and represented a constant potential threat; for these reasons, they had to be controlled. It was irrelevant whether the 'others' were uncivilised barbarians or Greeks from mainland Greece. This 'nostalgia' of the Sinopeans for the Greek mainland did not stop them from bribing the soldiers of Xenophon to leave. They preferred to see the Greeks departing as soon as possible,[125] rather than sharing their land with them. Similarly, the Macronians were ready to fight the 'Ten Thousand', until they realised that the Greeks were not coming as settlers on their land.[126] Beyond the obvious geographical isolation, the Greek and Anatolian inhabitants of Pontus seem to have preferred a sheltered, 'traditional' life without external and dangerous influences.

An initial, crude division between the Greek and the indigenous population would have reflected the geographical division of Pontus into coastal and interior. The Greeks mainly inhabited the narrow coastal plain, while the Anatolian communities[127] were established primarily in the interior, towards the mountainous

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[120] These issues will be analysed in Chapter 2.
[121] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.8, 36.17.
[122] Chapter 1 pp.38-40.
[123] Samouilidis Ch. (1992) p.12.
[124] Chapter 1 p.19.
[125] Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.14-16, 5.6.21-26.
[126] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.5-8.
[127] When considering the interaction of the Greeks with the people of Pontus, it is reasonable to keep in mind that the non-Greek inhabitants of Pontus could be of Iranian or Anatolian origin.

region of the Pontic Alps. A superficial view would have presented the Greeks as a 'marine race' who had managed to enter and master the Black Sea, but found it difficult to conquer the dark mountains. A similar viewpoint would have indicated that the indigenous population were primitive farmers and hunters who sustained themselves with the products of the earth and had no reason to be involved with the sea. It would appear that their lack of roads and ships isolated them from other people and civilisations, which caused their cultural state to remain stagnant and primitive. However, such a racial division did not necessarily exist. The inhabitants of Pontus, newcomers and natives, appear to have had more common elements than they themselves perceived. The Greeks were not the only coastal inhabitants of Pontus. The Tibarenians[128] and the Mariandynians[129] had coastal villages. Indeed the Greeks considered the Colchians who lived at the seashores as more peaceful and friendlier than their war-like fellow-countrymen.[130] This gentler character of the coastal Anatolian inhabitants indicates that the geographical division of Pontus reflected a cultural, rather than an 'ethnic' division. The coastal Anatolians were not as culturally advanced as the Greeks and the differences between the Greeks and the mountainous populations were exaggerated. However, it might be suggested that the coastal inhabitants of Pontus, Greeks and Anatolians, were aware of their differences from the inhabitants of the interior.

The geographical obstacles do not seem to have greatly affected the contact between the Euxine shores and the Pontic mountains; semi-navigable rivers dissected the interior of Pontus providing the main routes.[131] However, geography did limit the connections with the trading and cultural, as well as aggressive and imperialistic, neighbouring centres. The various Anatolian tribes of Pontus appear to have unconsciously preserved some cultural elements from their contacts with the Neolithic culture of Çatal Hüyük and their relations with the Hittites.[132] Interactions between the groups has made their identification even more difficult.

The major difference between the Greek and non-Greek populations of Pontus seems to have been that the Greeks were aware of their common cultural heritage.

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[128] Xen. *Anab.* 5.5.2-3.
[129] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 27.
[130] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.9, 4.8.24.
[131] Aesch. *Persae* 865; throughout Anon. *Peripl. P.E.*; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 8-12; Hdt. 1.72, 4.37; Pliny *N.H.* 6.6, 6.8, 6.10; Strabo 11.2.17, 12.3.12, 12.3.15, 12.3.30; Xen. *Anab.* 4.6.4, 4.8.1, 5.6.9.
[132] Mellink M.J. (1956) pp.540-555; Lloyd S. (1967); Danov C.M. (1978-1979) pp.158-159. For religious and ceremonial influences: Huxley G.L. (1978); Chapter 4 pp.135-136.

With the notable exception of the Colchians,[133] the Anatolian tribes appear to have had no common cultural identity of which they were aware. The Anatolian tribes overcame the geographical obstacles and had financial, trade and migration links among themselves. Yet, these exchanges do not seem to have promoted a lasting, internally-defined common identity. When the Greeks arrived in Pontus, they appear to have been the most culturally and technologically advanced people. The existing ancient Greek evidence make no references to the indigenous coastal dynasties. Even so, the modern archaeological finds from the so-called 'Pontic tombs at Horoztepe and Mazmatlar' in the area of Tokat reveal that the burial places were contemporary with the inland dynasties of Çatal Hüyük (2300 - 2100 B.C.).[134] The expected competition between the tribes might never have allowed their economic and cultural relations to mature enough to develop a centralised authority. The information we have on the cultural synthesis of the non-Greeks of Pontus of the sixth century B.C. onwards is limited; it mainly consists of the tribal appellations.[135] Some tribes, like the Paphlagonians, seem to have refused any kind of external influence. They were excellent horsemen,[136] but were limited in commercial activities and external communications. Their geographical and cultural isolation appears to have gone hand in hand with their dedication to a primitive lifestyle.[137] However, other tribes were more susceptible to Hellenisation. The Cappadocians accepted Greek manners and customs with relative ease, probably because they inhabited the region that connected central-northern Asia Minor with the major commercial and cultural cities of west Asia. No external authority, including the Achaemenids, seems to have been able to

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[133] Colchis seems to have been united as early as the eighth century B.C. (Aesch. *Prom.* 415; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.212-213). The Colchians appear to have kept their racial substance almost uninfluenced by the Greek culture. Possibly for this reason, although their so-called 'descendants' of the sixth century A.D. were Christians, they continued to define themselves as *Lazi*, by analogy to *Romans* (Procopius *Hist.* 2.28.26). The Colchians were reportedly of Egyptian origin (Hdt. 2.103; Diod.1.28.12; Strabo 11.2.17), yet their language seems to have been spoken over a large area bounded by Cilician Taurus, the Black Sea, Armenia and Colchis (Strabo 12.1.1). This linguistic expansion might suggest that it was a kind of primitive trade language, at least for a limited time. Colchis became part of the kingdom of Eupator, willingly or not [App. *Mith.* 15; Justin 38.7.10; Memnon 22.3 F 434 (Jacoby)]. Its position on the Transcaucasian trade route, linking the Black Sea with the countries of the East, led Shelov to maintain that it constituted a very important link in the economic, administrative and military system of the Mithridatic kingdom, despite the scanty evidence [Shelov D.B. (1980) pp.32-35; McGing B.C. (1986) p.60].

[134] Lloyd S. (1967) pp.18-20, 25-29; Map 1 p.233.

[135] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 15; Hdt. 1.28, 1.72, 1.104, 2.104 4.37; Pliny *N.H.* 6.4; Strabo 12.3.18-28; Xen. *Anab.* (summary) 7.8.25; Aesch. *Prom.* 714-715; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 15; Scylax 70, 71, 81, 85-88, 91, 92.

[136] Homer *Iliad* 2.851-852; Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.7, 6.1.3.

[137] Diod. 4.40.4; Strabo 7.5.12; Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.6-8.

unite the various tribes of Pontus.[138] Even after nearly two hundred years of Mithridatic rule, the apparent unification of the inhabitants of the kingdom was deceptive. Due to the configuration of the country, the difficulties in opening roads and the peculiar cattle-raising and hunting life, most Anatolian tribes retained their individuality by remaining unaware of their common cultural identity. However, this does not imply that they had not received influences from external factors.

From the moment that the Greek settlers of the Black Sea communicated with the indigenous population, they had to face widely differing degrees of material and spiritual culture. Natives and newcomers alike seem to have been reluctant to meet the 'others' and camouflaged their uneasiness by considering themselves 'better' than the 'others'. Although the cultural impact of Ionia had just started to emerge,[139] the tribes of the west and north Euxine appear to have expressed a 'national' reaction against excessive Greek influence, particularly in their religion. The Scythians were the first natives who began to appreciate the Greek products and to undergo the influence of Greek culture. However, the invisible frontier between the two ways of life remained unaffected, as Anacharsis and Scylas discovered to their peril.[140] It could be suggested that, by analogy, some Anatolian tribes would have eventually expressed similar 'national' reactions. Presumably the Greeks regarded some of the native peoples as frightening savages[141] and the experiences of Greek settlers in other colonial areas favoured such suppositions.[142] At the same time, the tribes near the Eastern cultural centres seem to have been considered as relatively advanced in their culture.[143]

'Frightening' or not, the 'others' had to be controlled. When the Galatians arrived in Asia Minor, the Hellenistic rulers were already established. It was comparatively simple to restrain the legendary power and brutality of the 'newcomers'. They were obliged to abandon their nomadic way of life and to settle on a defined territory of their own,[144] making the first small step towards urban life,

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[138] Hdt. 3.90-94, 7.61-95.
[139] The prehistoric finds in Northern (Romanian) Dobroudja, particularly in Varna (Bulgaria), are convincing indications of this notion [Danov C.M. (1978-1979) p.157].
[140] Anacharsis was shot dead by the King of the Scythians, Saulius, for associating with the Greeks and adopting non-Scythian ways, like the rituals of the Mother Goddess of Cyzicus. Scylas was similarly killed by his own people for adopting Greek ways of dress and worship (Hdt. 4.75-80).
[141] e.g. Hdt. 4.64-65; Strabo 7.3.6.
[142] Hdt. 1.168.
[143] e.g. Chalybes (Chapter 1 p.14).
[144] Livy 38.16.11-12; Pliny *N.H.* 5.146; Strabo 12.5.1.

civilisation and Hellenisation. However, when the Greeks were establishing their settlements on the coasts of the Black Sea, they themselves were the 'newcomers'. They had to establish themselves, and 'tame' an alien environment at the same time. The Greek colonies could not really depend on one another, because they were scattered over the four shores of the Euxine, all with a limited military capacity. It was, therefore, difficult to organise themselves into a cohesive force which was further compounded by the fact that the enemy would normally attack unexpectedly. Despite their close financial and trading links,[145] the distance and the bad weather conditions did not always allow a metropolis to protect a new settlement that was in danger. Therefore, it was essential for the Pontic colonies to establish relations with their 'other' neighbours.

At the beginning, the relations with the locals might not have been friendly. The colonists might have attacked their villages but without achieving in their entire destruction, due to the greater numbers of the indigenous population. In a similar way, the native tribes would have harassed the newcomers in an effort to preserve their existence.[146] Despite the danger to their very being which they perceived, the inhabitants of the hinterland were rarely successful in conquering Hellenic colonial cities.[147] These isolated attacks did not succeed in uprooting the Greek settlements, but they further bore witness to the lack of a national or political organisation. Even so, at a later stage, common interest would have forced them to accommodate each other's presence.[148]

The Greeks of Pontus needed the natives in order to gain access to the ores of the land, to farm and trade their goods. Presumably, the indigenous population soon reached the conclusion that the Greek trade could also benefit them. The flourishing of the colonies[149] implies that both communities had reached a kind of mutually acceptable agreement.[150] Both, newcomers and natives, appear to have regarded financial affairs as matters of vital importance. The *barvarotatoi* Mossynoecians[151] and the Paphlagonians had official representatives at Trapezus and Sinope; they seem

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[145] Chapter 1 pp.18-19.
[146] cf. The attitude of the citizens of Sinope to the colonising ideas of Xenophon (Chapter 1 p.22).
[147] Thuc. 1.100.
[148] Xen. *Anab.* 6.6.4.
[149] e.g. Sinope, Trapezus and Amastris (Chapter 1 pp.20-21).
[150] Athens and Sitacles, the Thracian King, signed such a treaty of alliance in 431 B.C. (Thuc. 2.29).
[151] Xen *Anab.* 5.4.34. Their customs and laws were branded as strange and 'barbarian', because they appeared as the reverse mirror image of the Greek manners regarding 'private' and 'public' behaviour (Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 1015-1029).

to have acted as commercial agents to support the interests of their chiefs and to facilitate trade and commerce. Agreements between the groups, in most cases, would not have dealt with cultural, political or military affairs, unless they assisted their financial interests. For example, Greek diplomacy often managed to weaken a native group by embracing the cause of a discontented tribe.[152] Similarly, the Trapezuntians protected some friendly Colchian tribes,[153] but led the 'Ten Thousand' to plunder the village of the hostile Drilae.[154]

Within the walls of Byzantium, a level space without buildings called the Thracian Square seems to attest to the involvement of the city with the native, non-citizen people. The space was used as quarters for the deployment of an army of six thousand.[155] Its appellation suggests that this space might have been left unoccupied for the accommodation of natives who came to the city to trade. In later years, a similar space for commerce, and possibly social interaction, between natives and traders existed in the Phrygian city of Celaenae.[156] Such spaces appear to have been an ancient tradition and it seems possible that they also existed in the cities of Pontus at the time of Xenophon. The citizens of Trapezus supplied the 'Ten Thousand' with a market.[157] Unlike those of Byzantium, such markets would have been outside the town defences for security reasons;[158] yet the account of Xenophon reveals that the Trapezuntians *edexanto* the Greeks.[159] The choice of word implies that the people of Trapezus might not have been able to receive the Greeks hospitably and entertain them[160] outside the walls of the city. Hospitality was and is still offered in one's own home; libations and oaths to Zeus Xenios protected both those who received and those who offered hospitality. For security reasons, it was better to house the armies outside the city, otherwise the citizens might have had regrets about allowing them to stay within the walls.[161] However, these spaces were meant to be used by traders and not by soldiers. The attitude of the 'Ten Thousand' and the towns which provided them with a market seem to have implied that they saw each other as friends rather

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[152] Xen. *Anab.* 5.4.3-10.
[153] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.24, 5.2.2.
[154] Xen. *Anab.* 5.2.1-2.
[155] Xen. *Anab.* 7.1.24.
[156] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.14. Strabo (12.8.15) also attested to the expanded trading activities of the citizens of Apameia who used to dwell in Celaene.
[157] The Macronians had also supplied the 'Ten Thousand' with a market (Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.8).
[158] Dalby A. (1992) p.26.
[159] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.23.
[160] *LJS* s.v. *dechomai.*
[161] Xen. *Anab.* 7.1.16-20; Dably A. (1992) p.31.

than potential military opponents. Similar commercial activities would have brought the Greek colonists and the local tribes together. A natural corollary of these interactions was an interdependence between their development on a social and economic level.

From the moment that people with a Greek education came into contact with pastoral, local nomads, their approach affected both communities. Some Greeks might have chosen to leave the coastal emporia in order to settle among the indigenous population,[162] like the 'whites' of the American frontier who 'went Indian'. Yet, if such cases did exist, they seem to have been the exception to the general rule. According to that rule, the coastal cities became places where people of many different languages, religions, trades and descents co-existed together even for a short period of time.[163] The few probable exceptions do not indicate that the Greeks had turned their back on their roots. The persistence of the colonists in establishing themselves[164] led them to adopt local customs and religious practices by adapting them to their own historical – mythological traditions. Hence, the temple of the Moschoi where a ram was never sacrificed became a place devoted to the goddess Leukothea and built by Phrixos.[165] Archaeological findings in coastal Colchis revealed the existence of Greek burial customs and funeral practices which were adapted to the local climatic and natural conditions.[166] However, excavations at the village of Atskouri, about one hundred kilometres from the Black Sea, revealed that the Greek impact on the populations of the hinterland was very limited. Some Greek material, mainly pottery between the sixth and the second century B.C., suggests that the Greeks had established some form of contact with the natives soon after their settlement; yet their influence on local hinterland culture appears negligible.[167] It might be suggested that geographical factors and the conscious Colchian identity[168] allowed the native inland elements to remain almost intact. In addition, the social and economic interdependence between the local tribes and the Greek colonists of the west Black Sea shores was evident around the first century A.D. The Olbians impressed Dio Chrysostom for maintaining long-lost Greek manners and customs;

[162] Hdt. 4.108-109; Strabo 14.5.23; Eur. *Bacch.* 15-22.
[163] Strabo 11.2.16 (Dioscurias).
[164] Chapter 1 pp.11-13.
[165] Strabo 11.2.17.
[166] Tsetskhladze G.R. (1994) p.122.
[167] *Atskouri Project.*
[168] Chapter 1 p.24 n.133.

they were confident of their Greekness.[169] Apparently, they had assumed that the world beyond the sea remained in its archaic form, as their distant descendants knew it. Yet an external observer who based identity not on traditions of descent, but on clothes, customs and language, would have recognised their mixed, Greek-Scythian culture.[170] Unfortunately, no current archaeological evidence can positively support the existence or absence of similar early cultural interchanges between the Greeks and the native tribes of Pontus. As a result, it is not possible to make a comprehensive comparison between their culture and that of the Greeks. By analogy with the west and east coasts, it might be expected that the native elements became firmer as one proceeds from the Pontic shores inland.

It can be safely assumed that the friendly or hostile relations between Greeks and Anatolians depended upon their financial advantages. However, successful economic developments presuppose a stable political *status quo* in the area. Despite the occasional foreign rulers,[171] the Persians appear to have been the most important and long-lasting influence on both the indigenous and the Greek inhabitants of Pontus. The Persian King held under his jurisdiction Amisus (368 B.C.), Sinope and some cities in West Pontus, but his generals do not seem to have proceeded with the occupation of the whole area.[172] Xenophon did not find any vestige of royal authority after entering the Armenian highlands. The last Persian forces he encountered were those of Tiribazus, lieutenant of the satrap of Armenia.[173] When the 'Ten Thousand' reached the coastal region, it was clear that the writ of the Great King had ceased to run, although it does seems to have been weak from the beginning. The Persians appear to have occupied the central – western part of Pontus thanks to the opening of the valley of the river Halys. The tribute that the people who inhabited Pontus and the neighbouring areas[174] paid was a sufficient acknowledgement of the power of the Great King,[175] which guaranteed to the Persians access to the metal ores and the feral

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[169] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.7-9, 36.16-18; Jones C.P. (1978) pp.6-63.
[170] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.7.
[171] Diod. 2.2.
[172] Ktesias 13.20-22 F 688 (Jacoby).
[173] Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.4-6, 4.4.18-22.
[174] Since the Greeks cities were established in the territory of the native tribes (Xen. *Anab.* 5.3.2, 6.1.15, 6.2.1-2 etc.), the Greeks and the natives could be regarded as "the people who inhabited Pontus". The documents of the Persians seem to have made geographical references. The Persepolis texts might have mentioned as Ionians not only the Greeks but the total of the autochthonous residents of Asia Minor; 'Ionian' might have designated an inhabitant of Western Asia Minor, but not necessarily a Greek [Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) pp.183-184].
[175] Hdt. 3.91-92; Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.24, *Cyrop.* 4.4.8.

warriors of the Euxine. By comparison, control of the rest of the coastal area of Pontus was unnecessary.

Although geographical factors[176] limited the exercise of Persian control, and most cities maintained their own institutions, language and manners, the authority of the Great King implies stability. In addition, the connection of the Pontic coasts with the Persian road which linked Susa, Ankara and the Aegean, facilitated long-range communications. As a result, trade prospects and intercultural[177] contacts increased. Craftsmen from all over the empire were used in construction works and in state workshops,[178] a factor which promoted architectural and artistic syncretism. For example, the excavated ceremonial reception-hall of Erebuni (Armenia) was similar to a Persian *apadama*, while early (end of the sixth - beginning of the fifth century B.C.) tomb wall paintings near the locality of Elmah in Turkey combined Greek, Anatolian and Persian elements.[179] Cappadocia also seems to have borrowed Persian elements in its architecture and art.[180] These influences would have been excellent propaganda: they were an indirect reminder of the stability and prosperity that Achaemenid rule could offer, without emphasising the political implications of Persian conquest.

The coins of Heracleia, Amastris and Sinope reveal the Persian influence on Pontus.[181] The silver coins of Dionysius, the tyrant of Heracleia (around 337-305 B.C.), were staters of a local standard, but sometimes they are assumed to have been "reduced Persian".[182] His widow, Queen Amastris, issued similar standards. The first coinage of the city of Amastris showed a head of Mithras in Persian head-dress and, on the reverse, a seated female deity carrying either Anaitis, Nike or the Tyche of the town of Amastris. The inscription *Amastrios Vasilisses* on the coins attests to the self-confidence of Amastris and the choice of types proudly proclaims her Persian origins and her royal descent from the House of the Achaemenids.[183] The main coinage of Sinope consisted of drachmas of Aeginetan weight with the head of the

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[176] Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.20.
[177] The appointment of non-Persian and non-indigenous administrators (Arrian *Anab.* 2.1.5; Hdt. 5.27) as well as mass deportations (Hdt. 5.12, 5.17) also assisted cultural exchange.
[178] Curtius Rufus 5.5; Diod. 17.69.
[179] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.300.
[180] ibid.
[181] For the survival of the Persian influence, see also: Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.24, 4.5.35; Chapter 1 pp.34-35, 37-40; Chapter 4 pp.121-127, 129.
[182] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.95.
[183] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.95-96.

local nymph Sinope, or an eagle standing on a dolphin. Around the second half of the fourth century B.C., an issue added in Aramaic the name of Ariarathes, the future founder of the royal dynasty of Cappadocia; as the Persian satrap of Great Cappadocia, Ariarathes struck his coins as Persian shekels, and he did the same with the silver issues of Gaziura in Pontus.[184]

Despite the cultural influences, evidence indicates that the Greek cities had enjoyed a relative autonomy and independence.[185] Heracleia refused to pay tribute to the Delian League due to its friendly relations with the Great King.[186] Such an incident seems to have indicated that the Greeks of Pontus were satisfied with the current political situation. They appear to have held greater autonomy than the Ionian Greeks.[187] It might have been possible that the Great King gave Greeks of Pontus the privilege of self-government, as he did with the Babylonians,[188] the Sardians and other Lydians.[189] The silence of the sources indicates that the cities had not expressed feelings of resentment towards the Persian garrisons within their walls, the Iranian soldiers near their city-walls or the Persian administrators and treasurers.[190] According to Xenophon, 'the Greeks who dwelled by the sea' made a special agreement with Cyrus, i.e. to pay tribute to him, and serve in his army but receive no Persians within their walls.[191] Since the Greeks of Pontus had Persians within their city, Xenophon might have been referring to the coastal natives who had already received the lustre of Hellenism. The Achaemenid practice of holding each province as an independent socio-economic region with its local social institutions and internal structure resulted in the autonomy of the Greeks and the limited presence of the royal authority over Pontus.

The lack of firm Persian political control over the cities was more evident over the local tribes of Pontus. As might be expected, the Persian conquest around the sixth century B.C.[192] left cultural traces. The interpreter of the 'Ten Thousand' was able to communicate with the mountain village-people in Persian.[193] Additionally, the

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[184] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.96.
[185] Strabo 12.3.6, 12.3.11.
[186] Justin 16.3.9.
[187] Maximowa M.I. (1956) pp.96-97; Burstein (1976) p.27.
[188] Arrian *Anab.* 3.16.3-4.
[189] Arrian *Anab.* 1.17.3.
[190] Thuc. 8.108; Xen *Cyrop.* 8.8.20; Chapter 1 p.34 (gazophylakia).
[191] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4.4.8.
[192] Hdt. 3.90, 7.78-81. The Persians had followed the Assyrians. King Ninus appears to have been the first conqueror of the Anatolian tribes (Diod. 2.2).
[193] Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.10, 4.5.34.

religious practices of the Armenians and the Cappadocians became almost identical to those of the Persians.[194] The cultural effect of Persian rule would have advanced gradually, with the integration of local cults and practices. The Anatolians of the area do not seem to have experienced any drastic changes in their lifestyle. The native tribes appear to have maintained their autonomy.[195] Their village communities around Pontus and Cappadocia were compatible with the religious beliefs[196] and the administrative structure of the Achaemenid Empire.[197] As a result, the Persians preserved, rather than destroyed, them. Despite linguistic and religious influences, the tribal chiefs continued to govern their peoples much as they had done before becoming subjects of the Persian Empire. The Paphlagonians voluntarily recognised the authority of Cyrus[198] and they received, in return, the privilege of not having a satrap.[199] Some other tribes, like the Taochi, the Carducians and the Chaldaeans, were not subjects of the King.[200] The Bithynians were hostile to the Persian satrap,[201] but they occasionally served as mercenaries in the Persian army.[202] Being a mercenary was an occupation and it had no connection with ethnic loyalty. In a similar manner, Greek mercenaries fought with Dareius against Alexander the Great.[203] Some native tribes offered strenuous resistance to the passage of the 'Ten Thousand' on their own account.[204] Likewise, the Iberians were not subjects of the Medes or the Persians, but chose to befriend Mithridates.[205] The native tribes appear to have rejected enslavement[206] and any kind of imposed foreign control, but they offered their friendship and loyalty voluntarily.[207] This loose Persian control lends validity to the statement of Mithridates VI, when he had maintained that he made subjects of people who had never experienced foreign domination.[208]

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[194] Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.35; Strabo 15.3.15; Chapter 4 p.120.
[195] Xen. *Anab.* 7.8.25 (probably the contribution of a later editor).
[196] Mithra was the protector of "village settlement and (of) healthy village habitation" [*Yasht* 10.4.15 Malandra W.W. (1983) p.60].
[197] Raditsa L. (1983) p.110.
[198] Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.8.
[199] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.6.8.
[200] Xen. *Anab.* 5.5.17.
[201] Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.2.
[202] Xen. *Anab.* 4.3.4, 4.4.18.
[203] Arrian 1.12.8, 3.23.8-9.
[204] Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.8, 4.1.10-11, 4.1.16.
[205] Plut. *Pomp.* 34.
[206] Xen. *Anab.* 4.7.13-14.
[207] Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.8, 5.6.8, 6.1.2-4.
[208] Justin 38.7.2.

It might be assumed that Pontus existed neither as an individual satrapy nor as a kingdom in Persian times but seems to have been officially part of Cappadocia.[209] Pontus is not mentioned in any of the lists of subject people put up by the Persian Kings, indicating the limitations of the Persian power. However, the persistence of names, place-names and Iranian sanctuaries and traditions attest to the presence of Iranian communities in Asia Minor from the sixth century B.C. until the Roman Empire.

The Achaemenids created military colonies, and they allotted land to their civilian servants and retired soldiers on the borders of the empire. The inhabitants of these colonies were mainly formed from people with Iranian origins (Persians, Hyrcanians and Bactrians).[210] The Hellenistic kings, the Romans[211] and later the Byzantine Emperors continued to establish colonies with a view to using the colonists for military duties. The settlers were usually allotted plots on the royal land; their settlement was paid for out of the royal treasury, and the king appointed their military officials.[212] By the time of Alexander, numerous Iranians lived in the Persian satrapies of Asia Minor. Major and minor Persian administrative, military and religious officials, their families and households were in every province of the empire, including the south shores of the Black Sea. The rise of the (Persian) Mithridatic Dynasty seems to have indicated their presence. Mithridates Ktistes would have established himself as the founder of an independent monarchy[213] in the area of Pontus-Cappadocia because of the considerable numbers of Persians in the area.[214] Amaseia might have become the first capital of the Mithridatids, not only for its natural defences,[215] but also for the wealthy noble Persian landowners and priests who

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[209] App. *Mith.* 8. In antiquity, the geographical areas of Pontus and Cappadocia appear to have been fused; even today, it is difficult to place definite borders between them. The so-called 'kingdom of Pontus' reportedly started in Cappadocia and a joint Cappadocian-Pontic dynasty came into existence for political and military purposes (App. *Mith.* 9, 12; Justin 38.5.6). The ancient authors frequently referred to Mithridates as "the Cappadocian" and to his supporters as "the *Cappadokizontes*" (Athen. 5.215b, 5.212a; App. *Mith.* 61).

[210] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.300.

[211] Strabo 12.3.11.

[212] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.230. A similar policy is attested to the medieval epic Digenis Akrites [1048-1052 Mavrocordatos J. (ed.)].

[213] Chapter 2 pp.53-57.

[214] Raditsa L. (1983) pp.106-107; Reinach T. (1890) p.13.

[215] Strabo 12.3.39.

lived in the fertile valleys of the area, "the plain of a thousand villages".[216] In times of danger and crisis, they seem to have provided the necessary loyal manpower.

The numerous royal[217] *gazophylakia*[218] (fortified treasuries) of Pontus seem to have been remainders of an effective Persian system. The title *ho peri aulen gazophylax*[219] (the head of the royal treasury) in the Bosporan Kingdom (first century A.D.) attests to the efficiency of the old Persian models and of the influence of Mithridates VI. The division of the Moschian country into *skiptouchias*,[220] which corresponds to the rank of Persian *sceptuchi* (sceptre-bearers), indicates a similar influence. In the Bosporan Kingdom, the governors of the districts situated on the royal land had the double role of commanding the troops and supervising the exaction of taxes.[221] Since Mithridates VI had had under his control the Bosporan kingdom since the late second century B.C., it appears possible that he had introduced, or even forced, similar land-tenure practices. If the models mentioned above originated from the Mithridatic kingdom and the Persian patterns, a similar system which linked a centralised land organisation to the military-administrative scheme would also be expected in Pontus.

As in most of the administrative and military institutions of the Mithridatic Kingdom,[222] the patterns of land ownership followed Persian practices.[223] In theory, the land was divided into temple, royal and polis land. Nevertheless, in practice everything was under the authority and at the mercy of the king.[224]

The long-established, Iranised temple estates of Pontic Comana and Zela were closely linked with the king and his authority.[225] The Mithridatids respected and honoured them. They secured the support of the priesthood by offering them special

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[216] Raditsa L. (1983) p.111. For the importance of the village for the Achaemenids, see: Chapter 1 p.32.
[217] Strabo 12.3.28.
[218] The Iranian word 'gaza' means 'treasure' (Theophrastos *Historia Plantarum* 8.11.5).
[219] *CIRB* 45, 49 apud Saprykin S.Y, Maslennikov A.A. (1996) pp.6-7.
[220] Strabo 11.2.18.
[221] *CIRB* 36 apud Saprykin S.Y., Maslennikov A.A. (1996) pp.6-7.
[222] These institutions will be examined in Chapter 2.
[223] "Persian practices" indicate the system that the Achaemenid kings followed. This distinction is necessary since many western scholars hold the opinion that the social structure of ancient Iran saw no essential changes during the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid periods. For more details, see: Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) pp.176-177.
[224] The enlightening article of Saprykin S.Y. and Maslennikov A.A. (1996) contains a detailed bibliography (mostly in Russian) concerning the land tenure and land organisation of the Mithridatic kingdom. My intentions are not to re-analyse or criticise these issues, but to establish the notion that the land tenure and organisation of Pontus was closely related to the Eastern (Persian-Anatolian) practices and it included special conditions for the Greek cities of the coast.
[225] Strabo 11.14.16, 12.3.32, 12.3.37; Raditsa L. (1983) pp.107-110.

privileges.[226] Apparently, it was easier to control the management and the possessions of the religious communities when they granted a relative autonomy to the priesthood. The uncultivated or unused land might have also been included in the temple land. It appears that ancient Anatolian traditions allocated the usually uncultivable mountains to a deity.[227] A range of mountains was considered as a divine boundary which separated country from country and people from people. Probably, from this convention came the principle which was still in use in Anatolia during the 1900s that uncultivated or unused land does not constitute legal property, so the owner must make use of his land.[228]

Inscriptions from Panticapaion and Gorgippia attest to the existence of royal land and royal governors.[229] Pontus lacks similar inscriptional and archaeological evidence, but it might be assumed that the kingdoms of the Hellenistic era observed similar land tenure legislation. The Persian origins of the Mithridatids[230] and the organisation of their kingdom[231] reveal an eastern character. Tradition and convenience would have encouraged the Mithridatic dynasts to follow the profitable practices of the Achaemenid kings. Accordingly, any newly-seized lands would have belonged to the king, who distributed it to members of the royal family, his friends, table companions, and the like.[232] The people who held these lands might have provided a certain number of troops and armies during the time of war.[233]

It is not easy to describe a *polis*-controlled territory beyond its walls, but it seems to have been comparable with that of a mainland Greek city-state. The 'Ten Thousand' took ships from the city of Heracleia to reach the boundary between the territory of the city and Thrace;[234] the city of Amisus possessed Themiscyra and Sidene in addition to its territory.[235] An expanded city-territory would also better explain the Greek influence in the neighbouring non-Greek communities. As happened with the temple land, in theory, the city land was under the supervision of the city administration, but in practice, it appears to have been under the sovereignty

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[226] Strabo 12.3.32. This practice was also followed by the Romans (Chapter 5 pp.152-153).
[227] See also Chapter 4 (p.121) for the Anatolian perceptions of the mountains. The native inhabitants of the Causacus region seem to have had similar perceptions (Philostr. *VA* 2.5).
[228] Ramsay W.M. (1928) p.11.
[229] Saprykin S.Y., Maslennikov A.A. (1996) p.1.
[230] Chapter 2 p.50.
[231] The organisation of the Mithridatic kingdom is examined in Chapter 2.
[232] Hdt. 8.85, 90.
[233] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.8.20.
[234] Xen. *Anab.* 6.2.16, 6.3.16(14).
[235] Strabo 12.3.14.

of the king. Since Hellenistic tradition proclaimed that the word of the king was law,[236] the king was the supreme landowner of the state. It might be expected that his men would have also been invested with a similar authority over the territory entrusted to them.[237] Garrisons of royal soldiers in the city and a system of fortifications guaranteed the royal control. The writings of Appian[238] illustrate the main principles of the construction of the fortifications of Mithridates VI, and according to Strabo,[239] Diophantos used the same principles in Eupatorium. The cities of Pontus would have erected similar defensive constructions. A Greek inscription from the Mithridatic era has been discovered on the rock of the fortress of Gaziura, where a subterranean gallery descends from the rock to the interior of the mountain and perhaps served as a secret depository for the royal treasures.[240] The utilisation of the terrain for defensive purposes can be clearly seen in the Pontic region.[241] Staircases and tunnels cut into the rock have been preserved on the site of the fortifications of Hellenistic times.[242] Many fortified citadels and settlements had water tanks cut into the rock and wells with underground passages and descending staircases.[243] They might have been used for cult purposes,[244] but they would also have become very useful in the event of a siege. Strongholds,[245] isolated fortified tower-houses,[246] estates with tower fortifications[247] and rural military and administrative settlements[248] eliminated the desire of the poleis for greater independence, subdued the local villagers and protected the country in case of foreign invasion.[249] It is natural to assume that when Mithridates VI was making preparations for the war against Rome,[250] he settled the recruited allied barbarians and those groups who facilitate the troops (road-makers, baggage carriers, and the like) in such military – administrative settlements. In the event of city disobedience, the king could make use of the fortifications as the stronghold of his power. Such settlements might have

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[236] Chapter 2 p.47.
[237] Strabo 12.2.9.
[238] App. *Mith.* 40.
[239] Strabo 7.4, 7.2, 7.3 7.4.2.3.
[240] Anderson JG.C. (1903) pp.69-72.
[241] Strabo 12.3.39.
[242] Anderson J.G.C. (1903) pp.42-45.
[243] Strabo 12.3.38.
[244] cf. Chapter 4 pp.123, 124 n.142.
[245] Strabo 12.3.28.
[246] Strabo 12.3.16, 12.3.33.
[247] Plut. *Eum.* 8.
[248] For architectural and technical information, see: Saprykin S.Y., Maslennikov A.A. (1996) p.2.
[249] Strabo 12.3.28; *LSJ* s.v. *Synoria.*

been one of the main reasons for the stable relations of the King with the Bosporan cities, which remained loyal to him up to the end of the Third Mithridatic War. The successors of Eupator continued to strengthen royal power by using the royal lands and fortified settlements. Such strongholds enabled them to manoeuvre between the cities and the barbarian tribes, reinforcing their positions in the struggle for the throne and opposition of the increased Roman control.[251]

The Mithridatids did not entirely rely on strongholds and garrisons for the control of the cities. Mithridates VI appears to have treated the (Greek) coastal cities differently from the villages of the natives. His conduct might be seen as an attempt to eliminate discontent and prevent potential insubordination or rebellion. In particular, the so-called *Eupator's Inheritance Law*[252] gave to the citizen body the right to inherit the fortune and the plots of land of those who died without heirs. An honorary degree to Apollonius, a citizen of the Cappadocian city of Anysa near Mazaca,[253] indicates that the *polis* had no right to take over the plots of land of heirless citizens without the knowledge of the king. The role of the King was significant, since he could confirm or repeal the *Law* for a particular polis at any given time. The confirmation of the decree would have given to the city an increased sense of self-government and autonomy.[254] Its reversal would have expressed the displeasure of the King or his desire to increase his own property. *Eupator's Inheritance Law* could be seen as a controlled and limited expansion of the judicial rights of the citizens. Since it involved mainly the coastal (Greek) cities of the kingdom, it appears to have been one of the most effective and direct philhellenic policies of Mithridates VI in Pontus.[255] Overall, the immense royal authority seems to have undermined the importance of the cities; however, until the first century B.C., the land organisation and tenure of Pontus combined Eastern practices and philhellenic decrees which underlined the importance of the Greek – city culture in the Mithridatic kingdom.

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[250] App. *Mith.* 69, 119; Justin 38.3.7.
[251] Strabo 12.3.38-39.
[252] For a thorough analysis, see: Saprykin S.Y. (1991).
[253] Saprykin S.Y. (1991) pp.181-197; Raditsa L. (1983) p.112.
[254] cf. Chapter 1 p.31.
[255] For the philhellenic policy of Mithridates VI Eupator, see: Chapter 2 pp.44-45; Chapter 3 pp.84-85.

Vestiges of the Iranian language[256] also attest to the influence of the Persian communities in the area. For example, the traditional musical instrument of Pontus, the *lyra*, is also known as *kementzes*, the Persian *kamantché*, "the principal *boxed* instrument of Iranian music".[257] Many of the native Anatolian tribes of Pontus would have used an Iranian-based language and maybe for this reason, the 'Ten Thousand' were able to communicate with them in Persian.[258] Although Greek appears to have been the most widely spoken language of the Kingdom, it is a historical fact that the Eastern-Iranian tongue was not swept away. It continued to exist as an important element in the development of the Pontian dialect-language.

In Pontus, there was constant intercourse between the Greek colonists and the indigenous population who came to the port towns to trade.[259] Along with the products of their land, they also brought knowledge of arts and crafts and the Anatolian names for them. Also, their lack of (Greek) education meant that they preserved their folk culture and language for longer periods. As a result, the Greek language came to incorporate Anatolian words, such as the word for steel.[260] In the Mithridatic kingdom, Greek might have been the trade and administrative language but the kingdom was multi-tongued.[261] In Pontus, Greek never was a 'national language' and it was never imposed on the people as one. As Jonathan Hall maintained, 'national language' is an invention which has rarely precede the 19th century A.D. and which owes its existence not only to linguistic but also political, geographical, historical, sociological and cultural factors.[262] Mainland Greece itself had no standardised 'national' Greek language before the third century B.C., and even then it is doubtful that the *koine* really qualified for this title.[263] The introduction of

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[256] As with the land-tenure, this work will not involve linguistic research or analysis of the Pontian language. Linguists who have dealt, and still deal, with it, take it for granted that it is a sub-group of the Greek language. Despite the expected non-Greek influences, Greek predominated. By referring to diverse linguistic traditions, an attempt is made to underline that the Pontian dialect also contains Persian-Eastern elements which were incorporated in antiquity.

[257] A Musical Anthology of the Orient – Unesco Collection. Edited by the International Music Council under the direction of Alain Daniélou. In his commentary on Persian music, Daniélou underlines the similarities between the music of Iran and ancient Greece. He remarks: "Iranian music... is modal but in its conception of development by tetracords and in its intervals, it seems to be more closely related to the ancient Greek music. It remains probably the last representative of a musical system to which Plato and Aristotle attributed an almost magical power of expression".

[258] Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.10, 4.5.34.

[259] Chapter 1 pp.26-27.

[260] Chapter 1 p.14.

[261] *De Vir. Illustr.* 76.2-3.

[262] Hall J.M. (1997) p.85.

[263] Plato *Apology* 17d, *Protag.* 341c. All varieties of Greek spoken today (with the exception of Tsakonian) derive from the Hellenistic *koine*, a relatively unified kind of Greek. It was developed

Greek as the official language of the kingdom would simply have been an acknowledgement of a *de facto* situation. In most of the Mediterranean world, middle class people tended to learn Greek in order to communicate with their customers, employees or assistants. Even prior to Achaemenid rule, some regions of Asia Minor were under the strong influence of Greek culture, and so as a result, the Greek language seems to have played a dominant role. For example, many Lydians had a good knowledge of Greek and adopted many elements of Greek culture.[264] Scylax published his work in the Greek language, most probably because he wanted to make it accessible to a larger reading public. Similarly, the brother of Artemisia, Pigres, wrote verses in Greek.[265] In the Persian Empire, many satraps and civil servants adopted the Greek way of life and language, which soon became widely used alongside the local languages.[266] It might be suggested that the local tribes and Persian civil servants of Pontus followed a similar policy, although no specific evidence exists from the area. It might be further supposed that people with a Greek education had more and better opportunities for financial development in the newly founded kingdom of Mithridates. A Greek education and the knowledge of Greek would have been prerequisites for those who were pursuing employment in state administrative positions and those who were engaged in lucrative enterprises. Non-Greeks would have been able to acquire important positions as long as they spoke and appeared Greek. It might have been the fear of 'being left outside' that led some of the members of the higher social classes towards a quick Hellenisation.

Today, many people assume that certain eastern words in the Pontian dialect-language originate from the Turkish, instead of the Persian language. Indeed, the two languages have internal and external relations which were acquired after centuries of contact between the two peoples. Terzopoulos[267] has demonstrated that many Greek words were incorporated into the Turkish via the Persian language. For example, the Greek *sandalon* or *sandalion*, became the Persian *sandal* and was then transformed

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throughout the Greek-speaking areas which incorporated mainland and island Greece as well as parts of the Balkans, southern Italy, Sicily, Asia Minor, Middle East and North Africa. This 'common language' might have assisted Hellenisation, but it appears to have supplanted the ancient Greek dialects which differed considerably from one another [Mackridge P. (1991) p.337].

[264] Hdt. 1.94; Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.31.

[265] *RE* vol.20.2 col.1313-1316.

[266] Diod. 11.60.3-5.

[267] Terzopoulos A.Ch. (1979) p.22.

into the Turkish *sendel.* Many scholars[268] have demonstrated that many of the non-Greek Pontian words derive from the Persian and not the Turkish language.

The dialects which lie furthest away from their geographical or administrative centre tend to be the most conservative. They preserve many features from the earliest stages in the development of that language which have disappeared in the geographically or administratively central dialects. If a particular dialect is geographically separated from the other dialects of the same language, as happened with the Pontian dialect-language, it is likely to retain even more archaic features.[269] Pontian contains more archaic words and characteristics than any other modern Greek dialect.[270] For example, *nostos* (tasty) from the ancient Greek *eu* + *nostos*, *onon* (egg) from *oon*, *anespálo* (I forget) from *ana* + *sphallo* and *ksigala* (yoghurt) from *oxy gala* (sharp milk).[271] The very place-names of Asia Minor show a similar continuity and persistence. Greek documents and inscriptions were the almost unique source of the indigenous onomastics during the Greek and Roman periods. The modern names of many cities, villages, plains, rivers and capes have preserved their ancient names, which makes their identification easier. Around the 15$^{th}$ century A.D., the prevailing language of Asia Minor came to be predominantly Turkish, but most ancient place-names underwent Turkish linguistic adaptation without losing their original form. For example, the ancient site of *Arhelais* in Cappadocia became *Aksaray* or *Ak-Seray*, *Herakleia* became *Eregli* and *Ionopolis* changed into *Inebolu* (or *Inepoli*).[272]

The invasions of the Seljuk Turks into Asia Minor around the 11$^{th}$ century A.D. further intensified the differences between the Pontian and the rest of the Greek dialects.[273] Between the 11$^{th}$ and the 16$^{th}$ centuries A.D., Pontus was inhabited by Christians, Muslims and Islamised people, some in a superficial way (cryptochristians) others totally. They all continued to speak the Pontian dialect-language. However, its survival in modern Turkey does not appear as an argument for the so-called, 'indisputable' existence of cryptochristians. The Pontian-speaking

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[268] e.g. Hemmerdinger B. (1969); Samouilidis Ch. (1992) p.292; Symeonidis Ch.P. (1975-1976) pp.248-252.
[269] Mackridge P. (1991) p.337.
[270] Parharidis G. (1984) pp.114-115; Parharidis I. (1883-1884) pp.121-178; Samouilidis Ch. (1992) pp.292-293.
[271] Mackridge P. (1987) p.130. Ironically, the Modern Greek language uses the Turkish word *giaourti* for *yoghurt.* Most of the relevant bibliography is enriched with fine glossaries. Italian and Slavonic words are rare in the vocabulary of the Pontic and Cappadocian languages [Dawkins R.M. (1916) pp.192-197].
[272] Georgacas D.J. (1971) pp.106-120.
[273] Mackridge P. (1991) p.337.

inhabitants of the region of *Of* are renowned throughout Turkey for the quality of their Koran teachers and their strong sense of their Turkish ethnic identity.[274] Over the centuries, without losing its linguistic identity, the Greek language of the Aegean Sea and of the first colonists had steadily evolved. Dio considered that the Olbians did not speak Greek clearly because they lived among barbarian people.[275] Nevertheless, the acquired Anatolian, Persian, Arab, Turkish and Latin words might be regarded as an enrichment of the Greek language and the Pontian dialect-language, rather than a deterioration.[276]

Asia Minor appears to have formed a corridor of historical and cultural importance between Persia, Pontus and Greece. The geographical position of Pontus favoured the survival of archaic Hellenic and Eastern cultural characteristics. The passing of time, the Greek colonising activities and the Persian political and economic stability caused drastic changes to the physical and human environment. The Greek and Persian colonists became 'natives' and formed, along with the Anatolian tribes, the population of Pontus. Before and during the time of the Mithridatic rule, these peoples who were conscious of their different origins and culture had misunderstandings and disagreements. Despite their acknowledgement of each other's significance, they continued to form two worlds; yet both worlds were established in the shared area of Pontus.

[274] Asan O. (1998) pp.25-26; Mackridge P. (1987) p.117.
[275] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.9.
[276] As Mackridge: "All varieties of Greek spoken at present – from Pontian to standard Athenian – have developed out of ancient Greek. And there is no sense in reserving the term 'modern Greek' for the standard language spoken and written in the Republic of Greece. Everyone's mother tongue is by definition a modern language! As for 'corruption', all varieties of Greek spoken today are different from ancient Greek, but this hardly makes them corrupt" [Mackridge P. (1991) p.336].

# Chapter 2

## The Administrative and Military Policy of the Mithridatic Dynasty, especially Mithridates VI

The peninsula of Asia Minor seems to have functioned as a mediator between Asia and Europe. The inhabitants of the region were members of a complex variety of cultural groups which were never united; they never formed a unified *Empire of Asia Minor*, although they were often subjected to a single ruling authority. As a result, there was no *people of Asia Minor*, only various communities which might have shared a distant common origin.[1] Due to its geographical position, the same could be implied for Pontus. The inhabitants of the area had various origins and culture. Although they maintained intercultural and economic exchanges, no one seems to have defined himself through a *Pontic identity*, at least not during the period this thesis examines. After the creation of the Mithridatic Kingdom, whose core appears to have been the mountains of north Asia Minor, the inhabitants of Pontus found themselves in the political, military and diplomatic foreground. Their fate was linked with the fate of their kings, the Mithridatids, despite the internally-defined identity of each individual. The Mithridatids came to be known as the 'Kings of Pontus' from Roman times onwards. They appear to have formulated a rather conventional dogma in order to keep all the popular elements of their kingdom united; everybody was a subordinate of the king to a lesser or greater extent. As a result, the unnamed Pontic culture of antiquity, and consequently the modern Pontian identity, seem to have been greatly indebted to the Mithridatic Kings.

In the Mithridatic kingdom, the individual citizens acknowledged the necessity for Greek education and the rewards of Hellenisation, which were wealth and higher social position.[2] At the same time, they might have seen the Persian origins of the rule of the Mithridatids as a guarantee of order and prosperity.[3] The Mithridatids

[1] The peoples of northwest Asia Minor (Phrygians, Mysians and Bithynians) could be of the same stock as the Thracians [Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 pp.77-78].
[2] Chapter 1 p.38-39.
[3] For the Achaemenid rule as a guarantee of prosperity, see: Chapter 1 p.29. For the relation of the Mithridatic House with the Persians, see: Chapter 2 p.50.

themselves also seem to have acknowledged that their prestige could only derive from their factual or fictional connections with Greece and they behaved to a great extent like the Hellenistic kings of the Macedonian Houses; yet they based their authority on their descent from the Royal House of Persia.[4]

In Hellenistic times, the Greek spirit was only a memory of its glorious classical past. Even so, Hellenistic and Anatolian rulers longed for the respectability of the Hellenic world. It appears that one could be considered to be famous only if he was spoken of in Athens.[5] As a result, the Hellenistic sovereigns created monarchic courts which were Greek in word and thought and the Mithridatids followed this model. The eloquence and multi-language skills of Mithridates VI, as well as his taste for natural science and medicine, would have been derived from his childhood years. He was born and reared in the Greek city of Sinope[6] where he would have been introduced to Greek education and arts.[7] Interestingly enough, it seems that while the Mithridatids desired the respectability of the Hellenistic monarchs, the latter longed for the supreme authority of the eastern sovereigns. For example, the Greek kings of the Seleucid House presented themselves as having one part of their roots in Macedonia and the other in the ancient families of Eastern Iran.[8] Progressive Hellenism seems to have been a necessary way of safeguarding relations with their subjects and of maintaining their authority in their kingdoms. Unfortunately, no primary evidence refers to the impact that the Mithridatic government had on the society of Pontus. However, it might be suggested that the study of the Hellenistic kingdoms may be able to elucidate the relevant issues in the area of Pontus.

The monarchs of the Mithridatic and the Hellenistic kingdoms appear to have had conflicting aspirations. It is impossible that they may have presented themselves as defenders of Hellenism and as sole sovereigns of their domains. No ruler would have liked to be called or even appear to be the enslaver of Greek cities; quite the opposite. For example, after the seizure of Amisus (around 71 B.C.), Lucullus punished his opponent, Callimachus, for destroying the city. The Roman general wanted to appear magnanimous to Amisus and "to show kindness to the Greeks".[9] In

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[4] Chapter 2 pp.50-51.
[5] Plut. *Alex.* 60.
[6] Strabo 12.3.11.
[7] App. *Mith.* 70-71, 112; Plut. *Sulla* 24.2. For the education and upbringing of Mithridates VI, see also: Chapter 3 pp.89-90.
[8] Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 pp.31-32.
[9] Plut. *Luc.* 32.5.

earlier years, an unnamed King of Thrace blinded his own sons, because they fought with the Great King against the Greeks.[10] Mithridates II tried to gain the acceptance of the Hellenic world by assisting Rhodes, when the island was struck by an earthquake in 227/226 B.C.[11] Pharnaces did not hesitate in capturing Sinope in 183 B.C., but he was concerned about his image in the Greek world. Therefore he tried to present a civilised and Hellenised impression by establishing a good relationship with Athens. His sister and future wife of Mithridates IV, Laodice, was honoured by the people of Athens with a statue and an inscription on Delos.[12] Nearly all kings tried to become military allies of mainland-Greek cities or protect the Greeks from Thracian, Galatian or other barbarian attacks.[13] The House of Seleucus played the role of defender of (Greek) civilisation against the Gauls quite successfully, for Antiochus was remembered as *Soter* or *Apollo-Soter*[14] and Apollo and Ptolemy II were presented as fighting these "late-born titans" from the West together.[15]

Many Hellenistic kings appear to have been *philellenes, patrons of science, poetry and art.* A way of expressing an acquired Hellenism appears to have been the donation of presents to Greek cities and temples. The presence of eminent men at the royal court also helped, for it seems to have indicated a love of Greek culture. Ptolemy sent the citizens of Heracleia ships and stones for their acropolis,[16] and after the earthquake of 224 B.C., Prusias, Mithridates and other Asiatic monarchs assisted the Rhodians with corn, timber and money.[17] Mithridates V Euergetes was eager to impress the Hellenic world and therefore he put particular emphasis on Apollo and Delos. This emphasis was rewarded with statues dedicated to him on the island,[18] possibly after the royal donations. The significance of Delos to the Mithridatic dynasty might be justified by the religious and cultural similarities between Mithra and Apollo. The king issued tetradrachms with the deity of Apollo Delios on the

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[10] Aelian. *Var. Hist.* 5.11.
[11] Pol. 5.88-90.
[12] *Ins. Delos* 1555; *OGIS* 771.
[13] The role of Mithridates VI as a liberator and protector of the Greek cities in the Black Sea and mainland Greece will be examined in Chapter 3.
[14] App. *Syr.* 65. The efforts of Antiochus were not in vain since the Galatian raids were restricted to the coast [Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 pp.142-143].
[15] Callim. *Hymn.* 55.174. In reality, Ptolemy II only struggled to control a mutinous contingent of Galatian mercenaries.
[16] Memnon 17 F 434 (Jacoby).
[17] Diod. 5.90.1.
[18] *Ins. Delos* 1557, 1558; *OGIS* 366.

obverse.[19] However, beyond its religious significance, the island of Delos was also one of the wealthiest trade centres of the time. All rulers wanted to be on good terms with the people of Delos. Therefore, the actions of Euergetes might simply have indicated his common sense and practical insight. Furthermore, a Hellenistic or 'barbarian' ruler could earn the title of *philhellen* by inviting, maintaining and supporting learned men in his court. Mithridates VI had attracted to his company philosophers, like Diodorus of Adramyttium and Metrodorus of Scepsis,[20] poets, historians and doctors; he was an excellent orator himself, which was a characteristic of the sophists.[21] During the First Mithridatic War, the tyrants of Athens, Aristion and Athenion, were also philosophers, and they supported the interests of Mithridates in the city.[22] The King frequently used philosophers as his ambassadors, as in his second embassy in Murena[23] or the one to the King of Armenia, Tigranes.[24] The situation seems to have been similar in the court of Tigranes. Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates VI and wife of Tigranes, had attracted to her side the Athenian orator Amphicrates.[25] Nevertheless, the royal philhellenism was confined to the use of Greek scientific thought and to the presents to Greek cities and centres of worship.

The fact remained that the Greeks had abolished kingship from a very early time, replacing the palace with the acropolis and the agora. These public places became the centre of their lives at commercial, military and political levels, in religious, philosophical and educational pursuits. The Greeks lived in an atmosphere of debate. Their city-states upheld the principles of *autonomy*, *autocracy* and *autarchia*, even if these were only empty words by that time. Inside and outside the borders of the country that was later called Greece, the term *polis* became synonymous with the *Greek City*. In Asia Minor, no king could afford to allow a free city-state within his dominion. In the eastern-style despotisms, the principles of government were the principles of the king and they could change accordingly. A city with a will independent of the central power could easily become the enemy

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[19] McGing B.C. (1986) p.40.
[20] Metrodorus of Scepsis was called "the King's father" (Plut. *Luc.* 22.2). See also: Reinach T. (1890) pp.282-283.
[21] Plut. *Sulla* 24.1-3.
[22] For the two tyrants, see: Chapter 3 pp.101-103.
[23] Memnon 26.1 F 434 (Jacoby).
[24] The ambassador of Mithridates to Tigranes was Metrodorus of Scepsis. However, he does not appear to have protected the interests of the 'Pontic King' in the best possible way, therefore he was killed (Plut. *Luc.* 22.2-3). The philosophers also abandoned Mithridates after the battle of Nicopolis in 66 B.C. (Orosius 6.4-5).
[25] Plut. *Luc.* 22.5.

within. In Pontus, Greek cities occupied a great part of the coast. One could expect that their citizens felt an inbred abhorrence of everything that restricted the autonomy of each *polis*; they would also have had the inveterate (although justified) assumption of a higher culture. Cities with such an attitude were bound to form a reactionary element in any obvious form of oriental monarchy.

The expedition of Alexander the Great and the end of the Persian Empire played an important but indirect role in this attitude. According to Appian,[26] Alexander restored Amisus to its democratic form of government. However, it is doubtful whether the Macedonian army exercised such a powerful influence over the districts along the coast of the Black Sea. The rise of the Iranian Royal Houses in the regions of Cappadocia and Pontus might suggest that the two areas preserved their existing system of administration for a longer period than the rest of the satrapies of the old Persian Empire. With that system as a basis, it seems that it might have been easier for the minor principalities and kingdoms to establish themselves. Alexander came to be known as the ruler who tried to consolidate Greek culture with necessarily eastern, mainly Iranian rule. He tried to impose himself as the legitimate successor of Darius in a system of government which was seen as oriental by the Greeks[27] and as divine by the Easterners. This particular form of government had an obviously oriental basis, although the actual deification of kings may have been alien to the Persians. The Achaemenids considered themselves to be the earthly representatives of Ahuramazda. The notion that the Persians deified their own kings seems to have come from Greek and Greek-influenced authors,[28] who mostly based their arguments on the Persian practice of *proskynesis*. In the Greek world, it was felt that the ritual of bowing to the earth in front of the Persian king proclaimed his divine status. Still, it is now widely accepted that the practise of *proskynesis* was a Persian form of greeting which the Greeks misunderstood and thus distorted. Alexander the Great used the institution of oriental – divine kingship and deified himself around 324 B.C.[29] The Great Kings had crowned themselves according to Median, Babylonian and Egyptian

[26] App. *Mith.* 8.
[27] It has been suggested that Ctesias was the first European historiographer who formulated the concept 'Orient'. His description of Persian court life established the association of the term 'Orient' with harems, eunuchs, luxury and intrigues as well as effeminacy [Sancisi-Weerdenburg H. (1987) pp.43-44].
[28] Aesch. *Persae* 153-4; Curt. Rufus 8.5.11; Plut. *Luc.* 28.7, *Them.* 27.
[29] Oikonomidis A.N. (1958) pp.235-237.

custom.[30] Alexander also categorically claimed personal autocracy and demanded total obedience from his subjects at all levels of society.[31] His actions might have been initially misunderstood,[32] yet his *Diadochoi* and their *Epigonoi* not only recognised his efforts but also elaborated on them. Furthermore, the Achaemenids provided stability and security by leaving the development of the economy and transit trade undisturbed. They used the traditional systems of dating, the local methods of administration, the regional measures, weights and monetary systems.[33] Alexander also appears to have followed the Achaemenid practice of utilising the traditional forms of administration and business organisation of the conquered countries. It was expected that anybody with serious aspirations of becoming an absolute ruler, or particularly the ruler of Asia Minor, would have used the institution on which the Persian Empire was based.

Alexander and his successors presented themselves as the liberators of the Greeks of Asia Minor. Still, the monarchy of the Hellenistic rulers became very similar to the despotism of the Achaemenids which it had replaced. It appears that local differences had affected the Hellenistic monarchs; the Seleucids were mainly influenced by Persian customs which had a Babylonian basis and the Ptolemies derived their royal tradition from Egypt.[34] However, the religious beliefs that emerged around 323-273 B.C. assisted in the deification of the Hellenistic kings. Philosophers and eminent men seem to have tried hard and succeeded in finding rationalised religious and philosophical arguments which tended to eliminate the distinction between human and divine. Their justification sanctified the actions, words and personage of the Hellenistic rulers.[35] Antiochus IV adopted the title *Theou Epiphanou* (around 172 B.C.) officially establishing the fashion of adding cult epithets to the name of the king.[36] This fashion was popular, especially amongst the barbarian – Hellenised dynasties. It seems to have emerged as a counter-reaction to the attempts of Rome to undermine the political power of the Hellenistic kingdoms; a powerless king frequently adopted majestic and illustrious names. These names might have promoted the royal virtues (*Nikephorou*, *Nikatoros*, *Dikaiou*, *Eusebous*),

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[30] Chapter 2 pp.48-49.
[31] Bosworth A.B. (1980) pp.14, 17-18, 20.
[32] Arr. 7.6.1-5, 7.8.2, 7.11; Diod. 17.109.2-3; Plut. *Alex.* 71.1-3; Justin 12.5-6.
[33] Peace was so important for the Achaemenids that Darius compelled the Ionians to live in peace with each other (Hdt. 6.42).
[34] McEwan C.W. (1934) pp.30-31.
[35] Aelian. *Var. Hist.* 5.12; Athen. 6 251b; Val. Max. 7.2.13.

feelings (*Philaderphou, Philopatoros, Philometoros, Eupatoros*), or political programme (*Philellenos, Philoromaiou*).[37] As expected, the latter epithets would have been particularly popular with barbarians and minor Hellenistic dynasts. Identification with one of the Greek deities, e.g. *Dionysou*, was less common and for this reason more impressive, as in the case of Antiochus VI and Mithridates VI.[38] The Mithridatic Royal House seems to have based its rule on the reciprocal experiences and influences of the Achaemenids, Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic monarchs.

Despite the numerous similarities, there was a major difference between the Achaemenids and the later monarchs. The Great King usually appropriated the royal title of the specific country he inherited or conquered, which he passed on to his successors. Darius the Great took the title 'King of Kings, King of the countries containing all kinds of men... Media, Elam, Parthia..." and others.[39] When the god Marduk sanctioned the authority of Cyrus II, the latter was called 'King of Babylon, King of the countries'.[40] In Egypt, Cambyses crowned himself according to the Egyptian customs and assumed the title 'King of Egypt, King of the countries'. The Egyptian inscriptions in six broken alabaster vases from Susa and Persepolis referred to Darius II as 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Double crown';[41] the titles of Artaxerxes I on a vase with a quadrilingual inscription, found in the former U.S.S.R. near Orsk, were similar.[42] Every conquered country appears to have been added to the geographical territory of the Persian Empire; the Great Kings subjected the people and assumed authority over cities and all manner of animal and plant life. However, in Hellenistic Asia Minor, official Greek documents referred to the kings with their title and name as 'King Seleucus'.[43] Seleucus was acknowledged as 'king', yet his name had no territorial reference, since he was not the 'King of Syria'. During the Hellenistic period, no king was called by his contemporaries 'King of Egypt or of Asia'.[44] No king wanted to be seen as the enslaver of the Greek cities of his

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[36] Around 169 B.C., the adjective *Nikiphorou* was added to the title.
[37] Mørkholm O. (1991) pp.30-31.
[38] App. *Mith.* 10; Mørkholm O. (1991) pp.30-31. People did not see the deification of Hellenistic monarchs as a violation of the contemporary religious and political beliefs [McEwan C.W. (1934)].
[39] *DB* col.1 11-16; *DNa* 2.8-15, 3.15-30; Kent P.G. (1953) pp.137-138, 119-120; Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.48, 50.
[40] Xen. *Cyr.* 112.
[41] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) pp.90-91.
[42] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p. 176.
[43] Plut. *Dem.* 18.
[44] Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 p.57.

kingdom[45] and it might be possible that the protracted and incessant conflicts allowed no certain, stable geographical borders for any kingdom.

In Pontus, coin inscriptions, like *Basileos Mithridatou, Pharnakou* or *Mithridatou Eupatoros*,[46] referred to the king who issued them rather than to the king of a specific kingdom or area. In the second or first century B.C., coins indicated the name of a city or its citizens but they made no direct reference to a specific king. The coins of Pharnaceia have the inscription *Pharnakeon* (plural), while in the reign of Mithridates VI, the inscription changed to *Pharnakeias*. The reverse of coins, depicting the bust of Mēn and a star, or the bust of Zeus and an eagle, reveals the Persian-Anatolian connections and influences of the city.[47] Still, the inscription *Pharnakeias* seems to have implied a not-entirely-independent-city, since it did not belong to its citizens as was implied with the legend *Pharnakeon* (plural).[48] During the reign of Mithridates VI a more or less uniform coinage of bronze was issued in the various cities of Pontus and Paphlagonia bearing the name of the city, not that of the king.[49] Mithridates Eupator had augmented his authority and felt more confident of his sovereignty than his predecessors. The appearance of the city-name on the coins would have created a feeling of pseudo-independence for the citizens, especially the ones with a Greek background as in Amisus or Sinope. This policy strongly resembles the one practised in the Achaemenid State where the coinage of the satrap and of a particular province existed simultaneously with the royal coins;[50] around the fourth century B.C., autonomous cities and rulers under Persian control locally minted silver coins with different values, particularly in the Mediterranean. However, this money was not intended for the economic needs of the respective satrapies, but for the payment of mercenaries. Compared with the Achaemenid method which indirectly emphasised the importance of the Persian king, the aforementioned coins of Mithridates VI had a rather obvious Greek appearance and influence.

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[45] Chapter 2 pp.43-44.
[46] Head B.V. (1911) pp.500- 501.
[47] Head B.V. (1911) pp.498-499.
[48] cf. Chapter 1 p.21 (numismatic evidence).
[49] Head B.V. (1911) p.502.
[50] In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., satraps, like Cyrus the Younger, Pharnabazus, Tissaphernes, Datames, Tiribazos and Orontes, issued silver coins at their own residences. Sometimes, the satraps were depicted on the coins of their satrapies. Datames, the satrap of Cilicia (376-372 B.C.), was depicted like the Persian king: on his knees with a quiver, holding in his hands an arrow and with a bow in front of him [Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.198]. However, no satrap decided, nor dared, to issue gold coins, even during the frequent uprisings against the king.

The primary sources almost unanimously call the Mithridatids "Persians"[51] and most modern scholars adopt the same point of view.[52] Still, other academics chose to overlook their Iranian origins and they refer to them as *the Pontic kings*. Such references either follow the ancient authors of the Roman period,[53] or they underline the most important geographical area of the kingdom, or they apply modern terminology to an ancient issue. However, it seems important to emphasise that the Mithridatids regarded themselves as Persians and used Persian symbols as their royal emblems. The depiction of Perseus on coins[54] emphasised their noble Persian descent; Perseus was considered the ancestor of the Persian Kings, the creator of the Persian power and the hero who gave to the Persians their name. Mithridates IV struck on his coins Perseus holding a harp and the head of the Gorgon. His almost uniform bronze coinage from Amisus, Cabeira, Comana, Amastris, Sinope, Amaseia, Chabacta and Laodiceia had mythological representations which were derived from the myth of Perseus. The coinage of Amisus and Chabacta also depicted Eupator himself as the hero.[55]

At that stage, it seems that the individual citizens of Pontus had already recognised the Persians as the symbol of order and prosperity.[56] The Mithridatids expected to be accepted by a large number of the inhabitants of their area when they based their authority on their descent from the Royal House of Persia. They presented themselves as the descendants of one of the seven Persians who had killed the Pseudo-Smerdis.[57] The early kings tried to present the kingdom as a gift from Darius. In doing so, they attempted to validate a *de facto* recognition of their rule over the area and to create a feeling of stability. Mithridates VI was confident and ambitious enough to present himself as a direct descendant of Darius.[58] Polybius[59] and most

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[51] App. *Mith.* 9; Diod. 19.40.2; Diog. Laer. 3.25 (Mithridates, son of Orontobates); Tac. *Ann.* 12.18.4.
[52] Griffith G.T. (1935) p.183; Mommsen T. (1909) p.322; Samouilidis C. (1992) p.28.
[53] Plutarch (*Luc.* 31.7) reported that the *Pontikos Mithridates* "fled most disgracefully for he could not endure even the shouting of the soldiers". However, here *Pontikos* might have been used in order to underline the barbarian, therefore weak and effeminate, background of Mithridates, according to the Greek perceptions.
[54] Head B.V. (1911) p.502.
[55] Aesch. *Persae* 79-80; Hdt.7.150-152; Seltman C. (1933) p.237; Head B.V. (1911) p.502.
[56] Chapter 1 p.29.
[57] *De Vir. Illustr.* 76.1; Diod.19.40.2; Florus, 1.40.1; Pol. 5.43.2-3. For the story of Pseudo-Smerdis, see: Hdt. 3.61-79.
[58] App. *Mith.* 12; Justin 38.7.1; Sall. *Hist.* 2.85; Tac. *Ann.* 12.18.2.
[59] Pol. 5.43.2-3.

modern scholars[60] were not convinced, although Bosworth and Wheatley have recently supported this theory with success.[61] It does not seem unreasonable to doubt the noble descent of the dynasty from Darius, although most of the native rulers of that time[62] had maintained that they were descended from Cyrus the Great or one of the Seven Persians who did away with the Magus.[63]

The 'Pontic' Mithridatids appear to have been closely connected with the Mithridatids of Cius. The name provides a first, yet not very powerful argument for this. It seems that the appellation *Mithridates* had been one of the commonest throughout the old Persian Empire, from Hellespontine Phrygia and Armenia to the Parthian Empire. A person bearing the name of Mithridates, son of Orontobates, dedicated a statue of Plato to the Academy in Athens,[64] although his relation with the 'Pontic' Mithridatids is questionable. The domains of the dynasty of Cius seem to have included the general area of Mysia, the territory lying in and around Mt. Olympus and Mariandynia.[65] Towards the later part of the fifth century B.C., the region seems to have fallen directly under the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, the family of Pharnabazus with whom nearly all satraps of Asia Minor had contacts, including Ariobarzanes.[66]

Overall, it appears very difficult to link the Mithridatic dynasts with the ruling houses of the Achaemenid and Hellenistic Asia Minor. It has been maintained that Ariobarzanes, the satrap of Phrygia, was related to the ancestors of the so-called Kings of Pontus through the principality of Cius, although this view is not widely accepted.[67] When King Mithridates of Cius died, Ariobarzanes the satrap of Phrygia might have brought under his control the *basileia* of Mithridates.[68] An Ariobarzanes appears to have ruled for twenty-six years[69] over the principality of Cius, although no

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[60] McGing B.C. (1986) p.13; McGushin P. (1992) p.252; Reinach T. (1890) pp.3-4; Walbank F.W. (1957) p.573.
[61] Bosworth A.B., Wheatley P.V. (1998).
[62] Diod. 31.19.
[63] Chapter 2 p.50 n.57.
[64] Diog. Laertius *Lives* 3.25. Reinach considered Mithridates, the son of Orontobates, as the first known dynast of Pontus and Ariobarzanes, the satrap, as his successor. However, no strong evidence link Mithridates, the son of Orontobates, with the Mithridates mentioned by Diodorus [Reinach T.(1890) pp.3-4; Diod.15.90.3].
[65] Bosworth and Wheatley supported the notion that Mariandynia might be the Arrhine or Marine mentioned by Diodorus quite convincingly [Bosworth, A.B., Wheatley P.V. (1998) pp.156-157; Diod. 20.111.4].
[66] Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.28; Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 p.90.
[67] Weiskopf M. (1989) p.30.
[68] Diod. 15.90.3.
[69] Diod. 16.90.2.

evidence suggests whether the particular principality was part or all of his realm. He seems to have held this position around 362/3-336/7 B.C. The work of Diodorus seems to have indicated one ruler with the name Ariobarzanes,[70] yet McGing[71] suggested that Ariobarzanes the satrap took over the principality some time after the death of Mithridates of Cius (362 B.C.) and controlled it until his death in the same year. McGing referred to two rulers with the name Ariobarzanes; the first one was the satrap of Phrygia who died in 362 B.C. and the second one ruled over Cius and died in 337 B.C. He argued that Ariobarzanes, the satrap, could not have been allowed to live or to continue his rule due to his major role in a revolt against the Great King. Although McGing does not suggest it, the second Ariobarzanes might have been one of the sons of the satrap. The eldest of the three sons of Ariobarzanes was called Mithridates and it appears that all three sons had been granted Athenian citizenship, like their father.[72] Bosworth and Wheatley also supported the existence of a second Ariobarzanes.[73] They maintained that Diodorus fused together two homonymous rulers, the known satrap[74] and the ruler of Cius who reigned for twenty-six years,[75] both of whom may have taken part in the revolt. Consequently, it could be assumed that the Great King would not have allowed a leading member of a major revolt to live and rule. It could be suggested that Ariobarzanes, the satrap of Phrygia, had proved himself very useful on Greek matters and that his friendship with the Athenians[76] made him a good ambassador. Thus, it would not have been to the advantage of the Achaemenid Empire to kill such a valuable satrap. However, if Ariobarzanes was simultaneously the satrap of Phrygia and the ruler of Cius, then his successor, Mithridates of Cius, would have inherited the title of his father. Yet no evidence seem to have verified the position of Mithridates as a satrap. In addition, it appears unlikely that after the revolt of 362 B.C., Ariobarzanes was 'demoted' to rule over the domains of Cius[77] and his son succeeded him; the principality of Cius can

[70] Diod. 16.90.2.
[71] McGing B.C. (1986) pp.14-15.
[72] Nepos *Dat.* 4.5, 10.1; Val. Max. 9.11 ext.2; Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.8.4. Although it does not appear a convincing argument, Weiskopf believed the Mithridates mentioned by Nepos was the son of Ariobarzanes because he was the only Mithridates mentioned in the biography [Weiskopf M. (1989) p.33].
[73] Bosworth A.B., Wheatley P.V. (1998) pp.160-161.
[74] Diod. 15.90.3.
[75] Diod. 16.90.2.
[76] Dem. *In Aristocr.* 141, 202.
[77] Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 pp.90, 96-97.

hardly be described as small or insignificant.[78] Under these circumstances, it seems that Ariobarzanes the satrap was defeated and executed by 360 B.C.;[79] no king would have pardoned his infamous betrayal which was spoken of for many years.[80] Therefore, it would be impossible to equate him with Ariobarzanes who ruled until 336/7 B.C.

Ariobarzanes was succeeded by the so-called Mithridates of Cius. He appears to have reigned for thirty-five years, between 336/7 and 301/2 B.C.[81] After he was slain in the area,[82] the dynasty of Cius was continued by his son who was also called Mithridates. He ruled for thirty-six years[83] and the dates of his sovereignty could be speculated as being between 301/2 to 265/6 B.C. This Mithridates seems to have been the one who was later called Mithridates I Ktistes (around 281-280 B.C.). He established himself as the founder of the royal dynasty of the Mithridatids over the areas of Cappadocia and Pontus. Authors of the Roman era gave them the title 'Kings of Pontus', after the region became an administrative district of the Roman Empire.[84] The story about the escape of Mithridates from the court of Antigonus with the assistance of the Seleucid prince Demetrius might be a genuine historical event.[85] It would not have been impossible if Antigonus realised that the ambitious Mithridates was a potential troublemaker and wished to put him to death but the latter managed to escape. Still, the story seems to have had a double function; it provided a justification for the events which led to the establishment of Mithridates Ktistes as a king and it accommodated the future greatness of the 'Pontic' House.

The foundation of the Mithridatic kingdom could be seen from a rather 'nationalistic' perspective. Although the Iranian nobility of the Persian satrapies did not necessarily belong to the Achaemenid House,[86] it certainly formed a class distinctively different from the native tribes. The Achaemenid Kings might have utilised the cultural, legal and administrative traditions of the countries they conquered, yet the Persians always occupied a special position in the apparatus of the

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[78] Chapter 2 p.51.
[79] Harpocration s.v. *Ariovarzanes*.
[80] Arist. *Pol.* 5.8.15-16; Val. Max. 9.11 ext.2; Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.8.4.
[81] Diod. 16.90.2.
[82] Diod. 20.111.1-4.
[83] Diod. 20.111.1-4.
[84] Pontus did not exist as an individual satrapy in Persian times (Chapter 1 p.33 n.209). The issue of Pontus under Roman control will be examined in Chapter 5.
[85] App. *Mith.* 9; Bosworth A.B., Wheatley P.V. (1998) pp.162-164.
[86] Briant P. (1996) p.338.

state. The administration of the empire frequently needed and employed the services of native inhabitants, yet the most important military and civilian posts were still entrusted to Persian hands.[87] This nationalistic distinction appears to have decreased considerably with the arrival of the Macedonian conquerors. When one speaks of 'the problem of the native races under the Greek rulers', it would be safe to assume that the non-Greek people, from the Anatolian tribes to the Iranian upper-class society, were considered as native population. For the Iranian nobles, self-preservation required either their allegiance to any of the Macedonian rulers or the formation of independent principalities, like those of Bithynia and Paphlagonia. Mithridates of Cius chose the first by joining Eumenes and Antigonus,[88] while his son could be seen as having bypassed the foreign Macedonian yoke by forming the principality which became the independent Mithridatic kingdom.

On the one hand, the actions of Mithridates I seem to have been an internal problem of the Seleucid kingdom. Appian[89] suggested that initially, the actions of Mithridates I were not taken very seriously. He remarked that the young king took advantage of the *ascholia* of the Macedonians to expand across Cappadocia and the neighbouring countries. In the Loeb edition, the relevant passage is translated by H. White as "in consequence of the embarrassment of the Macedonian power"; however, *ascholia* could also mean *(pre-)occupation.*[90] It seems that Mithridates I took advantage of the constant competition and infighting among the Macedonian Houses and of their attempts to subdue the aspirations of the Greek cities to independence and autonomy.[91] These preoccupations did not enable the Seleucids to pay him the proper attention. Thus, they involuntarily gave him the opportunity to expand across Cappadocia and towards the Black Sea.[92] The Seleucids appear to have realised their mistake in failing to detect the growth of a potential rival only when it was too late.

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[87] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.116.
[88] Diod. 19.40.
[89] App. *Mith.* 9.
[90] *LSJ* s.v. *ascholia.*
[91] Bevan E.R. (1902) vol.1 pp.172-173.
[92] App. *Mith.* 9, 12; Plut. *Dem.* 4.3-4; Diod 20.111.4; Strabo 12.3.41. Cappadocia was not an individual satrapy in the list of Herodotus (3.89-97). From a very early stage, some regions of Cappadocia appear to have been considered part of the Mithridatic kingdom to such an extent that Mithridates V was reported to have invaded Cappadocia "as though it were a foreign country" (App. *Mith.* 10). Maybe this was the reason that the part of Cappadocia that Seleucus occupied was called *Cappadocia Seleucis.* Thus, Mithridates and Ariarathes marked out the regions they held (App. *Syr.* 55).

The gold coins that Mithridates I might have issued and his choice of allies seem to have reinforced the independence of the Mithridatic rulers.[93]

On the other hand, it appears possible that the Macedonian House had not failed to see the royal intentions of Mithridates, but simply misunderstood them. Due to the Persian origins of the latter, it might have been believed that he intended to form an area of influence in the same way as the Persian satrapies. Mithridates I might not have intended to create an independent kingdom, when he fled in order to save his life. He might simply have intended to establish a semi-autonomous domain, which would have been under the jurisdiction of the House of Seleucus, but also safe for him and his followers. In Achaemenid history, the Persian king occasionally had similar relations with his satraps. Under Darius, the satraps were the rulers of their domains, like minor kings who were subjects of the Great King. In their own regions, they held supreme power in matters of administration and judicial affairs, while they appear to have had some freedom in striking their own coins.[94] They were also responsible for issues of security and they possessed the right to mint silver coinage.[95] However, they did not have military authority, with a few exceptions concerning the local army.[96] In most cases, the army was under the command of military leaders who were independent of the satraps and subordinated directly to the king.[97] It might be possible that Mithridates I was aiming at something similar. This suggestion appears more plausible since Tigranes[98] and Machares,[99] the sons of Mithridates VI, made overtures to Rome when they acknowledged their defeat. Their acceptance of the power of Rome strongly resembles the submission of satraps to the Great King.[100] However, in contrast with the satraps who had no military authority, Mithridates I realised that he had on his side a strong military force;[101] he became an independent king not only due to his personal ambition but also due to the loyalty and strength of his army.[102]

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[93] Chapter 2 pp.57.
[94] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.96.
[95] Chapter 1 p.31.
[96] Hdt. 3.128.
[97] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) p.101.
[98] App. *Mith.* 104-105.
[99] Plut. *Luc.* 24.1.
[100] Mithridates VI chose to commit suicide rather than conform. He might have had the qualities of an excellent Persian satrap, but the Achaemenid Empire did not exist anymore.
[101] App. *Mith.* 9.
[102] Apollod. 244 F 82 (Jacoby); Dionysius 5a F 251 (Jacoby).

Since its early years, the kingdom of the Mithridatids became so powerful that the Greek cities of the Black Sea asked for its assistance and protection against the barbarians. Even before becoming one of the major opponents of Rome, the Greek cities seem to have respected it, being aware of its strength and the determination of its sovereigns. When Seleucus I[103] and Zipoetes of Bithynia[104] harassed the citizens of Heracleia, they asked for the help of Mithridates I while he was still in the process of developing his newly formed principality.[105] At this early stage, the embassies of the Greek cities suggest, rather than state, a connection between them and the Mithridatic Kingdom. For this reason it is difficult to support any assumptions for the participation of Mithridates I in the Northern League.[106]

The year 280 B.C. is the commonly accepted date for the creation of the Northern League which signified a relationship, most probably a form of alliance, between some cities of the Southern Black Sea coast and some of the Hellenistic dynasts. On the one hand, the presence of Mithridates I as an ally to this coalition of Byzantium, Chalcedon, Heracleia, Teium and Cierus can only be hypothetical.[107] Around 280 B.C., the Heracleiots failed to recover Amastris from the 'Pontic' Ariobarzanes.[108] This clash of interests would have reduced the possibilities of an alliance between Mithridates I and Heracleia or between the King and any league in which Heracleia was an important member. In addition, Mithridates I, possibly Ariobarzanes[109] and the Galatian allied forces fought successfully against Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt.[110] If Mithridates I was allied to the Northern League, he would have provoked the wrath of his associates, since Ptolemy was a great benefactor of the League.[111] On the other hand, the Northern League seems to have had anti-Seleucid origins, since Heracleia helped Ptolemy Ceraunus against

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[103] Memnon 7.1 F 434 (Jacoby).
[104] Memnon 6.3 F 434 (Jacoby).
[105] Memnon 7.2 F 434 (Jacoby).
[106] Magie D. (1950) p.1087 n.36; Memnon 12.5 F 434 (Jacoby); Justin 17; Burstein S.M. (supra n.12) p.145 n.69, p.143-4 n.45.
[107] Memnon 7.2, 11.2 F 434 (Jacoby); Paus. 10.23.14.
[108] Memnon 9.4 F 434 (Jacoby).
[109] At that time, Ariobarzanes ruled over Amastris and he might have been a joint ruler of Pontus, since Mithridates I, his father, was about seventy years old.
[110] Apoll. Aphrod. 14 F 740 (Jacoby); Steph. Byzantii s.v. *agkyra*.
[111] Memnon 17 F 434 (Jacoby). Most probably, Nicomedes had already appointed Ptolemy as one of the guardians of his son. McGing also mentions that Ptolemy presented land, corn, weapons and money to Byzantium when it was under siege by the Galatians, about 279 B.C. [Memnon 14.1 F 434 (Jacoby); McGing B.C. (1986) p.19].

Antigonus Gonatas (around 280 B.C.).[112] Mithridates I started to create his kingdom after the battle of Ipsus and the death of Antigonus. Seleucus I would have disapproved of his actions for Mithridates appears as a constant threat to the existence of the new principality. The League seems to have attracted the attention of Mithridates, because he shared similar enemies with its members. Overall, if he had joined the League, he would have made a shrewd diplomatic move in presenting himself as a defender of the Greeks; if he was not a full member, it might be suggested that he had very close relations with the members of the League due to their mutual enemies.

The newly founded principality asserted its authority by issuing gold coins,[113] considered a mark of undisputed sovereignty. Head attributed no coins to Mithridates I and Ariobarzanes I,[114] yet McGing proposed that the first royal 'Pontic' coins were gold staters of the Alexander type.[115] They depicted the head of Athena and on the reverse, a standing Nike and the inscription *Mithridatou Basileos*. Mørkholm suggested that the first dynastic coinage might be ascribed to Mithridates II.[116] Whichever king issued gold coins, he showed strong signs of independence and his action was not welcomed by the Hellenistic rulers. Around 266 B.C., when Mithridates I died, the kingdom appears to have been firmly established. After Mithridates I or II, the kings seem to have ceased to coin in gold possibly as an indication of their willingness to purchase the friendship of the Seleucids by some formal and indirect recognition of their power.

Ariobarzanes I succeeded his father, Mithridates I Ktistes, around 266 B.C. and died around 250 B.C. Limited information suggests that during his reign, he came into possession of Amastris[117] and got into difficulties with the Galatian mercenaries.[118] The annexation of Amastris furthered the coastal acquisitions of the new kingdom. From the reign of Ariobarzanes onwards, the Mithridatids began to be increasingly involved with the Galatians. In particular, Ariobarzanes I, although reported to be their ally in their war against Ptolemy,[119] was at variance with them in the period leading up to his death. When he died, his son and successor, Mithridates

[112] Memnon 8.4-6 F 434 (Jacoby).
[113] Strabo 12.1.4.
[114] Head B.V. (1911) pp.499-500.
[115] McGing B.C. (1986) pp.19-20.
[116] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.131.
[117] Memnon 9.4 F 434 (Jacoby).
[118] Memnon 24 F 434 (Jacoby).

II, while still only a child, appears to have followed the path of his father.[120] Mithridates II was succeeded by Mithridates III but no definitive dates exist for their reigns. Under the first four kings, the geographical expansion of the kingdom was accomplished in a slow, steady and almost quiet way. Progressively, the Mithridatids became related to the Hellenistic royal families and their disputes, while they also created the image of a growing, important and potentially dangerous power.

After Pharnaces I (around 187-157 B.C.) who succeeded Mithridates III, more evidence illustrates the deeds and history of the 'kings of Pontus'. Although information tends to be rather indirect, Pharnaces appears to have been the first king who was keen to become actively and dynamically involved in Anatolian politics. He seems to have adopted a vigorous policy of systematic aggression with full-scale wars of expansion, instead of the diplomatic and indirect military actions of his predecessors. However, mere ambition and aggression does not necessarily guarantee victory. After the war with Eumenes (183-179 B.C.), the peace terms seem to have implied that Pharnaces was overpowered.[121] The treaty included other parties, like the Armenian ruler Artaxias, Acusilochus and the Sarmatian Gatalus as well as the cities of Heracleia, Messambria, Chersonesus and Cyzicus, which do not seem to have remained neutral. Due to their status[122] and condition,[123] they would have been directly involved in the treaty and they would have taken sides, although it is not evident if they actually fought or whom they supported. When the plans of Pharnaces in Asia Minor were not accomplished, he turned to the north. After the capture of Sinope,[124] the harbour and the extensive trade connections of the city provided the means to extend his influence and control across the Black Sea. Despite the lack of information and the abundance of scepticism, fragmentary inscriptional evidence appears to have suggested that the people of Odessus[125] had asked Pharnaces to assist them in their strife with their neighbouring barbarians. Pharnaces did not succeed in expanding the actual territory of his kingdom to the north; still, his relations with the

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[119] Chapter 2 p.56 n.110.
[120] Memnon 9.4, 16.1 F 434 (Jacoby).
[121] Pol. 25.2. Eumenes, Prusias and Ariarathes fought against Pharnaces and Mithridates, probably the satrap of Armenia (Pol. 25.2.11).
[122] The *autonomoumenes* cities of Heracleia, her colony Chersonesus, Messambria and Cyzicus would have found it in their interests to support each other.
[123] The Sarmatians had helped Chersonesus against the Scythians (Polyaenus *Strat.* 8.56); their assistance might be seen as a good foundation for mutual support and agreement.
[124] Pol. 23.9; Strabo 12.3.11.
[125] *IG Bulg.* $1^2$.40.

Greek cities of the Black Sea might have laid the foundations for the future activities of Mithridates Eupator.

Mithridates IV Philopator Philadelphus (around 157-150 B.C.) was the brother and successor of Pharnaces I. Unlike his predecessor, he followed a conciliatory foreign policy, one of his main concerns being the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations with Rome.[126] In the war of Pergamum, he fought on the side of Attalus II who was an ally of Rome against Prusias II of Bithynia.[127] The uniting of the military forces of Mithridates and Ariarathes under the command of Demetrius, the son or brother of Ariarathes V of Cappadocia, also implies the cultivation and development of close relations between the neighbouring Royal Houses.[128]

Mithridates IV was succeeded by his nephew, possibly the son of Pharnaces I, Mithridates V Euergetes (around 150-120 B.C.). The predecessors of Euergetes appear to have influenced him and in a similar way, he inspired his son, Mithridates VI (around 120-63 B.C.). It has been suggested that the efforts of the latter to present himself as Alexander[129] created similarities between Mithridates V Euergetes and Philip II of Macedon.[130] It appears as if a kind of 'preparation' had existed at the time, although such comments were made retrospectively after the achievements of Mithridates VI. Any such 'preparation' would have been done unconsciously, yet modern analysts tend to consider the coin issues of Euergetes as an intermediate stage between the brutal realism of the portraits of the early 'Pontic' kings and the idealised depictions of Eupator.[131] The policy that he followed seems vague today, due to lack of sources, yet even at the time it was ambiguous as far as his Anatolian neighbours were concerned. Euergetes invaded Cappadocia as a foreign territory[132] but he seems to have been unwilling to occupy the country. Instead, he tried to control it indirectly through intermediaries, a policy that was also pursued by Eupator.[133]

Strabo[134] implied that Eupator was the first King of the Mithridatic House who became master of Armenia Minor and Orosius, a fifth century A.D. writer, called

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[126] *OGIS* 375.
[127] Pol. 33.12.1.
[128] Pol. 33.12.1.
[129] e.g. Chapter 3 pp.86-87, 89-92.
[130] Olshausen E. (1974) p.153; McGing B.C. (1986) p.42.
[131] For the idealised depiction of Mithridates VI in coins, see: Chapter 3 pp.86-87.
[132] App. *Mith.* 10.
[133] Justin 38.1.1. Overall, Eupator tried to present Cappadocia as always belonging to his ancestors (App. *Mith.* 10). For the marriage policy of Mithridates VI, see: Chapter 4 pp.110-112.
[134] Strabo 12.3.1, 12.3.28.

Euergetes, "king of Pontus and Armenia".[135] In particular, when Mithridates VI invaded Armenia and the neighbouring districts, people welcomed him as *homophylon*. They appear to have regarded him as the hereditary monarch, especially when they compared him with the Roman 'newcomers' who maltreated them.[136] Appian and Plutarch enumerated eight 'Pontic' kings starting from the Mithridates who escaped Antigonus and established the kingdom.[137] Appian could be seen to contradict himself, since he mentioned[138] that *hoi* (apparently *Mithridates*) held the power from the first until the sixth, who fought against the Romans. However, it appears that "*hoi* (*Mithridates*)" referred not to the Mithridatids as a whole but only to the homonymous kings. Technically, the dynasty of the Mithridatids continued to exist after the death of Mithridates Eupator with his son, Pharnaces II;[139] yet Plutarch made a valid point when he commented that "at the eighth generation (Mithridates VI) the line was brought to an end by the Romans".[140] The kingdom of the Mithridatids ceased to exist after the death of the greatest of its kings. After the death of Mithridates VI, references were made to 'kings of Pontus' but they were vassal kings who based their authority on the goodwill of Rome. In discussing identity, both the Mithridatic and the Roman elements are taken into consideration, because they left their mark on the culture of ancient Pontus.[141] However, the vassal kings were established by the Romans; even during the rebellion of Anicetus, the rebels did not try to assert their independence from Roman rule but to substitute one Roman Emperor for another.[142] In Pontus, no monarch appears to have managed to follow Mithridates I Ktistes in his achievement of becoming master of a territory, establishing a hereditary dynasty and creating an independent kingdom.

Mithridates VI decided to continue the aggressive (imperialistic) policy of his father so as to extend his kingdom. Thus, it was only to be expected that eventually he would turn to the coastal cities of the Black Sea rim. The direct or indirect control of these areas meant access to unlimited human and material resources;[143] they would prove to be extremely useful during his campaigns against Rome, especially during

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[135] Orosius 5.10.2.
[136] Dio Cass. 36.9.2.
[137] App. *Mith.* 112; Plut. *Dem.* 4.4.
[138] App. *Mith.* 9.
[139] Strabo 11.2.11, 11.5.8; App. *Mith.* 113; *SEG* 30.1448.
[140] Plut. *Dem.* 4.4; Appendix 2 p.191.
[141] The Roman influences will be discussed in Chapter 5.
[142] For the rebellion of Anicetus, see: Chapter 5 pp.161.
[143] Dem. *Lept.* 29-40; Strabo 7.4.6, 11.2.4; Thuc. 3.2.2; *SIG* 1.252; Callataÿ F. (de) (1997) pp.242-244.

the final years of his life. These areas supplied escape routes for him to flee from his pursuers. They would also have supplied the manpower with which he intended to attack Rome from the East, as Hannibal had done earlier from the West.[144] This last idea might be seen as the wild plans of a confused, insane or desperate man. However, it might also have indicated the importance of the resources of the Euxine area, which made such a scheme plausible.

Eupator, like all sovereigns, depended on the excellence of his armed forces. The unity of his kingdom relied heavily on its military and administrative[145] union in order to keep people with different origins and culture within the state structure. These groups appear to have kept their internally-defined identities, as is obvious from the constant references to Galatians, Thracians, Scythians and others who served in the Mithridatic army.[146] During the Mithridatic era, the kings do not seem to have tried to construct an 'ethnic', 'Pontic' identity. However, the retrospective enumeration of 'Pontic troops' as one of the many military divisions of Mithridates VI[147] appears to have underlined the potential for the establishment of 'Pontic' as a community appellation; this would happen though in later centuries.

There is much speculation concerning the constitution of the Mithridatic land and sea forces. Modern historical analysts have never clearly and positively defined the nature of the various terms that ancient authors used in order to describe the armed forces.[148] Even the status of the Greek fighters at the top levels of the military hierarchy has been open to debate. The use of the court titulature indicates their presence,[149] yet their position is not totally clear in the primary sources. Most likely, they occupied the higher military ranks due to their reputation for superior knowledge of strategy which resulted in their expert understanding of military affairs. Most of the *Pontikoi andres* who trained the soldiers of Tigranes[150] would have been from the Greek cities of Pontus. The position of these officers in the Mithridatic armed forces seems vague to us for we lack conclusive information on how Mithridates used to pay his army.[151] Nonetheless, they do not appear to have been mere mercenaries.

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[144] App. *Mith.* 109
[145] These issues have been examined in Chapter 2.
[146] e.g. App. *Mith.* 15, 41.
[147] App. *Mith.* 41
[148] e.g. 'standing army', 'national armed forces', 'reserves, called in times of crisis', 'mercenaries', 'professional soldiers' etc.
[149] Savalli-Lestrade I. (1998) pp.251-253.
[150] App. *Mith.* 87.
[151] cf. Callataÿ F. (de) (2001).

It might be speculated that titles like *ton proton philon* (plural) would have existed from the creation of the Mithridatic Kingdom and they appear to have been commonly established by the time of Mithridates V.[152] The Achaemenid court also had people of similar status; although their Persian title is not known, they acted as the nearest councillors or associates of the Great King.[153] In particular, the sons of noble and highly placed Persians were trained at the royal court to give commands to their inferiors and to be subordinate companions to the future king.[154] In later years, many of them probably reached the position of *friend* (councillor) of the Great King. In Hellenistic times, not all the *friends* of the kings were necessarily soldiers, since they could also hold civil, judicial or medical[155] positions. For example, Dionysius of Athens was a *friend* of Euergetes and the royal official who assisted the citizens of Amisus in matters of justice.[156] A *friend* of Eupator governed Colchis and functioned as *hyparhos kai dioiketes*;[157] others appear to have had secretarial duties.[158] An Athenian tetradrachm (87 B.C.) with the engraving *Aristion filon* (plural)[159] notified everybody of the relation of Aristion to Mithridates VI. It is highly likely that almost all the *strategoi* would have been trusted *friends*, since they would have supplied the army with its highest officers. Archelaus and Neoptolemus were almost certainly *friends* of Mithridates VI. Some of the other generals (Dorylaus,[160] Menophanes,[161] Taxiles,[162] Hermocrates,[163] Eumachus,[164] Menander, Menemachus, Myron[165] and Callimachus[166]) might also be considered as the *friends* of the King.[167] An inscription from Chersonesus described Diophantus of Sinope[168] as somebody who was highly trusted and honoured by the king Mithridates Eupator.[169] From the above, it seems

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[152] Strabo 10.4.10.
[153] Savalli-Lestrade I. (1998) pp.307-321. In Strabo (10.4.10), the term '*ton philon* (plural)' could be translated both as 'friends' and as 'closest associates'.
[154] Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.3, *Cyr.* 5.1.2, 8.6.2-10.
[155] *OGIS* 374; *Ins. Delos* 1573.
[156] *Ins. Delos* 1559.
[157] Strabo 11.2.18.
[158] *Ins. Delos* 1572; *OGIS* 371-372.
[159] *CAH* vol. of Plates 4 p.4 no.e.
[160] Strabo 10.4.10.
[161] Memnon 22.7 F 434 (Jacoby).
[162] App. *Mith.* 70; Memnon 22.12, 22.4 F 434 (Jacoby); Plut. *Luc.* 26.3.
[163] App. *Mith.* 70.
[164] App. *Mith.* 75.
[165] Plut. *Luc.* 17.1.
[166] Plut. *Luc.* 19.2.
[167] Savalli-Lestrade I. (1998) pp.173-186.
[168] *SIG* 1.252, 2.709; Strabo 7.3.17.
[169] Griffith G.T. (1935) p.188; Bagnall R.S., Derow P. (1981) pp.87-88; Savalli-Lestrade I. (1998) pp.175-178.

that nearly all the known *friends* of the Mithridatids were Greeks and, presumably, natives of cities within the Kingdom of the Mithridatids. Even if these *friends* were mercenaries, it is doubtful that they were considered as 'soldiers of fortune'. Their honourable title[170] indicated that they were actually regarded as highly trusted, professional soldiers. The existence of these *philoi* would have been very significant for the Mithridatids, especially for Eupator, because they gave him a supply of good officers for his armies, both the standing and the mercenary one.

Reinach[171] argued that the army of the early Mithridatids was composed almost exclusively of Galatian and Greek mercenaries; he also maintained that Mithridates VI created a national army which he used along with the mercenary one. Griffith[172] dismissed the statement of Reinach, because of lack of evidence; he claimed that the regular standing armies of the Hellenistic Kings usually consisted of soldiers drawn from their own subjects, following the traditional Persian system. During Achaemenid times, the practice was that autonomous states, like Cilicia and the Phoenician cities, as well as allied tribes, like the Arabs, were not exempt from military duties. Only in rare cases were exceptions made for individual tribes, as with some Greek provinces of the Persian Empire; they did not take part in the general war between Greeks and Persians, but they participated as divisions of the Persian army in other wars.[173] Accordingly, Griffith proposed that once the Greek cities became part of the Mithridatic kingdom, the Greek soldiers who served the Mithridatids were not mercenaries. They were "obliged" to do military service at the behest of the king, because they already were, or became, citizens of cities which belonged to the kingdom. However, the interpretation of Griffith is open to dispute. In his opinion, the nature of the 'obligations' of subjects is not known. Furthermore, he appears to have contradicted himself; he mentioned that common practice made it improbable that the Greeks were obliged to serve as soldiers, even in times of crisis. According to him, the conquered people served as soldiers as a form of national duty and not only as an obligation in times of crisis. They were supposed to be the standing army of the Mithridatids.

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[170] Plutarch (*Eum.* 8.7) reported that the leading Macedonian soldiers "were delighted to receive from Eumenes such honours as kings bestow upon their friends".
[171] Reinach T. (1890) pp.264-265.
[172] Griffith G.T. (1935) pp.183-186.
[173] Hdt. 2.1.

The Greeks seem to have been exempted from this duty. The Greeks of Asia Minor, including Pontus, would have been *subjects* (slaves)[174] of the Great Kings, but they seem to have been treated with a great deal more care than the people with Anatolian origins and culture.[175] The Hellenistic and 'Pontic' monarchs were always very concerned with the image they presented to the Hellenic world.[176] In times of crisis, the Greek citizens of Pontus would have been summoned to their duty to defend and fight for their city as citizens but not as *subjects*. Gallatis, Parthenopolis, Tomis, Istrus and Burziaon[177] appear to have supported Mithridates VI against the Romans and for this reason Lucullus might have captured them (around 72/1 B.C.).[178] These cities were not situated in Pontus but they recognised the authority of Mithridates. Numismatic and ceramic evidence reveals the dependence of Tyras on Mithridates VI.[179] On the obverse of Lysimachean type staters from Istrus and Tomis, a portrait in accordance with the fashion of the 'Pontic' Royal House was depicted.[180] On similar coins from Gallatis, a monogram was visible with the letters *MITH*, which could be interpreted as *Mithradates*.[181] The portraiture of Mithridates VI could also be identified on coins from Byzantium and Chalcedon.[182] In addition, the currency of Odessus and Messembria displayed the portrait of Mithridates-Heracles.[183] In many cities of the Black Sea,[184] symbols which suggested Mithridatic influence have been found, like the cornucopia or the eagle standing on a thunderbolt. The inhabitants of these cities could be seen as fighting for the army of Mithridates in times of extreme danger. They were resisting the Romans either because they still believed in the anti-Roman propaganda of Mithridates or because they were afraid of the punishment of

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[174] In the Achaemenid sense of the word, everybody was a *slave* of the Great King including the Persians (Hdt. 7.96). The Greeks had a different perception of the term. They believed that the Persian King inherited these *slaves* from his father (Hdt. 2.1) and, since his word was the law, he had the power of life and death over them. According to the Greek perception, this mentality effeminised them, making them unable to think of themselves as individuals. As has been already discussed, the Mithridatic kingdom was not a miniature copy of the Persian Empire. The Mithridatids used the Eastern institution of divine kingship, but they were directly influenced from the Hellenistic kingdoms.

[175] cf. Chapter 1 p.37 (*Eupator's Inheritance Law*).

[176] Chapter 2 pp.43-45.

[177] Eutropius 6.10.

[178] Another explanation might be that, initially, the west coast of the Black Sea interested Rome more than Pontus itself, probably due to its proximity to the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Illyria.

[179] Belin de Ballu E. (1965) no.156; Golenko K. (1973) p.492 no.88.

[180] *CAH* vol. of Plates 4 p.4 n.i, h.

[181] McGing B.C. (1986) p.58.

[182] *CAH* vol. of Plates 4 p.4 n.f, g.

[183] For Mithridates-Heracles, see: Chapter 3 pp.87-88.

[184] Panticapaeum: *CAH* vol. of Plates 4 p.4 n.m; Head B.V. (1911) p.281. Tyras: Head B.V. (1911) p.273.

the Romans. These reasons suggest that the Greeks who lived in Pontus and the Black Sea area were not part of the standard military force of the King; to defend one's city was different from fighting in the standing army of the Kingdom in annual campaigns.

A suggestion for the origins and culture of the standing army of Mithridates might be that such a military obligation was a 'privilege' reserved mainly for the Persian and Anatolian inhabitants of the kingdom. When Pontus was under Achaemenid rule,[185] some native tribes appear to have participated in the Persian Wars.[186] In the Mithridatic era, the variety and diversity of the origins and culture of the soldiers[187] casts doubts on the existence of a 'national' army. On a totally hypothetical basis, it could be suggested that Eupator promoted the idea of a 'national' military force in his propaganda. Still, the presence of a 'national' army requires the existence of a 'nation', or in this case, a kingdom with internal unity among the numerous groups with different origins and culture; this was not the case. The double standards in the handling of cities and people immediately disproves the image of even a unified Mithridatic kingdom, much less a nation. From the moment that the Greek cities were treated differently from their Anatolian counterparts, the same would have been true for their citizens. The unity of the particular Kingdom was based on the two royal personas, the Hellenic for the Greek and the Anatolian-Persian one for the Eastern inhabitants of the kingdom. The use of these groups as a counterbalance to each other, casts doubts on the idea of a united 'people-nation'.[188]

Mithridates VI appears to have used the native barbarian tribes of the Black Sea rim to increase his revenue. For example, the acquisition of Colchis provided him with an abundance of shipbuilding materials, a major resource for food supplies and gold.[189] Nonetheless, the most valuable thing they offered him was the levy of soldiers from their tribesmen. At the time of the First Mithridatic War, Pelopidas boasted that Colchians, Scythians, Taurians, Bastarnae, Thracians and Sarmatians as well as "all those who dwell in the region of the Don and Danube and the sea of

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[185] For the rule of the Achaemenids over the area of Pontus, see: Chapter 1 pp.29-33.
[186] Hdt. 7.72.
[187] Scythians: App. *Mith.* 41, 79; Justin 38.3.7. Sarmatians: App. *Mith.* 19; Justin 38.3.6. Thracians: App. *Mith.* 41; Dio Cass. 36.9.3-4. Bastarnae: App. *Mith.* 71; Justin 38.3.6; Memnon 27.7 F 434 (Jacoby). Dandarians, a Maeotian tribe: Plut. *Luc.* 16.1. Galatians: App. *Mith.* 41, 46, 109, 111; Justin 38.3.6, 38.4.9. For lists of the 'allied' barbarian tribes, see: Reinach T. (1890) pp.72-75; Griffith G.T. (1935) p.189; Callataÿ F. (de) (1997) p.257.
[188] Reinach T. (1890) pp.264-265.
[189] Strabo 11.2.17-18

Azov"[190] were at the disposal of Mithridates VI. The King also had contacts with the Maeotian tribes of the Dandarians[191] and the Agari.[192] By the Third Mithridatic War, he had added to the aforementioned forces the Chalybes, Armenians, Achaeans,[193] Heniochi, Leucosyrians and the occupants of "the country of the Amazons" as well as the Thracians of the river Danube and of the mountains of Rhodope and Haemus.[194] Most of these tribes did not willingly accept the 'alliance and friendship' of Mithridates and he had to fight to subdue them. Once he did so, they appear to have automatically become his subjects and he had the right to conscript them into his armies. For example, the Sarmatians and Bastarnae were very reluctant to become allies with Mithridates, yet the latter appears to have conquered them through a combination of force and diplomacy.[195] Once he did so, the allied Sarmatian cavalry were distinguished in battle[196] and the allied Bastarnae gained the reputation of the bravest of his troops.[197] He also had to fight and defeat the Scythians in order to protect the Greek cities of Chersonesus and Bosporus.[198] Mithridates called nearly all these native tribes *allies*, which was a more tactful appellation than *subjects*. The Scythian princes, or at least some of them, would have been left with considerable autonomy to rule their tribes, because Scythian manpower was important to him.[199] Perhaps for this reason, when he felt that their loyalty was wavering, he tried to secure their help by marriage alliances.[200]

During the wars with Rome, the levy of the native barbarian tribes must have formed the strongest part of the standing army of Mithridates. Towards the final years of his reign, lack of resources would have forced him to abandon any pretence, conscripting the barbarian forces as subjects and not as recruited mercenaries. Due to the scantiness of evidence, it is difficult to differentiate accurately between the levy of

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[190] App. *Mith.* 15.
[191] The Dandarian prince, Olthacus, plotted against Lucullus (Plut. *Luc.*16).
[192] The Maeotian *Agroi* of Strabo (11.2.11) were probably the same as the Scythian *Agaroi* of Appian (*Mith.* 88). They accompanied Mithridates because of their knowledge of poisons and they cured him when he was wounded in the battle against Fabius, during the Third Mithridatic War.
[193] The evidence for the loyalty of the Achaeans is confusing; Appian (*Mith.* 102) reported that Mithridates put them to flight, while Strabo called them friendly by comparison with the hostile Zygi (11.2.13).
[194] App. *Mith.* 69
[195] Justin 38.3.6-7.
[196] App. *Mith.* 19.
[197] App. *Mith.* 69, 71; Memnon 27.7 F 434 (Jacoby).
[198] For the Decree for Diophantos, the Strategos of King Mithridates VI, see: Bagnall R.S., Derow P. (1981) pp.87-88. For the expeditions of Diophantos on Bosporus, see: Callataÿ F. (de) (1997) pp.245-252. cf. Justin 37.3.2, 38.7.3-4.
[199] App. *Mith.* 13, 15, 41; Justin 38.7.3.

*subject peoples* and real mercenaries. The important issue however is that these reserves of manpower enabled him to be one of the most persistent and dangerous threats to Roman domination in the East. When Eupator was almost a refugee, without his former inexhaustible revenue, it is to be expected that his army was composed almost entirely from barbaric forces; being unable to pay for an extensive mercenary army, he would have depended upon the levy of the barbarian *subject* people. By comparison, the native tribes of the interior were numerically superior to the scanty Greek population of the seashores. A plausible suggestion might be that this attitude revealed something more than a king in despair. The use of native-barbarian forces as the chief source of his standing military strength might have reflected a common practice throughout the Mithridatic era. The Mithridatic dynasts might never have really depended upon the Greek population for the manning of their army, although they made extensive use of Greek tactics, formations and officers. It appears to have been possible that the two distinctive 'armies' counterbalanced each other. With the native-barbarian forces on his side, Mithridates would have been able to control more effectively the coastal cities which lived with the constant fear of an attack from the 'barbarians'. The native-barbarian forces could either defend the cities or turn against them. Like Alexander the Great,[201] Eupator seems to have tried to produce troops whose loyalty would be to King Mithridates alone, irrelevant of their origins and culture.[202] Unfortunately, the loyalty to Mithridates himself seems to have created problems when the King was not present on the campaigns. In mainland Greece, at the First Mithridatic War (before the battle of Chaeroneia, spring 86 BC), arguments among the numerous military commanders (*polyarchian*)[203] appears to have resulted in disordered and ineffective troops.

The Mithridatids had used mercenary armies since the establishment of the kingdom. Mithridates I and Ariobarzanes seem to have been involved with Galatian mercenaries and in all probability, they laid the foundations for the relations between the Mithridatic dynasts and the Galatian tribes. The assignment of Phrygia, which was removed from the boundaries of the Kingdom, to Mithridates V[204] may have

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[200] App. *Mith.* 108. For the marriage alliances of Mithridates VI, see: Chapter 4 pp.110-112.
[201] Bosworth A.B. (1980) pp.14, 17-18, 20; Badian E. (1958) p.201.
[202] For the relation between Mithridates VI and Alexander, see: Chapter 3 pp.86-91.
[203] Plut. *Sull.* 16.
[204] Phrygia Major: App. *Mith.* 57; Justin 37.1.2, 38.5.3. Some of the kingdom that Attalus II bequeathed to Rome was divided up as a reward for the loyal allied kings; the sons of Ariarathes of Cappadocia received Lycaonia and Mithridates got Phrygia [McGing B.C. (1986) pp.36-37].

indicated quite a strong Mithridatic influence on Galatia. On the eve of the First Mithridatic War, Mithridates VI depended on the Galatian allied forces, but he still seized the so-called 'allied' Galatia.[205] Apparently, they were called 'allies' for reasons of propaganda and diplomacy. The description of Bituitus as *hegemon Kelton* (plural) indicates that Galatian troops were in the army of Mithridates VI,[206] who seems to have believed that they would have followed him in his expedition to invade Italy.[207] The Thracians also appear to have fought on his side,[208] but their over-zealousness implies that they were professionals who worked for their own benefit.[209] The duty of Dorylaus, one of the friends of Mithridates Euergetes, was the recruitment of mercenaries from Thrace, Greece and Crete.[210] Thus, it should be expected that Greek mercenaries joined the lower ranks of the Mithridatic forces. Some adventurers from Pontus would also have been included among these Greek 'soldiers of fortune'. They would have enrolled themselves in the mercenary land forces of the Mithridatids, in the same way and for the same reasons that others enlisted themselves in the piratical forces of Cilicia.[211]

The composition of the nautical armed forces of the Mithridatids proves to be as open to debate as the composition of their land army. Since the time of Pharnaces, the desire for control of the coastal regions of the Black Sea underlined the importance of a powerful naval force. Mithridates VI was the king who established both the standing land army and the naval power of the kingdom. The areas which were under his direct or indirect control supplied him with an abundance of shipbuilding materials and numerous safe harbours,[212] as well as the necessary manpower. His plans to 'liberate the Greeks from the Roman dominion' required a strong navy. Maybe for this reason, his opponents accused him of planning so-called Pontic world-domination and distrusted his accumulation of a significant nautical force.[213]

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[205] Justin 38.4.9, 37.4.6.
[206] App. *Mith.* 111. The word *hegemon* can mean either the *leader* or the *general* (*LSJ*). In both cases, the Mithridatic army appears to have included some Galatian troops.
[207] App. *Mith.* 109. For the intention of Mithridates VI to invade Italy, see: Chapter 3 p.90.
[208] App. *Mith* 13, 15, 69.
[209] Dio. Cassius Fr. 101.2.
[210] Strabo 10.4.10.
[211] App. *Mith.* 92.
[212] e.g. Chapter 1 pp.13 n.40, 20.
[213] App. *Mith.* 13.

The naval policy of Mithridates strongly resembles the organisation of the Achaemenid nautical power. It is commonly accepted that when the Persians began to play a dominant role on the seas under Darius I, they did not have their own fleet; instead, they waged their maritime wars with the ships of the Phoenicians, Cypriots, Greeks and Egyptians.[214] In a similar manner, when Mithridates I founded his kingdom in the mountainous area of Paphlagonia,[215] the coastal Greek cities of the area already controlled the sea trade routes. Due to their experience in trade and naval affairs, it was only a matter of time before the ambitious Mithridatids conquered them.[216] The control of these cities was necessary in order to expand their influence, since only respect and fear could have guaranteed the survival of the new kingdom. Accordingly, it might be supposed that when Eupator managed to temporarily unify the greater part of the Black Sea, he depended on the numerous Greek coastal cities of Pontus and on their ships.

Allegedly, when the Persians subjugated the Ionian and Phoenician city-states of the fifth century B.C.,[217] the latter possessed navies of astonishing magnitude. The estimations of Herodotus of the ships that the various inhabitants of Asia Minor *pareichonto* to the battle of Lade and to the Great Expedition were impressive.[218] As far as is known, the coastal cities of Pontus never possessed similar navies. An analogy with the navy of the Great Kings and the Mithridatids might be made if it is taken into consideration that a city-state of the Persian Empire in the sixth century B.C. would not have owned such a force.

No recorded evidence states clearly that the maritime subjects of the Persians granted their ships to the King.[219] The tribute that the Persian subjects had to pay, including the Asiatic Greeks and Phoenicians, mentions no such (tax) obligation and

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[214] Due to their geographical position, various cities of Phoenicia, Cyprus, Ionia and Egypt were already involved in commercial activities and nautical military operations. The Achaemenids considered the toparchy of Asia Minor to be very important. The toparch of that region had at his disposal ground and naval troops. Cyrus the Younger (end of the fifth century B.C.) had under his control Lydia, Phrygia, Armenia and Cappadocia.

[215] The mountains which surround Pontus were the ideal place of refuge for those with no prospect of winning a pitched battle, like Mithridates I, and for those with no safe settlement to which to withdraw, like Mithridates VI [Chapter 3 p.90; Buxton R.G.A. (1992) p.4]. Apparently, these mountains saved the lives of many people. In earlier years, around the middle of the sixth century B.C., when Persia began to conquer the Greek cities of Asia Minor, some Ionians chose to migrate to the Black Sea area in order to avoid Persian conquest and enslavement [Hdt. 1.168-169; Tsetskhladze G.R. (1994) p.125].

[216] e.g. Pharnaces conquered Sinope at 183 B.C. (Pol. 23.9.2; Strabo 12.3.11).

[217] Hdt. 7.89ff.

[218] Hdt. 6.7, 7.89-99. The use of the word *pareichonto* seems to have implied that each city owned the ships and it presented them to the King for a specific purpose (Hdt. 7.1, 7.21, 7.89ff, 7.158; *LSJ* s.v. *parecho – parechomai*).

the suggestion that such a nautical (tax) obligation was implied rather than clearly stated does not sound convincing. The bureaucrats of the Achaemenid Empire were very concerned with the psychological impact that the word 'tribute' might have on the Persians[220] but it is doubtful that their concern extended to all subject peoples. The navies of the Persian city-subjects, including the coastal cities of Pontus, had a commercial nature. Their business-related activities would have discouraged their participation in large-scale and long-term naval operations, of the type that the Great Kings and most of the Mithridatids were involved in. The engagement of the cities in these expeditions would have severely damaged one of their primary income sources, trade. The difference between the Achaemenid and the Mithridatic Kings was that a Persian subject-*polis* with a damaged economy would have caused some inconvenience to the tax collectors of the Persian empire; yet such an occurrence was unlikely to have distracted the Great Kings from their grandiose plans. The Mithridatids did not possess the unlimited financial sources of their Persian ancestors. A coastal city of Pontus with its economy damaged due to the actions of the Mithridatic Kings could have easily turned to the Romans for sympathy.

The Mithridatids appear to have been obliged to acquire their own naval armed forces in the same way that the Persians were obliged to become sailors themselves.[221] The expansionist policy of Pharnaces towards the north Black Sea coasts[222] seems to have laid the foundations of the royal Mithridatic fleet. His successor, Mithridates V, was able to send a small naval force to aid the Romans against the Carthaginians.[223] The lack of any references to specific cities suggests that the Greek coastal cities were not involved in supplying the ships and crews or the fighters of that naval force. If they did so, a contemporary inscription or a reference attesting to their friendship with Rome would surely have been discovered.[224] Herodotus attested that during the Ionian Revolt, the Ionians *pepleromense tesi neyse paresan*, implying that the Ionians owned these ships and they were also able to

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[219] Wallinga H.T. (1987) p.48.
[220] cf. Chapter 1 p.29; Chapter 2 p.105 n.7.
[221] In all probability, Cambyses might have founded the Persian fleet. In Herodotus (3.34), the achievements of Cambyses were summed up in terms which emphasised the importance of the naval contribution. However, the Persian expedition against Egypt was highly dependent on non-Persian vessels (Hdt. 3.19).
[222] Chapter 2 pp.58-59.
[223] App. *Mith.* 10.
[224] It has to be mentioned that further excavations might bring to light such evidence.

provide the crews.[225] However, a few years later, the subjects of the Persian Empire, including the Ionians, appear to have operated the ships of the Persian navy, without any proper control over them.[226] The subject cities provided the crews and the Great King supplied the vessels. The aforementioned passage of Herodotus[227] seems to have suggested that, in this particular instance, the Ionians were able to man and supply the ships, with the assistance of the Aeolians who dwelled in Lesbos. Herodotus might have made a conscious contrast between the double function of the Ionian navy and the other cities which only supplied the crews.

It is doubtful that the phrase "*hoi ek tou Pontou strateuomenoi pareichonto men ekato neas*"[228] implies that the soldiers from Pontus had provided one hundred ships. During the fifth century B.C., the Greek cities of Pontus do not seem to have been prosperous enough to provide such a large number of vessels and no evidence suggests that they were involved in the Scythian expedition of Darius. The only surviving reference to Persian activity in Pontus during 480s B.C. is an obscure passage of Ctesias[229] stating that Datis had been there before the campaign of Marathon. It could be suggested that the compulsory participation of the coastal cities of Pontus in the expeditions of the Persian and, later, to the military operations of the Mithridatic kings did not necessarily damage the trade of the *poleis*. Herodotus constantly used the word *naus* which usually signified a war-ship by contrast to *ploion* which customarily described a merchant-ship.[230] This assumption implies the existence of two naval forces in each city, one for military and one for commercial purposes. However, even a wealthy city would have quite a difficult task in maintaining a naval force of such magnitude. The cities would have had some kind of military force for protection against their enemies, but no king would have allowed his subjects to control so many ships for fear of revolt. A reasonable conclusion seems to be that the cities of Pontus might have added a small number of their military vessels to the one hundred ships of the Great King's royal fleet. The King seems to have ordered the islanders and the coastal Greek cities of western and northern Anatolia to build the rest because of their shipbuilding expertise and

[225] Hdt. 6.8; *LSJ* s.v. *parecho – parechomai.*
[226] Diod. 11.3.7.
[227] Hdt. 6.8.
[228] Hdt. 7.95.
[229] Ctesias 12.22 F 688 (Jacoby).
[230] *LSJ* s.v. *tois ploiois kai tais nausi* (Thuc.).

experience.[231] During the Great Expedition, the task of the people of Abydos was to guard the bridges of Hellespont.[232] The fate of these Pontic ships and soldiers remains unknown but the suggestion that the Pontic naval units were sent home after the naval battle of Salamis appears the most plausible.[233] Accordingly, it might be suggested that the Pontic soldiers of Mithridates had a similar assignment: to operate the ships which the Mithridatic Kings provided. Another conclusion that can be drawn from the use of the word *pareichonto*[234] was that the locals furnished and manned the war-ships with fighters. The structure of the leadership of the navy reflects such a notion. Leaders of local origin directed subdivisions from their own countries, but the local subject people were usually the crews and not the soldiers. Real authority was in the hands of the Persian admirals, while the Persians, Medes and Sacae who were placed on the ships acted both as fighters and guards to prevent defection.[235] The general of Mithridates VI, Archelaus, might have followed a similar method; during the siege of Piraeus by the forces of Sulla (87 B.C.), he reportedly armed his oarsmen in order to increase his army when he realised that everything was at stake.[236]

In their complete form, the military naval forces of the Persian Kings and the Mithridatids would have consisted of two parts. The Greek cities of Asia Minor and Pontus would have supplied a small number of vessels and the Persian and Mithridatic Kings would have furnished the majority of the ships. In particular, during the First Mithridatic War, Eupator outnumbered the Rhodians in the size of his fleet,[237] although they were a traditional naval power; still, lack of skill resulted in his defeat. Part of his fleet originated from conquered cities which delivered their vessels to him according to the customs of the time. For example, one of the terms of the treaty which ended the First Mithridatic War was that Eupator should deliver to the Romans his fleet.[238] However, Mithridates VI was repeatedly and clearly reported to build ships.[239] In his dealings with Mithridates, Sertorius appears to have promised

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[231] Diod. 11.2.1, 11.3.8; Hdt. 7.95.
[232] Hdt. 7.95.
[233] Hignett C. (1963) pp.345-350.
[234] Chapter 2 pp.69-71.
[235] Hdt. 7.96, cf. 7.81.
[236] App. *Mith.* 31.
[237] App. *Mith.* 25.
[238] App. *Mith.* 55, 58.
[239] App. *Mith.* 13, 15, 22, 69; Florus 1.40 18.

him Cappadocia and Bithynia in return for money and ships.[240] Mithridates seems to have supplied most of the vessels during the Mithridatic Wars. However, at the eve of the First Mithridatic War, a new element was introduced in the Mithridatic naval armed forces: the (Cilician) pirates.

From a societal point of view, the pirates were able to hold their place in the economic scheme of the world. Most probably, their 'career' was allowed to flourish thanks to the 'open-mindedness' of the Roman government, who were obliged to respond to the growing demand for slaves in Italy. Therefore, the prosperity of the pirates came as a result of Roman tolerance.[241] However, by the time Mithridates VI arose as the enemy of Rome, the pirates did not enjoy the tacit acceptance of Rome any more. Complaints from the provinces and the client Kings, like possibly Nicomedes of Bithynia, had forced the Romans to act against the pirates from 102 B.C. onwards.[242] The present study does not examine the reasons and the motives that led the pirates to assist Mithridates. As was the case with Sertorius and 'his' Cilician pirates,[243] they appear to have supported Eupator because he presented them with a new means of acquiring wealth; they also had the opportunity to take revenge on the Romans. The pirates who harassed Lucullus on his voyage to the East[244] seem to have had a personal interest in whether Lucullus would have managed to procure ships for Sulla against Mithridates or not.[245] It appears possible that some of the pirates might have upheld the anti-Roman aims of King Mithridates, the King of their homeland; although, initially, most of the pirates had originated from Cilicia which was also their base, men from nearly all the Mediterranean world, including Pontus, soon joined them.[246] However, their presence would have had no influence on the decisions of their leaders and admirals. The results and the benefits of the services of the pirates had political importance, despite the outcome of the Mithridatic Wars.

Mithridates VI appears to have organised the pirates into a naval force of considerable power, as opposed to disorganised, plundering nautical thieves.[247] The disciplined piratical body became capable of stopping all commerce and navigation between cities, causing severe famine for a long time. It has to be accepted that only

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[240] Plut. *Sert.* 23-24.
[241] App. *Mith.* 70; Strabo 14.5.2; Omerod H.A. (1978) pp.199, 207; Souza P. de (1999) pp.63-65.
[242] Diod. 36.3.1; Omerod H.A. (1978) pp.208-209.
[243] Plut. *Sert.* 9.
[244] App. *Mith.* 56.
[245] App. *Mith.* 33; Plut. *Luc.* 2.2
[246] App. *Mith.* 92.

a ruler with the skills of Eupator could have managed to organise this disorderly force so successfully. The pirates might have built their unusual warships towards the end of their career under his guidance, maybe because he intended to use them almost as part of his regular royal navy. The usually small pirate boats were nearly always distinguished from the tactical warships;[248] usually the word *ploion* enables us to realise that a pirate-craft is indicated rather than the warships of a hostile power. It is possible that the *ploion* and the *emiolia* in the fleet of Menophanes, the admiral of Mithridates,[249] were pirate boats and that Menophanes was himself a pirate leader. This assumption is underlined by the actions of Bruttius who crucified the slaves and cut off the hands of the freemen of the captured barbarians.[250] By the end of the First Mithridatic War, Mithridates had already organised the pirates into a regular fleet.[251] McGing[252] favoured the point of view of Appian but only for the reasons that led the King to organise them. He had a different opinion as to the period in which their organisation took place, suggesting that Eupator began to organise them towards the end of the First War. It seems that the pirates, as a body with ordered squadrons resembling fleets rather than independent hordes, would have been in operation before the recorded existence of such fleets.[253] The pirates would have acted as a compact naval power, fully organised for regular warfare from the beginning of the First Mithridatic War.

It is not known to what extent Eupator was able to control them during the early phase of the First War. When the pirates captured Iassus, Samos, Clazomenae and Samothrace after the end of the first Mithridatic War (around 84 B.C.),[254] they might have had the permission of Mithridates because he realised he could no longer restrain them. From a more practical point of view, it might be argued that Mithridates used the pirates and their methods to ravage those areas he thought he could not hold for long. Since he could not profit from these coastal regions in the long-term, he tried to benefit from them in the short-term. The understanding that existed between Mithridates and the pirates could be described as similar to the

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[247] App. *Mith.* 63, 119.
[248] Thuc. 4.67; Strabo 11.2.12; Tac. *Hist.* 3.47; Omerod H.A. (1978) pp.27-28.
[249] App. *Mith.* 29.
[250] Some of the known Roman punishments of the pirates were beheading, crucifixion and exposure to wild beasts (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5, 78; Plut. *Caesar* 2; Velleius 2.42).
[251] App. *Mith.* 63.
[252] McGing B.C. (1986) pp.129-130.
[253] App. *Mith.* 63.
[254] App. *Mith.* 63; Plut. *Pomp.* 24.

arrangement between the Persian Kings and the people they subjected. Mithridates VI favoured and protected the pirates, like the Great King had protected his subordinates from external dangers. Mithridates ruled over many traditionally mountainous communities. The pirates were extremely useful to him, because they gave him a group of professional seamen. In a similar way, the maritime people of the Persian Empire operated the ships that the Great King provided. The union with the Cilician pirates gave Mithridates a vital advantage at sea which was dangerous but not fatal for Sulla; the Persian naval military power for the Great Expedition against Greece was equally impressive and ineffective.

Mithridates VI seems to have used the pirates as a body of privateers. They were experienced in naval affairs and they were not paid by him but contented themselves with the proceeds of the raids.[255] Having the pirates on his side, he managed to confuse his enemies and friends about his actions and whereabouts; the pirates were an excellent decoy for his activities. On the one hand, he constantly renewed his forces, rebuilt ships and accused the Romans of allowing the sea to be overrun by pirates.[256] On the other hand, the naval force of the pirates amounted to around a thousand ships. As a result, it is very difficult for the researcher to draw a definitive line between the tactical naval force of Mithridates and his assistants (not allies), the pirates. This task might have been equally as difficult in the time of the King as it is for modern researchers. Appian, however, distinguished soldiers from pirates, in his mind the naval force of Archelaus on the western coasts of Greece could be identified as a piratical squadron merely by virtue of its actions.[257] For example, the *stratos allos*[258] which burnt the advance guard of the fleet of Flaccus outside Brundisium (around 85 B.C.) might well had been a division of this naval force, or of a similar one.[259] Both piratical and Mithridatic fleets pursued similar tactics, appearing as two sections of the same fleet; the achievements of the regular fleet of Mithridates often assumed the disguise of pirates and vice versa.

Trying to establish who was behind the pillage or the plunders of Delos (around 87 B.C.) is considered to be a particularly complex task. Aristion appears to have send Apellikon from Teos to Delos in order to plunder the island and the temple,

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[255] Omerod H.A. (1978) p.210.
[256] App. *Mith.* 70.
[257] App. *Mith.* 45.
[258] In the Loeb edition, H. White translates *allos* as *new*. However, another interpretation might be *different, unusual* or *strange* (*LSJ*).

and thus, increase the income of Aristion. The attempt of Apellikon was, however, unsuccessful.[260] Appian and Pausanias described full scale plundering.[261] In the first case, Archelaus seems to have undertaken a 'political' deed, since it was maintained that Delos had revolted against Athens.[262] Although Mithridates was not named, it can only be assumed that as a general, Archelaus was following the orders of his King. Although Pausanias named Menophanes as an officer of King Mithridates, he seems uncertain whether the action of Menophanes had been a personal decision "to show his contempt for the god" or a response to the orders of the King. The apparent inconsistency between the two authors can be explained. Appian had a tendency to refer to an army or one of its detachments as being under their supreme commander, even when the particular leader was absent.[263] In this case, the supreme commander was Archelaus. It might be suggested that the actual plundering was executed by Menophanes who was the leader of the piratical force. This naval force was under the direction of Archelaus who took his commands from Mithridates. In either case, the given reasons for the attack were plunder and profit. Ormerod[264] referred to a second attack of Delos, "a feat which was imitated a few years later by an independent pirate". Presumably he referred to the account of Pausanias, basing his notion on the uncertainty of the author about the motives of Menophanes. The pirates were independent enough to act according to their own will when Mithridates was defeated and retired.[265] Hence, although the autonomous action of a pirate does not appear impossible, it seems unlikely that 'an independent pirate' would have dared to undertake the plunder of Delos, a place where Rome, Mithridates and the pirate leaders themselves had financial interests. It is doubtful whether the King would have permitted the plundering of Delos even if he found the pirates useful and inexpensive,[266] unless he also profited from it. Overall, it could be suggested that Delos was ravaged by pirates, or tactical soldiers, who might have been under the direct orders of Mithridates VI.

Friends and enemies would have closely identified the pirates with the official naval armed forces of the King. When Lucullus surrounded Sinope, he mainly fought

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[259] App. *Mith.* 51.
[260] Athen. 5.214d-215a.
[261] App. *Mith.* 28; Paus. 3.23.3-4.
[262] For the return of Delos to Athens, see: Plut. *Sul.* 2.
[263] Cf. Keaveney A. (1981) pp.247-250.
[264] Omerod H.A. (1978) p.211.
[265] App. *Mith.* 92.

against the Cilicians "who were occupying the city for the King".[267] On another occasion, Mithridates did not hesitate to come aboard a pirate vessel in order to save his own life;[268] even so, the objections of the companions of Eupator underline a rather ambiguous friendship with the pirates. It appears that the King himself may have had reasons to trust the pirates; yet the same did not apply to his advisors. The confidantes of Mithridates might have been afraid that these royal 'assistants' could easily betray and hand him over to the Romans who were obviously the victorious party. This might have been the case if the concern of these pirates was purely financial.[269]

It can safely be suggested that the Cilician pirates co-operated with Mithridates VI during the First War and most probably continued to have his approval after the end of the War. In the Third Mithridatic War, he did not possess the command of the sea that he had held during the First War.[270] He began the war with a well-prepared, purely military navy[271] which was strong enough to sustain its being split into three parts.[272] He still appears to have counted on the assistance of a considerable number of pirate vessels but it is unlikely that his dependence on them was as desperate as in the First War.[273] The squadrons which were dispatched to create trouble in Crete,[274] and to effect a union with Sertorius in Spain,[275] might have been professional pirates. Despite the initial success which enabled him to destroy the fleet of Cotta at Chalcedon,[276] Lucullus soon defeated the regular fleet of the King in the Aegean Sea and a storm almost totally destroyed the rest in Pontus.[277] The

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[266] As a body of privateers, the pirates seem to have been content with the proceeds of the raids.
[267] Plut. *Luc.* 23.2; Memnon 37.1 F 434 (Jacoby); Orosius 6.3.2. Philip de Souza [(1999) p.126] maintained that the garrison of Sinope was made up of mercenaries most of whom had Cilician origin. Admittedly, the evidence for Sinope does not suggest that all the cities of the Pontic coast were held by pirates. However, Sinope was an important, wealthy city. It seems that the double harbour and the trading links of Sinope might explain the presence of pirates who were evidently in a relationship of mutual advantage with Mithridates.
[268] App. *Mith.* 78; Orosius 6.2; Plut. *Luc.* 13.
[269] Souza de P. (1999) pp.125, 127.
[270] Plut. *Sul.* 11 , *Luc.* 13.4.
[271] Memnon 27 F 434 (Jacoby); Plut. *Luc.* 7.4.
[272] App. *Mith.* 76; Plut. *Luc.* 13
[273] Chapter 2 pp.73-77.
[274] The relation of Mithridates with the Cretans is a puzzling one. The Cretan cities did nothing to prevent foreigners or their own citizens practising piracy from their coasts. Antonius accused them of supporting and assisting the pirates (App. *Sic.* 6) and they might have favoured Mithridates VI. They negotiated with Mithridates V to supply him with mercenaries and they enlisted themselves in piratical bands (Strabo 10.4.10).
[275] Memnon 33.1 F 434 (Jacoby).
[276] App. *Mith.* 71; Plut. *Luc.* 8.
[277] App. *Mith.* 77-78; Plut. *Luc.* 11-13.

fighting for spheres of control became a struggle for survival for Mithridates and the war shifted from the Aegean Sea and mainland Greece to Asia Minor.

In conclusion, it could be said that by the second half of the second century B.C., a change in the political situation in Northern Anatolia signalled a time of crisis for the Greek cities of Pontus. A family with Iranian or Graeco-Iranian origins established themselves in the area, giving birth to the so-called 'Kingdom of Pontus'. The Mithridatids endeavoured to gain the admiration of the Hellenic world, yet they subdued the Greek coastal cities of Pontus, of the north and west Black Sea. They exercised an expansionist policy strongly reminiscent of Persian practices and they behaved to a great extent like the Hellenistic monarchs. Their system of administration was based on oriental – divine kingship and they presented themselves as protectors of the Greeks from the barbarians. They appear to have tried to Hellenise their kingdom, probably because the promotion and acceptance of the Greek civilisation assisted their imperialistic interests. Governmental policies always depend to a large extent on the feelings of the people who are prey to manipulation. Since the Mithridatids ruled over a kingdom with diverse popular characteristics, their political actions, military operations and diplomatic manoeuvres depended on the control and unification of these distinct elements. Externally, the Mithridatic Kingdom appears to have been unified; its civic and military administration gave control to a monarch who was presented as much of Hellenised as Persian persona. Internally, the Mithridatids accomplished their aims by using the various origins and cultures of the inhabitants of their kingdom. No evidence indicates that any group identified itself as 'Pontic' between the third and the first centuries B.C.; the retrospective appellation of the Mithridatids as 'Kings of Pontus' justifies the retrospective term 'Pontic troops' as a title but not as an identity trait. The Mithridatic army was composed of various *ethne*[278]and the inhabitants of Pontus seem to have had their own, internally-defined identities based on their origins and culture. The Mithridatids kings did not need a common name to unify their multinational troops or the inhabitants of their kingdom; their royal authority and their Greek–Persian origins and culture were sufficient for that. During war, a less-than-perfect system of communication between the higher and lower ranks might have resulted in the inefficiency of the army. However, it was united enough to provide internal peace in

[278] Plut. *Sull.* 16.

the Kingdom and to wage three wars against Rome. The emergence of the Mithridatids as the liberators from the barbarian and Roman oppression affected most of the world in the eastern part of the Mediterranean; it had substantial reasons and cause to expect to be successful, although it ultimately failed.

# Chapter 3

## The Usefulness of the Greek-Eastern Image of Mithridates VI

Lack of evidence about the everyday life of the population of ancient Pontus makes the examination of how the people defined themselves difficult. However, it could be argued that the popular notions of identity and the propaganda of the kings had much in common. Indications of the nature of royal propaganda emerge from the external policy of the Mithridatids, especially that of Mithridates VI Eupator; and the external policy of a kingdom might be suggestive of its domestic state of affairs. By establishing the repetitive patterns of the rule of the Mithridatids, the internally-defined identity of the inhabitants of Pontus might be revealed. In particular, Mithridates VI was a king who presented a Graeco-Persian-Eastern image and this image appears to have reflected the mixed Greek, Persian and Anatolian elements of his kingdom.

Mithridates VI is the most famous of the Mithridatic kings for no other reason than his persistent, but ultimately unsuccessful, wars against Rome. However, the Mithridatids did not always follow an anti-Roman policy. Mithridates V tried to expand the influence of his kingdom rather than its territory by following a philo-Roman policy. His marriage to Laodice, a Seleucid princess well known to the Senate and possibly the daughter of Antiochus Epiphanes, appears to have served this purpose.[1] He seems to have greatly valued Roman friendship. His loyalty was expressed by sending ships and auxiliaries to help the Roman forces at Carthage in the Third Punic War[2] and by providing forces in the war against Aristonicus.[3] Evidence indicates that initially his son, Mithridates VI, also had friendly associations with Rome. It has been suggested that a statue in Delos depicted him in the uniform of a Roman legionary and the inscription proclaimed that both the Athenian and the

[1] Justin 38.7.1; Pol. 33.15.1-2 33.18.6-13.
[2] App. *Mith.* 10.
[3] App. *Mith.* 12; Justin 37.1.2, 38.5.3; (possibly) Strabo 14.1.38; Eutropius 4.20; Oros. 5.10.2. It appears that Mithridates VI had been frequently referred to as *the Cappadocian* and his supporters as *the Cappadocizontes* (Chapter 1 p.33 n.209).

Roman people honoured King Mithridates.[4] In addition, at the end of the First Mithridatic War (around 84 B.C.), he tried to use the friendship and alliance of his father with the Romans to his own advantage.[5] Nonetheless, at the beginning of the First Mithridatic War (around 88 B.C.), the pro-Mithridatic Athenion presented the 'Pontic King' as the 'champion' of the Greeks, while denouncing the Romans as the greatest enemy of the Hellenistic states and of the Greek polis.[6]

Rome does not appear to have controlled the so-called barbarian rulers of Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia as easily as it had influenced the Hellenistic monarchs. These 'barbarian' kings struggled to avoid any kind of direct or indirect hegemony of a foreign power. This might be one of the reasons that Rome does not seem to have taken an active part in the events of Asia Minor, during the usual fights amongst the native rulers. The siding of the experienced and 'invincible' Roman army with any of the kings would have upset the balance of power between the local rulers. The king with Roman military support would have had an immediate advantage over his opponents. Rome seems to have refrained from whole-heartedly supporting any of the local monarchs, thus allowing the strengthening of one side at the expense of the other; the policy of 'divide and rule'. For example, when Rome restored Nicomedes and Ariobarzanes to their Kingdoms in Bithynia and Cappadocia respectively (around 90 B.C.), it also encouraged them to attack Mithridates VI with the promise of assistance.[7] After Nicomedes attacked and plundered some of the territory of Mithridates, the Romans were able to play the role of judge in the dispute between the two kings.[8] The major concern of Rome was to protect its own interests in Anatolia. Anything and anybody who caused an upset to the *status quo* of the eastern provinces could eventually present a threat to its dominance. Rome maintained the role of the catalyst by constantly dispatching envoys to the areas that asked it to act as an intermediary.[9]

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[4] McGing B.C. (1987) pp.90-91.

[5] When Mithridates VI met Sulla in order to complete the terms of the treaty which would have officially finished the First Mithridatic War, the 'King of Pontus' began his argument with a reminder of the *patroa filia* (ancestral friendship) of the 'Pontic House' with Rome [*OGIS* 376; App. *Mith.* 10, 12-13, 56; Madden J.A., Keaveney A. (1993) pp.139-140].

[6] Athen. 5.213d. For the events in Athens at that time, and the career of Athenion, see: Chapter 3 pp.101-103.

[7] App. *Mith.* 11.

[8] App. *Mith.* 12-14.

[9] cf. The role of Rome in the alliance between Pharnaces and Chersonessus (Chapter 3 p.82).

From the moment Rome stepped into the political and diplomatic foreground, no king could hold his position unless he had the acceptance of Rome. The King of Cappadocia seems to have been aware of and to have conformed to this notion. He proclaimed his friendly attitude to Rome with precious gifts and the renunciation of a marriage alliance with Demetrius because the Romans were ill disposed towards the latter (160 B.C.).[10] The alliance of Pharnaces and Chersonesus (around 179 B.C.) also seems to have been under Roman auspices since the relevant inscription mentions the two parties as having a *philia* with Rome.[11] Pharnaces appears to have found it necessary to play the diplomatic game by sending missions to Rome[12] and by appearing as a loyal client of Rome. Although he was initially known for his anti-Roman feelings, he might well have been the first Mithridatic king who became a *friend* of Rome.[13] The alliance appears to have been maintained through the *philia* between Pharnaces and Chersonesus as well as through their friendship with Rome. In this way, Rome safeguarded its interests, since such an alliance made an attack on Roman interests unlikely. Its interest in stability led Rome to become directly involved by supervising peace negotiations and acting as arbiter between opposing parties. The Romans seem to have been satisfied with their role as mediators and to have considered the area of Asia Minor safe. No consular army was sent to Asia from 129 to 87 B.C. and as a result, the initial force which engaged Mithridates VI in battle was composed only of allied troops from Asiatic levies and a few Roman soldiers.[14]

Around 120 B.C., almost the whole rim of the Black Sea was either under the direct control of the Mithridatic kingdom[15] or part of its protectorate, as were the western coasts.[16] Mithridates VI gained many benefits by expanding across the Black Sea, following in the footsteps of his grandfather. His calculated ambitions and energetic nature created an enormous sphere of influence which provided him with

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[10] Diod. 31.28. Pharnaces I chose to proclaim his independence from Rome by accepting the marriage alliance offered by Demetrius (Chapter 4 p.110).
[11] *IOSPE* 1².402; *SEG* 30.962.
[12] Pharnaces sent his first emissary to Rome in 181 B.C., but he paid no heed to a Roman commission (Livy 40.20.1; Pol. 23.9.1, 24.1.1-3).
[13] It is usually supposed that the first Mithridatic dynast who became a friend of Rome was either Mithridates IV (*OGIS* 375) or Mithridates V (App. *Mith.* 10, 12; Eutropius 4.20.1; Justin 37.1.2; Orosius 5.10.2).
[14] App. *Mith.* 11, 17, 19; Memnon 22.7 F 434 (Jacoby); Justin 38.3.8; Plut. *Sull.* 5.3.
[15] Mithridates acquired the coast east of Trapezus up to Colchis and became master of Armenia Minor, when Antipater delivered it to him (Strabo 12.3.1, 12.3.28).
[16] Eutropius 5.1.

two of the most essential elements when conducting a war, manpower[17] and supplies.[18] In addition, his expansion across the Black Sea appears to have assisted the trading and communication links between the Greek coastal cities of the Black Sea as well as between these cities and the inhabitants of the interior. Such relations might have offered an initial feeling of self-definition through a comparison between the communities of Pontus and those across the Euxine.[19]

The relationship of Mithridates VI with the various communities of the Black Sea area was changeable. Most of the territory and the alliances of the King would have been established before the First Mithridatic War, but frequent revolts and uprisings were witnessed throughout his reign. Around 88 B.C., on the eve of the First Mithridatic War, the ambassadors of the rival King of Bithynia maintained to the Romans that King Mithridates had already acquired the services of the Greeks bordering the Euxine and the barbarian tribes beyond them.[20] The Bastarnae and the Thracians were only two of the named allied barbarian tribes.[21] Mithridates was able to gain the alliance of more native tribes because he had access to their countries through the territory of the coastal cities of the Black Sea which were either allied to or least on friendly terms with him. His power over cities like Byzantium also gave him a dominant role in the control of the trading route of the Euxine,[22] especially the profitable imports and exports of olive oil, wine and corn.[23] Additionally, it eliminated possible financial difficulties, since he received direct annual tributes from subjugated people, as was also the case in the Crimea.[24] Similarly, it can be safely assumed that most of the (Greek) cities of the west and north coasts of the Black Sea were paying a monetary tribute for their protection, as they had done for their previous 'champions'.

Acquiring a foreign (non-Greek) protector against the barbaric menace was a widespread solution among the Greek cities of the Euxine. Alliances and agreements with native kings and princes provided military aid, guaranteed peace and deterred a particular band of barbarians by playing one group off against another. A series of

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[17] Chapter 2 pp.60-61.
[18] Food supplies (like corn, cattle and preserved fish) and trading goods (from slaves to luxuries, like honey and wax). See also: Chapter 1 pp.13-14.
[19] Smith A.D. (1987) p.39; Introduction pp.7-8.
[20] App. *Mith.* 13.
[21] App. *Mith.* 15, 41; Dion Cass. 36.9.3-4; Justin 38.3.6; Chapter 2 pp.65-66.
[22] Pol. 4.38.1-5.
[23] Chapter 1 p.13.
[24] Strabo 7.4.6.

coins indicates that Olbia succumbed to the Scythian Scilurus.[25] Istrus also turned for help and security to the Getan king, Zalmodegicus, when barbarian pressure became extremely intense.[26] Apparently, the citizens of Istrus paid an annual tribute to the Getan king for the return of Istrian hostages and some sources of revenue; they also paid a *phoros* to King Rhemaxus for military aid against Zoltes and his Thracian bands.[27] Similarly, the Byzantines were forced to pay an annual tribute of forty talents to Commontorius and his Celts,[28] although the Thracian king Cavarus relieved them of that payment.[29] Messembria and Apollonia made similar treaties with the local barbarian kings Sadalas and Cotys respectively (around 250 B.C.).[30] Various epigraphical evidence attests to the fact that the Greek cities of the east, north and west Black Sea coasts had come under increasing pressure from the various barbarian groups which surrounded them. The citizens of Chersonesus honoured Diophantus, the son of Asclepiodorus and friend of Mithridates VI.[31] Diophantus, the general and ambassador of Mithridates, fought successfully against the Scythians. Overall, the particular inscription from the area presents a city under immediate threat from the neighbouring barbarians (around 110 B.C.). When the barbarian forces had plundered the city, necessity appears to have compelled the people to invite Mithridates VI to become its *prostates* (protector).[32] Such evidence confirms the relationship of protector and protégé between Mithridates and Chersonessus, which suggests that the city had a positive reply to its request for help. Furthermore, by interfering in the region of Tauric Chersonesus, Eupator was given the opportunity to be involved with and finally acquire the Kingdom of Bosporus. The King of Bosporus, Parisades, seems to have been unable to continue paying the constantly increasing annual tribute that the barbarians demanded.[33] Since Mithridates VI earned the reputation of being the 'champion' of the Greeks against those who threatened any physical or intellectual aspect of the Hellenic world, Parisades willingly handed over his realm to the King. Overall, the activities of Eupator on the Black Sea coasts and his role as the protector

[25] Strabo 7.4.7; McGing B.C. (1986) p.47.
[26] A number of inscriptions honoured individuals who helped Istrus during times of crisis [*Bull. Epig.* (1962) n.237 p.189].
[27] *Bull. Epig.* (1962) n. 234 p.187.
[28] Pol. 4.45.9-4.46.
[29] Pol. 8.22.1.
[30] *IG Bulg.* $1^2$.307, $1^2$.389.
[31] *IOSPE* 1.185 pp.174-183; *SEG* 30.963.
[32] Strabo 7.4.3.
[33] Strabo 7.4.4.

of the Greek cities seems to have been a rehearsal for the similar role he played later in Asia Minor and Greece, during his encounter with Rome.

Mithridates VI presented himself as the ruler who would free the Hellenic world from its Roman oppressors[34] in the same way that Alexander liberated the Ionian Greeks from the Persians. One of the most prominent characteristics of Mithridates was his ability to promote himself; at the same time, he had the ability to undermine his enemies. These two tactics complimented one another; the charismatic character of King Mithridates seems to have underlined the negative characteristics of the Romans. In particular, the generosity and *philanthropia* of the King was set against the avarice and greed of the Romans, who were also against the institution of kingship.[35] The magnanimity of Eupator to his captives validated his reputation as a 'New[36] Alexander'. In addition, his so-called 'social policy', implying the potential redistribution of land and cancellation of debts, promoted the idea of the perfect sovereign.[37] The cities were carefully manipulated into accepting him as such. As a result, a favourable image of Mithridates was created which appealed not only to the various communities dwelling in Asia Minor but also to the Greeks of mainland Greece.

On the eve of the First Mithridatic War, an important element of Mithridatic propaganda was the projection of the King as *philanthropos* (benevolent). His kindness was expressed by taking care of his friends[38] and by releasing war prisoners. This latter action was perceived as highly unusual, because the common practice was to kill or sell into slavery the soldiers who were prisoners. Mithridates gave them supplies and provisions to go back to their homes,[39] possibly expecting that some of them would go back to their generals and commanders to reassume their positions as soldiers. In reality, the reputation he gained for this action appears to have been greater than the actual number of the soldiers he gave back to his enemies or the profit he would have gained by selling them. Nevertheless, his reputation of benevolence

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[34] Sall. *Epist. Mith.* 11.

[35] App. *Mith.* 11, 15, 16, 21, 56, 70, *Syr.* 42; Memnon 21 F 434 (Jacoby); Orosius 5.18.27-28; Sall. *Epist. Mith.* 5.

[36] The title '*Neos*' (New), when coming from subject people, usually expressed a form of homage. It was so for Mithridates, Mark Antony, Nero and Antinoous [Nock A.D. (1928) p.34]. For Mithridates VI as 'New' Dionysus, possibly *Insc. Delos* 1563.

[37] Chapter 3 pp.95-96, 98-99.

[38] App. *Mith.* 111.

[39] App. *Mith.* 18-20. Hamilcar is reported to have adopted a similar attitude in the First Punic War in order to weaken enemy resistance (Polyb. 1.78.13-15, 1.79.8).

eventually produced the desired results. Around 88 B.C., during the events which made Rome proclaim war officially against Mithridates, the citizens of Laodiceia demonstrated their confidence in the King by dismissing the Roman mercenaries. They also surrendered the Roman general, Oppius, and their city to Mithridates,[40] who showed clemency by respecting the status of his opponent without ridiculing or dishonouring him; still, he was shrewd enough not to set the general free. The reputation of his *philanthropia* might have been a very important reason why the people of Greece and Asia Minor decided to embrace his anti-Roman objectives. The population of entire cities not only accepted but also offered their cities to the 'King of Pontus', calling him their "god and saviour".[41]

Mithridates VI wanted to have people associate him with Alexander the Great,[42] whom he deeply admired.[43] Leaving nothing to chance, he appears to have tried to control destiny by creating favourable omens for himself. For example, he considered it a good omen to pitch his camp at the inn where Alexander had once stopped.[44] It has also been suggested that his visit to the inn in Phrygia might have been part of a deliberate effort to win the support of the military settlers of Macedonian descent in Asia.[45] The royal propaganda targeted the civilians as well as the military settlers. The silver coinage of Lysimachus with Alexander's image upon it was changed so as to represent the characteristics of Mithridates VI,[46] who thus abandoned the realistic style that his ancestors had favoured.[47] Coins,[48] gem and ring portraits[49] present him as a near reincarnation of Alexander the Great. For example, a gold stater (about 88 B.C.) shows the diademed head of Eupator covered with flowing Alexander-like hair.[50] However, the Mithridatic (Persian) symbols of the feeding stag and the sun in a crescent remain on the reverse along with the Greek inscription

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[40] App. *Mith.* 20.
[41] Diod. 37.26.
[42] Strabo 12.8.18, 14.1.13.
[43] Pompey found among the possessions of Mithridates a cloak of Alexander the Great, which used to belong to the people of Cos; they had received it from Cleopatra (App. *Mith.* 117).
[44] App. *Mith.* 20.
[45] Glew D.G. (1977b) p.254 n.3.
[46] Bieber M. (1981) p.122; Hill G.F. (1906) p.106; Seltman C. (1933) p.238. For a golden stater of Mithridates II with Alexander types, see: *CAH* vol. of Plates 4 p.2 n.k.
[47] Mørkholm O. (1991) p.175. Traces of that style can be observed on one of his silver tetradtachms (89 B.C.) in the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto , where "the character of the face is rather barbarian and reveals a mixture of energy and passion" [Bieber M. (1981) p.121].
[48] Head B.V. (1911) pp.501-502; Seltman C. (1933) p.237.
[49] McGing B.C. (1986) p.101 ft.72.
[50] Hill G.F. (1906) pp.160-162.

*Basileos Mithridatou Eupatoros* and the Dionysiac ivy wreath.[51] At about the same time, the royal influence was also in evidence on similar golden coins of local type issued in Ephesus and Smyrna. Furthermore, the engravers of the gold staters and the large silver tetradrachms of Byzantium, Istrus and Tomi represented Mithridates with the horned head of Alexander-Ammon.[52] Although the fact that cities coined in gold was indicative of power and independence, they do not seem to have been free to represent on their coins whatever they chose; in spite of everything, Mithridates had allowed them to coin in gold in the first place. The representations of Mithridates VI as Alexander on coins can be seen in parallel with the identification of Mithridates as Heracles and Dionysus in sculpture. Eupator appears to have followed Alexander the Great[53] who presented himself in the guise of these gods because they were both linked with the east.[54]

Heracles seems to have been considered as a suitable model for the image of Mithridates VI. As the ruler who liberated mankind from the evils of Rome, it was appropriate that he should be modelled on Heracles who was the benefactor of mankind. Eupator – Heracles might have been represented in a group from Pergamum, where Heracles delivered Prometheus.[55] The theme might well have been an allegory of the deliverance of Asia from the Roman tyranny by the 'Pontic King'. A head which is displayed today in the Louvre has also been identified as a representation of Mithridates as Alexander – Heracles.[56] A gilt-bronze colossus in the Conservatory might also be intended to portray him as Heracles; it has been suggested that the brutal countenance and receding forehead recall the head on the coins of Mithridates.[57] The same appears to be true of a controversial statuette of Heracles in the British Museum.[58] The explanation of Oikonomides on this matter is highly plausible. He identified the lion-skin as connecting Eupator with Heracles and his Macedonian lineage; he also maintained that the Iranian fashion belt of the statuette

[51] ibid. In the same work, it has also been suggested that the (Greek) monogram *PERG* reveals that the coin was struck at Pergamum. The appearance of the (Greek) letter *D* has been explained as possibly representing the years of the new era that began with the expulsion, i.e. slaughter, of the Romans in Asia Minor. Cf. Ballesteros-Pastor L. (1999b).
[52] Hill G.F. (1906) p.162; Seltman C. (1933) p.237.
[53] Alexander the Great was the reputed descendant of Heracles (Plut. *Alex.* 2; Dio Cass. 37.52.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.78; Suet. *Iul.* 7). The statement that he was also a descendant of Dionysus seems to have been the result of Ptolemaic genealogists [Nock A.D. (1928) pp.25-26].
[54] Arr. *Anab.* 5.1.5-2.7, 5.3.4, *Indica* 5.8-13, 7.4-9, 7.8.4ff; Nock A.D. (1928) pp.21-30.
[55] Lawrence A.W. (1972) p.240.
[56] Cat. Num. 232 apud Oikonomidis A.N. (1958) p.225.
[57] Lawrence A.W. (1972) p.240.

was reminiscent bears obvious reminiscences of his Persian origins, while the short tunic of the Thracian Knights[59] might have been a homage to the local barbarian tribes. These three characteristics of the attire of the statuette seem to have appealed to the various inhabitants of Pontus. The explanation of Oikonomides also seems to have corresponded with the royal emblems which attest to the mixed Graeco-Persian descent of Eupator.[60]

The appellation of Mithridates as Dionysus[61] might be attributed either to his imitation of Alexander or to an attempt to connect himself with the Royal House of Syria and his maternal relative Antiochus VI.[62] Literary evidence appears to suggest that Mithridates might have been worshipped as Dionysus.[63] This notion is supported by the ivy-wreath which was engraved on many of the royal coins and is a characteristic feature of Dionysus.[64] Similarly, Dionysus and Dionysiac motifs (a cista, thyrsos or panther holding the head of a stag) have been identified on coins which were struck in Amisus[65] and Mesambria[66] during the reign of Mithridates VI. Such symbols would have underlined the appellation of the King as Dionysus. In addition, it is likely that they would have appealed to the rural population either because they knew of the Greek deity or because they linked these symbols with other native fertility gods or goddesses.[67] Dionysus became one of the most important Greek deities with established festivals throughout the Hellenic world, but he also had close links with Cybele[68] and he might even have originated from the East.[69] Indeed, Mithridates may have adopted the name 'Dionysus' because he acknowledged the god as the ideal link between the Greek world and the East.

The use by Mithridates of the Alexander-type coins might also have an additional practical explanation. From the time of the *diadochoi* and their *epigonoi*,

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[58] For the arguments concerning the identity of the statuette, see: Oikonomidis A.N. (1958) pp.189-192.
[59] They were the strongest division of the cavalry of Mithridates VI.
[60] Cf. Chapter 2 pp.44, 50; Chapter 4 pp.160-161.
[61] App. *Mith.* 10; Athen. 5.212d; Cic. *Pro Flacco* 60; *Insc. Delos* 1562, 1563.
[62] Justin 38.7.1. Antiochus VI seems to have established the fashion of adding cult epithets to the name of the king. He identified himself with Dionysus [Chapter 2 p.48; Mørkholm (1991) pp.30-31].
[63] Durrbch F. (1921) p.215 n.133
[64] Hill G.F. (1906) pp.160-162; Chapter 3 p.87. For the connection of ivy with Dionysus, see: Eur. *Bacch.* 177, 205, 383-385 ff; Farnell L.R. (1977) pp.335-336 (numismatic evidence at the British Museum).
[65] Head B.V. (1911) p.497.
[66] Karayotov I. (2001).
[67] For the extent of Hellenisation in the rural areas of Pontus, see: Chapter 5 p.142, 163. c.f. Chapter 4 pp.118-119.
[68] Pind. *Isthm.* 7.3-5; Eur. *Bacch.* 78-82; Farnell L.R. (1977) p.158; Burkert W. (1979) pp.102, 104.
[69] Eur. *Bacch.* 13-20; Graf F. (1990) p.100; *OCD* s.v. Dionysus.

the kingdoms of Asia Minor used these coin issues as their major means of exchange. They were utilised in the market places of Europe and Asia as far as the Bactrian Kingdom, sometimes simultaneously with coins bearing the iconography of the Hellenistic kings.[70] The local coinage seems to have had the same 'fate' as the *shekels* of the Persian Empire; in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., Greek silver money predominated in most countries of the Persian Empire, while the Persian currency was of little use outside Asia Minor, the Phoenician and Palestinian world.[71] When Mithridates used the Alexander-type coins, he appears to have followed the pattern of the Achaemenid rule to leave intact the monetary systems and the trading exchanges of the conquered areas.[72]

The life of Mithridates VI has many similarities with the life of Alexander the Great, although they do not necessarily prove that he imitated the Macedonian conqueror. To be more precise, the birth and future greatness of both had been announced with extraordinary events, dreams and visions.[73] They both succeeded to the throne after their fathers were murdered,[74] possibly due to plots instigated by their mothers.[75] Being the royal princes, they had the best education available in philosophical,[76] medical[77] and physical matters. Generally, their tastes and ideals bear very close resemblance, although this does not imply that they imitated one another. The Persian, Macedonian and Mithridatic Kings appear to have observed similar practices and customs when they offered gifts to the people they favoured.[78] The male aristocracy of Macedonia, north Asia Minor and Iran enjoyed similar interests, like hunting, horse racing and carousing.[79] Mithridates was born in the Greek city of

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[70] Oikonomidis A.N. (1958) p.226.
[71] Dandamaev M.A., Lukovin V.G. (1989) pp.199-212.
[72] For the Achaemenid system, see: Chapter 1 pp.29-34.
[73] Olympias dreamed that her womb was struck by a thunderbolt and Philip dreamed that he was sealing up the womb of his wife with a seal, upon which the figure of a lion was engraved (Plut. *Alex.* 2). In the year of the birth of Mithridates VI, a comet appeared. Reportedly, the same event happened in the year of his accession to the throne (Justin 37.2.1-3).
[74] Strabo 10.4.10; Memnon 22.2 F 434 (Jacoby).
[75] Plut. *Alex.* 10; Bieber M. (1981) p.121; Reinach T. (1890) pp.51, 53.
[76] For the connection of Mithridates with philosophy and philosophers, see: Chapter 2 p.45. For Alexander, see: Plut. *Alex.* 5, 7-8
[77] Mithridates was famous for his resistance to poisons (Justin 37.2.6; App. *Mith.* 111). For Alexander, see: Plut. *Alex.* 7-8.
[78] Persian: Hdt. 3.84, 3.160, 9.109ff; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.7-8, *Anab.* 1.2.27, 1.8.29. Macedonian: Arr. *Anab.* 1.5.4; Plut. *Eum.* 8.7. Mithridatic: Plut. *Pomp.* 32, 36; Chapter 4 pp.112, 115.
[79] For the Greek/Macedonian nobility: Plut. *Alex.* 6, 23, 40. For the Mithridatic Royal House: App. *Mith.* 112; *De Vir. Illustr.* 76.2-3; Plut. *Pomp.* 37; Justin 37.2.7. cf. Strabo 15.1.41, 15.1.55 (Indian royal interests).

Sinope[80] and his upbringing was an amalgam of Persian traditions and Hellenic influences, which he shared with his Persian and Greek *syndrophous*.[81] According to Justin,[82] Eupator, during his early years, wandered in wild forests in order to evade would be assassins. Yet this report might have been the result of misunderstanding the Persian traditions and pedagogical practices which required what was in effect military training of the young men.[83] When the tutors of young Mithridates forced him to ride an untamed horse throwing javelins at him at the same time,[84] they may have been attempting to kill him or, alternatively, trying to teach him the fundamental skills demanded of a Persian noble, "to ride, to shoot and to tell the truth".[85] Fictional or not, the story strongly resembles the incident with Alexander and Bucephelas.[86] Mithridates also appears to have spent his early life in the wild in order to avoid assassins[87] or, alternatively, because spending time in the mountains was considered an initiatory space for adolescent males; being neither a city nor a plain, a mountain formed the perfect backdrop to their military education as they were neither fully fledged citizens nor proper soldiers.[88] In addition, Philip supposedly said to his son, "you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions. Macedonia is too small for you".[89] Having that in mind, it might be possible that the promise of Mithridates to the Italian rebels around 88 B.C.[90] was not entirely an excuse to avoid helping them. The early reigning years of Eupator and his plans to invade Italy demonstrate an extraordinary will power and ambition,[91] similar to that of Alexander. When Mithridates was injured, he showed himself to his troops,[92] something that Alexander had also done.[93] Still, he may not have been intentionally imitating the behaviour of Alexander, since most military leaders would have done the same thing in order to

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[80] Strabo 12.3.11.
[81] Strabo 10.4.10. For the birth and early years of Mithridates VI, see also: Garcia Moreno L.A. (1993) pp.91-109.
[82] Justin 37.2.4-9.
[83] Hdt. 1.136; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.34-36. According to Ephorus, the young men from Crete followed similar practices [Ephorus 70 F 149 (Jacoby); Strabo 10.4.16].
[84] Justin 37.2.4.
[85] Hdt. 1.136; Plato *Alc. I* 121e.
[86] Plut. *Alex.* 6.
[87] Justin 37.2.7-9.
[88] Apollod. 3.13.6; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.45; Vidal-Naquet P. (1986) pp.106-128.
[89] Plut. *Alex.* 6.
[90] Mithridates promised the Italian rebels to lead his armies to Italy after settling his affairs in Asia Minor (Diod. 37.2.11). See: Keaveney A. (1987) pp.157-158.
[91] App. *Mith.* 112; Memnon 22.2 F 434 (Jacoby); Dio Cass. 37.10.
[92] App. *Mith.* 89.
[93] Plut. *Alex.* 63.

calm and lift the spirits of their alarmed troops.[94] While Mithridates VI appears to have followed in the footsteps of the sovereign who came to be thought of as the ideal ruler, he also followed a pattern of behaviour typical of all ambitious rulers throughout time and irrespective of their ancestry, education or religious practices. It could be suggested that Eupator did not imitate Alexander[95] any more than he imitated the Great Kings. His expansionist policy does not appear to have been a duty 'imposed' by his Persian descent,[96] i.e. to conquer more countries than his predecessors and to augment his kingdom. Such a notion emphasises the origins of the 'Pontic Kings' and the so-called 'inevitability' of the Mithridatic Wars rather than the issue in question which is the social, economic and political factors of the specific time and place. Likewise, it is doubtful that Alexander presented himself as Heracles and Dionysus because of his religious nature. As a result of propaganda, these two gods appear to have undergone some degree of transformation, having been given some of the characteristics of Alexander; propaganda also appears to have had the Macedonian conqueror following in the footsteps of Dionysus and Heracles, as far as their exploits in the East were concerned.[97] For this purpose, it has been suggested that Alexander was initially presented as setting out to emulate Heracles in his struggle; yet, after the conquest of the Persian Empire, the image of Dionysus passing triumphantly through Asia seems to have better suited his position and intentions.[98] Since the Greek language and customs were presented as the only respected and respectable way of life,[99] the identification of Mithridates with Alexander emphasised the Hellenic image of the former. His philhellenic attitude fitted with the pattern of behaviour that Hellenistic and Roman rulers[100] followed. Roman authors might have referred to Mithridates VI as 'barbarian', yet his (temporary) popularity throughout the Hellenic world indicates that he had grasped the imagination of the people. It could be argued that his name and authority had become part of the mythological groups in which barbarian characters acquired noble characteristics in order to

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[94] Similarly, when Florus (1.40.18) described Eupator as "Rex callidus", he did not necessarily imply that there were similarities between the 'Pontic King' and crafty Odysseus.
[95] Bieber maintained that "there is no doubt that the ambitious Mithridates felt himself a genuine heir to Alexander the world conqueror" [Bieber M. (1981) p.122].
[96] Florus 1. 40.1-2; App. *Mith.* 57.
[97] For Heracles, see: Soph. *Trach.* 252; Hdt. 1.7, 2.43; Diod. 4.15.2, 4.16. For Dionysus, see: Eur. *Bacch.* 13-17, 75-81; Diod. 4.3; Valerius Flaccus *Argon.* 5.75-81; *OCD* s.v. Dionysus.
[98] Nock A.D. (1928) pp.21-43.
[99] Chapter 1 pp.38-39.
[100] App. *Mith.* 83; Strabo 14.1.13.

enhance the Hellenic and civilised values.[101] This might be one of the reasons that in the First Mithridatic War, the King took on his side all the Roman allies of Galatia and Cappadocia, most of the Aegean islands[102] and most cities of mainland-Greece. With the assistance of his propaganda, the Hellenic world came to regard Mithridates as the leader who could and would gather together the remains of the Hellenic legacy, laying the foundations of a new Greek world domination.

Due to the distance, the Greek coastal cities of Pontus were cut off from the political developments that took place in mainland Greece and South Italy (sixth – fourth centuries B.C.). Consequently, in Pontus not only did the language remain archaic[103] but the political processes also developed much later. It appears possible that the tyrant era which occurred in Greece around the sixth century B.C. reached Pontus towards the end of the second to the beginning of the first century B.C. The tyrants[104] and the Mithridatids, especially Mithridates VI, seem to have used similar political - propaganda techniques in order to become popular. The difference was that the Mithridatids were already monarchs, thus they did not struggle to assume power as the tyrants did. Although their methods appear to have been similar, the political, social and economic circumstances, and the mentality of the people had changed. As a result, the particular methods were ineffective, resulting in the downfall of Mithridates. Although he might well have been a charismatic person and, like the archaic tyrants, his propaganda presented him as the perfect ruler who would have tried to solve a number of social and political problems in the Hellenic world, the cycle of the tyrants had ended and that became obvious in the so-called 'social' policy of Eupator.[105]

It is acknowledged that a *trusted man* was defined as a *man of justice* in the minds of the people. In the middle of the seventh century B.C., the potential tyrants

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[101] For example, the barbarian Amazons appear to have had the values of Greek warriors (Plut. *Thes.* 26-28). It might be coincidental, yet Mithridates and the Amazons were closely associated with Pontus. See also: Conclusion p.186.

[102] For the refusal of Rhodes to support Mithridates, see: Chapter 3 p.100 n.148.

[103] Chapter 1 pp.39-40.

[104] For the purpose of this thesis, a *tyrant* is a person who took advantage of the general discontent of the people and presented himself as the champion of dissatisfied citizens in archaic times. A *tyrant* usually gained the support of the people by opposing the existing status quo. The dissatisfied citizens belonged to different economic and social classes, but they all saw the tyrant-to-be as their saviour. He would have been the ruler who was supposed to bring justice, social recognition and political power to all. However, no tyrant was able to satisfy everybody. With the passage of time, either the tyrant failed to fulfil his promises or a new, more promising figure appeared. Usually, the services of a *saviour* were not needed after a few generations and their doom was inevitable.

[105] For the so-called 'social policy' of Mithridates VI, see: Chapter 3 pp.94ff.

promoted their sensitivities concerning matters of justice.[106] As a result, they won the trust and support of the people who were discontented with the existing system of government and its injustice.[107] In a similar way, Mithridates appears to have cultivated the image of a benevolent and just ruler in order to gain favour with the people. For example, when Nicomedes, the King of Bithynia, plundered the territory of Mithridates around 88 B.C. on the instigation of the Roman ambassadors, the 'King of Pontus' retreated because he wanted to have good and sufficient cause for war.[108] In addition, Mithridates emphasised Roman avarice and injustice, and their mistrust of the institution of Kingship.[109] Like the archaic tyrants, he gained public goodwill by supposedly revolting against existing, unpopular institutions. Furthermore, Eupator and the tyrants appear to have enhanced civilian support by focusing the attention of the people on non-political topics, like building programmes, new festivals or reorganised and remodelled old cults. Peisistratus had cultivated the existing public interest in religion and art with detailed cultural policies.[110] For the Mithridatic dynasty, a noteworthy example was a series of coins of Pharnaces I around the middle of the second century B.C. The King was represented as a "pantheistic divinity" on these coins[111] which depicted a standing male figure dressed in Greek fashion[112] and holding mixed Graeco-Persian emblems.[113] It is possible that this portrait reflected the cultural policy and the political ambition of Pharnaces. He was depicted as the king-god who ruled over and protected the Graeco-Eastern elements of his kingdom. Having amalgamated cultural elements from Greek and Eastern-Persian iconography, he appears to have been the focus for both Greeks and Easterners-Persians. Such imagery had the potential to be appreciated not only by the inhabitants of the Mithridatic Kingdom but also the population of Asia Minor and the Black Sea area. As mentioned above,[114] the Mithridatids did not need to exploit the needs of the people in order to gain power because they were already kings; their objective appears to have been to expand the power they had to neighbouring kingdoms and, possibly, beyond them.

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[106] Arist. *Athen. Const.* F.16.5-8, *Pol.* 1315b18-19; Hdt. 5.92.
[107] Hes. *Works and Days* 218-220, 261-265.
[108] App. *Mith.* 11.
[109] Athen. 5.213d.
[110] Andrews A. (1956) pp.113-114.
[111] Head B.V. (1911) p.500; McGing B.C. (1986) p.33; Seltman C. (1933) p.237.
[112] Spreading hat, chiton, chlamys and cothurni.
[113] Cornucopiae, caduceus and a dove nibbling from a vine-branch.
[114] Chapter 3 p.92.

Mithridates used a so-called 'social policy' in order to secure the favour of the people beyond his Kingdom. It is difficult to examine this 'social policy', since the associated terminology of the slender primary references mystifies rather than clarifies the issue for contemporary analysts. Nevertheless, it comprised two main edicts. The first proclaimed rewards to those who would actively participate in the massacre of the Romans in Asia Minor around the beginning of the First Mithridatic War (88 B.C.).[115] According to the second edict, Mithridates granted freedom to the Greek cities of Asia and the right of citizenship to all who dwelled in the cities, while he also freed the slaves and proclaimed the cancellation of debts (middle of 86 B.C.).[116] These proclamations do not seem to have been addressed to the inhabitants of the 'Pontic' Kingdom, since no evidence indicates that the cities of Pontus were included in these decrees; yet his 'social policy' appears to exhibit elements of the mixed image Mithridates VI presented to the inhabitants of his kingdom.

Mithridates must have been certain of his control over the inhabitants of his kingdom in order to be able to expand outside his realm and become one of the major opponents of Rome. His civic and military administration seem to have brought together the Greek and Eastern elements of his domain;[117] during his rule, an unnamed, mixed culture also appears to have become more evident in Pontus.[118] It could be argued that the internal policies of Mithridates VI would have reflected his mixed Graeco-Eastern image,[119] especially since no substantial numbers of Romans seem to have been settled in the royal domain.[120] In the Mithridatic Kingdom, lack of the aforementioned decrees seems to indicate lack of problems, while these decrees also demonstrate that the control of Mithridates over the people of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands had been problematic. The Greek element of his mixed image might have assisted him in gaining the support of the Hellenic and Hellenised inhabitants of the urban centres of Asia Minor. However, the rewards to the Asian Vespers imply that Mithridates had not been entirely confident of their undoubted support and had

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[115] App. *Mith.* 21; Chapter 3 pp.95-99. For a discussion on the exact date of the Asian Vespers, see: McGing B.C. (1986) p.113 n.118.
[116] App. *Mith.* 48; Chapter 3 pp.99-101.
[117] For the civic and military administration of the Mithridatic kingdom, see: Chapter 2.
[118] This issue is examined in Chapter 4.
[119] e.g. The land tenure practices of the Mithridatic kingdom appear to have accommodated both Eastern (temple estates) and Hellenic (*Mithridates' Law of Inheritance*) perceptions (Chapter 1 pp.34-35, 37). See also: Chapter 4 pp.106-107.
[120] For the Roman settlers in the area of Pontus at the time of Mithridates VI, see: Chapter 5 pp.140-141.

felt it necessary to bolster this support financially. It is likely that when his armies failed in the face of the military might of Rome, his Greek image alone was not able to retain the support of the people. As a result, it became necessary for Eupator to make the aforementioned proclamation. His mixed image exerted a successful, lasting influence over the inhabitants of his kingdom, but it did not have the same lasting results as far as the mainly Greek and Hellenised inhabitants of western Asia Minor was concerned. This notion is supported by examination of his 'social policy'.

The social proclamations of Mithridates appear to have affected different socio-economic groups. Thus, it is difficult to establish with certainty the social identity of the people who supported the King and probably shared his vision for a world without Rome. To be more precise, it appears that the supporters of Mithridates VI against the Roman rule had come from the urban centres of Asia Minor and Greece; their social and economic backgrounds were diverse, ranging from slaves and lower class citizens to wealthy metics and nobles. These people seem to have come from the same socio-economic background with those who encouraged the genesis of the tyrannical form of government in many Greek *poleis* during the sixth century B.C. In order for the tyrants to become autocrats, they would have been supported by nearly all the socio-economic groups. Each group might have had different interests from the others, yet, they would all have supported the tyrants-to-be because they would have expected them to safeguard their particular interests. In a similar way, during different periods, individuals from nearly every social and economic rank appear to have supported Mithridates.

At the beginning of the First Mithridatic War, the support for *the civilised benefactor and liberator of the Greek world* appears to have come jointly from the governing classes and the lower ranks of society. The invitation to take part in the massacre of the Italians of western Asia Minor was addressed to all non-Italians, irrespective of their social or economic status. Eupator promised to share the spoils of the slaughtered with those who actively participated in the massacre, even if only as informers. He also pledged to free the slaves who killed their masters and cancel half of the debt of the debtors who killed their creditors.[121] It is doubtful whether the decree of Mithridates should be considered as kind of social reform, since the rewards he offered were limited. It was the Romans who suffered the consequences

[121] App. *Mith.* 22.

of the royal 'gifts' and the slaves and debtors to the Romans who were positively affected. His decrees did not affect local slave owners, landowners or creditors. The Asian Vespers had social implications, like the cancellation of debts and the freedom of the slaves; yet, their impact was not radical. The slaves would have gained their freedom and the debtors would have had their debts half-cancelled only if they killed by their own hand their owners or creditors.[122] The rewards of Mithridates, to those who would have actively participated in the massacre of the Romans in Asia Minor, seem to have initiated an anti-Roman policy, not a 'social' one.

From a cynical point of view, the Asian Vespers appear to have had a rather practical side for the 'King of Pontus'. The Romans had no place in the Hellenic-centred programme which Mithridates offered to the people of Asia Minor; the Italians who dwelled in the area were potential spies and the Asian Vespers removed a large body of potential opponents and trouble makers. In addition, the confiscated property brought wealth to the King who gave tax redemption for five years.[123] Furthermore, the inhumanity and brutality of the Asian Vespers had the potential of binding irrevocably the cities of Asia Minor to Mithridates, since they would have been afraid of the revenge of Rome. According to the Greek historians of the 1970s, the brutality of the Asian Vespers alienated the Greeks from the 'King of Pontus'.[124] They implied that the Greeks had found the acts barbaric and, as a result, they withdrew their support from the anti-Roman aims of Mithridates. However, the Asian Vespers took place at the beginning of the First Mithridatic War and the Greek cities appear to have supported Mithridates almost until its end. No evidence suggests that it was the non-Greek inhabitants of the cities who had accomplished the murderous deeds. Quite the opposite, the decision of the city of Tralles to hire an assassin in order to avoid the blood-guilt[125] had been taken by the citizen body and not by a particular social group or the mob. The cities held the Asian Vespers and they assisted Mithridates VI because he was winning; they stopped supporting him due to the unsuccessful outcome of the First War. The fact that entire cities welcomed him and the savagery of the massacre[126] at the beginning of the First Mithridatic War seem

[122] App. *Mith.* 22.
[123] Justin 38.3.8-9.
[124] *HHH* (1974) vol.5 p.198.
[125] App. *Mith.* 23.
[126] App. *Mith.* 21, 23; Amioti G. (1980). The few Romans who survived the Asian Vespers had Greek attire (Athen. 5.213 b; Cic. *Pro Rab. Postumo* 10.27).

to have indicated that most social groups supported the King, probably because they saw him as the perfect ruler who would 'free' them from the Roman oppression.

Mithridates VI used the Greek antipathy to the Roman political and financial oppression in order to present himself as a liberator, saviour and avenger. In this respect, the aforementioned comparison between the archaic tyrants and the 'Pontic King' becomes more evident. It could be argued that Mithridates used the hatred between Romans/Italians and Greeks/Anatolians in the same way that Cleisthenes used the tension between the races of the Peloponnese in the sixth century B.C. Cleisthenes seems to have centralised the focus of his followers to an anti-Dorian policy[127] and, in this way, he managed to rise to and stay in power. Mithridates appears to have presented a mixed image in order to unite his followers under his own royal personage; then, he focused their attention on an active anti-Roman policy. His order for the slaying of the Italians was obeyed with an enthusiasm,[128] which implies that for more than two generations the inhabitants had accumulated animosity towards the Roman greed.

The reasons for the Asian Vespers, like the reasons for similar events in the same areas after twenty-one centuries, might have been the so-called undying mistrust and hatred between people of different origins and cultures, whatever the behaviour of Roman *publicani.* It is not uncommon for communities which live in close contact with 'other' groups to dislike each other. Traits and characteristics of each group are used in order to define, and segregate, the 'self' from the 'others'.[129] For example, the natives of Pontus were seen as 'barbarians' by the Greeks and the Romans were perceived as 'greedy' by the tax-payers. However, this distrust was frequently overcome by necessity and mutual benefits,[130] while personal friendship was not entirely dismissed. Certain individuals were perceived not as strangers, but as neighbours and, in quite a number of cases, confidants; under certain conditions, the whole 'other' group might have be seen as part of the 'self'.[131] Such mixed communities might never have achieved an ideal, amalgamated multi-cultural society; yet they do not seem to have initiated by themselves similar savageries. Communal

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[127] Hdt. 5.66-69.
[128] In some places, such as Ephesus, it even led to the violation of the right of asylum of the traditionally revered and highly prized sanctuary of the city (App. *Mith.* 23; Florus 1.40.7-8).
[129] Introduction pp.7-8.
[130] Chapter 1 pp.25-27.
[131] Introduction p.8 n.58.

brutality appears to have reached these communities from outside[132] and when it arrived, personal and public 'friendships' dissolved within a very short period of time; a phenomenon which attests to the power of the masses and of the demagogues.[133]

Closely associated with the massacre of the Romans in Asia was the so-called redistribution of land by Mithridates VI, who never appears to have intended to proceed with such a task. Overall, hopes for land redistribution seem to have increased social resentment and, consequently, the popularity of potential tyrants in archaic Greece.[134] When Mithridates ordered the massacre of the Italians, he promised that the killers would have shared with him *ta onta* of the killed.[135] It is likely that *ta onta* refers to *the landed property* of the victims. However, the King seems to have been referring to the land of the murdered Italians; he does not appear to have proposed to redistribute the city-land and it is even doubtful that he had in mind to reapportion the land at all. It could be argued that the land of the murdered Italians was intended to be divided either between the King and the killers[136] or between the King and the satraps – governors. Mithridates addressed his letter about the Asian Vespers to the governing members of the cities and, realistically, they would have been the ones gaining from the massacre. If the letter of Eupator implies the actual assassins, the exact proportions of land to be received by them and the King is not known. It might also be possible that *ta onta* refers not only to *the land* but also to *the moveable property* of the dead, indicating objects[137] such as jewellery, works of art and furniture.[138] If that was the case, then the bonus of the actual assassins might have been the moveable property of the deceased; such rewards would have pleased those who were desperate and daring enough to commit the brutal acts. The wealth of the affluent middle class Roman traders and landowners would have been sufficient to satisfy the slaves and the members of the lower classes. However, when the citizen body of Tralles decided to hire an assassin in order to being tainted by having committed the murderous act,[139] they seem to have expected something more

[132] The Asian Vespers were not held in the kingdom of Mithridates.
[133] As Herodotus maintained, "it is easier to impose upon a crowd than upon an individual" (Hdt 5.98).
[134] The impoverished Athenians tried to persuade Solon to become a tyrant (Plut. *Solon* 14.3-6). They wanted and expected him to proceed with a redistribution of land (Arist. *Athen. Const.* D.12.3; Plut. *Solon* 16.1).
[135] App. *Mith.* 22.
[136] Magie D. (1950) vol.1 p.216.
[137] *LSJ* s.v. *onta (ta).*
[138] cf. Lysias *Erat.* 4.
[139] App. *Mith.* 23; Diod. 31.1.

significant than valuable objects. Their action and Mithridates' accusation to the Chians[140] might have been initiated from the fact that the land of the dead Romans might have been the bonus to the cities. It could be argued that the land of those who were killed became part of the city-land, consequently it came under the indirect control of the King.[141] The specific land would have come within the jurisdiction of the governors or the councils of the cities, who most likely re-distributed it as they thought best and not necessarily to the underprivileged citizens. Since the victories of Mithridates VI were responsible for this additional resource of wealth, it seems only fair for the King to have received a percentage, or even the full amount, of the extra taxes on the additional land.

Overall, at the beginning of the First Mithridatic War, the 'social policy' of Mithridates was linked with the Asian Vespers and it was successful. As such, it could be said that when Mithridates introduced the decrees for the punishment of the rebellious cities at the end of the First War,[142] he was not treading unfamiliar ground. He seems to have expected different reactions from the people because, at the beginning of the First War, he had introduced similar measures with greater success. After the defeats of the royal armies in Greece during the First War,[143] the leaders of various cities of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands began to doubt the results of their support for the 'Pontic King'. The Mithridatic propaganda which announced the coming of the 'New Alexander'[144] became ineffective because it lacked the support of military victories. The upper classes would have initially supported Mithridates because they believed that he would have enhanced their privileges and power. A victorious Mithridates would have been magnanimous,[145] honouring his friends and supporters[146] by giving to them the administrative, military and financial offices which were currently held by the Romans. However, the privileged classes seem to have been aware of his impending military failure; their plots against him[147] could be

[140] The 'Pontic King' accused the Chians of enjoying the profits of the massacre without sharing them with him (App. *Mith.* 47).
[141] cf. Chapter 1 p.37.
[142] Chapter 3 pp.99-101.
[143] Sulla took Pireus and Athens and won a significant victory over the armies of Archelaus, the general of Mithridates VI, at the battle of Chaeronea (App. *Mith.* 38, 40-45).
[144] Chapter 3 p.85 n.36. See also: Ballesteros-Pastor L. (1999c) pp.506-508.
[145] Chapter 3 pp.85-86.
[146] For the *friends* of the King, see: Chapter 2 pp.62-63.
[147] Towards the middle of 86 B.C., some of the associates of Mithridates (Mynio and Philotimus of Smyrna, Cleisthenes and Asclepiodorus of Lesbos) plotted to kill him; they were betrayed by

seen as a proof of their decision to change sides.[148] Like any other military and political ruler, Eupator had realised that the lower social and economic classes would have soon followed the change of heart of the privileged. Fearing that the cities would defect to the side of the Romans,[149] he turned to oppression, violence and slaughter; he seems to have considered that he could frighten the people into assisting him.[150] Having lost the support of the prominent people, Mithridates tried to secure the support of slaves, debtors and metics. He appealed for support to non-privileged groups by giving citizenship to all those who inhabited the Greek cities, freeing the slaves and proclaiming the cancellation of debts.[151]

This edict presented Mithridates as the protector of the underprivileged groups because it offered them a chance to improve their lifestyle. The changes he introduced might be considered a 'social policy', but no evidence indicates that he tried to organise a revolution on social or 'nationalistic' grounds. The lower classes would have favoured him almost everywhere and welcomed any change, given that they had nothing to lose. They would have supported Eupator and his anti-Roman objectives, because only his rule would have secured these privileges. Indeed, when Sulla tried to settle the affairs in Asia, he met the opposition of these groups which in many cases might have caused the whole city to revolt.[152] Nevertheless, despite their numbers, they were not the ones who controlled the cities. The proclamation of Mithridates to give citizenship, i.e. political rights and power, to the metics does not appear extremely revolutionary. Some of the metics who were usually involved in commerce and industry would have been quite affluent, if not wealthy. They would have been able to influence more people and offer practical and financial aid to Mithridates, if needed. Such a decision might have displeased a large number of the citizens by birthright, despite the socio-economic groups they belonged to; such a decision was not voted for by the citizens of the *poleis* of Asia Minor but it was imposed on them by Eupator. In a similar way, his cancellation of debts would have

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Asclepiodorus and the conspirators were tortured and executed. Some citizens of Pergamum and other cities were also discovered plotting against the 'King of Pontus' (App. *Mith.* 48).

[148] One of the most prominent financial trade centres of the Mediterranean world, Rhodes, remained faithful to Rome, even when nearly the whole Greek world supported Mithridates VI around 88 B.C. (App. *Mith.* 24-26). They seem to have known that the military and economic power of Rome would prevail.

[149] App. *Mith.* 48.

[150] App. *Mith.* 46-48.

[151] App. *Mith.* 48; Chapter 3 pp.99-101.

[152] App. *Mith.* 61.

pleased the debtors of all social ranks and displeased the creditors with or without the status of citizen. It is reasonable to assume that the 'King of Pontus' would also have annoyed all the social groups by freeing the slaves, a measure taken in extremely desperate circumstances. For example, during the First Mithridatic War, the generals of Mithridates had freed fifteen thousand slaves in order to enrol them as soldiers for the battle at Chaeronia, in Greece.[153] During the Third Mithridatic War, the Roman commander Fabius might have done the same in his effort to fight against the royal forces.[154] However, the liberation of the slaves does not appear to have had a long-term social significance. The ex-slaves do not appear to have established any considerable political or economic power, although they became the most devoted supporters of the 'Pontic King'. It is possible that the 'respectable' citizens would not have expected such a popularistic attitude from Eupator. Most probably for this reason, after the end of the First War, Sulla maintained that the (wealthy and powerful) people of Asia had learned by experience who the best protector for them was, Rome or Mithridates.[155]

The propaganda and the 'social policy' of Mithridates appear to have had similar results in mainland Greece as in Asia Minor. The Achaeans, Lacedaemonians and Boeotians had chosen to defect from the Roman power and follow the 'Pontic King';[156] their support seems to have indicated the further success of the propaganda of Eupator in appearing as the New Alexander, i.e. the perfect ruler. At the beginning of the First Mithridatic War, in the cities of Asia Minor and in Athens, the decisive factor in whether a city supported or opposed Mithridates appears to have been the support of the upper classes.[157]

Being part of the Roman Empire, the political authority of Athens would have been in the hands of pro-Roman leaders from the noble and wealthy class. Between 91 and 89 B.C., the city was under the tyranny of Medeius who appears to have been supported by factions of the ruling aristocracy and the Romans.[158] However, the

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[153] Plut. *Sull.* 18.5-6; Strabo 14.1.38. It has been reported that the slaves who had taken part in the naval battle of Salamis were given their freedom as a reward. They were enrolled on the citizen register as Plataians and enjoyed citizen status (Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs* 694).

[154] App. *Mith.* 88. Dio (36.9.4) mentioned that the slaves were given their liberty by Mithridates and they assisted him instead of Fabius.

[155] App. *Mith.* 62.

[156] App. *Mith.* 29.

[157] For example, it has been recorded that a notable man, Zonas of Sardeis, was accused of trying to incite the cities to revolt against Mithridates [Strabo 13.4.9; Welles C.B. (1974) n.73-74].

[158] Around 89-88 B.C., Medeius either died or was removed from power by his rivals [Keaveney A. (1982) pp.79-80].

successes of Mithridates in Asia Minor encouraged the Athenians to view in a positive way the royal, anti-Roman policies. The upper classes sent Athenion to Mithridates as an official envoy in order to invite him to become the champion of the Athenians.[159] Their hopes were justified; Athenion sent a letter[160] to the Athenians emphasising the royal support for the removal of the imposed debts and the re-establishment of democracy. He also referred to the gifts which would be granted to the private and public sector. It is not known what kind of debts Athenion or Mithridates spoke of.[161] It appears unlikely that Mithridates would have risked losing the upper-class assistance by promising a general cancellation of debts. As a clever diplomat, he might have tried to keep everybody happy; for this reason, he appears to have mentioned the importance of a life of unity and agreement. After the letter of Athenion, the privileged socio-economic groups and the lower classes expected *ta kallista* from the King.[162] Most Athenians would have seen in Mithridates a chance to change their social, political or economic conditions through the opportunity to free their city from Roman control. When Athenion returned to Athens (around 88 B.C.), all classes appear to have welcomed him.[163] In all probability, Athenion was seen as the representative of the King, and consequently, as the defender of their privileges, irrespective of their social class. The wide support of the people assisted Athenion in making himself a tyrant. At the beginning, he appears to have upheld his pro-Mithridatic and aristocratic views; inscriptions with the names of the *archons* that Athenion chose reveal that they were members of prominent political families.[164] Nonetheless, he soon befriended Rome.[165] As a result, Mithridates cut off the corn supply of the Athenians from the Black Sea and Athens was faced with a famine.[166] Athenion appears to have abandoned his aristocratic Athenian friends and Mithridates, and chosen to follow his own policies; apparently, he was hoping to become a tyrant of Athens under the auspices of Rome.[167] These pro-Roman actions of Athenion do not seem to have been supported by the higher classes of the Athenians; around 87 B.C., a second pro-Mithridatic tyrant, Aristion, had been

[159] Athen 5.212a.
[160] Athen. 5.212a.
[161] McGing B.C. (1986) p.118.
[162] Athen. 212c.
[163] Athen. 5.212b-e.
[164] *IG* $2^2$.1714.
[165] Athen. 214a-d.
[166] App. *Mith.* 34
[167] For further bibliography on the case of Athenion, see: Keaveney A. (1982) pp.106-107 n.5.

established in Athens.[168] Mithridates appears to have managed to overcome the Athenian philo-Roman parties by establishing tyrannies which were directly or indirectly controlled by him.[169] However, after Athenion, he did not rely entirely on his propaganda as the ideal ruler.[170] Although he was prepared to gain control over the cities of mainland Greece by force,[171] he persuaded the Athenians to support his anti-Roman policies by indirect means. Around that time, Athens issued gold staters[172] which were the last gold coins struck by the Greeks. These golden issues were a symbol of power and independence, proclaiming the imminent restoration of Athenian-Hellenic glory, with the assistance of Mithridates, and marking a break away from Rome. The return of Delos, which had revolted, its sacred treasure and a garrison of two thousand soldiers under the command of Aristion also 'persuaded' the Athenians of the imminent royal success.[173] Interestingly enough, many Athenians who were displeased by or afraid of Aristion found refugee in Amisus,[174] one of the most important and prominent cities of the Mithridatic kingdom. It is likely that these discontented citizens were not displeased with Mithridates himself but with Aristion, although he acted as an agent of the King.[175] Such actions seem to indicate that the image of Mithridates VI as the champion and protector of the Greeks was successful. Nonetheless, once Sulla took the city and although the Athenians supported the 'Pontic King' *en masse*, any pro-Mithridatic feelings were doomed. Royal propaganda alone was not able by itself to win wars and the perpetual support of the people.

The royal policies and propaganda spread over a large geographical area which was inhabited by communities with different origins and culture. Mithridates

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[168] For bibliography on the controversy over the identities of Aristion and Athenion, see: Magie D. (1950) vol.2 p.1110; Keaveney A. (1982) p.107 n.6.

[169] App. *Mith.* 28; Paus. 1.20.5; Strabo 9.1.20. It could be said that Athens (fifth century B.C.) had followed a similar policy in order to further establish its 'empire'. It exercised indirect control over the affairs of some states by supporting a democratic form of government which would have been loyal to the Athenians (Arist. *Polit.* 1307b 20-24; Thuc. 1.115.2-3). Maybe for this reason, it has been reported that tyrants 'compelled' Athens to side with Mithridates VI (Plut. *Sull.* 12.1; Val. Paterc. 2.23.4-5).

[170] When Athenion returned to Athens, he described Mithridates as the ruler of most of Asia Minor, who subdued the civilians and the armies of the Romans and whose influence reached Carthage. He maintained that the royal victory was destined from the gods. According to Athenion, the King encouraged the Athenians to break their links with Rome, which was described as the destroyer of the Greek *polis* and its institutions (Athen. 5.212f-213d).

[171] App. *Mith.* 27, 29; Plut. *Sull.* 11.

[172] Hill G.F. (1906) pp.160-162. For an extended analysis of the coins struck in Athens during 87 B.C., see: Callataÿ F. (de) (1997) pp.298-313.

[173] App. *Mith.* 28; Strabo 10.5.4.

[174] Plut. *Luc.* 29.6. Other pro-Roman Athenians found refuge in Rome (Cic. *Brut.* 306).

[175] Paus. 1.20.5.

VI assumed absolute power in order to be able to control them. His so-called 'social policy' does not appear to have had an impact on Pontus, which indicates his confidence over the regions of his Kingdom. The mixed descent and the policies of the Mithridatids seem to have been influenced by the mixed population of their Kingdom. They came to be known as *the kings of Pontus*, probably because they integrated within themselves the mixed elements of the area. The fact that Eupator was almost successful appears to have been directly linked with the royal Graeco-Eastern image. Being a success in the kingdom,[176] this image had the potential for being successful in areas with similar cultural elements as was the case of Asia Minor and, to a lesser extent, of Greece.

When Mithridates VI presented himself as Greek and an Easterner, he might have made more prominent the common mythological-historical elements of the inhabitants of his kingdom. Since the King was descended from both worlds, the people of his kingdom might not have been as unrelated as they initially thought. The Mithridatids, Eupator in particular, might have put the foundations for the notion of a shared descent and history into the minds of the inhabitants of their kingdom. Overall, during the reign of Mithridates VI, the royal authority and policies do not seem to have left substantial space for rivalry between the Greek and Eastern elements of the kingdom. Such circumstances appear to have led to the flourishing of an unnamed mixed culture which created the potential for an externally-defined Pontic identity centuries after the fall of the dynasty.

[176] For the emblems of the Mithridatic Dynasty, see: Chapter 2 p.50.

# Chapter 4

## Some of the Mixed Elements of the Culture of Pontus (Greek, Eastern, Persian)

The political and military activities of the Mithridatic House appear to have created a unified state structure, which had an external lustre of Hellenism and was largely based on eastern civic and military forms. The plans of Mithridates VI concerning Asia Minor and mainland Greece[1] were potentially successful, partly due to the stability of the areas he influenced, directly or indirectly. In addition, the inhabitants of his kingdom seem to have supported him, despite their various ancestral origins; his Graeco-Persian image would have appealed to them, because it would have reflected their Graeco-Persian culture.[2] No conscious state policy had existed for the amalgamation of the cultures of the kingdom, yet an unconscious blending seems to have occurred, as happens to nearly all areas where two or more cultures interact.

The Mithridatic dynasty endeavoured to do two things: to gain the admiration of the Hellenic world and to have the devotion of their Persian and Anatolian subjects. As a result, on the one hand, they followed closely the behaviour of the Hellenistic monarchs[3] and, on the other hand, they emphasised their Persian lineage. As Persians, they would have been very proud of their origins.[4] Darius I repeatedly referred to himself as "son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, having Aryan lineage".[5] Persia was not included in the list of countries which performed obligations in the Achaemenid Empire[6] and the Persians were exempt from compulsory labour and monetary taxes.[7] The bust of Mithridates III

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[1] These plans have been examined in Chapter 3

[2] e.g. Chapter 2 p.50; Chapter 3 pp.86ff (Mithridates – Alexander); Chapter 4 pp.106-107 (emblems).

[3] Chapter 2 pp.43-45.

[4] For the Persian origins of the Mithridatids, see: Chapter 2 p.50-51. The Persians have been described as the *aristoi* of the Asian people (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.29-30).

[5] *DNa* 2.8-15 Kent (1953) pp.137-138.

[6] Hdt. 3.90-94.

[7] The vast majority of subject peoples appear to have paid taxes, whereas the Persians and those who lived on the borders of the empire delivered '*gifts*'. This practice does not imply that the border communities were seen as equals to the Persians. It is possible that the Great King found it easier to compliment the people who inhabited the borders of the empire and, therefore, avoid rebellions (Aelianus *Var.* 1.31; *Ezra* 2.4:13, 2.4:20, 2.6:8; Hdt. 3.97, 1.134).

manifests the attachment of the Mithridatids to their oriental roots. The wrinkled face and the small beard of the sculpture emphasises the 'eastern' features of the King. During his reign, a star and a crescent was depicted on the gold and silver coinage of Pontus, which became the regal emblem of the royal dynasty until the annihilation of the kingdom.[8] Similar realistic characteristics are depicted in the coin portrait of Pharnaces I.[9] The meeting of Greek artists with oriental models seems to have created a unique and exceptional portrait art which stood quite isolated, outside the main development of portraiture in the Hellenistic age. The representation of Pharnaces is considered to be one of the least flattering human representations ever made. Still, his portrayal demonstrates a brutal realism which was only surpassed by the coin depictions of the Greek kings of Bactria.[10] The Mithridatids also displayed their Iranian ancestry with a series of Persian emblems, like the Persian standards which have been found in Amisus and Trapezus (fourth century B.C.).[11] Nearly all the Greek-like coins of Pontus have Persian references, possibly as a permanent reminder of the king who issued them. In particular, the coins of Amisus[12] of Mithridates VI depict a quiver which was considered as the traditional Persian weapon;[13] a quiver is also depicted in the Persian shekels and darics.[14] A star within a crescent surrounded by an ivy-wreath with a stag feeding or a Pegasus drinking became the symbols of the Mithridatic kingdom;[15] these emblems are also depicted on Attic gold staters and tetradrachms.[16] The eagle on issues of the Pontic cities[17] can be seen as a Persian symbol of swiftness and power; a golden eagle or a falcon with widely spread wings was regularly borne before a Persian army or in front of the Great King.[18] However, some symbols have a double meaning which varies according to the interpretations. For example, the stag could have symbolised

[8] Head B.V. (1911) p.500; Mørkholm O. (1991) p.131.
[9] Head B.V. (1911) p.500.
[10] Mørkholm O. (1991) pp.28, 131; Seltman C. (1933) p.237.
[11] Head B.V. (1911) pp.496, 499.
[12] Head B.V. (1911) p.497.
[13] Aesch. *Persae* 85-85, 146-149, 239-240.
[14] Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) pp.197, 224-225; Hill G.F. (1909) p.26.
[15] Head B.V. (1911) p.497. It has been suggested that the Mithridatids passed the symbol of a star within a crescent to the Byzantine Emperors; it was retained in Constantinople under Christianity and it still remains upon the flag of the Turkish Republic [Seltman C. (1933) p.23].
[16] These coins also displayed the Greek inscription *Basileos Mithridatou Eupatoros* [Head B.V. (1911) pp.501-502; Seltman C. (1933) p.237].
[17] Head B.V. (1911) pp.500-502; Seltman C. (1933) p.237.
[18] Xen. *Anab.* 1.10.12; *Cyrop.* 7.1.4. For the symbolism of the falcon in the Persian religion, see: Boyce M. (1982) vol.2 pp.103-104. However, in Aeschylus (*Persae* 205-210), the eagle was identified with the Persians while the falcon was with the Greeks.

Artemis or the Persian love of hunting, while Pegasus, as the offspring of the Medusa, referred to Perseus who was a Greek hero and the legendary ancestor of the Persians.[19]

The symbols of the Mithridatids were related to the various cultural groups who inhabited their kingdom. It could be argued that the Mithridatids were successful in controlling the area partly because their actions unconsciously promoted the cultural amalgamation which had started from the first contacts between 'natives' and 'newcomers'. They were interested in establishing and expanding their royal authority and not in promoting a cultural fusion. However, as they were struggling for the former, they appear to have created the necessary conditions for a mixed culture to flourish, the marriage policies of the dynasty perhaps illustrating this notion.

Frequently, a marriage is, and was, not simply the union of a man and a woman for social or emotional purposes. For instance, a surviving fragment of a Persian carpet found in the frozen tombs of distant Siberia might have belonged to a Persian princess, who was probably married off to a Scythian prince for diplomatic reasons; her marriage might have established or secured peace on the northern borders of the Persian Empire.[20] For the Mithridatic Kings, a wedding usually carried political implications and economic connotations. Due to their lineage, they were able to follow the Persian conventions concerning the institution of marriage: their practice of having several lawful wives without even the pretence of a divorce was based purely on Iranian customs. However, this does not imply that all the inhabitants of Pontus exercised the polygamy that the royal family practised. Commoners were allowed to follow the marriage practices of their own cultural background, in the same way that many communities of the Achaemenid Empire practised monogamy.[21]

Political marriages were intended to tighten the relationship between two Royal Houses and they usually strengthened the status of one of them. Women were the catalyst in the integration of two families. They were bound to both Houses and, therefore, had to deal with conflicting interests. If the reconciliation, as a result of the

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[19] Hdt. 7.61; Hill G.F. (1906) pp.162-163.

[20] Sancisi-Weerdenburg H. (1983) p.23. For examples from the Greek and the Roman world, see: Arist. *Ath. Const.* 14.4, 16.2-3 and Plut. *Pomp.* 44.2-3, respectively. For Persian examples, see: Hdt. 9.108-113, 3.84. Examples of intermarriages between Greeks and barbarians are provided by Diodorus (20.109.6-7) and Herodotus (4.78).

[21] For the monogamous subject-countries of the Persian Empire, see: Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) p.124. For Persian marriage practices, see: Jong A. de (1997) pp.424-431.

marriage, failed or if the original hostilities developed further, these brides were under great pressure, since their loyalties clashed. Laodice, the daughter of Mithridates V and wife of Ariarathes VI,[22] might have been involved in the murder of her husband, although there is no indisputable proof. Initially, the loyalty of Laodice to her father secured her influence over the inexperienced Ariarathes and, thus, the indirect control of Mithridates V over Cappadocia. However, as Ariarathes became more confident in exercising his rule, Laodice appears to have had difficulties influencing him in favour of the Mithridatic interest. It is possible that she participated in, or at least did not object to, his assassination due to her devotion to the 'Pontic House'. Like the Persian queen mothers,[23] the status of Laodice as the mother of the future legitimate king would have made her far more powerful than when she was one of the royal wives.[24] As a regent for her son, Ariarathes VII, it would have been easier for her to advance the wishes of her brother, Mithridates VI.[25] The efforts of the latter to gain easy access to Cappadocian affairs seems to have justified the murder of Ariarathes VI and the attempts on the lives of his sons.[26] After the death of the Cappadocian ruler, the family obligations of Mithridates VI to his sister would have given him a direct say in Cappadocian matters. However, Laodice did not give him the opportunity to exercise such authority. The King of Bithynia, Nicomedes, took advantage of the death of Ariarathes VI and overran the country.[27] At that critical moment, Laodice decided to ignore her obligation to her brother and sons and she appears to have chosen to act as an independent queen; her marriage with Nicomedes might have sealed a treaty between them.[28] Royal women were particularly powerful as well as vulnerable since they constantly had to choose between their roles as wives and as daughters. The outcome of this role-conflict was never entirely predictable and for this reason, their choice was feared; Mithridates was angry with the decision of

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[22] App. *Mith.* 10. For a discussion on the time and the conditions of the wedding of Laodice and Ariarather VI, before or after the invasion of Mithridates V in Cappadocia, see: McGing B.C. (1986) pp.37-38.

[23] Plut. *Artax.* 18.4.

[24] Sancisi-Weerdenburg H. (1983) pp.22-25. In view of the status of the queen-mother and the Persian customs, matricide was unthinkable. As a result, it is doubtful whether or not Mithridates VI killed his own mother [Hdt. 1.137; Memnon 22.1-2 (Jacoby); Appian *Mith.* 112; Sen. *Contr.* 7.1.15, 7.3.4; Reinach T (1890) pp.50-56].

[25] Ariarathes VI seems to have reigned between 130 and 116 B.C. Since Mithridates VI had become King in 120 B.C., the loyalty of Laodice was expected to be transferred to her brother as he had become the leader of the Mithridatic Dynasty.

[26] Justin 38.1.1.

[27] Justin 38.1.1-3.

[28] Justin 38.1.4.

Laodice to marry Nicomedes and to support the ambitions of her new husband rather than those of her brother.[29] The catalytic role of women was an unpredictable element and this notion is further illustrated by the marriages of the Mithridatic Royal House, especially those with not-so-clearly-visible political motives.[30]

The intermarriages between the Hellenistic Houses of Asia and the Mithridatic Dynasty are models of the political significance of a royal marriage.[31] Mithridates II married the daughter of Antiochus II Theos and sister of Seleucus II Callinicus;[32] as a result, he gained impressive recognition for his kingdom as a political power in the Hellenistic world. The marriage of Alexander and the Companions with Persian noble brides seems to have legitimised their sovereignty over the Persian Empire.[33] Similarly, the marriage relations between the Mithridatic Dynasty and one of the most prominent Hellenistic Houses appears to have established the Mithridatids as lawful rulers of the area. The marriage between Greek noble women and the *barbarian* Kings may attest to the Hellenisation of the latter.[34] Antiochus III married his first cousin, Laodice, daughter of Mithridates II.[35] The conscious choice of the House of Seleucus to establish marriage relations with the so-called barbaric forces of Asia Minor[36] demonstrated an official recognition of the Mithridatic political might and influence. It could be argued that the same notion is also demonstrated by the careful steps which were taken in order to legitimise the status of Laodice, i.e. first, she was called wife of Antiochus, secondly, the marriage was consummated and finally, she was proclaimed a queen.[37] As the Mithridatic kingdom was initially a serious internal problem for the Seleucid Kingdom,[38] the Seleucids appear to have used marriage alliances to secure control over Asia Minor and to minimise the number of potential antagonists. It has been suggested that such marriages might have demonstrated the *tendency* of the Mithridatids to favour the Seleucids.[39] However, the political and diplomatic terrain allowed no unjustified, sentimental inclinations. Favourable or

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[29] Justin 38.1-5.
[30] Chapter 4 p.112.
[31] The Mithridatids did not have the monopoly on intermarriage with the Hellenistic Houses of Asia. The Cappadocian dynasty followed similar patterns (App. *Syr.* 5; Diod. *Apud Plotium* p.1160).
[32] Euseb. *Chron.* lib.1 p.118.
[33] Arr. 7.4.3-8; Curtius Rufus 8.4.25-27; Plut. *Alex.* 70.2; Bosworth A.B. (1980) pp.10-12.
[34] See also: Chapter 4 pp.116-117.
[35] Polyb. 5.43.1-4.
[36] App. *Syr.* 5; Diod. 31.19.5; Eus. *Chron.* lib.1 p.251; Polyb. 5.74.4-5, 8.20.11.
[37] Vatin C. (1970) p.91; Ogden D. (1999) pp.133-134.
[38] Chapter 2 pp.54-55.
[39] McGing B.C. (1986) p.20.

unfavourable dispositions of one kingdom to the other seem to have been part of their scheme of survival and growth. The Mithridatic Kings would have realised that the Seleucids were more useful as friends than as enemies; hence, they used marriage alliances to befriend them. Even so, this tried and trusted method did not produce the desired results in the aforementioned union between Mithridates II and the sister of Seleucus II.[40] It would have been expected that after such an important political marriage, gratitude would have made Mithridates a sincere supporter of the lawful king, Seleucus II. Despite the prestige he gained through his wedding, he had also received Greater Phrygia as part of the dowry of the bride; at least, this was what the Mithridatic House maintained afterwards.[41] Nonetheless, Mithridates II seems to have demonstrated his independence from the Seleucids by favouring Antiochus Hierax, who rebelled against his brother, Seleucus II.[42] At the battle of Ancyra (around 141/140 B.C.), Mithridates II entered the battlefield supporting Antiochus. A large number of the forces of Seleucus II were destroyed due to the intervention of the 'Pontic King' and his Galatian mercenaries.[43] Overall, it could be argued that the marriage of Mithridates II with the daughter of Antiochus II[44] does not demonstrate an alliance of the 'Pontic House' with a particular authority. In contrast, it appears as a statement of power and independence. Pharnaces seems to have made a similar statement by marrying into the House of Demetrius I, who had escaped from Rome in order to take up his throne;[45] the same union had been rejected by Ariarathes V of Cappadocia out of deference to Rome. It is likely that by performing this marriage alliance, Pharnaces demonstrated his indifference to and independence from Rome.

Mithridates VI came to be seen as a master of political matchmaking, because he appears to have used political marriages extensively in order to achieve his purposes and fulfil his ambitions. In particular, the marriage of his daughter, Cleopatra, to Tigranes II[46] seems to have played an important role in the relations between the Armenian and the Mithridatic Kingdoms. The two states tightened up their relations to such an extent that the fifth century A.D. writer Orosius called

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[40] Euseb. *Chron.* lib.1 p.118.
[41] Eus. *Chron.* lib.1 p.251; Justin 38.5.3.
[42] Justin 27.2.7-8.
[43] The battle of Ancyra appears to have brought about a chaotic situation in Asia Minor. Neither Seleucus II nor Antiochus Hierax were able to establish themselves in the region, leaving the field free for the Attalid House of Pergamum. For further reading, see: Bevan E.R. (1966) vol.1 pp.192-196.
[44] Chapter 4 p.109.
[45] Diod. 31.28.
[46] Justin 38.3.1-5.

Mithridates "King of Pontus and Armenia".[47] In addition, the actual wedding was arranged to take place close to the time of the agreement between the two Kings, according to which Mithridates kept the territory of Cappadocia and Tigranes carried off whatever could be removed.[48] The wedding took place either just before or after the agreement; it seems to have been either the cause or the effect of the arrangements concerning Cappadocia. In the description of Justin, Mithridates appears as the *wicked king* who had tricked *innocuous* Tigranes into attacking Cappadocia and the interests of Rome. However, it is doubtful that Tigranes was unaware of the fact that his marriage and his actions would have displeased the Romans. He would have simply considered the marriage alliance and the accompanying, aforementioned agreement as more beneficial. This alliance with Armenia and the prospect of a similar one with Egypt and Syria created a feeling of uneasiness in those who opposed the plans of Mithridates VI. When the ambassadors of Nicomedes, the Bithynian King, enumerated to the Romans the reasons Mithridates VI was dangerous and hostile to Rome, they also included these marriage alliances.[49] The 'Pontic King' had also betrothed two of his daughters to the kings of Egypt and Cyprus.[50] Even after losing the Third Mithridatic War, and while he was a fugitive, Mithridates seems to have continued to utilise his daughters in cementing alliances with barbarian princes.[51] Overall, he does seem to have accumulated great power through such unions.

The marriage manipulations of Eupator did not always have the desired results. For example, in 81 B.C., the Second Mithridatic War came to end with the reconciliation between Mithridates and the King of Cappadocia, Ariobarzanes. In order to seal their truce, Eupator betrothed his four-year old daughter to Ariobarzanes;[52] yet, the primary concern of Mithridates does not seem to have been peace. He appears to have used the betrothal of his daughter to legitimise possession of the parts of Cappadocia he already controlled and to acquire even more. Despite the engagement and the costly celebration, Ariobarzanes refused to give a large part of his kingdom as a bridal gift. He requested the intervention of Rome, whose leaders

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[47] Orosius 6.2.
[48] Magie D. (1950) p.1099 n.16; McGing B.C. (1986) pp.56, 78.
[49] App. *Mith.* 13.
[50] App. *Mith.* 111.
[51] App. *Mith.* 102.
[52] App. *Mith.* 66.

commanded Mithridates to withdraw from Cappadocia.[53] Mithridates complied with the orders of Sulla, but as early as 79 B.C., he appears to have made an agreement with his Armenian son-in-law, Tigranes: Tigranes would invade Cappadocia and carry off whatever could be removed and Mithridates would keep the territory.[54] Marriage alliances were not always successful in tightening the relationships between two Royal Houses.

Certain marriages of Mithridates VI have puzzled ancient and modern researchers alike, because their political relevance is not very apparent. The unions between non-noble Greek women and the King appear to have had an indirect practical side. Such marriages bestowed enormous authority on the family of the bride and constituted an excellent propaganda tactic for Mithridates. In particular, the family members of Stratonice[55] and Monime[56] enjoyed special privileges; the father of Stratonice was given wealth and presents, as if he were a *philos* of the king, and the father of Monime, Philopoemen, was appointed overseer of Ephesus. Loyalty and family obligations were not only displayed among the members of the Royal House;[57] the marriage of the King with a non-noble woman created responsibilities and signified a mutual affiliation between the in-laws, too.[58] Mithridates manipulated the father of Stratonice in order to advertise the royal generosity and kindness by honouring him with majestic gifts. The King would have also required of Philopoemen to safeguard the royal interests. Since no evidence suggests that Philopoemen had attempted to inform the King of the revolt of the Ephesians or that he tried to protect the general of Mithridates, Zenobius, around 87 B.C., the King might have suspected him of playing an active part in the rebellion and punished him among the rebels.[59]

Plutarch and Appian used the marriages of Mithridates VI with Greek women in their effort to celebrate the Greek spirit and hold it up in comparison with the 'others'. For example, Monime was first regarded with indifference, as one of the

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[53] App. *Mith.* 67.
[54] For the marriage alliance between Mithridates and Tigranes, see: Chapter 4 pp.110-111.
[55] Plut. *Pomp.* 36.
[56] See the following paragraphs.
[57] For the marriage of Laodice and Ariarathes and the relation of Laodice with the Mithridatic Dynasty, see: Chapter 4 pp.108-109.
[58] The ancient, Mithridatic attachment to kinsmen bears strong vestiges of the attachment of modern Greeks to *their koumbaros* (this is what the Groom and the Best Man call each other, according to Modern Greek terminology). In particular, they are expected to help each other in their professional, financial, social and, possibly, emotional life.
[59] App. *Mith.* 48.

numerous wives of Eupator.[60] Yet, she soon emerged as his favourite wife[61] and a much-discussed woman in the Greek world. Monime was a Greek woman, from Ionia, Stratoniceia or Miletus.[62] In reality, she might have lived a relatively contented life. However, the ancient historians seem to have considered that her fate was an unhappy one; it did not fulfil the stereotypical expectations of happiness of a Greek citizen. For Plutarch, Monime had to be unhappy, because "she had a master instead of a husband and a guard of barbarians instead of home and family".[63] In his writing, Monime is presented as the personification of an ideal, rather than a real person. According to the Greek model, she was a beautiful and virtuous woman who was married to a barbarian, i.e. somebody who lived below her Hellenic status despite the fact that her husband was a king. This model required her to live an unhappy life at the court of the King as well as to be an obedient, dutiful wife. Her dath was also to conform to this model. She died with silent dignity choosing an honourable death by the sword, when her husband ordered that she should die. Plutarch followed the same model of female character and behaviour in his portrayal of Hypsicrateia, the concubine of Mithridates. Her behaviour was unconventional, because she was rode a horse and she wore male clothes; still, she was praised for behaving like a proper, dutiful and honourable woman. Ironically, when the author praised her female qualities, he proclaimed that she "showed the spirit of a man".[64]

The writings of Plutarch and Appian present Mithridates as an inconsiderate barbarian, who yielded only to pleasures with women.[65] However, Mithridates VI seems to have trusted and honoured certain women, like Stratonice, possibly one of his concubines, to whom he entrusted the richest of his castles.[66] Sometimes, his behaviour might also be interpreted as a genuine interest in the well being of the women he was related to. For example, his decision to put all his sisters, wives and concubines to death may, in fact, have been motivated by his dsire to protect them from a 'worse fate'. This act has been presented as a brutal appetite for blood,[67] which, according to Appian, led the garrison commanders of Mithridates to desert to

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[60] App. *Mith.* 21, 27.
[61] *Favourite* could be a good translation of *eromenis* (App. *Mith.* 48).
[62] App. *Mith.* 21 and Plut. *Luc.* 18.2, respectively.
[63] Plut. *Luc.* 18.3-4.
[64] Plut. *Pomp.* 32. For a comparison of Hypsicrateia with the Amazons, see: Ballesteros-Pastor L. (1997) pp.241-247.
[65] App. *Mith.* 112.
[66] Plut. *Pomp.* 36; possibly the same Stratonice as in App. *Mith.* 107.
[67] App. *Mith.* 82; Plut. *Luc.* 18.2-6.

Lucullus.[68] Yet, there is some question as to the validity of this statement. Plutarch did not give any information concerning the desertion of the commanders, although he described the event in more details than Appian. In addition, it could be argued that the orders of Mithridates were related to the Persian custom which punished with death whoever saw the royal wives and concubines, except for the king, nearest relatives and eunuchs.[69] The Persian Mithridates would have behaved with characteristic Iranian jealousy,[70] which might have been directly linked to his desire to protect his wives, concubines and female slaves. Mithridates was not able to protect them by killing the Romans who would have threatened their well being; instead, he put them to death, possibly to protect them from servitude. One of his sisters, Statira, was grateful to her brother for taking measures to have them die in freedom and not be subjected to Roman insults.[71] The eagerness with which the men of Tigranes managed to save the royal concubines[72] might indicate a similar mentality between Mithridates and Tigranes. When Lucullus captured Tigranocerta, he protected the women of the powerful Cilician men who dwelled in the city, because he wanted to win their support.[73] Despite his reportedly gentle nature,[74] he might not have been able to be so protective to the numerous wives, concubines and female relatives of the enemy Kings, Mithridates and Tigranes.[75] Since women and children were killed rather than suffer the consequences of captivity, the fact that the Romans had managed to capture a sister and five children of Mithridates VI might have given additional prestige to the triumph of Pompey.[76]

It could be argued that Mithridates did not give to his wives, concubines and sisters a genuine choice, since they could either commit suicide or be killed. It is likely that Mithridates expected that most of these women would have unquestionably obeyed his orders. A considerable number of them would have had Eastern origins

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[68] App. *Mith.* 82.
[69] For more laws and customs concerning the Persian (royal) behaviour towards women, see: Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) pp.119-120.
[70] Plut. *Them.* 26.
[71] Plut. *Luc.* 18.4.6.
[72] App. *Mith.* 85; Memnon 38 F.2-3 (Jacoby).
[73] Dio Cass. 36.2.4.
[74] Plut. *Luc.* 18.4.6.
[75] For a different interpretation, see: Keaveney A. (1992) p.91.
[76] Plut. *Pomp.* 45. History appears to be full of accounts of people who chose to die rather than be captured by the enemy. For example, during the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the women and children of Souli chose to fall into the canyons of Zallogos rather than surrender to Ali Pasha. In Kougi in Crete, injured soldiers, women, children and priests chose to blow up the church in which they were hiding rather than fall into the hands of the enemy.

and they would have been accustomed to comply with the word of the King – patriarch. The powerful eastern patriarchs behaved like slaveholders to the members of their own families, while in ancient Iran, this behaviour might have originated from efforts to balance the poorly developed institution of slavery.[77] The Biblical tale of the Persian queen Astin reveals that the Persian husband exercised over his wife an authority similar to the relationship between a king and his subjects.[78] A woman was supposed to obey her husband, even when his demands clashed with the established laws; thus, it appears highly improbable that the female relatives of Mithridates would have made any serious attempt to disobey the King and save their lives. According to Persian and, possibly, Greek manners and customs, the wives and concubines of the 'Pontic King' manifested the obedience which all decent women were expected to uphold. Many of them, like Statira,[79] appear to have approved of his decision, since they preferred death to humiliating captivity. Another deed of Mithridates lends further weight to this assumption. When Pompey pursued the King, the latter decided to kill the soldiers who were sick or unfit for service and to distribute costly gifts and deadly poison to his friends.[80] Eupator seems to have detested the idea that his friends and faithful soldiers might fall into the hands of the enemy against their will. For men or women, falling into the hands of the enemy was something to avoid at all costs. Although Lucullus was an influential commander and was reported to have a gentle and humane disposition,[81] the same did not necessarily apply to all his generals and soldiers. Under these circumstances, it is possible that Mithridates expressed a genuine interest in his soldiers, relatives and friends.[82]

Overall, the marriage alliances seem to have played an important role in the politics of the Mithridatic Kingdom. However, the royal women were not supposed to take an active part in the government, since state affairs were considered a male preserve according to the Persian and Greek mentality. On a theoretical basis, such Graeco-Persian influences demanded the exclusion of the royal Mithridatic women from the administration of public and state affairs. Nevertheless, they seem to have been able to obtain control over powerful men and to have influenced decisions taken

[77] Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 9.12; Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) p.158.
[78] According to tradition, King Artaxerxis asked Queen Astin to present herself to his guests. The Queen refused, disobeying the King but obeying the law. However, the advisors of the King proclaimed that the Queen had to be punished because the word of the King is Law (*Esther* 1:11-23).
[79] Plut. *Luc.* 18.6.
[80] Plut. *Pomp.* 32.
[81] Plut. *Luc.* 18.6, *Pomp.* 36.

by males, despite their seclusion in the harem or the *gynaikonites*. In the Graeco-Roman world, the women who were attached to important political and military figures were able to influence them as far as their own private interests, or those of their families and friends, were concerned.[83] It has been suggested that Achaemenid queens and princesses might have had the power to punish those who threatened the life or the sovereign authority of the members of the royal family.[84] It is possible that the notion of giving power to a woman was not altogether alien to the mentality of Mithridates. Many of the royal women of the Mithridatic Kingdom appear to have been well aware of their power. Cleopatra, one of the daughters of Mithridates VI, might not have been able to command the army or to organise a defence without the assistance of generals and advisors, but the direct reference to her military struggle indicates that she had actual sovereign power in her hands.[85] In addition, Eupator invested his daughters with his authority by putting them in charge of the "all-powerful with Mithridates" eunuchs, when he sent them as wives to Scythian princes in return for reinforcements.[86] It appears that a number of royal women were not 'hiding away' in the harem of Mithridates, but had become involved in crucial political processes.[87]

Under certain circumstances, royal women might also have shared the responsibility for the introduction of Greek culture into the Mithridatic court. The royal wives, concubines and female slaves seem to have come from different social and educational backgrounds and so have represented nearly all the cultural elements of the kingdom. It could be argued that their relationship with the Mithridatids signified not only considerable political and economic benefits but also an unconscious cultural blending. Their religion, language, manners and customs would have made up a 'dowry' of exceptional wealth, which reflected the cultural amalgamation of the kingdom.

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[82] For the not-so-genuine *philanthropia* of Eupator, see: Chapter 3 pp.85-86.

[83] Plut. *Peric.* 24.1-3, *Luc.* 6.1-4.

[84] This hypothesis is based on the story of Artaynte who wore a royal robe; Artaynte and her family were punished for her insolence by Amestris, the wife of the Great King. The request of Artaynte to wear the robe has been interpreted as at attempt to usurp the kingship [Hdt. 9.108-113; Brosius M. (1988) p.113 n.68]. cf. Hdt. 7.3.3-4, 7.134.1.

[85] App. *Mith.* 108.

[86] Ibid.

[87] According to popular belief, women are referred to as *the hidden force* behind an important man. In the Achaemenid Empire and the ancient Orient, they frequently remained nameless or unnamed. For example, although Atossa was often quoted in Herodotus (3.31, 3.68, 3.134, 7.2-3), she was the

Hellenisation seems to have started from the royal court, since it was usually the king who was interested in the Greek culture.[88] Mithridates IV even presented the marriage to his own sister, Laodice, from a Greek viewpoint even though the marriage between royal siblings was a common eastern practice.[89] In particular, he associated himself and his bride with the gods of Olympus. Before their marriage, the coinage of the Mithridatic Kingdom emphasised the Persian origins of the dynasty, depicting Perseus holding a harp, the head of Medusa and the 'Pontic' emblems, star and crescent.[90] After their marriage, the tetradrachms "of King Mithridates and Queen Laodice Philadelphoi" associate them with Zeus and Hera.[91] The issue of a gold stater, which is also connected with Mithridates IV, depicts the King wearing a laurel crown and, on the reverse, Hera, as was the case with the aforementioned tetradrachms.[92] The presentation of this marriage appears to have been part of the philhellenic policy of the Mithridatids; in a similar way, the adoption of Greek symbols and images on coins would have assisted the gentle introduction of Hellenic cultural elements throughout the Kingdom.

Marriage alliances seem to have assisted the introduction of Greek culture into the royal court. After a wedding, it is likely that various Greek/Hellenised attendants, cooks and entertainers as well as priests, physicians and (unofficial) councillors accompanied the Hellenistic princesses to their new homes, at the Mithridatic palaces. It seems likely that they would have eventually mingled with the less Hellenised elements of the royal court. The newly arrived queen may have become the nucleus of a Hellenic – Hellenised circle within the royal court. A similar circle seems to have surrounded Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates VI and wife of Tigranes.[93] The notion that "mixed marriages have the potential to create a mixed culture"[94] appears to have functioned quite well among the royal ranks of the Mithridatic kingdom; although a mixed culture appears to have been developing, we have no

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unnamed leading character in *Persae*. The few exceptions of eponymous women were mostly of a notorious kind (e.g. Plut. *Artax*. 18-19).

[88] Chapter 2 pp.43-45.

[89] Eur. *Andr*. 173-176; Diod. 1.27.1; Dio Chrys. *Or*. 10.29-30. For a further analysis and bibliography on the subject, see: Goody J. (1990) pp.319-341. Mithridates VI also married his sister, Laodice (Just. 37.3.6-7, 38.1.1; Sall. *Hist*. 2.76M).

[90] Head B.V. (1911) p.501.

[91] Head B.V. (1911) p.501.

[92] Head B.V. (1911) p.501; Seltman C. (1933) p.237. Laodice and Hera are also portrayed on another issue, although it is doubtful that the coin refers to the future wife of Mithridates IV [Head B.V. (1911) p.501; *Ins. Delos* 1555].

[93] Plut. *Luc*. 22.5, 29.4.

evidence for mixed marriages among the middle and lower classes or the population of the countryside, at least at the present time.

It seems plausible that the influence of Hellenic culture among the Persian-Anatolian inhabitants of the Mithridatic Kingdom might have reflected the proportion of intermarriages. On the one hand, the high level of Hellenisation among the royal circles might have been assisted by the various royal intermarriages. On the other hand, it is likely that the Greek (trade) language and the institutions of the *poleis* would have affected the middle classes and those who lived in the cities of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, Greek literature, philosophy and oratory would not have influenced the middle classes as much as the noble circles. Currently, literary evidence and archaeological finds provide no indications for middle class intermarriages in Pontus; one hypothesis might be that they were proportionate with the mixed marriages from Asia Minor and Hellenistic Egypt.[95] Middle class intermarriages might have been based on contemporary 'fashion'. Frequently, the way of life of royalty becomes the socially acceptable behaviour for the other social and financial classes.[96] As a result, it could be speculated that the intermarriages of the Mithridatids might have created a high and middle class 'fashion' for Greek brides. However, no indications imply that the lower classes, especially in the rural areas, participated in mixed marriages. They would have come into contact with Hellenising elements, like coins, royal emblems and administrators; these elements, though, do not seem to have had a considerable impact on their way of life. The scarcity of evidence of mixed marriages in the lower and rural classes of Egypt and Asia Minor indicates that similar intermarriages in Pontus might have even been non-existent. It could be argued that their minimal degree of Hellenisation reflected an inadequate number of mixed marriages. Overall, the connection of the intermarriages

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[94] Pomeroy S.B. (1984) p.124.

[95] Peremans W. (1981), "Les mariages mixtes dans l'Egypt des Lagides", in Scritti in Onore di Orsolina Montevecchi, Bologna, pp.273-281 apud Pomeroy (1984) pp.123-124. From the moment that two cultures come into contact, intermarriages are expected. For example, between the sixth and the third centuries B.C. in Athens, minimal intercultural contacts seem to have produced a modest amount of intermarriages. By comparison, the intermarriages between Athenian citizens and non-citizens were increased dramatically between the third and the fourth centuries A.D. During that period, the advancement of communication would have promoted intercultural contacts. It is also expected that a larger amount of foreigners would have settled in Athens. Both racism and the commencement of a new, mixed culture appear to be linked with the mixed marriages [Urdahl L.B. (1959) p.100. cf. Harré J. (1966)].

[96] e.g. Elizabethan clothes and fashion, Princess Diana's haircut, Victorian morals, the introduction of German customs in England (e.g. Christmas tree) by Prince Albert and others. Cf. the mixed marriages

with the level of Hellenisation of the inhabitants of Pontus points to something more than mere coincidence; they appear to have been closely connected, although it seems impossible to examine which caused the other. There appears to have been a similar connection between Hellenisation and the blending of the religions.

The inhabitants of mainland Greece had taken elements from the Eastern religious doctrines and had remodelled them in order to produce their own mythological and religious traditions.[97] In Pontus, the Greek colonists do not appear to have objected to direct contact with the 'exotic' religions of the 'others', as they usually were able to accommodate them into the Greek divine pantheon.[98] The citizens of Heracleia seem to have identified many native deities with Greek divinities.[99] For this reason, no substantial evidence exists on the native spiritual culture of the Mariandynians, who seem to have worshipped a Mother Goddess-type.[100] It has also been suggested[101] that their religious beliefs included the cult of Bromus, the Greek hero Agamestor, the god of the river Lycus and possibly, some nymphs.[102] Zeus Stratios, the god to whom Mithridates VI and earlier the kings of Persia offered sacrifices,[103] might also have been an indigenous deity; the Greek colonists appear to have transformed the local god into the warrior version of Zeus, who was then recognised by the Mithridatic dynasty as a form of Ahura Mazda.[104] The numbers of colonists would not have enabled them to conquer and control such vast, already inhabited areas. They seem to have known, or at least to have hoped, that the 'others' would become eventually attracted to their cities and adopt *polis*

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between the soldiers of Alexander and Asiatic women: Justin 12.4.2-6; Arr. 7.4.4-8, 7.12.2; Plut. *Alex.* 70.2.

[97] For a comprehensive analysis of the subject, see: Burkert W. W. (1992).

[98] In Commagene, Antiochus Theos (69-36 B.C.) consciously mixed Greek and Iranian traditions; he devised gods who had Greek characteristics, Persian attire and Graeco-Iranian names, like Zeus-Oromasdes, Artagnes-Heracles-Ares and Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes [Duchesne-Guillemin J. (1978) pp.189-192].

[99] Demeter: Hesychius s.v. *Pampanon.* Dionysus: Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.904-910; Valerius Flaccus *Argon.* 5.74-76; Amm. Marcellinus 22.8.23; Amphitheus 3b F 431 (Jacoby). Tyndaridae: Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 2.806-810; Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 12; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 19.

[100] Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 12; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 19; Burstein S.M. (1976) p.10.

[101] Burstein S.M. (1976) pp.10-11.

[102] Domitius Callistratus 3a F 433 (Jacoby); Aesch. *Persae* 939; Nymphis of Heracleia 4, 5b F 432 (Jacoby); Apoll. of Rhodes 2.844-850; Promathidas 3 F 430 (Jacoby); Schol. Apoll. of Rhodes 2.724, 2.752; Anon. *Peripl. P.E.* 12; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 19.

[103] App. *Mith.* 66, 70.

[104] *SEG* 30.1449A; Hdt. 1.171, 5.119; Cumont F, Cumont E. (1906) pp.371-384; McGing B.C. (1986) p.10. It has been maintained that the worship of Zeus Stratius might have come from Asia Minor to mainland Greece around the fourth – third century B.C. [Farnell L.R. (1896) p.59].

(Greek) culture.[105] The extent of the religious amalgamation in Pontus seems to have been reflected in the importance of Mithra who was a popular deity throughout the region; Armenia, Cappadocia and Pontus are the main areas of Asia Minor which provide evidence for an extended cult of Mithra.

It has been suggested that the Armenian language contains many words relating to the cult of Mithra. For example, *mehean* refers to the pre-Christian temple and it possibly came from the Parthian *mihriyan* - *maiθryana* which might have derived from the Parsi *Dar-i Mihr.*[106] Linguistic indications also link Armenia with the Persian practice of worshipping the divine with fire temples; the Parthian word for a fire temple (*aturoshan*) seems to have survived in the Armenian word for the 'place of burning fire' (*atrusham*).[107] This linguistic evidence indicates that the inhabitants of Armenia were influenced by a predominantly Zoroastrian cult of Mithra.

A similar cult seems to have existed in Cappadocia, where the inhabitants with Persian origins appear to have continued to practise the faith of their forefathers well into the Roman era. Strabo's description of the local fire-temples correspond with the Achaemenid, the Seleucid and the Arsacid representations of the religious practices which survived carved in stone.[108]

In Pontus, the initial indication of a cult of Mithra is linguistic and it springs from the theophoric name of the 'Pontic' kings, *Mithridates – Mithradates.* The Persian nobility had always used these names, which suggests that the appellation did not occur incidentally. Such god-bearing names seem to have indicated the popularity of the god, although their mere presence cannot clarify the historical conditions of the worship of Mithra.[109] As Persian education was supposedly concentrated on the doctrine "to ride, to shoot and to tell the truth",[110] a god of justice who also fought at the side of the fair-minded and destroyed the breakers of treaties and covenants held a special position.[111] Mithra was believed to bestow upon the Persian leaders an aura

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[105] Scylas was attracted to the city culture of the Greeks but the results were disastrous for him (Chapter 1 p.25 n.140).
[106] Frye R.N. (1975) p.66.
[107] Boyce M. (1979) p.85.
[108] Strabo 15.3.15; cf. Paus. 5.27.5-6; Boyce M. (1979) p.85.
[109] The Greek Avroman documents (first century A.D.) cited the names *Miradatis*, *Meiridatis* and *Miraandakos*, while the Aramaic inscriptions of the Elamite tablets made references to *Mitrabada* and *Missabadda* (protected by Mithra) [Frye R.N. (1975) p.62, 65].
[110] Hdt. 1.136.
[111] *Yasht* 10.1.2, 10.2, 10.4 Malandra W.W. (1983) p.60. In the Greek world, Apollo was also closely associated with law and its observance, especially when homicide was concerned [Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.176-179, 295-306].

which consecrated their authority and guaranteed victory to their armies;[112] as the Persian sovereigns and nobility paid special homage to the god, he became a dynastic deity. Under these circumstances, it has been proposed that the use of the theophoric name of Mithridates in a series of sovereigns indicated a strong cult of Mithra in Pontus.[113] Furthermore, the ancient name of the mountain near Trapezus seems to have indicated the importance of Mithra in the area; the appellation *Minthros*, *Mithrion*, *Minthrion*, *Mithros* or *Minthron* proclaims a strong connection with the divinity.[114] The association of Mithra with the mountain is also supported by the ancient practice of observing the heavens from the mountains.[115] In nearby Cappadocia, people identified certain divinities with mountains[116] and the practise was not totally alien to the Greeks.[117] It seems perfectly justifiable to have named the mountain after the god that the people honoured there[118] and whose cult, some have suggested, was remembered until the 14th century A.D.[119] In the Achaemenid period, common people would have gathered together to offer sacrifices and to worship the divine powers on the mountain at certain times of the year;[120] the seventh calendar month[121] and the sixteenth day of each month were dedicated to Mithra. In addition, during the autumn equinox, everybody celebrated a festival in his honour, the

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[112] Quintus Curtius 4.13.12; Cumont F. (1956) p.8. For the infrequent association of Apollo with war, see: Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.175-176.

[113] Cumont F. (1956) p.8; Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.109.

[114] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.198; Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.117. Today, the mountain is called Böz Tepe.

[115] Petron. *Sat.* 88; Philo *Prov.* 2.27; Philostr. *VA* 2.5. For an analysis on the importance of astrology in Western Mithraism, see: Beck R. (1988).

[116] Huxley G.L. (1978).

[117] Page D.L. (1953) pp.19-22, 29-34; Huxley G.L. (1978) p.72; Buxton R.G.A. R.G.A. (1992) pp.5-6; *OCD* s.v. Mountain Cults.

[118] Lazaropoulos Logos p.63.5-9 apud Rosenqvist J.O (1991) p.111.

[119] Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.115-116.

[120] Hdt.1.131. Until the exchange of population of 1922, the Muslim and Christian population of Pontus celebrated jointly the ascension of the prophet *Elias* into Heaven (20th of July) with a general outing to the *parharia*, the open pastures of the Pontic plateaux. The flaming chariot he used associates him with Mithra and Apollo who crossed the sky with their chariots. In addition, the word *parhari* might derive from the ancient Greek *parahorion* (pastureland) or it might have Indo-Persian roots. Apollo also had a pastoral character; his connection with the care of flocks and herds might be seen as a link between Mēn and Mithra "of wide pastures". Their pastoral and solar characteristics seem to have further assisted the association of the two divinities [Farmer D.H. (1987) sv Elias-Elihah p.138-139; *OCD* s.v. Apollo; Farnell L.R. (1907) p.311-312]. For the Mithrakana festival, see below: n.124. For "Mithra of wide pastures", see: *Yasht* 10.1-2 Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.59-60; for Mēn, see: Chapter 4 pp.126-127.

[121] In Persepolis, the first day of the New Year fell on the vernal equinox, 21st of March [Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) pp.255]. Apollo is also connected with number seven [Aesch. *Sept.* 800-801; Hdt. 6.57; Schol. Aristoph. *Plut.* 1126; Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.258-259].

Mithrakana which was the occasion of solemn sacrifices and stately ceremonies.[122] In all likelihood, the Persian settlers of Pontus would have continued to practise their ancestral customs, their practices would have eventually mingled with the cognate local practices.

The main written evidence of a Mithraic cult in Pontus comes from hagiographical texts;[123] they refer to or narrate the story of St. Eugenius and his fellow martyrs, who destroyed a Mithraic sanctuary in Trabizond, supposedly, in the third century A.D. Although these texts are highly valuable, they are also highly disputable and many scholars question their historical merit as a credible source of information which relates Mithra with St. Eugenius.[124] On the one hand, the existence of a widespread (14th century A.D.) Trapezuntian tradition which linked the pagan god with the Christian saint appears to have been ambiguous. On the other hand, the need for a national patron seems to have required the fabrication of an early relationship between St. Eugenius and Mithra in order to give credibility to the importance of St. Eugenius.[125]

Overall, nobody seems to have questioned the existence of a cult of Mithra in Trapezus, the so-called gateway to Persia.[126] Nevertheless, questions have been raised as to the specific place of his worship around Trapezus. Rosenqvist[127] questioned the description of Loukites of the shrine of Mithra as a *bomos*; according to him, the Mithraic sanctuaries "were generally small, intimate shrines, often hidden in caves or similar places rather than situated in conspicuous places, such as in the open air on the summit of a mountain, as seems to be the case here". As far as is known, the Mithraeums were dark and hidden places,[128] but the idea of an open altar agrees with Persian and Greek religious notion. According to the Persian customs,

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[122] The festival of Mithrakana was famous and popular throughout Hither Asia; it survived in Muslim Persia in the form of Mihragan. Strabo 11.14.9; Cumont F. (1956) p.9; Frye R.N. (1975) pp.64-65; Boyce M. (1984) pp.67-68. For the stately ceremonies, see: Athen. 10.434d-e.

[123] Anonymos, "Kanon eis Agion Eugenion" (pp.192-201), Eugenikos I., "Kanon eis Agion Eugenion" (pp.178-190) and Xiphilinos I., "To Martyrio tou Agiou Eugeniou" (pp.138-163) apud Lampsidis Od. (1953). The relevant passages of Constantine Loukites "Enkomion of Sts. Eugenius, Kanidios, Valerianos and Akylas" and John Lazaropoulos "Logos on St Eugenius' Birthday" (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca vol.611, Brussels, 1957) apud Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.110-111.

[124] For a comparison and questions on the historical value of these texts, see: Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.113-116.

[125] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 pp.168-170; Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) pp.116-117.

[126] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.92.

[127] Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) pp.116-117.

[128] Porphyr. *Peri antrou nymphon* 5-6, 20.

the deities were worshipped in the mountains[129] and according to the Greek conceptions, the mountains were a place where divine and human came together, literally and metaphorically.[130] The modern naturalistic perception of the mountains is not necessarily in accordance with the ancient beliefs. In ancient Greek thought, mountains were frequently dark, mysterious, secluded and dangerous places,[131] while topographical references describe the mountains of Pontus as particularly dark and isolated.[132] Thus, an altar or a shrine on the mountain might have been as dark and isolated a place as a cave. In this respect, the ruins of St John the Sanctifier at the peak of the Mithrion mountain seem a more likely Mithraic place of worship than the nunnery of Theoskepastos.[133] Furthermore, according to the bishop of Trapezous, Chrysanthos, at the beginning of the 20th century, people were still able to point to a cave with a spring of water at the church of St John the Sanctifier,[134] two elements closely associated with a Mithreum.

Another indication of the worship of Mithra in Pontus might be the Roman imperial coins which were struck in Trapezus around 211-244 A.D.[135] The reverse of these coins represents a divinity with combined iconographic elements such as horse riding and the Phrygian cap of the moon-god Mēn, as well as the flaming altar and the torchbearers of Mithra. On the one hand, Cumont[136] appears certain that, in Pontus, Mithra was represented on horseback like Mēn. On the other hand, Rosenqvist has doubts due to the lack of "the characteristic iconography of Mithras himself" and the association of Mithra with "a minor deity".[137]

In general, Mithra was a deity that could easily be assimilated with other deities. Mithra was related to the sun and to the element of fire[138] and he crossed the sky in a chariot.[139] By natural transition, he was recognised as the personification of

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[129] Hdt.1.131.
[130] Hes. *Theog.* 22-23; Hdt. 6.105; Eur. *Bacch.* 62-63.
[131] Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 3.69-71; Eur. *Phoen.* 802-806, *Bacch.* 33, 1139-1143, 1219-1221; Homer *Iliad* 1.267-268; Plato *Cratylos* 394e; Buxton R.G.A. (1992) pp.4-6, 9.
[132] Bryer A.A.M, Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.178. For the mountains of Pontus, see also: Introduction p.5; Chapter 1 p.35.
[133] Bryer, Winfield and the Cumonts have accepted the association of Theoskepastos with Mithra [Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p. 245; Cumont E., Cumont F. (1906) pp.367-369].
[134] Chrysanthos (1933) pp.106-107.
[135] Cumont F. (1956) pp.17-18; Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) pp.109-110.
[136] Cumont F. (1956) p.17.
[137] Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.110.
[138] Quintus Curtius 4.13.12.
[139] *Yasht* 10.4.13 Malandra W.W. (1983) p.60; Boyce M. (1979) p.10.

Truth,[140] the protector of integrity, good faith, oaths and contracts.[141] He was the god who punished the perjurers[142] and one of the after-life judges.[143] Such attributes made him occupy an important place in the official Persian religion[144] and, later on, in the western world.[145] It could be said that Western Mithraism was different from the cult of Mithra in Pontus and Asia Minor. The characteristic forms of Western Mithraism are not found in Persia, while little archaeological and literary material concerning Mithra survives from Parthian Iran.[146] From the collapse of the Persian Empire to the moment that Mithra became an important god of the Roman Empire, his cult came into closer contact with Greek thought. The Magi of Asia Minor were able to preserve their faith by harmonically identifying their religious system with the Greek one. As a result, the abstract divine personifications of the East took the forms of the anthropomorphic Greek gods; Ahura Mazda was combined with Zeus, Verethraghna with Heracles, Anahita with the different forms of Mother Goddess-types, like Ma and Artemis Tauropolos,[147] while Mithra was associated with Helios/Apollo.[148] As a consequence of this identification, the character of the Mazdean divinities was modified, conforming to the Hellenic ideas of syncretism; the sacred traditions of the Asiatic priests (Magi) and the theories of the philosophers appear to have influenced each other.[149] Following philosophy, a sculptor of the school of Pergamon created the model of the known representations of tauroctonous Mithra, which constitute a homogeneous, religious rather than aesthetic, group. This type was an imitation of the

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[140] Boyce M. (1979), pg.8-9.

[141] *Yasht* 10.5-33 Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.60-75; Cumont F. (1956) p.8; Frye R.N. (1975) p.64.

[142] One of the recognised pledges of the Persians was the contract or covenant called 'mithra', according to which two parties agreed together over something. If someone was accused of breaking his word, he was often submitted to an ordeal, either by water or by fire. *Mitra* or *mithra* also meant associate, friend [Boyce M. (1979) pp.8-9; Geden A.S. (1925) p.6; Malandra W.W. (1983) p.56].

[143] The Iranian triad of Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu reminds us of Minos, Aeacus and Rhadamanthus who had similar duties in the Greek mythology – religion [Cumont F. (1956) pp.2-3; Jackson A.V.W. (1965) pp.58-59].

[144] Ahuramazda was recognised as the supreme god of the Achaemenids. Still, Mithra and Anahita were mentioned by name, at least in the inscriptions of Artaxerxes Memnon and Artaxerxes Ochus. Although most of the people of Iran converted to Islam, a small number of Zoroastrian communities continue to exist in Iran, Great Britain, India (Bombay) and possibly elsewhere [Cumont F. (1956) p.2; Jackson A.V.W. (1965) p.154].

[145] Geden A.S. (1925) p.2; Cumont F. (1956) pp.42, 63, 78-79.

[146] Despite the discovery of a Mithraeum at Dura-Europos, Zoroastrianism seems to have obstructed the spread of Western Mithraism into Iran proper. Frye considers unsatisfactory any suggestions of (Western) Mithraeums in Iraq [Boyce M. (1979) pp.84-85, 99; Frye R.N. [(1975) p.67].

[147] Strabo 12.2.3.

[148] Chapter 4 pp.123-124.

[149] Cumont F. (1956), pg.25-33; Tarrant H. (1990) p.622. For an analytical account and further bibliography on this issue, see: West M.L. (1971).

sculptures of the temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis[150] and, with minor differences, constitutes the known iconography of Western Mithraism. Mithra might have originated from the faith of ancient India and Iran,[151] yet the influence of Semitic doctrines, local beliefs of Asia Minor and Hellenic ideas partly conceal from view the original nature of Western Mithraism.[152] In Greece, as in Persia, people appear to have been less influenced by Western Mithraism than the rest of the Mediterranean world. The teachings of Western Mithraism professed to offer a solution to the problems of regeneration and life-after-death. In Greece, various mysteries indicate that these issues were not new;[153] although these mysteries might have had their distant roots in the East, they were not considered 'barbaric' like the cult of Mithra.[154] In Persia, despite the identification of Mithra with Apollo/Helios, the absence of numerous foreign soldiers and slaves appears to have reduced the chances of accepting a cult outside the traditional religion. The Seleucid sources do not have many references to Mithra in Iran and only Strabo mentions that the Persians honoured the Sun who was called Mithra.[155] It, therefore, becomes apparent that Western Mithraism was different from the cult of Mithra in Iran and Asia Minor. Furthermore, the modern knowledge of the Mithraic iconography from ancient Trapezus is incomplete. The Achaemenid descent of the Mithridatids would have imposed upon them the obligation of worshipping the gods of their ancestors; as a result, they would have kept the religious tradition and they would have reserved special favours for the Mazdean divinities. However, the cult of Mithra in Pontus seems to have been influenced by local religious traditions; it could be argued that the represented deity in the relevant imperial Roman coins[156] indicates such a local cult. The Mithraic attributes of the coins attest to the fact that a Mithra-like deity, which seems to have been closer to the Persian beliefs than the concepts of Western Mithraism, had a place in the pantheon of Pontus. It is likely that these Trapezuntine coins constitute an iconographic relic of an almost-forgotten link between the Persian cult of Mithra and Western Mithraism. As a result, the notion of Rosenqvist that the

[150] Cumont F. (1956) pp.208, 210
[151] Geden A.S. (1925) p.4; Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.56-57
[152] Cumont F. (1956) pp.30-31.
[153] e.g. Aristoph. *Frogs* 312-459; Hdt 2.81; Pind. *Ol.* 2.70, *Fr.* 131a; Plato *Gorg.* 493b-c; Burkert W. (1985) p.293-295.
[154] Geden A.S. (1925) pp.8-9.
[155] Strabo 15.7.32.
[156] Chapter 4 p.127.

coins of Trapezus do not represent Mithra because they do not conform to "the characteristic iconography of Mithra himself"[157] appears less convincing.

The second argument of Rosenqvist, against the identification of Mithra on the Roman coins of Trapezus, was that the represented god was associated with "a minor deity (Mēn)" instead of a more important one, like Apollo/Helios.[158] His view seems to have contradicted the Lydian inscription which proclaims that "there is only one god in the heavens, the great celestial Mēn",[159] the ancient, lunar god who was honoured throughout the entire Anatolia.[160] An indication of his importance, and a legacy of his worship, might be visible in the Pontian language, where the moon is masculine, *ho pheggon, tou pheggondos*,[161] unlike the ancient Greek *hi seline*. It appears unlikely that the god to whom the kings had proclaimed their royal oaths[162] could have been of minor importance. In addition, the god would often bear a crescent moon behind his shoulders or he was identified with the moon,[163] while the Mithridatic dynasty used a star with a crescent as one of the royal emblems.[164] Mēn had various localised cults, like Mēn Pharnacou who was worshipped at Cabeira.[165] However, at the time of Mithridates VI, the coins of the citizens of Cabeira [*Kabiron* (plural)] depicted the inscription *DIAS*, the head of Zeus and an eagle, instead of the expected iconography of Mēn.[166] It appears doubtful that Eupator had tried to undervalue the Eastern deity by promoting the Greek Zeus; although he promoted a Hellenised image, his royal Persian descent would not have allowed such conduct.[167] One possibility might be that the 'King of Pontus' had tried to associate Mēn with Zeus;[168] this syncretism would have increased the credibility of Mēn among the Greeks of Pontus and it would have further enhanced the Graeco-Persian appeal of the King among the Graeco-Eastern inhabitants of his Kingdom. A similar notion might

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[157] Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) p.110.
[158] ibid.
[159] Lane E.N. (1976), Corpus Monumentorum dei Menis (EPRO 19), Leiden, 1971, Ns 83; III, Leiden, p.79 apud Turcan R. (1992) p.68.
[160] *OCD* s.v. Mēn; *SEG* 2.299. At Cabeira, Mēn shared his temple with Selini, the moon goddess. The Indo-Iranians also worshipped *Mah*, the nature god who personified the Moon [Strabo 12.3.31; Boyce M. (1979) p.6; Robert L. (1963) p.515]
[161] Samouilidis C. (1992) p.27.
[162] Strabo 12.3.31.
[163] *OCD* s.v. Mēn.
[164] For the moon and crescent as royal emblems of the Mithridatids, see: Chapter 4 p.106 n.8.
[165] Strabo 12.3.31. Mēn Arcaeus/Ascaeus near Antiocheia in Phrygia Paroreia (Strabo 12.8.14) and Mēn Carus between the cities of Laodiceia and Carura (Strabo 12.8.20).
[166] Head B.V. (1911) p.497.
[167] Chapter 2 pp.50-51.

have prompted the Roman Emperors to further increase the significance of Mēn.[169] In particular, after the second century A.D., Mēn played an important role in the Imperial iconography of Pontus; he became a counterpart of Attis, the consort of Cybele. It has even been suggested that Cybele was directly associated with the Moon-god, Mēn.[170] One difference between Mēn and Attis is that the former was an ancient god, while the latter was a subsidiary figure who was honoured but not worshipped. However, under Claudius (41-54 A.D.), Attis attained official status and he eventually achieved equal status in the imperial cult of Cybele (around 150 A.D.).[171] Statues, figurines and marble reliefs from Zela, Amisus, Sinope and Tium, dating from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D., seem to have indicated that Cybele was honoured in Pontus.[172] Both Mēn and Attis were closely linked with Phrygia;[173] in imperial times, they both had celestial and chthonic functions.[174] Under these circumstances, it could be argued that the Roman coins of Trapezus which were struck around 211-244 A.D. would have enhanced the appeal of Caracalla, Alexander Severus and Gordian III[175] among the inhabitants of the area with Eastern origins. The choice of these Emperors to associate themselves with the (Hellenised) Eastern deities would have further increased the significance of Mēn. Overall, Rosenqvist maintained that the deity which was represented on the Roman coins of Trapezus could not have been Mithra, because it seems to have been associated with a minor divinity, i.e. Mēn.[176] Nonetheless, a counter proposal might be that the depicted deity is Mithra because he was associated with the major religious figures of Mēn – Attis – Ma;[177] these divinities were significant in ancient Anatolia and continued to be important in the Roman Empire.

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[168] Mithridates III and IV emphasised their eastern origins, but they also depicted Zeus on their coins [Head B.V. (1911) p.500; Seltman C. (1933) p.237].

[169] Rome tried to reconcile the Roman values and ideas with the native traditions, see: Chapter 5 pp.162-163.

[170] E.Lane, Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis apud Vermaseren M.J. (1977) p.27.

[171] Tac. *Ann.* 11.15; Cumont F. (1929) pp.52-56.

[172] *CCCA* 202-205, 207-208, 210.

[173] Mēn: Chapter 4 pp.126-127. Attis: Paus. 7.17.9-12; Ovid *Fasti* 4.223-224; Hdt. 1.34-35.

[174] For further reading on the comparison between Attis and Mēn, see: Sfameni G.G. (1985) pp.64-65, 99-100.

[175] Cumont F. (1956) pp.17-18; Rosenqvist J.O. (1991) pp.109-110.

[176] Chapter 4 pp.126-127. See also: Cosi D.M. (1979) pp.625-638.

[177] Ma was the mistress/mother of Attis, the Mother Goddess of creation, war and destruction; she was identified with Greek and Roman lunar deities, like Rhea, Cybele, Selene and Artemis. The religious centre at Pontic Comana was devoted to the cult of Ma as a martial goddess, while her centre of worship at Castavala included a temple of Perasian Artemis. She might have been represented as a seated Athena on the coins of Ariarathes IV; her military attributes as the *Thea Nikephoros* seem to have associated her with the *Athena Nikephoros* and the Roman Minerva – Bellona. Thus, the

In antiquity, local deities and cults were frequently linked with popular gods and religions. For example, the temple of Artemis at Kangavar (Kurdistan), near Pontus, had Hellenic features, although the goddess was identified with Anahita/Armaiti whose functions are reminiscent of Ma, Athena[178] and Aphrodite. In addition, a fine bronze head of a goddess from Armenia seems to have represented Anahiti who was portrayed as Aphrodite;[179] astrologically, the name *Anâhîd*, which appears infrequently in the *Yasht*, would seem to refer to the planet Venus,[180] while it has also been acknowledged that the two goddesses share similar functions in fertility and war.[181] On the one hand, the origins of the anthropomorphic Anahita are ambiguous, although her beaver coat suggests a region of the "extreme north-west" of Iran.[182] On the other hand, the beaver of the Black Sea[183] might have been a trading item. As a goddess was expected to wear more elaborate clothes than mere mortals, it could be argued that a beaver coat from a distant land was sufficiently rare and expensive. Since gaining access to Pontus was as difficult through the mountains as it was by sea, Persians and Greeks might have shared similar perceptions of the 'distant and strange' land of Pontus.[184] Overall, Aphrodite, Anahita, Ma, Artemis and Athena appear to have been female divinities whose functions frequently interrelated and, thus, some of their cults had been combined.[185] Initially, the religious differences of the Greek colonists from the indigenous population would have been more visible

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Cappadocian names *Athenaios* and *Athenais* might have referred to, and emphasised, the importance of the local goddess Ma, rather than that of Athena. In imperial times, the lunar and military elements of Ma seem to have complimented those of her companion Mēn/Attis [Strabo 12.2.3, 12.3.32; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 11; *OGIS* 364; Robert L. (1963) pp.436-438, 490, 494; Turcan R. (1997) p.67-69; Head B.V. (1911) p.498; Lasseur D. de (1919) pp.248-249 ; Seyrig H. (1970) pp.76-78]. For the location of Pontic Comana, see: Map 3 p.235. For the association of Artemis with Castavala, see: Strabo 12.2.7; cf. Robert L., Dupont-Sommer A. (1963) pp.95-96.

[178] Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. (1989) pp.270-271. For the association of Athena and Ma, see: Plut. *Sull.* 9.4; Mørkholm O. (1991) p.132.

[179] Boyce M. (1979) p.85. The association of the two goddesses does not seem to have been difficult; Aphrodite originated from the East and, thus, she had the potential to be linked with many eastern goddesses with whom she shared similar functions, like Ishtar, Astarte and Anaitis [Farnell L.R. (1896) pp.618-627].

[180] Malandra W.W. (1983) p.117.

[181] Anahiti – Spenta Anahita – Armaiti represented the Heavenly River and all rivers; she was the protector of the herdsmen and of those who depended upon the earth. Her martial status to "overcome the hostilities of the enemies" is revealed through her function as the protector of the clan, the land and settlement. Zela had an important temple dedicated to Armaiti and other Persian deities (Strabo 11.8.4, 12.3.37). For Anahiti, see: *Yasht* 5 Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.117, 120-121; Boyce M. (1979) pp.22-24; Jackson A.V.W. (1965) pp.50-51. For the association of Aphrodite with the sea: Chapter 1 p.13 n.30. For Aphrodite as a goddess of war: Paus. 2.5.1 (Corinth), 3.15.19; *CIG* 3137; Tac. *Ann.* 3.63 (Smyrna); Farnell L.R. (1896) pp.653-658.

[182] Malandra W.W. (1983) pp.118-119.

[183] Hdt. 4.109.

[184] For the Greek perceptions of Pontus, see: Introduction pp.4-5.

than during the reign of the Mithridatids. Throughout their rule, the people of Pontus seem to have worshipped an amalgamation of Greek, Anatolian and Persian gods and goddesses;[186] by that time, they were natives themselves. Through their acceptance of 'new' customs and religious practices, the inhabitants of Pontus appear to have begun to construct a mixed culture.

The modern Pontian culture has Byzantine, Muslim, Arabic, Turkish, Russian and other elements; yet it seems to have been rooted to ancient cultural practices. Remnants of the unnamed culture[187] of Hellenistic Pontus can be still found in the traditional Pontian dances and in the Pontian theatrical performances, which were practised in mainland Greece until 1955.[188]

Today, the traditional Pontian dances are performed throughout the world at private parties or community festivities. The Pontian-Greeks are particularly proud of the *serra* or 'dance of the sabres'[189] where the dancers represent the different stages of a battle, fighting an imaginary enemy as a group or in single combat. According to popular belief, the *serra* corresponds to the ancient armed dance *pyrrichios*[190] which had been performed in front of Xenophon and the 'Ten Thousand' by the inhabitants of ancient Cotyora. In reality, however, the particular dance was performed by two of Xenophon's Thracian soldiers, who danced in full armour holding *tais machairais* (blades); when the first man fell, the second man despoiled him of his arms and marched out singing.[191] Although it becomes evident that the aforementioned notion of the Pontian-Greeks is somehow distorted, it could be said that the inhabitants of ancient Pontus with Greek origins and culture were aware of the Greek armed dances, especially the pyrrchis.

Overall, the Greeks regarded dancing as the invention of the gods and employed it in nearly all aspects of their life.[192] It was particularly linked with

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[185] e.g. Artemis - Ma, Ma - Athena/Bellona/Anahita/Aphrodite or Ma - Cybele/Selene/Artemis.
[186] e.g. Mithra.
[187] We cannot call 'Pontic' the local Hellenistic culture; the term was externally imposed from the first century B.C. onwards. The issue will be examined in Chapter 5.
[188] After 1955, the Pontian theatrical performances, which will be examined later on, seem to have lost their traditional function; they mostly remained as part of the carnival before the beginning of Lent [Samoulidis C. (1980) p.67].
[189] Plate 13, 14 p.228; Plate 15 p.229.
[190] Avramantis I. (1972b) pp.49-50.
[191] Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.5; cf. Plate 13 p.228, Plate 14 p.228.
[192] Plato *Laws* 2.653e, 6.771e-772a, 7.795e-796d, 7.815a; Athen. 14.629f, 14.630d-631b; Lucian *Peri Orches.* 10; *OCD* s.v. dancing.

religious festivals and the cults of female divinities, like Artemis,[193] Athena[194] and Cybele/Rhea. The fully armed escorts of Cybele,[195] the Corybantes, were famous for their noisy and mystic dance which enabled them to cure insanity,[196] while Rhea had taught dance to the Curites of Crete and to the Corybantes of Asia Minor, in order to protect her son, Zeus.[197] Achilles and his son, Pyrrhus, were also closely associated with the pyrrhis and the armed dances.[198] These dances, performed to the music of the lyre, the flute or the tympanum, were integrated chiefly into the cult of Dionysus-Sabazius[199]/Apollo[200] who was invoked with the paean before or after the battle or at the victory celebrations. Dancing, especially the armed dances, appears to have been linked with gods who had lunar and solar powers as well as fertility and martial functions. The sword dances, in particular, might have originated as rituals in celebration of virility, fertility and victory; the performed combat dance appears to have represented a battle of the physical elements (summer and winter, night and day) or of actual enemies.[201] It is safe to assume that when the Greek colonists arrived in Pontus, they brought with them the custom of performing (armed) dances. Their ancestral language and customs, including dancing, would have enhanced the bonding of the community, reminding them who they were in the new and 'other' environment.[202] The circling dances with their hands clasped[203] around an altar, a tree, a pillar or a musician not only purified and protected the encircled object[204] but also dispelled the fears and uncertainties of the dancers.[205] The closed circle emphasised the unbreakable spirit of the community as well as the interdependence of

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[193] Plut. *Thes.* 31.3; Homer *Iliad* 18.590-604; Paus. 6.22.1; Callimachus *Hymn 3 To Artemis* 237-247; Hdt. 3.48.
[194] Eur. *Ion* 492-502; Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 7.72.7.
[195] Aristoph. *Lysistr.* 557-558; Long T. (1986) p.26.
[196] Arist. *Wasps* 8-10; Plato *Laws* 7.790d, *Ion* 533e, 536c. The healing nature of the music of the cymbals, tympana and flutes rests upon the homeophathetic theory that madness can be cured with madness. For an extensive analysis of the issue, see: Dodds E.R. (1973) pp.64-101.
[197] Strabo 10.3.6-8, 10.3.11, 10.3.19-23; Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 7.72.7; Eur. *Bacch.* 120-134; Lucian *Peri Orches.* 8.
[198] Hesychius s.v. *pyrrichas, pyrrichizein.* The Greeks regarded the Cretans and the Spartans as the mortal inventors of dance (Athen. 14.630b, 14.629c and Athen. 5.630d-e respectively).
[199] Plato *Laws* 2.653d; Lucian *Peri Orches.* 22; Dem. *On the Crown* 260; Plut *Alex.* 2; Phanodemos 12 F 325 (Jacoby).
[200] Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.11; Lucian *Peri Orches.* 16-17; *OCD* s.v. paean; *LSJ* s.v. *paian.*
[201] Lawler L.B. (1964) p.30-31.
[202] *Horos* in its proper form constituted a circling dance, thus the intimate involvement of the dancing group (*LSJ*).
[203] Homer *Iliad* 18.592-594.
[204] Lawler L.B. (1964) p.31-32.
[205] cf. Plate 15 p.229; Plate 17 p.230.

its members. As such, dancing seems to have played an important role in the religious – ritual life of ancient Pontus.

When the traveller George Sandys observed an armed dance in Crete which the locals called *Pyrricha* in 1615,[206] he considered that he was witnessing a genuine tradition from antiquity.[207] In 1615, the Greek Enlightenment which preceded the Greek Revolution of 1821 had not started yet, thus it appears unlikely that the *Pyrricha* was revived by enthusiastic schoolteachers. By analogy, it is possible that similar dances survived in 'remote' Pontus. In relation to the aforementioned passage of Xenophon,[208] it appears improbable that the Paphlagonian ambassadors were bewildered by the sight of Greek dances; it may be assumed that their primary tribal culture would have incorporated similar (armed) fertility and martial dances. The source of their amazement might have been that "all the dances were armed".[209] In all probability, they would have seen Greek dances before, possibly in their interactions with the Greeks,[210] but never such an abundance of armed dances. Their martial interest became obvious after the graceful[211] armed dance of a girl, when they asked whether women fought by the side of the men. Xenophon's answer implied that Greek women actively participated in military training and warfare.[212] When the 'Ten Thousand' performed their dances in front of the war-like Paphlagonians, they also exhibited their military skills,[213] possibly demonstrating their resolve against whoever tried to stop them returning home. Generally, pyrrchic dance was performed in nearly all regions where people of Greek origin and culture lived, including Asia Minor,[214]

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[206] Willetts R.F. (1988b) p.21.
[207] cf. Homer *Iliad* 18.494-496, 18.590-594.
[208] Chapter 4 p.129 n.191.
[209] Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.11.
[210] A painted crater of the late fifth century B.C. has been found in a tomb in the middle Dnieper region. As the tomb belonged to a (Hellenised) Scythian, it has been suggested that the illustrations of the crater represent pyrrchic dances, possibly an amalgamation of Greek and Scythian dances for the purpose of religious cults. Fragments from similar craters (early fifth century B.C.) have also been found in Chersonessos [Vdovichenko I. (2001)]. To date, the south coasts of the Black Sea have not yeilded similar archaeological finds; only by analogy might it be implied that the pyrrhic dances would have been known not only to the inhabitants of Pontus with Greek origins and culture but also to the 'barbarians' who came into contact with Hellenism.
[211] In the ancient Greek world, most men and women seem to have learned to dance at an early age, for dancing was held in very high regard (Athen. 1.20f, 1.21d-f, 22a, 14.626b-e; Plato *Laws* 2.654a-b, 2.672e; Nepos *Epamin.* 1-2; Lucian *Peri Orches.* 10).
[212] Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.13.
[213] The Thracian despoiled his 'opponent' of his arms, an unquestionable sign of his victory. The dance of the Aenianians and Magnesians *en tois oplois* showed a farmer being attacked by a robber, while the Mysian was supposedly fighting against two opponents (Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.5-11).
[214] Strabo 10.3.7, 10.3.16, 10.3.19-23.

although its functions changed as time passed.[215] The popularity of the armed dances might have rested on their primary magical, fertility or apotropaic functions.[216] In ancient Athens, similar circular dances, which were performed as part of fertility rituals and religious festivals, eventually led to the honouring of the gods with theatrical performances.[217]

Pontus is the motherland of a number of playwrights, like Dionysius (third century B.C.),[218] Diodorus[219] and his brother, Diphilus (middle of the fourth century B.C.).[220] Although they lived and established their careers in Athens, they originated mostly from Sinope, which suggests that Pontus must have had an important theatrical tradition in antiquity.[221]

The neo-Pontian theatre (1850-1922) had two variations.[222] The first variation allegedly originated from the dithyramb and the Athenian tragedy, although in many plays it is difficult to differentiate the ancient Greek elements from the European theatrical influences of the 19th century. Admittedly, European tragedy has its roots in the ancient Athenian drama and the dithyramb; yet the use of *kathareuousa* (the 'purified' Greek language), no matter how rare, appears to have indicated a break from the supposedly continuing ancient theatrical tradition.[223] This theatrical form might be considered the result of the Pontian enlightenment of the 19th century, when the Christian people of Pontus re-discovered their ancient Greek roots.[224] The second variation of the neo-Pontian theatre seems to have derived from the Athenian *dromena* (sixth – seventh centuries B.C.). It consists of the custom of *Momogeroi*,[225] which signifies in the Pontic dialect the masquerades between Christmas and

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[215] The 'Purrhic' was originally a war-dance. However, the descriptions of Athenaeus and Apuleius suggest that the term had been extended to various sorts of mimetic or satiric dance (Athen. 14.629; Apul. *Met.* 10.29).
[216] Lawler L.B. (1964) p.30-31.
[217] Dioskouridis *A.P.* 7.410-411 (Paton).
[218] *PCG* vol.5 pp.32-40; *OCD* s.v. Dionysius of Sinope.
[219] *IG* $2^2$.10321, $2^2$.2319.61, $2^2$.2319.63, 11.105.21, 11.107.20; Athen. 6.235f; *FAC* vol.3A pp.218-223; *OCD* s.v. Diodorus.
[220] *FAC* vol.3A pp.98-153; Athen. 13.582e, 13.597e; Strabo 12.3.11; *IG* $2^2$.2325.163, $2^2$.2363; *OCD* s.v. Diphilus; Webster I. (1953) pp.152-183; *ΕΠΕ* pp.75-75.
[221] For the ancient tragedians from Pontus: *ΕΠΕ* pp.75-78.
[222] Mouratidis E.L. (1991) pp.26-27.
[223] *Kathareuousa* was a manufactured language. Linguistically, it stood between the everyday language of the people and the 'scholarly' ancient Greek. It could be argued that the use of *Kathareuousa* was a conscious effort to revive classical antiquity. However, in that case, it indicates an interruption to the natural continuation of the theatrical tradition whose medium was the language of the people.
[224] Introduction pp.1-2.

Epiphany. *Momogeros* is a crafty, cheeky person; the *momogeria* took their name from *Momos*, the god of criticism and blame,[226] while *momeuo* came to mean "to blame, ridicule and disgrace".[227] It has been suggested that the practice contains numerous ancient – archaic features which many researchers have described and analysed, although they only began to record them from the 19th century onwards.[228] The *momogeria* seem to have preserved elements of the pre-Thespian Greek agricultural rituals, but it is doubtful whether these parallels prove their pure Greek roots.[229] One suggestion might be that the custom was also influenced by the ancient religious practices of those who worshiped eastern fertility goddesses. The goddesses were closely connected with the regeneration of the earth and their cults were quite widespread in Pontus.[230]

Overall, the *momogeroi* was a group of men of various ages who wore costumes made of animal skins[231] and masks in order to perform theatrical acts from house to house, in the square of the village or at the crossroads. Although there were numerous variations, some of the typical participants of the play were the musician(s), the chorus, who were also dancers and singers,[232] the Landowner, the Old-Man, the Young-Man, the Old-Woman,[233] the Bride, the Devil,[234] the Doctor[235] and different animals.[236] The performance focused on the contest between the Old and the Young Man to gain the Bride; sometimes, the two men were brothers and they might have symbolised the different aspect of the same deity.[237] The custom was performed between the end of December and the middle of January, which was a particularly cold period when the agricultural world would try to assist in the revitalising the earth with magic rituals. During that time, the ancient Athenians celebrated the

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[225] The appellation differs from region to region and the terms *momogeria*, *momo'er* and *momoger'* can also be found.
[226] Hesiod *Theog.* 214; *RE* vol.16.1 col.42; *OCD* s.v. momos.
[227] *LSJ* s.v. *momeuo*. See also: Chapter 4 p.134 (the function of the Bride).
[228] Samouilidis C. (1984) pp.25-27; Mouratidis E.L. (1991) p.26-27, 31-36 ff.; Hatzopoulos G.K. (1984) pp.35-38.
[229] Mouratidis E.L. (1991) p.27.
[230] Chapter 4 pp.128, 135-136.
[231] Samouilidis C. (1992) p.276; Hatzopoulos G.K. (1984) pp.32, 36.
[232] Plate 1 p.221.
[233] Plate 5 p.223.
[234] Plate 4 p.222.
[235] Plate 3, 4 p.222.
[236] e.g. Plate 6 p.224.
[237] cf. Demeter and Kore: Aristoph. *Frogs* 372-396; Harrison J.E. (1911) p.420.

*Poseidonia*,[238] the *Haloa*[239] and the *agricultural Dionysia*.[240] Due to the prominent Greek-Hellenised presence in Pontus, it seems logical to associate the *momogeria* with the agricultural rituals of Greek antiquity; these rituals led to the worship of Dionysus with theatrical performances and they were regarded as the basis of the ancient Greek theatre.[241]

Most of the theatrical characters of the *momogeria* have Byzantine and Turkish appellations, but the importance of *Nyphe* (the Bride) seems to have indicated a connection with primitive fertility practices. The *Nyphe* was wearing garlands of nuts, herbs, weeds, fresh fruits and vegetables around her neck; these garlands appear to have expressed her function as a symbol of fertility and abundance, and they may have substituted for the lack of a phallus in the acts. The Bride was a silent character, but her presence was necessary for the play, since she seems to have symbolised the living earth, the *trophos* and the giver of life to all living things. According to one variation, she brought back to life one of the characters by breaking wind in his face; her 'improper' behaviour reminds us of the Homeric *momon anapsai* (to set a brand upon somebody)[242] and of the rude phallic songs which gave birth to comedy.[243] Elsewhere, the Young Man shared the Bride with the Old Man, by symbolically cutting her in two halves with a wooden knife.[244] In other areas, she was kidnapped and her beloved tried to find and bring her back, an action that brings to mind the kidnapping and eventual return of Persephone.[245]

The importance of music,[246] singing and dancing at the performance of the masked *momogeria* also associates the custom with Dionysus and the primitive

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[238] *Poseidonia* were held in honour of Dionysus and Poseidon, the god of fresh water who fructifies the field of Demeter [Paus. 3.21.8 (Gythium); Hesychius s.v. *protrygaia*. See also: Robertson N. (1984) p.2; Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.5-7].

[239] *Haloa* were held in honour of Demeter, Kore, Dionysus and possibly Poseidon [*IG* $2^2$.949; Hesychius s.v. *protrygaia*; Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.45-46; Parke H.W. (1977) pp.98-100].

[240] Aristoph. *Acharn.* 247ff; *RE* vol.5.1 col.1022; Parke H.W. (1977) pp.100-103.

[241] For the tragedians with origins in Pontus, see: Chapter 4 p.132.

[242] *LSJ* s.v. *momos*. For the appellation of the *Momogeria*, see: Chapter 4 p.133.

[243] Arist. *Poet.* 4.14. Like the celebrations of the phallus in ancient Athens, the Pontian custom helped the suppressed Pontians to express their complaints against the strong and powerful, i.e. the judge, the policeman etc.

[244] Hatzopoulos G.K. (1984) p.34.

[245] Hesiod. *Theog.* 912-914.

[246] The Greeks themselves did not perceive their music as Greek, since mythology and linguistics associate music with Thrace. For example, the very names of *barbitos* (type of lyre) and *magadis* (harp with twenty strings) betray their origin outside Greece, while the cithara and flute have also been respectively described as Berecynthian, Asian or Phrygian. Musicologists have maintained that high civilisations have the ability to assimilate musical instruments and modalities from other cultures [Strabo 10.3.17 Long T. (1986) p.64. cf. Bevan E.R. (1966) vol.1 pp.77-78].

fertility rituals which honoured Cybele.[247] Her celebrations included music, ecstasy, initiation and purification rituals,[248] while the statues and figurines of the goddess from the area of Pontus nearly always depict her with a *tympanum*.[249] Agriculture[250] and the worship of the various types of fertility goddesses, like "Mother earth",[251] appear to have arrived on the Greek mainland from the East. Medea, who might have been a personification of the primordial goddess,[252] is closely linked with Pontus,[253] while she has been associated with Juno, the *medomene thea*, whose worship under that name came from Pontus.[254] Her son, Medeus,[255] as the male form of the same deity, completed the form of the 'Mother Goddess-type' and her son/lover companion. Among the findings of the Pontic tombs of Horoztepe and Mahmatlar at Tokat, a figure of a mother nursing a child has been found; since the early inhabitants of Pontus seem to have been associated with the Çatal Hüyük culture,[256] the statuette might have represented a primitive fertility goddess. Furthermore, the story of Demeter and Kore links the two divinities to the statuette comprising a large and a much smaller goddess which has been found at Çatal Hüyük.[257] In the large plaster statues of Çatal Hüyük, a goddess is portrayed with her legs spread wide so as to give birth to a boy or to an animal; it has been proposed that this boy might be a predecessor of Attis/Adonis.[258] Her presence next to the household shrines over the bones of the dead might have implied that she was regarded as a life-giving power governing the dead. In addition, the animal bones around her statue and her iconography as the 'Mistress of the Beasts' link her to the similar presentation of Cybele who is accompanied by two lions.[259] Cybele was popular among the Greeks of Asia Minor, as her sacred festival at Cyzicus[260] and at the Ionian cities indicates.[261]

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[247] Dem. *On the Crown* 259-260; Eurip. *Bacch.* 58-63, *Hippol.* 141-147; Strabo 10.3.15. For the appellation of Cybele as the 'Mother of Mountains', see: Diod. 3.58.1-3.
[248] Plato *Ion* 534a, *Minos* 318b, *Phdr.* 234d; Strabo 10.3.9; Turcan R. (1997) p.29.
[249] *CCCA* 202, 203, 204, 208. cf. Plate 2 p.221 (a modern performance of *momogeria*).
[250] The oldest (around 6000 B.C.) terracotta figurine of a Mother Goddess has been discovered in Asia Minor [Anatolian Museum in Ankara, 63 (p.114, 8 Wuensch) apud Turcan R. (1997) p.28]. See also: Savvidis Th. (1999) pp.22-24.
[251] Paus. 10.12.10.
[252] Malandra W.W. (1983) p.81.
[253] Apoll. of Rhodes *Argon.* 3.1-3, 3.247ff, 4.212-213, 4.241-252.
[254] Paley F.A. (1861) p.250.
[255] Hes. *Theog.* 1001.
[256] See also: Chapter 1 p.23 n.132.
[257] Burkert W. (1985) p.161. For a more detailed description of the figurines and the religion of Çatal Hüyük, see: Mallaart J.B. (1965) pp.207-208.
[258] Burkert W. (1983) pp.78-79.
[259] Mallaart J.B. (1965) pp.207-208; Burkert W. (1983) pp.78-79.
[260] Hdt. 4.76; Apol. of Rhodes *Argon.* 1.1123-1141; Schol. Apol. of Rhodes 1126.

Although she was honoured as a deity distinct from the traditional Greek gods,[262] she held a special place in the Greek mythological and religious tradition[263] and she was identified with the divine mothers, Earth, Rhea and Demeter.[264]

Overall, this evidence supports the existence of pre-colonial fertility and apotropaic celebrations and rituals in Pontus, namely the possible deification of wild nature by some local tribes,[265] the arrival of the worship of Cybele in Greece from the East, the likely function of Medea as a primitive fertility goddess, and the Mariandynian worship of the Great Goddess and the Cappadocian Ma. The Greek colonists appear to have incorporated these rituals into their own ancestral fertility practices. The merging of the Anatolian and Greek rituals seems to have laid the foundation of the *momogeria*. The custom of *momogeroi* maintains its primitive function as a magical, agricultural ritual which symbolises the death of nature or time, and its resurrection.[266] A particular aspect of *momoeria* seems to have emphasised the sense of community by opposition to elements outside the group, thus it might have related to the Greek rather than the eastern inhabitants of Pontus.

To be more precise, in the ancient Greek world, the Anthesteria[267] was the joyful celebration of the opening of the wine casks.[268] However, it incorporated the day of *Choes* which was a day of pollution and guilt[269] when the 'dead souls', ghosts or spirits were thought to emerge from the underworld and enter the city only to be chased away at the end of the festival.[270] According to the folk-customs, masked and menacing mummers invaded the city. They came from outlying areas, perhaps riding on the wagons which carried the wine casks, and they would ride around the city on carts, pursuing with lewd jests anyone they met.[271] The festival of the Anthesteria was used as the backdrop for a primitive and frequently grotesque masquerade, where

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[261] e.g. *CIG* 3193, 3387; *BMC Ionia* Pl.25.10 (Smyrna).
[262] The cult of Cybele seems to have reached Greece by the fifth century B.C., but the inhabitants of mainland Greece were reluctance to accept and make official the oriental aspects of her cult [Farnell L.R. (1907) pp.298, 302-304].
[263] Aristoph. *Birds* 877.
[264] Plut. *Them.* 30.1; Photius *Lexicon* s.v. *Mitroon.* Cf. Pliny 10.49.1, 10.50; Burkert W. (1983) p.256.
[265] Procopius *Peri Ktismaton* 3.6.2.
[266] Samouilidis C. (1984) pp.25-27; Mouratidis E.L. (1991) p.26-27, 31-36 ff.; Hatzopoulos G.K. (1984) pp.35-38.
[267] The Anthesteria was similar to the Roman Lemuria (Ovid *Fasti* 5.442).
[268] Phanodemos 12 F 325 (Jacoby); Aristoph. *Achar.* 1000-1234; Burkert W. (1983) pp.216-218.
[269] Hesychius s.v. *miarai emerai*; Photius *Lexicon* s.v. *miara imera*; *IG* $2^2$.1672,170; Harrison J.E. (1911) pp.39-40; Burkert W. (1983) pp.218-226.
[270] For a detailed analysis of the festival, see: Harrison J.E. (1903) pp.32-49; Burkert W. (1983) pp.216, 226-227. cf. similar Mesopotamian beliefs: Scurlock J.A. (1995) pp.93-94.
[271] Photius *Lexicon* s.v. *ta ek ton amaxon* (plural); Plato *Laws* 637b; Dion. of Hallic. *Rom. Ant.* 7.72.11.

wild laughter was combined with terror and fear.[272] Like the ghosts of the dead, these 'strangers' were entitled to come to the city and enter the houses, but they could stay no longer than the duration of the festival.[273] This motif, of supposed spirits or aboriginal inhabitants[274] appearing on certain days only to be chased away afterwards, may also be found in the grotesquely masked groups that invaded the villages of isolated Alpine valleys well into the 20th century.[275] It could be argued that this primeval celebration in which 'strangers' were allowed inside the city and the citizens offered them hospitality has also survived as one of the aspects of the *momogeria*. In another variation of the Sourmena of Pontus,[276] the masked performers and the participating audience or the father-figure of the house used the words *thymisman* and *thymizo* with the ancient Greek meaning 'offering'.[277] The *momogeria* were 'strangers'; they had to introduce themselves to the family who offered them food and drink in return for blessings for health and prosperity.[278] In the Greek cities of Pontus as in Massalia, Syracuse, the Ionian colonies and elswhere,[279] Anthesteria would have been celebrated in the spring in honour of Dionysus. However, at some point in history, due to the numerous medieval/Byzantine and post-Byzantine/Turkish influences,[280] the *momogeria* were incorporated into the fertility celebrations of winter (end of December – middle of January).[281] This would further justify the 'wedding' between the Bride and the Young Man at the end of the *momoeria* performance,[282] possibly as a remnant of the Anthesterian 'sacred marriage' between the 'queen' and Dionysus.[283]

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[272] Burkert W. (1983) pp.226-230.

[273] The custom was almost fatal to the people of Massilia. The native King of the Ligurians, Comanus, tried to take advantage of the festival in order to conquer the city. However, the plot was foiled by a woman and the attempt was unsuccessful (Justin 43.4.6-12).

[274] In Athens, the masked figures who filled the city as spirits (*Keres*) or aboriginal inhabitants (*Kares*) on the day of the Choes were identical [Burkert W. (1983) pp.228-229].

[275] Burkert W. (1983) p.228.

[276] Samouilidis C. (1984) pp.21, 25.

[277] *LSJ* s.v. *thymiao – thyo*. Both meanings of *thyo*, rushing (excitement) and offering (sacrificing) appear relevant to the energy of the momogeria as well as their function.

[278] The crude comedy elements of their performance have already been established, see: Chapter 4 p.134.

[279] Justin 43.4.6; Timaios 158a F 566 (Jacoby); Thuc. 2.15.4.

[280] cf. Plate 6 p.224.

[281] Even in antiquity, the time of the year when a festival was celebrated could have changed, like the *Haloa* which is associated with the *momogeria* (Chapter 4 pp.133-134). Evidence indicates that the festival had been held in mid-winter, yet it might have been originally a harvest celebration falling no later I the year than October [Farnell L.R. (1907) p.46].

[282] Plate 7 p.225.

[283] Pollux 8.90; Hesychius s.v. *Dionysou gamos*; Burkert W. (1983) pp.230-235.

It is very likely that the Greek colonists brought their fertility rituals to Pontus, but they also found already established, local customs of a similar nature. The Greeks were not the only ones who performed *dromena* – ritual acts in order to assist prosperity. It has been established that similar fertility folk-plays were performed throughout Europe, all with a common satirical element, contest, death and resurrection.[284] Since the Greek *dromena* appear to have had roots in the eastern celebrations, it would not have been difficult to accommodate the local customs into the Greek rituals. In addition, evidence from other areas of Asia Minor suggests that the locals were willing to participate in Greek religious practices and to adopt Greek artefacts, as long as the core of their own religious concept remained unchanged;[285] tribal societies seem to have had permeable boundaries in the territorial and cultural sense.[286] In the second century A.D., the people of Pontus appear to have continued to celebrate the customs of their ancestors. According to Lucian,[287] on specific days, they attended performances with satiric elements. The most noble among the citizens danced and many of the costumes of the performers were associated with pseudo-military and fertility functions. Their attire appears to have been similar to that of the performers of the ancient Greek *dromena*, the ancient fertility rituals of the East and the *momogeria*. In modern times, at least until 1955,[288] the *momogeria* retained various fertility symbols but its original function as a conscious fertility ritual was concealed; it came to incorporate other religious elements, but the custom never seems to have lost its fixed elements (fight, death, resurrection, entertainment) on which its effectiveness depended. Although the *momogeria* do not prove beyond doubt the "purity of Greekness" of the inhabitants of (modern) Pontus, they do seem to indicate the fusion between Greek and Eastern cultural elements, which produced the unnamed, mixed culture of ancient Pontus and formed the foundations of what came to be known as the (modern) Pontian culture.

Altogether, there is a fair amount of evidence that the Mithridatic era exhibited signs of this unnamed, mixed culture. Although the Mithridatids did not have a fusion policy, their emphasis on their Persian lineage and on their royal relations with the Hellenistic Houses of Asia Minor suggest the promotion of a cultural amalgamation.

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[284] Chambers E.K. (1967) pp.182-228, 249-301; Harrison J.E. (1911) pp.333-334. For the English 'mummers' and armed dances, see: Brody A. (1969); Hutton R. (1996) pp.70-80.
[285] Roller L.E. (1991). e.g. Chapter 4 p.119.
[286] Mitchell S. (2000) p.120; Hall J.M. (1997).
[287] Lucian *Peri Orch.* 79.

Intermarriages seem to have been closely connected with the level of Hellenisation of the area. With this in mind, lack of direct evidence for mixed marriages in middle and lower classes appears to have indicated a lack of Hellenisation in these social classes. The religious practices of the people led to a religious amalgamation in which eastern and 'Greek' gods, myths, rituals and festivals intermingled. The modern Pontian armed dances and the custom of the *momogeria* seem to have vividly indicated this mixed, yet unnamed culture, which was also enriched with Roman cultural forms.

[288] Chapter 4 p.129 n.188.

# Chapter 5

## The Romans and the Arrival of Christianity

As has been established in the previous chapters, the various inhabitants of ancient Pontus intermingled. It could be argued that by the first century B.C., an initial, primitive form of the (modern) Pontian culture had been shaped, on which all the successive cultural elements of Pontus left their distinctive mark. The Roman and the Christian elements arrived and established themselves in the area, after the fall of Mithridates VI. Their influence was immense and both elements were, to some extent, complimentary to each other; in 1969, a Turkish inhabitant of a village in Santa summarised their impact, saying: "This is Roman (Rum) country; they spoke Christian here".[1] The processes which took place from the coming of the Romans until about the third century A.D. might be seen as establishing the appellation 'Pontus' on the political map of the world. Pontus became the domain where the *Pontici*, initially an externally-imposed appellation, lived and originated from. Although in later centuries, this appellation might have indicated an internally defined identity shaped by the Roman and Christian factors,[2] no evidence suggests that something similar existed by the third century A.D.

The Romans established their control over the geographical area of Pontus after they annihilated the Mithridatic kingdom and incorporated part of it into the Roman province of Bithynia-Pontus.[3] The anti-Roman policy of Mithridates VI seems to have prevented early Roman settlement in the area; that could perhaps explain the reasons Eupator did not proceed with the same anti-Roman actions as in the rest of Asia Minor.[4] In addition to the anti-Roman royal sentiments, the Black Sea

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[1] In the account of Bryer, the particular individual is defined as "a Pontic Turk". However, it appears peculiar that a Pontic Turk, i.e. someone who had Pontian culture and Muslim faith, described his own language as "Christian". It is possible that, after the exchange of populations in 1922, his family was resettled in the formerly Pontic-Greek village of Santa after moving from another area of Turkey [Bryer A.A.M. (1991) p.321].

[2] This thesis does not examine the sixth century A.D. indications for an internally defined Pontic identity. Selected evidence is used in order to suggest that such an identity might have existed around the sixth century A.D. and it is worth further research.

[3] The terms Pontus-Bithynia and Bithynia-Pontus are used to indicate the same administrative area.

[4] Chapter 3 pp.95-97.

area did not offer such a stimulating cultural and intellectual civic life as the Hellenistic cities of the Mediterranean world;[5] the average Roman had no reason to want to live in the 'barbaric' realm of Mithridates. Similarly, the average inhabitant of the kingdom would not have risked the wrath of the king by participating in a Roman institution.[6] Nevertheless, after the annihilation of the Mithridatic Kingdom, the incorporation of Pontus into the Roman administrative system seems to have initiated the use of the term *Pontici* to describe the inhabitants of the south Black Sea coasts.[7] Although 'Pontus' had not been designated an administrative territory until then, Roman organisation changed that. In addition to the Roman province of Pontus-Bithynia, *Pontus Galaticus* came into existence, designating the part of Pontus which was given to the tetrarch of Galatia, Dieotarus; initially, it belonged to the Roman province of Galatia and, later, to the province of Cappadocia. Around 63 A.D., the east part of Pontus was given to Polemon I and took the name *Pontus Polemoniacus*, while around 166 A.D., *Pontus Galaticus* and *Pontus Polemoniacus* were united into one district, *Pontus Mediterraneus*, which was part of the Roman province of Cappadocia. Eventually, the establishment of *Diocecis Pontica*[8] by Diocletian (284-305 A.D.) gave 'political' significance to the term 'Pontus'. Gradually, and due to the Roman system of government, 'Pontic' came to designate the people who lived or originated from the particular administrative district, and not just the inhabitants of the south, southeastern shores of the Black Sea, or even its coastal rim.[9] Furthermore, from the middle of the first century B.C. onwards, the constant interaction between the two groups, the 'newcomers' and the 'natives', seems to have enriched the culture as well as the civic and social life, of Pontus with Roman manners and customs.

The Roman presence around the rim of the Black Sea was evident, but discreet, from the beginning of the first century A.D. The friendly kingdom of Bosporus coined in gold as a sign of independence, although the portrait of the Emperor featured always on one side of the coins, attesting to the indirect, yet firm,

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[5] Catull. 10.19. For the remoteness of the Black Sea area, see: Introduction p.5 esp. n.33.

[6] Anderson made the hypothesis that a Pontic *Koinon* might have existed before the establishment of a Roman province in the area. He based his hypothesis on the proposal of Kenyon that an Asian *Koinon* appears to have existed before the time of Augustus. However, it is doubtful whether the strong eastern elements and the anti-Roman policies of Pharnaces and Mithridates VI would have allowed the establishment of a Roman institution within their royal realm. Anderson J.G.C. (1900) p.156. For the Pontic *Koinon*, see: Chapter 5 pp.164-165.

[7] Strabo 12.3.9; Pomp. Mela *De Chorogr.* 1.14-18.

[8] *Diocecis Pontica* included three administrative districts: Diospontus, or later Hellenopontus, Pontus Polemoniacus and Armenia Minor, or Armenia I.

[9] See also: Chapter 5 pp.146-148.

control of Rome.[10] Being on the fringe of the Roman sphere of influence – control, the principality had an important role as buffer against and regulator of the northern local tribes. Although the king might have proclaimed his philo-Roman policies with the epithet *philoromaios*,[11] the kingdom had to be monitored.[12] Similarly, the short-lived, vassal-kingdom of Pontus supposedly kept the Caucasian tribes under control.[13] Around the first century A.D., the close military relationship between Bithynia-Pontus, Bosporus and the small Roman garrisons on the north and east Black Sea coasts upheld the peace in the area.[14] It was under Hadrian (beginning of the second century A.D.) that substantial numbers of troops were stationed on the southeastern coast of the Euxine;[15] their purpose was to keep an eye on the Roman clients immediately to the East, rather than to secure the coast from the local tribes.[16]

In the established Roman provinces, the Roman influence was more noticeable, even among the lower rural classes of the eastern inhabitants of Pontus, which seem to have been left untouched by Hellenism.[17] The Romans appear to have come into contact with nearly all the cultural groups which inhabited Pontus, irrelevant of their social class. The Roman troops guarded prisoners, escorted them on their journey to Rome and policed the city.[18] Frequently, they were assigned to the service of important administrators,[19] while military specialists often assisted in civil engineering projects, or carried out various imperial ceremonies. As a result, Roman influence was not confined to the higher levels of the local civic hierarchy. Greek-Hellenised natives of different social status[20] would have become accustomed to the presence of the Romans and they would have interacted with them. The early Roman military presence in Pontus was subtle, but its results were of some consequence; it had made the natives, who served in the Roman army, behave like Romans and they had smoothly accustomed the civilian population to Roman cultural and

[10] Head B.V. (1911) p.504.
[11] Chapter 2 pp.47-48 (significance of the cult epithets).
[12] *IGR* 1.874; Suet. *Aug.* 21, 48; Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 78.
[13] Chapter 5 p.144.
[14] Jos. *Bell. Jud.* 2.16.4; Zosimus 1.31-32; *IGR* 1.894 –896; *IOSPE* 2.290, 2.293; Speidel M.P., French D.H. (1985) pp.98-99.
[15] Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 12, 14; *ILS* 2660.
[16] Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 15
[17] For the minimal extent of Hellenisation of the rural classes of the Mithridatic Kingdom, see: Chapter 4 p.118.
[18] Pliny *Ep.* 10.20, 77, 78.
[19] Pliny *Ep.* 10.21, 22, 86A.
[20] cf. Chapter 5 pp.155.

administrative perceptions. In Pontus, the 'early Roman military presence' did not necessarily have 'Roman - Italian' origins and culture.

The Civil Wars had forced some Roman commanders to supplement their army in unorthodox ways. Military urgency required that most military leaders accept any recruits of suitable bearing and physique.[21] The promise or prospect of full citizenship and financial rewards in the event of victory would have attracted many natives.[22] The result was the creation of new (emergency) legions with provincial soldiers, although they lacked the essential qualification of citizenship.[23] For example, Pompey seems to have intended to hurriedly raise such legions[24] and Caesar created the controversial *legio Alaudae*.[25] Domitius Clavinus was forced to create *legio Pontica* (47 B.C.) in order to replace *legio XXXV* and *legio XXXVIII*, which were sent to Caesar in Egypt.[26] Being conscious of its unorthodox genesis, he tactfully reported that "*ex tumultuariis militibus in Ponto confecta erat*",[27] giving no clear information on the origins of the legion. It is notable that the legion was not defined numerically, while the term '*legio Pontica*' indicates that these "militia men" were not Roman citizens.[28] It seems unlikely that in 47 B.C. the Romans had already managed to form a strong residential and colonising presence in Pontus. Therefore, these *militibus* appear to have been freeborn[29] natives of Pontus, i.e. people of Greek, Anatolian or Persian origins. *Legio Pontica*, along with *legio XXXVI*, played a key role in the wars of the Romans against Pharnaces II and they remained in Pontus with Caelius Vinicianus after the battle at Zela and the defeat of the king.[30] The soldiers of *legio Pontica* do not seem to have become Roman citizens since the legion never had

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[21] Caes. *BC* 2.20, *Bell. Hisp.* 7; Butler H.E., Cary M. (1966) p.73.
[22] Keppie L. (1984) pp.141, 143-144.
[23] Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 53; Grant M. M. (1974) pp.6, 55-56, 169, 239-240.
[24] Caes. *BC* 3.102; *Bell. Hisp.* 7.
[25] Suet. *Caes.* 24; (possibly) Caes. *Bell. Afric.* 1.
[26] Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 34.
[27] ibid. See also: Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 40, 77.
[28] Parker H.M.D. (1971) pp.57, 63, 68-69.
[29] Proof of free status remained a necessary requirement, even for the recruits to the auxiliary forces; only in times of great emergencies were freedmen recruited into specially created *cohortes voluntariorum*. Slaves tried to enrol themselves despite the punishment if they were discovered. *CPL* 102; Barns J. (1949); *Digest* 49.16.11 (Marcianus), 49.16.8 (Ulpian); Dio 55.31, 56.23; Suet. *Aug.* 25; Tac. *Ann.* 2.85; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.2.32; Cheeseman G.L. (1914) pp.65-67, 187; Pliny *Ep.* 10.29-30.
[30] Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 34, 40, 77; Perrot G. (1871). It has been suggested that the small units of auxiliary forces, which were in the area during the reign of Trajan, might have been the remains of these two legions, *legio Pontica* and *legio XXXVI* [Pliny *Ep.* 10.21; *IGR* 3.1396, 3.1411; Ritterling E. (1927) p.28].

a number.[31] A small number of auxiliary soldiers appears to have had greater luck; they became Roman citizens earlier, between 63 and 68 A.D.[32] It is disputed whether the Pontic recruits of the early second century A.D.[33] were for legions,[34] auxiliary forces[35] or both.[36] Still, they appear to have been the ones who took over the burden of policing the Black Sea and its coasts.

Rome needed a fleet in order to protect and strengthen the existing coastal posts and garrisons.[37] In order to take direct control of the area, and the royal fleet, they removed the vassal 'King of Pontus',[38] Polemo II, from his throne (63 A.D.).[39] The royal fleet[40] was transformed into (the basis of) the *classis Pontica*.[41] It has been suggested that *classis Pontica* originally incorporated the ships of the vassal Kings of Thrace, which comprised the royal Pontic fleet and the Thracian detachments.[42] Indeed, it might have been closely associated with the Roman administration in Thrace[43] after 175 A.D. when Cyzicus was considered as its base.[44] However, at the time of its formation, Trapezus and Sinope appear to have been more likely bases, since the sphere of operations of the fleet seems to have been the south and southeastern shores of the Black Sea, even until the third century A.D.[45] Although the control of the fleet passed from the King to Rome,[46] the natives of Pontus continued

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[31] It has been suggested that the number *V* in the legion of Caesar from Gaul (*legio V Alaudae*) indicated that the soldiers received the franchise. Suet. *Caes.* 24; *Bell. Afric.* 1.5; Parker H.M.D. (1971) pp.57, 69.

[32] Tac. *Hist.* 3.47. After 257 A.D., *legio Pontica II* was stationed in Trapezus, while at the time of Dioclesian (284-304 A.D.), a (new) *legio I Pontica* was stationed in the city. By these dates, citizenship was no longer an issue. These legions appear to have supported the several Roman stations that continued to exist on the eastern Black Sea shore. *CIL* 3.6746 (Suppl.); Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) pp.181-182; *DE* 5.1310f; Zosimus 2.33; *Not. Dig. Or.* 38.15ff.

[33] Pliny *Ep.* 10.29.

[34] Referring to an unclassified list of the first century A.D., Fink maintained that the nineteen soldiers from Galatia, Pontus, Paphlagonia and Bithynia were all legionaries because they were citizens [Fink R.O. (1971) pp.165-167].

[35] It has been suggested that a native of Pontus-Bithynia who was also a Roman citizen served in the auxiliary cohort Cypria which was stationed in Sinope [Speidel M.P., French D.H. (1985) p.99].

[36] Sherwin-White A.N. (1973) p.321.

[37] Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 12.

[38] After Mithridates VI, the policies of 'the Pontic kings' were directed by Rome. Lack of independence indicates that these 'Kings' could be considered part of the Roman element when discussing the constituents of the ancient culture of Pontus. See: Chapter 2 p.60.

[39] Tac. *Hist.* 1.6; Suet. *Nero* 18; Strabo 11.2.12.

[40] Tac. *Hist.* 3.47.

[41] *IGR* 4.150; *CIL* 6.31856; Starr C.G. (1960) p.127; Souza P. (de) (1999) p.208.

[42] Grant M. (1974) p.156, 176-177.

[43] Dio 79.3.5; Starr C.G. (1960) p.157 n.10.

[44] Dio 79.7.3.

[45] *AE* 364 (1961); Jos. *Ant.* 16.21; Strabo 12.3.11; *ILS* 2824; Starr C.G. (1960) p.128; French D.H. (1984) pp.58-59; Speidel M.P., French D.H. (1985) p.100.

[46] Two of the praefecti of *classis Pontica* were L. Iulius Vehilius Gratus Iulianus (175-176 A.D.) and Crispinus (third century A.D.) (*CIL* 6.31856; *IGR* 4.150).

to man the ships.[47] Freeborn provincials continued to provide the manpower for the smaller[48] Roman fleets, which had the task of demonstrating Roman presence on peripheral seas. Although the creation of the Roman Pontic fleet was necessary for the protection of the economic life of the area, it does not appear to have been able to secure permanent Roman control of the Euxine region. *Classis Pontica* had better results than Polemo II[49] in maintaining the appearance of peace[50] and in creating a Black Sea trading network,[51] but it was incapable of resisting the Gothic invasions of the middle of the third century A.D.[52]

The importance of *legio* and *classis Pontica* lies in the freeborn natives of Pontus which they incorporated. Although they were part of the Roman army, they did not lose their cultural identity. They seem to have continued to uphold their religious perceptions. This appears to have been sanctioned by Rome on condition that they recognised the gods of the official religious calendar of the army.[53] By honouring the Roman gods, they also manifested their loyalty to the emperor, thanks to whom they acted as representatives of Roman power.[54] During peace time, the nature of the duties of the Pontic 'Roman' soldiers indicates that there was an early social and cultural intercourse between the Romans and the locals of all social classes.[55] Their position would have been ideal for creating a link between newcomers and natives. However, it is doubtful whether their modest numbers allowed them to play a significant role in the mutual exchange of influences between Romans and the natives of Pontus.

Administrative affairs came after military matters[56] and, as a result, as early as 47 B.C., the word *Pontic* seems to have been used both in a military as well as a civic – social context. In particular, when Pharnaces II attempted to regain the kingdom of

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[47] Tac. *Hist.* 3.47.

[48] The permanent Roman navy was constituted after the battle at Actium; its major fleets were stationed at Misenum and Ravenna and controlled the Western and Eastern Mediterranean, respectively (Suet. *Aug.* 49.1).

[49] Strabo 11.2.12; Ovid *Ex Pont.* 4.10.21-30; Jos. *Bell. Jud.* 2.16.4; Zosimus 1.32.

[50] Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 15; Jos. *Bell. Jud.* 2.16.4.

[51] *Inscr. of P. Eux.* $1^2$.340, $1^2$.233, $1^2$.174 apud Rostovzeff M.I. (1916-18) pp.9-22.

[52] Zosimus 1.31-36.

[53] *ILS* 4349; Beard M., North J., Price S. (1998) vol.1 pp.324-328. The official religious calendar of Dura Europos (third century A.D.) adequately presented the Imperial House as the focus of the military religious celebrations [Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) pp.567-568].

[54] Pliny *Ep.* 10.101, 10.103; Bohec Y. (1994) pp.248-249. It has been proposed that when Domitian awarded the title *praetoria* to the main fleets, he indirectly indicated his appreciation for their role in the defence of the position of the Emperor. Such a recognition might have been reflected to the regional fleets as well [Keppie L. (1984) pp.186-187].

[55] Chapter 5 p.142.

his father, Mithridates VI, and plundered the property of the inhabitants of the area, the wording "*bona civium Romanorum Ponticorumquae diripuit*" appears to have implied that the Romans saw, or chose to see, an interrelated people. They were defined with the geographical adjective 'Pontic'.[57] After the conquest of the kingdom of Mithridates VI by the Romans (63 B.C.), the word was externally appropriated to denote a person who lived in, or originated from, the south, southeastern shores of the Black Sea.[58] This might be the reason that the term was also used to indicate people who were linked with the area of Pontus before it became a Roman province. In particular, from the first century B.C. until modern times, the Mithridatids have been called 'Kings of Pontus', although they were never known as such during their reign.[59]

The policies of Rome appear to have established '*Pontikos*', as an externally defined appellation. A number of epitaphs and inscriptions, from Ionia, the Aegean islands, Chersonnesos, Sinope and elsewhere, name numerous people as *Pontikos* and *Pontios*.[60] Although in the Roman imperial period, names ending in *–ikos* seem to have been derived from ethnics,[61] no evidence reveals that *Pontikos* was used as an ethnonym by the individuals themselves and no title of the period proclaims an internally imposed, distinct 'Pontic' identity. Such a name might had been an indication of the (distant) affiliation of the individual with Pontus, referring to his ancestral geographical origins. Even so, the term does not appear to indicate that he conceived himself to be 'Pontic'. The only allusion to an internally defined 'Pontic' identity in antiquity comes from the writings of Gregory Thaumatourgos, the bishop of Neocaesareia.[62] When the Goths devastated Pontus (252-254 A.D.), Gregory pleaded with his flock to remember that they were *Pontikoi kai Christianoi*, thus they

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[56] Strabo 12.3.6, 12.3.14, 12.3.33; Dio 36.46.1-2; Plut. *Pomp.* 31.1, *Luc.* 36.1.

[57] Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 41. Although it has been suggested that *Ponticorumque* might have referred to the citizens of the Roman province of Pontus, this might have been a forced reading [Mitchell S. (2000a) p.8]. Around the middle of the first century B.C., there was no 'Roman Province of Pontus' by itself, only the administrative district of *Pontus Galaticus* which belonged to the province of Galatia.

[58] Pliny *Ep.* 10.112-113; Strabo 11.8.4, 12.3.33. Page – Benseler, Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen (3), 1911, pp.1233-1234 apud Linderski J. (1987) p.159 ft.2. The *cognomen* "*Ponticus*" was particularly popular and it frequently signified the close relationship of the individual with Pontus [Memnon 1 T 434 (Jacoby); Linderski J. (1987) pp.158-157].

[59] Chapter 2 p.49.

[60] e.g. *SEG* 37.977, 42.1142, 42.1061, 45.985A.37 and others.

[61] *SEG* 35.1795. Pordomongo discusses the origins of names derived from ethnics, especially those in *–ikos*, including *Pontikos*.

[62] Mitchell S. (1999b).

should not behave like the Northern invaders.[63] The bishop seems to have been appealing to the Christian identity of his flock, reminding them that they were meant to live according to the Christian mores. By analogy, *Pontikoi* implies that he was also appealing to their cultural or political self-identification. This fragment by itself is as interesting as it is inadequate in proving the construction of an internally defined Pontic identity; until further evidence is forthcoming, the existence of such a construction must remain in doubt. In the early and late empire, Roman provincial boundaries overlapped the indistinct cultural borders between the various peoples; provinces were little more than geographical regions, delimited and defined for practical administrative purposes. The result was that by themselves they were a weak basis for the creation of an internally defined identity.[64] It could be argued that *Pontikoi* referred to the civic status rather than the identity of the particular people. When the letter of Gregory was written, the entire geographical area of Pontus had become a single Roman province and all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were Roman citizens; the term *Pontikoi* seems to have referred to the inhabitants of the *Diocesis Pontica*.[65] Similarly interesting, as well as ambiguous and inadequate, evidence for the construction of an ancient Pontic identity might be found in the *Pontikai Historiai* and the *Pontika* of Apollodoros and Diophantus.[66] These works seem to have referred to the history of Hellespont, Propontis and the Black Sea coasts. The writers of *Pontika* do not appear to have written an account of a particular group, but rather the history of a place. The word *Pontika* has the same ending as the *Ioudaika*,[67] the *Karika*[68] and many others, whose writers appear to have narrated the history of the people who defined themselves as *Ioudaioi* or *Kares*. However, the title by itself provides no evidence of people who defined themselves as *Pontikoi* in antiquity. The impact that this terminology had on the construction of a Pontic identity is highly questionable. Written evidence of people identifying themselves as *Pontikoi* or *Pontians* has begun to appear since the early 19th century. However, the

[63] Gregory Thaumat. *Can Ep.* 7, *PG* 10.1019-1048. For a translation and discussion of the letter, see: Heather P., Matthews J.F. (1991) pp.4-1.
[64] Mitchell S. (2000b) pp.124-125, 135.
[65] Even after the third century A.D. and the establishment of *Diocesis Pontika*, evidence for an internally defined Pontic identity are scanty and open to discussion. Cf. Proc. *Bell.* 2.29.19 (Romans who are called *Pontikoi* – external definition), *Bell.* 8.2.2 (people who call themselves *Pontikoi* – internal definition).
[66] Apollodorus 803 F 1 (Jacoby); Diophantus 805 F 1, 3 (Jacoby).
[67] Artapanus 726 F (Jacoby).
[68] Apollonius from Aphrodisias 740 F 1, 6 (Jacoby); Philip from Theaggelia 741 F 1 (Jacoby).

people who identified themselves as such are unlikely to have based their claim on the works of ancient authors, like Apollodorus and Diophantus, as these authors would have been known to only a handful of extremely wealthy and educated people. Overall, it could be argued that, between the first and the third centuries A.D., and within the Roman empire, the definition *Pontici* came to encompass the employment of Greek as the main language, the use of an urbanised Graeco-Roman administrative system and the practice of mixed Greek-Roman-Eastern religious customs.

The ancient culture of Pontus was different from the culture of the inhabitants of mainland Greece, Asia Minor and Italy, although it incorporated Greek, Hellenised-Eastern and Roman elements. When the Romans arrived in Pontus, centuries of coexistence, the need for survival and the Mithridatic ambition had already begun to amalgamate the different cultural elements of the region. Roman rule brought a regular pattern of administration which provided political stability; thus, Rome became the catalyst which brought the various cultural elements together, as the Persian King had done earlier. The Romans did more than establishing the administrative and political usage of the term *Pontic*; through road construction, they indirectly assisted the inhabitants of Pontus to become aware of the differences between their (mixed and yet unnamed) culture and that of their ancestral place of origin.

For the Romans, the eastern area of Pontus had a particularly noteworthy military status; it bordered Armenia, which interested them due to its contacts and frontiers with Parthia.[69] The strategic area of eastern Pontus[70] demanded the development of extensive road networks and the establishment of fortresses and garrison armies; such organisation provided the basis for security and peace, while it also had lasting effects on the civic construction of the area.[71] Until the arrival of the Romans, the sea trade routes were the most important means of communication. The roads along the southern and eastern Black Sea coasts crossed numerous valley torrents and the mountains left no space for a reliable passage.[72] The Roman road-making techniques managed to overcome the obstacles of the mountains, opening the way for further military activities in the area. During the Parthian-Armenian wars and

[69] Starr C.G. (1960) p.127; Debevoise N.C. (1968).
[70] Eastern Pontus was a convenient supply base for operations against Armenia. For an initial bibliography, see: Gilmartin, K. (1973); Pill-Rademacher I. (1988).
[71] Roman roads were still in use at the beginning of the 20th century [Anderson J.G.C. (1903)].
[72] Strabo 11.2.17; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 pp.18ff.

the campaigns of Corbulo in Armenia (54–63 A.D.), the north-south route from Trapezus was guarded with a chain of forts.[73] Despite lack of milestones, or other inscriptions of any period at this part of the frontier, it appears probable that this difficult road had been an essential supply line for his armies. A road from Satala to Trapezus would have linked the garrisons of the Euphrates with the ships of the *classis Pontica.* Another route from Trapezus to Commagene would have connected two legionary bases,[74] while the Pontic Highway linked Galatia, Pontus and Cappadocia and played a key role in the annexation of Paphlagonia.[75] Under the auspices of Caesennius Gallus, a road system connected the provinces of Galatia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, Lycaeonia and Armenia Minor.[76] Overall, military connections created a feeling of security in traders, merchants, visitors and residents,[77] while the construction of a safe road system affected the commercial activities of the area. For example, the 'Sinopic' ruddle changed its route and followed the high road all the way to Ephesus.[78] These roads provided links between Pontus and the 'old' trading and cultural centres. Economic exchanges would have promoted the movement not only of goods but also of cultural practices, religion and ideology. Due to the Roman road-system, an increased number of the inhabitants of Pontus came into closer contact with the rest of the Mediterranean world. An internally defined Pontic identity would not appear for many centuries to come; yet, it is likely that a comparison between the, mixed and yet unnamed, culture of Pontus and that of their ancestral place of origin (mainland Greece, Ionia or Persia) would have already begun. The realisation of the major and minor differences between ourselves and the 'others' is a painstaking and lengthy process, yet it does eventually lead to the realisation of one's identity.[79]

Any concept of Pontic culture cannot be understood without taking into account the interactions between the Romans and the native inhabitants of Pontus, who had already started to practice a mixed culture. The support of Rome for *poleis-*

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[73] Tac. *Ann.* 13.39.
[74] Isaac B. (1990) pp.37-38.
[75] Syme R. (1995) pp.95, 300.
[76] *ILS* 268.
[77] *CIL* 3.6745 (Suppl.), 3.6747 (Suppl.); *IRE* 64; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) p.181; Mitford T.B. (1974) pp.163-164. It does not appear coincidental that Trapezus had played an important role as the corner stone of the defence policy of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires on the Black Sea. In modern historical times, the port of the city served as the western terminal of the overland route from India through to Persia.
[78] Strabo 12.2.10; Jos. *Ant.* 16.23.
[79] Introduction p.7-8.

type institutions had an impact on the culture of Pontus. Rome seems to have disregarded, or overlooked, any 'life' outside these institutions. The Roman edicts regarding the organisation of Pontus appear to have been addressed to the cities and not to the region as a whole. A *beneficium* of Pompey decreed that children born to a Pontic mother should be considered *Pontici*, according to the origins of their mother and not of their father.[80] At that time, no Pontic municipality existed by itself and no evidence indicates a 'Pontic citizenship' or 'identity'; this, somewhat curious *beneficium* might be connected with the issue of city-citizenship. It was not uncommon for cities and individuals to attempt to claim special privileges based on their particular origin or citizenship.[81] The legislation of Pompey might have anticipated this issue; it seems to have tried to regulate conditions of tenure of citizenship in order to stabilise the citizen-body, and thus the financial, civic and social order of the city.[82] The *beneficium* might have complemented the law, which controlled the right of the cities to grant citizenship to anyone, who already held the franchise of another city in the same province of Pontus-Bithynia.[83] It might also have assisted in the growth of the citizen-body of the newly founded cities of Pompey by providing citizenship which could be passed down through the female as well as the male line.[84] Roman Emperors and generals protected these *poleis*-type institutions because they safeguarded the unity of the empire.

In Pontus, the Roman newcomers depended upon the local network, which was developed by the Greek colonists and originated from the links among the indigenous tribes. In many ways, Rome continued the urbanisation processes of the Greeks and the Mithridatids. Amaseia, as the royal burial place,[85] would have been designated a city since its early history. The Magnopolis of Pompey was already half-built under the name of Eupatoria,[86] while Cabeira, the site of one of the palaces of Eupator with water-mill, zoological park and hunting grounds, was renamed

[80] *Digest* 1.1.2 (Ulpian); Marshall A.J. (1968) pp.107-109; Mitchell S. (2000a) p.8.
[81] Cic. *Pro Balbo* 12.29-30. The third of the Cyrene Edicts required from the holders of multiple citizenship to perform the public services required by their Greek citizenship [*SEG* 9.8.3; Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) pp.36, 38-39].
[82] Marshall A.J. (1968) pp.108-109.
[83] Pliny *Ep.* 10.114.
[84] Mitchell S. (1984) p.124. For the cities that Pompey founded, see: App. *Mith.* 117; Fletcher W.G. (1939).
[85] Strabo 12.3.39.
[86] App. *Mith.* 115; Pliny *NH* 6.2.7 (Pompeiopolis); Memnon 30.3 F 434 (Jacoby); Strabo 12.3.30. The renaming of Magnopolis was a symbolic statement. Many Roman generals and emperors founded

Diospolis, emphasising the religious significance of the city.[87] On an administrative level, the Romans also used extensively the Hellenised structure of Pontus.[88] The provincial districts (*conventus*, *dioikiseis*)[89] were frequently named after the major municipal centres of the province, in which juridical and judicial businesses (*assizes*) were held.[90] Rome favoured the city for practical administrative and economic reasons; for example, Phazemonitis and the village Phazemon became Neapolitis and the city of Neapolis.[91] As a result, they resolved to promote *poleis*-institutions at the expense of tribes, villages, kingdoms, temple-estates and all other administrative systems.

The dispensability of the kingdoms was evident with the distribution of the Mithridatic kingdom. Roman allies received some territory as an award,[92] Heracleia Pontica lost her position as a free and allied city due to her adherence to Mithridates,[93] while Sinope[94] and Amisus[95] became autonomous and free. The remaining territory became part of the Province of Pontus-Bithynia. In order to incapacitate the old royal divisions of *eparxheiai*, Rome divided the former kingdom into eleven *conventus* – *politeiai*,[96] each with a town as its centre; these were either new creations or founded on the site of an existing town. The resulting units were analogous to city-states and they run their affairs as such, subject to Roman rule. By analogy with other areas of the Empire, it could be assumed that the *publicani* would have used contracted companies to collect taxes and not done directly.[97] This system expressed the 'practical' side of the Romans, who were mainly interested in securing, and

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poleis with dynastic and majestic names, often on the site of pre-existing settlements [Head B.V. (1911) pp.498].

[87] Also refer: Chapter 5 p.153.

[88] The information on the administrative transformation of the Mithridatic kingdom into a Roman province is highly dependent on chance citations in the sources (e.g. Dio 37.7a). Strabo provides some general comments on the Roman changes but they are vague, probably due to his family's past; they did not hesitate to abandon Mithridates VI despite occupying very important positions under his rule (Strabo 11.2.18, 12.3.33).

[89] Plut. *Moralia* 814D; Marshall A.J. (1966) pp.233-234; Mitchell S. (1993) pp.64-65.

[90] Nicomedia and Nicaea: Pliny *Ep.* 10.41, 67, 83; Jones C.P. (1978) p.86. Prusa: Pliny *Ep.* 10.17A-B, 51, 53, 58, 81; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 40.33. Sinope, Amisus and Amastris: Pliny *Ep.* 10.90, 92, 98, 110; Sherwin-White A.N. (1966) pp.532-533.

[91] Strabo 12.3.38, 12.8.9; *OGIS* 532; Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) p.35. cf. Xen. *Anab.* 6.6.4.

[92] Strabo 12.3.1, 12.5.2, 12.3.13-14; App. *Mith.* 114; Eutropius 6.14.1.

[93] Memnon 39-40 F 434 (Jacoby).

[94] App. *Mith.* 83.

[95] App. *Mith.* 83; Memnon 30.4 F 434 (Jacoby); Head B.V. (1911) p.497; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Cat. no. 1984.7, 63.1497 apud *PP* s.v. Amisus.

[96] Strabo 12.3.1.

[97] For an analysis on the issue and further bibliography, see: Badian E. (1972) pp.99-100.

safeguarding against the reduction of revenues. The success of the system[98] appears to have been partly based on the collection of the tribute by the communities themselves. The efficiency of the arrangements relied upon the local elite, whose sense of 'responsibility' emphasised their affiliation to the ruling power.[99] The intervention of the community, through the local elite, would have kept the notorious Roman tax gatherers away from the native inhabitants. It is also doubtful whether the *publicani* would have managed to efficiently gather the taxes from the myriad of local chiefs and tribal communities that re-emerged after the annihilation of the kingdom.[100] The material interests of many Roman citizens depended on the maintenance and expansion of revenues from the East, particularly those from Asia Minor. In 88 B.C., the Asian Vespers caused the loss of a considerable amount of private Roman capital invested in Asia; although Pontus did not indulge in the murderous conduct,[101] the Asian Vespers caused the collapse of credit in Rome.[102] Pompey wanted to be certain that nothing would ever threaten the Romans' access to the important resources and *orae Ponticae*.[103]

The little theocratic states of Mēn Pharnakou at Cabeira, of Ma at Pontic Commana and of Anaitis at Zela[104] presented an excellent financial deal for whoever controlled them. The large temple estates of Pontus were governed and taxed by the priests, while the status of their population, the nature of their administrative structure and their strong cult-character made them readily distinguishable from the *polis*-type that Rome promoted. A direct confrontation with the religious authorities would not have been a clever move. Consequently, Rome tried to neutralise any threat that the priestly organisations might have represented; it tried to abolish, or at least dissipate, the powers and privileges of the priests, but preserve the prestige of the cults. The temple estates had the potential to be successfully incorporated into the Roman administrative system and Rome tactfully recognised that. Pompey appears to have

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[98] In the second century A.D., the basic tenets of the constitutional system of Pompey were still serving as the basis of the *poleis*, despite considerable changes [Pliny *Ep.* 10.80, 10.115; Murphy J. (1993) pp.141-142].

[99] Cic. *Pro Flacco* 42-43.

[100] Jones A.H.M. (1940) pp.57-58, (1971) pp.158-60; Kallet-Marx R.M. (1995) p.329. For the numerous tribes – military 'allies' of Mithridates, see: Chapter 2 pp.65-67.

[101] For the Asian Vespers, see: Chapter 3 pp.95-99.

[102] Cic. *Pro leg. Man.* 7.

[103] Dio 37.20.2; Pliny *Ep.* 10.21, 86A. For the resources of the southern coast of the Black Sea, see: Chapter 1 pp.13-14.

[104] Strabo 11.8.4, 12.3.31-37.

transformed the state of Cabeira into Diospolis, one of his eleven Pontic *politeiai*.[105] Diospolis held its religious significance; in Imperial times and under the name of Neocaesareia, it became the metropolis of the *koinon Pontou*.[106] Pompey added considerable territory to Zela, settled its inhabitants within the city walls[107] and allowed them to have their own coins, *Ziliton* (plural) *Pontou*.[108] Under the Romans, the city of Pontic Comana appears to have held its traditional religious character. Under the name of Hierocaesareia,[109] its territory was expanded;[110] it was referred to as a noteworthy city, due to its large population and the fine temple dedicated to Ma.[111] In these theocratic states, the Romans transformed the temple-communities into Greek-style city-states and they assigned the priesthood to those, whom they could trust to favour their authority.[112] On the one hand, the Romans can be seen as those who abolished and dissipated the former royal institutions. On the other hand, it could be argued that the Romans based their 'new' organisation on already familiar Greek-Hellenised and Eastern systems, the *poleis*-type institutions and the theocratic states respectively.

The foundation of Roman colonies in Pontus further promoted these *poleis*-type institutions as an easily recognisable trait of the empire. Their establishment presupposed the ending of fighting and the beginnings of peace, security and prosperity. They were excellent propaganda for the *pax Romana* as well as very appropriate for the beneficial imperialism of Rome. Through the colonising policies, natives and newcomers came into close cultural contact. Since the Greek and eastern cities already occupied the most desirable positions,[113] the Roman settlers were superimposed upon an already existing city and population. The Roman *coloniae* in Pontus were hardly ever made up exclusively of Roman settlers, as they were in the West. Sinope[114] and, temporarily, Heracleia[115] accommodated Roman colonists who

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[105] Strabo 12.3.31.
[106] Head B.V. (1911) pp.496-497. For the Pontic *koinon*, see: Chapter 5 pp.164-165.
[107] Strabo 11.8.4.
[108] Head B.V. (1911) p.499. For the interpretations of the inscriptions on the coins, cf. Chapter 2 p.49.
[109] Head B.V. (1911) p.498.
[110] Strabo 12.3.34.
[111] Strabo 12.2.3.
[112] Strabo 12.3.34, 12.8.14 (Phrygia, temple-estate of Mēn Arcaeus).
[113] For some of the important cities in the area of Pontus, see: Chapter 1 pp.20-21.
[114] Strabo 12.3.11; Pliny *Ep.* 10.90-91; French D.H. (1984) pp.55, 58; Magie D. (1950) vol.1 pp.414-415. Sinope, as the base of *classis Pontica*, was expected to have a higher concentration of Roman residents than other cities. For *classis Pontica*, see: Chapter 5 pp.144-145.
[115] Strabo 12.3.6; Magie D. (1950) vol.1 p.415. Adiatorix slaughtered the Roman colonists of Heracleia a little before the battle of Actium; no evidence exists for a subsequent re-colonisation.

shared the city territory with the locals. The free and confederated city of Amisus[116] had also integrated Roman settlers into its constitution,[117] although it was never a colony. These city-communities accommodated two layers of population, the new Roman colonists – settlers and the natives of Pontus. It would appear that even if the colonies initially existed as separate organisations alongside the Greek-Hellenised communities, they soon evolved into dual communities[118] in which the Roman element became integrated into the local culture.

The dual communities of Pontus were the result of the intermingling of the Romans and the natives of Pontus. These two groups lived either in very close proximity to each other, or they shared the same city space, despite their different customs, manners and languages.[119] The Pontic culture does not appear to have been exclusively Greek, Roman, or Eastern. The existence of diglot groups of Greek and Latin speech, the Graeco-Roman characteristics of the Pontic cities and the eastern religious elements of the Pontic culture indicate that no single factor was able to eliminate its counterparts. By the time the Romans arrived in Pontus, the Greek component appears to have been the dominant social and cultural factor; yet it had already received distinct eastern influences in language, religion and administrative practices.[120] It appears that the imperial attitude, to adopt and adapt, and the accomplishments of the Greek-Eastern union, had enabled the Romans to become an integral part of the Pontic cultural identity.

The survival of the Greek language through the centuries[121] could be considered convincing enough proof of the dominant role of the Greek cultural element. Greek appears to have been the dominant language used in official documents addressed to a city. By analogy to other Roman provinces, it can be assumed that Greek was used for decrees of the city administration and the Senate, letters and edicts of the Emperors, honorary inscriptions to Roman magistrates, the Emperor or the Imperial family, as well as inscriptions erected by local officials;[122] it was the primary language of the coins of the Pontic cities, although the imperial

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[116] Pliny *Ep.* 10.92-93.
[117] *IGR* 4.314.
[118] *CIG* 4164; *CIL* 3.6976, 3.6978; Memnon 40.3 F 434 (Jacoby); Magie D. (1950) vol.1 p.415, vol.2 pp.1267-1268; Mitchell S. (1993) p.27.
[119] Strabo 12.3.6, 12.3.11.
[120] Chapter 1 pp.37-38 (language); Chapter 1 p.37 and Chapter 2 (administration practices); Chapter 4 pp.120ff (religion).
[121] For the language of Pontus, see: Chapter 1 pp.37-39.
[122] Kaimio J. (1979) pp.75-82, 109, 127-128.

influence was evident from Roman symbols.[123] Latin was used for milestones and inscriptions on public works, probably in order to underline the benevolence of the Roman magistrates and Rome towards the community.[124] The Roman *coloniae* of Pontus used Latin legends on their coinage,[125] while a small number of Latin inscriptions and epitaphs from Trapezus and Amaseia has survived.[126] It appears that the Romans had left their cultural mark by creating diglot speech groups which further supports the idea of dual communities in Pontus.[127]

Pontic recruits to the Roman army,[128] Roman merchants, members of the native upper class and Roman citizens of any class might be considered, more or less, diglot speech groups. The abundant natural resources of Pontus[129] would have attracted Roman businesspeople, some of whom chose to settle there.[130] Due to their profession, the tradesmen were expected to participate in the social life of the local community. Judging by what occurred in other areas of the Empire,[131] there would have been quite a large number of mixed marriages. Such interactions accustomed the natives to the Latin language and enabled the newcomers to adapt more effectively to their new environment. In addition, a moderate number of the leading members of the community, comprising intellectuals, the rich and powerful, and the people involved in provincial administration, would have been diglots.[132] The Pontic people of all classes who received Roman citizenship had to comply with rules which demanded the use of Latin.[133] In these cases, it is likely that the interaction of local people with 'proper' Romans would have influenced not only their language but also their manners, customs and mentality. The diglot speech groups of Italian and Pontic

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[123] Head B.V. (1911) pp.496-499.
[124] Kaimio J. (1979) pp.82-84.
[125] Head B.V. (1911) p.509 (Sinope).
[126] *CIL* 3.6746-6748 (Suppl.); Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 pp.34, 113-114, 146, 181, 226, 229, 243.
[127] A linguistic study of the diglot communities of Pontus is not attempted here. Based on the splendid study of Kaimio J. (1979), it is examined whether some of these conceptions might be in the area of Pontus.
[128] For the Pontic natives in the Roman army, see: Chapter 5 pp.143-145. For an analysis and bibliography of the languages of the Roman army, see: Kaimio J. (1979) pp.153-162.
[129] The importance of Pontus as a place of commerce may be illustrated by the saffron of Trapezus. It was displayed in the Paris Exhibition of 1855 and until that time, it was exported from Sinope [Robert L. (1963) p.182].
[130] *OGIS* 532; Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) p.35.
[131] Kaimio J. (1979) p.36.
[132] Philostr. *VA* 5.36.
[133] For example, wills and documents connected with the inheritance of Roman citizens were written in Latin [Kaimio J. (1979) pp.147-149].

origin would have made them "natural mediators as regards both physical and cultural contacts"[134] for bridging any gaps between the two communities.

Apart from the linguistic indications, the Graeco-Roman characteristics of the cities of Pontus also provide evidence for the dual Pontic communities.[135] The urbanising basis provided by Mithridates VI[136] and almost two centuries of Roman – 'Pontic' co-existence suggest that by the second century A.D., the Graeco-Roman traits were visible in the urban centres of the area. The cities incorporated fortifications and religious structures,[137] political meeting places (bouleuteria, basilicas) and large areas for public assembly. Gymnasia, stadiums,[138] theatres[139] and amphitheatres[140] were also necessary for cultural and educational activities. Civic amenities, like aqueducts, nymphaea and bath-houses,[141] were considered of equal importance. Naturally, neither the archaeological nor the literary evidence always supports these suppositions. Bryer and Winfield[142] argued that it would have been pointless to search for physical evidence of advanced urbanisation in Trapezus, because there is no literary evidence for a theatre, hippodrome or gymnasium. However, it is doubtful whether a *polis Hellenis*[143] would have lacked a gymnasium. The current evidence points to a rather optimistic evaluation. We know that a legacy for public buildings or quadrennial games at Heracleia and Tium was entrusted to Pliny[144] and that an exedra was built at private expense at Heracleia (167 A.D.).[145] Sinope, the principal residence of Mithridates VI,[146] had the means to finance a much needed sixteen-mile aqueduct[147] and it honoured a *pontarch* with an inscription at the amphitheatre.[148] Amastris seems to have had sufficient money to pay for the luxury

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[134] Kaimio J. (1979) p.40.
[135] Mitchell maintained that these characteristics were reflected in the five hundred cities of Asia Minor, despite the slightly exaggerated enumeration of Josephus [Mitchell S. (1993) p.80; Jos. *Bell. Jud.* 2.16.4].
[136] Chapter 5 pp.150-151.
[137] Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Cat. No. 1986.252 apud *PP* s.v. Amaseia; *SEG* 15.782-783, 30.1454.
[138] Pliny *Ep.* 10.39.4, 10.40.2; Strabo 12.3.11; Head B.V. (1911) p.516.
[139] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.39; Pliny *Ep.* 10.39.1-3, 10.40.1. In Chapter 4, it was established that Pontus was the birthplace of a number of playwrights and it had a theatrical tradition'; it seems logical to deduce the existence of theatres in Pontus from our knowledge of a theatrical tradition.
[140] Robert L. (1940) p.131.
[141] Pliny *Ep.* 10.37-39, 10.70; Niholson O., Nickolson C. (1993) pp.143-146.
[142] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) p.180.
[143] Strabo 12.3.17.
[144] Pliny *Ep.* 10.75.
[145] *IGR* 3.1428.
[146] Strabo 12.3.11.
[147] Pliny *Ep.* 10.90.
[148] *CIG* 4157; *IGR* 3.95.

of a pavement to cover the polluted stream which ran through the middle of its long and beautiful colonnaded street.[149] Additionally, despite the financial discrepancies in the buildings and city-constructions,[150] decorative monuments of every shape and size[151] appear to have beautified the cities and to have enhanced the prestige of the rich and powerful. Above all, they seem to have reflected the gradual, but certain, blending of the most powerful elements of the inhabitants of the cities, i.e. the Greek-Hellenised and the Roman communities.

The prosperity of cities, like Sinope, Heracleia, Amisus and Trapezus, and lack of contradictory evidence suggest that the inhabitants of the Pontic cities lived without intense racial rivalries, despite their different origins. Administrative and trading activities led to social and cultural interactions, which enriched the mixed (Greek-Persian-Eastern) culture of Pontus with the Roman element. As might be expected, no clear evidence attests to this 'Pontic'–Roman cultural amalgamation. However, a handful of indications derive from some ancient local cults, the modern Pontian custom of *s'a'tafia* and the Imperial Roman policies concerning provincial administration.

The Roman traditions of origin highlighted the importance of the progressive incorporation of outsiders,[152] a notion that the citizens of Trapezus tried to utilise,[153] while the Latin language and literature were not entirely unfamiliar to the inhabitants of mainland Greece.[154] It has been suggested that the various cults which united the Greek communities also linked the Greek with the Roman ritual and religious system; in this way, a comprehensive idiom for both was created.[155] Honouring the religions of the conquered people was a standard imperial practice. Coupled with the fact that the Romans usually preserved the Greek ways within a Roman framework, this meant that they would not have found anything alien in the Greek-Hellenised cults of

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[149] Pliny *Ep.* 10.98. For archaeological evidence: *SEG* 15.1449; Robert L. (1980) pp.151-163.
[150] Pliny *Ep.* 10.17a-b.
[151] Pliny *Ep.* 10.23.2; Strabo 12.3.11.
[152] Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 1.73; Strabo 5.3.5. According to the Roman tradition, Romulus and the early inhabitants of Rome spoke the Aeolic dialect (Dion. of Hal. *Rom. Ant.* 1.90.1). For relevant bibliography, see: Kaimio J. (1979) pp.41-42.
[153] It could be argued that when the Pontic Trapezuntines welcomed the Arcadian Trapezuntines, the former created, or hoped to establish, a visible link not only with mainland Greece but also with Rome through the Arcadian Evander (Chapter 1 p.15; Virgil *Aen.* 8.51-54, 8.185ff; Ovid *Fasti* 2.267-302; Livy 1.7; Paus. 8.43).
[154] Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 19.9.7; Pliny *Ep.* 7.4.9.
[155] Price S.R.F. (1986) p.77.

Pontus. By analogy to the rest of the ancient world,[156] the Romans seem to have found local traditions which they recognised as similar to their own, or even as models of their own.[157] In particular, *Romani* and *Pontici* used the same musical instruments, like the lyre and the barbitos;[158] they performed armed dances in honour of the gods and they had mummer-figures, who dressed up with animal skins, wore masks and mocked the powerful.[159] In addition, the Romans appear to have accepted the local deities of Pontus relatively easily. They already honoured Mithra and Cybele,[160] while the son/consort of the goddess, Attis/Mēn, came to acquire great significance within the Empire from the middle of the first century A.D. onwards.[161] The cults of Mithra, the Great Mother/Ma and Mēn were widely embraced in Pontus.[162] As a result, imperial coinage depicts local[163] and imported[164] divinities with eastern origins as well as Greek gods, along with the portrait of the emperor. For example, some of the imperial coins of Amaseia display Hermes as the *oikist* of the city; this in addition to the portrait of the Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.). Some imperial issues depict a large altar, possibly as a reminder of the imperial cult; others display an altar with an eagle above, which might have indicated an altar of Zeus Stratius.[165] Similarly, the imperial coins of Amisus depict Greek gods (Athena, Demeter, Dionysus and Poseidon) and a possible imperial altar. Local deities, the river-god Thermodon, Enyo, Anaitis and Mithra/Mēn, are also depicted on the imperial coins of Amisus, Comana, Zela and Trapezus respectively.[166] The incorporation of the Eastern deities into the Roman symbols appears to have indicated the importance of the gods in the multi-cultural Roman Empire. The affiliation of the gods seems to have reflected the cultural amalgamation of the inhabitants of the dual communities of the Pontic cities.

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[156] Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 1.33, 1.40, 2.18-20; Virgil *Aen.* 8.268-279.
[157] Romans and Greeks came into early contact, while ancient scholars tried to present the Greeks as ancestors of the Romans [Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 1.90.2, 7.70.1-3, 7.71.3, 7.72.2-4, 7.73.2; *ILLRP* 1271a; Beard M., North J., Price S. (1998) pp.20-22].
[158] Chapter 4 p.134 n.246; Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 7.72.5.
[159] Romans: Dion. of Halic. 2.70.1-5, 7.72.6-12; Suet. *Jul. Caes.* 49, 51. People of Pontus: Chapter 4 pp.129-138.
[160] Mithra: Plut. *Pomp.* 24.5. Magna Mater: Juv. 6.511-521; Dion. of Halic. *Rom. Ant.* 2.19.3-5; Pliny *Ep.* 10.49-50. See also: Strabo 12.3.36; Magie D. (1950) p.1073 n.13.
[161] For Attis/ Mēn see: Chapter 4 p.127.
[162] Chapter 4 pp.120-128.
[163] Mithra: Head B.V. (1911) p.499; Cumont (1965) p.18 fig.2. Anaitis: Magie D. (1950) pp.1072-1073 n.13, 14.
[164] Sarapis and Isis: Head B.V. (1911) pp.499, 506, 509; *CIG* 3.4157.
[165] Head B.V. (1911) p.496. For Zeus Stratius in the Mithridatic era, see: Chapter 4 p.119.
[166] Head B.V. (1911) p.497-499.

Another easily identifiable indication of the affiliation between the natives and the Romans of Pontus is the customs honouring deceased family members. Greek-Hellenised[167] and Roman[168] people commemorated their dead ancestors with annual festivals, which included libations, offerings, sacrifices and feasts. These ceremonies were domestic and public, they focused on family ancestors, but they also included communal feasting and prayers; Greek and Roman customs seem to have overlapped in this respect. Many provincial communities expressed their identity through the Greek-Hellenised traditions; yet, individuals and groups of all social classes sought to gain prestige by adopting the cultural practices of the ruling power.[169] Under these circumstances, it is likely that some people from Pontus with Greek-Hellenised culture would have adopted Roman practices as a means of distinguishing and elevating themselves within their social circle. The assumed but not verifiable amalgamation of Greek and Roman rites in memory of deceased family members appears to have laid the foundation of the modern Pontian custom, *s'a'tafia.*

*S'a'tafia* takes place after the Mass of the first Sunday following Easter, when the relatives take sweets, savoury 'nibbles', raki and wine to their family graves. While they wait for the priest to arrive and pray for their dead relatives, they eat and drink inviting the passers-by to join them; all this is done to the accompaniment of the *lyra*, the traditional Pontian musical instrument.[170] Today, many see this practice as a 'pure' surviving custom of the ancient Greek world. Since primeval times, similar ritual meals have functioned as a bond within a community. The upsetting event of the death of a group member was used as a reminder of these bonds; thus, the funeral meals and sacrifices at the graves assisted in re-establishing and strengthening these ties.[171] In ancient Greece, such funeral meals were part of the burial customs, but no clear evidence refers to annual feasts at burial grounds.[172] However, evidence indicates that the Romans had ceremonial meals and feasts at the grave, on the same day of the funeral (*silicernium*), the ninth day after the funeral (*cena novendialis*

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[167] Kurtz D., Boardman J. (1971).
[168] Parentalia or Feralia: Ovid *Fasti* 2.533-569; *CIL* 13.2465; Varro *De ling. lat.* 6.13. Lemuria: Ovid *Fasti* 5.419-493; Plautus *Capt.* 598, *Cas.* 592, *Am.* 777. Beard M., North J., Price S. (1998) vol.2 pp.31, 50, 289; Scullard H.H. (1981) pp.18, 74-76, 118-119; Toynbee J.M.C. (1971) pp.63-64.
[169] Price S. (1986) pp.90-91.
[170] The custom still survives in areas where Pontian refugees settled after 1922. At present, it is considered the culmination of the annual Pontian festival of Sourmena in Athens.
[171] Hdt. 5.8; Burkert W. (1983) p.50.
[172] Homer *Iliad* 23.29, 24.801-804, *Od.* 3.309; Plut. *Solon* 21.5; Hegesippos *Adelphoi* 11-16; Kurtz D., Boardman J. (1971) pp.146-148.

*aten*), the deceased's birthdays and when the annual festivals of the dead were celebrated.[173] The Romans also had the tradition of eating at the temples, due to custom or by habit.[174] In the fourth century A.D., Gregory of Nazianzus tried to discourage the Christians of Pontus and Cappadocia from eating and drinking in churches, at the tombs of the martyrs.[175] This early Christian custom appears to be a remnant of the Roman ways and as the progenitor of the modern Pontian ways. It could be argued that *s'a'tafia* signifies the inseparable link between the ancient and modern culture of Pontus, in which Christianity provides the binding tie. The remoteness of Pontus from the rest of the Mediterranean world seems to have allowed the inhabitants to continue practising their ancestral customs, even when the rest of the world had stopped. They were like the citizens of Borysthenis, who considered themselves Greeks because they had kept the Greek customs and traditional education, while the Greeks of mainland Greece had abandoned some of these practices.[176] It is safe to assume that the Greek-Hellenised inhabitants of Pontus would have practised the funeral meals following the ancient Greek customs; after the burial and the necessary sacrifices, a meal would have been offered at the house of the closest relative of the deceased.[177] The incorporation of the additional annual ritual in these ceremonies would have broadened the range of existing social behaviour. The modern Pontian custom might have originated from the adoption of the Roman ceremonial meals into the established native rituals of Pontus. The continuance of, and subsequent influences upon, the practice resulted in *s'a'tafia*. The inhabitants of Pontus were conservative enough to uphold their ancestral ways and sufficiently open to innovation to enrich them; as a result, the Roman element was incorporated into the local culture.

The mingling of the Roman ways with the native culture of Pontus was also indirectly supported by Roman provincial policies. During the Mithridatic era, the 'Pontic kings' strengthened their position by placing the inhabitants of their kingdom

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[173] *CIL* 3.703, 3.754, 13.5708; *ILS* 72137259, 8370-8372, 8375; Tac. *Ann.* 6.5; Petr. *Sat.* 65; Toynbee J.M.C. (1971) pp.50-51, 61-64.
[174] *ILS* 7213, 8374.
[175] Greg. of Nazianzus *AP* 8.166-169, 8.172, 8.175. See also: Brown P. (1971) p.63 plates 46 & 47 (the third century A.D. wall paintings from the Catacomb of SS. Pietro e Marcellino and the Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome). Cf. The Hittite religious practices incorporated ritual feasts in the temple before the altar of the god [Collins B.J. (1995) p.78].
[176] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.8, 36.16-17.
[177] Homer *Iliad* 23.29, 24.801-804, *Od.* 3.309.

under royal authority.[178] Rome replaced the royal unifying element with an imperial one and presented itself as the new magnanimous authority, which cultivated civilisation, imposed mores and justice, and brought peace, happiness and freedom.[179]

Roman rule appears to have demonstrated its impartiality with a series of laws, which prevented governors from abusing their power and punished the unjust.[180] Pliny seems to have been sent to Bithynia-Pontus for the express purpose of inquiring into the municipal affairs of the cities and, if possible, putting them upon a satisfactory footing.[181] Misgovernment and embezzlement scandals[182] shattered the efforts of Rome to appear as a benevolent power; they also perpetuated the hostility of the local population towards the Romans, which often resulted in bloodshed. However, at such times, no ruler seems to have had the power to present himself as the 'saviour of the people from the Roman oppression' as Mithridates VI had done.[183] The 'champions of the people against the Romans' tended to be Romans themselves. In particular, in Pontus, Anicetus had organised a revolt against Roman rule (around 6 A.D.).[184] The agitators turned against the Roman soldiers, who were, ironically, an auxiliary cohort of Pontic natives who had been granted Roman citizenship.[185] The revolt of Anicetus appears to have been against Roman rule; still, lack of a native royal 'liberator' had led the rebels to support another Roman, the Emperor Vitellius.[186] The objective of the revolt gave the impression of being an attempt at liberation from the Roman oppressors; it proved to be merely a conflict within the same 'oppressing' system of Rome.[187]

The bestowal of citizenship on non-Romans appears to have also assisted in the inclusion of individuals, communities and eventually, the whole Empire within the Roman 'family'.[188] Like a benevolent father, the Emperor and his representatives claimed to control the inhabitants of Pontus for their own good. They restrained ruinous financial policies, suggested projects of advantage to the cities, advised

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[178] This issue was examined in Chapter 2.
[179] App. *Mith.* 83; Memnon 30.4 F 434 (Jacoby); Pliny *Ep.* 10.40.2, 10.90-93, 10.98-99.
[180] Cic. *Balb.* 11, *De Officiis* 2.26-27, *Rep.* 3.35-38.
[181] Pliny *Ep.* 10.18, 10.32.
[182] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.34, 38.36, 43.11; Plut. *Luc.* 7.5-6; Pliny *Ep.* 10.17B, 10.38, 10.81.1; *Or. Sib.* 3.175-191.
[183] Chapter 3 pp.92-93.
[184] Tac. *Ann.* 2.47-49, *Hist.* 2.83, 3.47-48.
[185] Tac. *Ann.* 2.47-49, *Hist.* 2.83, 3.47-48.
[186] Tac. *Hist.* 3.47.
[187] By their (unsuccessful) revolt, the Gauls started the process which eventually led to the downfall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty [Suet. *Nero* 40; Mommsen T. (1906) pp.82, 128].

powerful individuals and even acted as mediators in the squabbles between Greek communities.[189] The reconciliation of the Roman values and ideas with the native traditions seems to have formed part of these imperial responsibilities. For example, Trajan appears to have considered the treaty of Amisus as a mere *beneficium*, but he respected the autonomy of the city.[190] The Roman administrators were instructed to preserve the provincial sacred places[191] and in most cases, to follow the local customs,[192] a case in point being money lending.[193] The tendency was to modify and adjust existing constitutions rather than imposing new ones on the communities of Pontus.[194] For example, according to the Nicaeans of neighbouring Bithynia, Augustus had granted to their city the privilege of claiming the property of any of the citizens who died without relatives.[195] Augustus might have granted this privilege as a sign of respect to this city and an acknowledgement of their independence, although he was able to take the franchise away at any given moment. However, this privilege does bear a striking resemblance to the *Mithridatic Law of Inheritance*.[196] Augustus might not have introduced but simply (re)confirmed the established Mithridatic law as a favour towards Nicaea. It is doubtful that the Nicaeans would have boasted of the Mithridatic origins of the privilege, especially since the wording of Trajan's letter seems to have implied that the municipality had a good case.[197] If the privilege was a reformation of the *Mithridatic Law*, it was also enacted in accordance with the imperial policy of modification and adjustment rather than innovation; it also provides an example of continuity in the civic life of the cities of Pontus-Bithynia. The Roman administrators of the province were reluctant to sanction any measures of general application as they preferred to examine each case individually.[198] Their influence was evident on the terms and conditions related to magistracies, like the entrance fee for the elected provincial senators and the senators who held citizenship in two cities

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[188] Pliny *Ep.* 10.5-7, 10.11ff. See also: Appendix 1 pp.189-190.
[189] Pliny *Ep.* 10.17a, b-18, 81; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38 (Nicomedea and Nicaea).
[190] Pliny *Ep.* 10.93; Head B.V. (1911) p.497. c.f. Strabo 4.1.5; *SIG* $2^3$.785.
[191] Pliny *Ep.* 10.49-50.
[192] Pliny *Ep.* 10.68-69, 10.113.
[193] Pliny *Ep.* 10.108-109.
[194] Pliny *Ep.* 10.20 (the use of public slaves as wardens, instead of soldiers), 10.79-80 (the minimum age of a person who is eligible to hold civil office).
[195] Pliny *Ep.* 10.84.
[196] The *Mithridatic Law of Inheritance* is examined in Chapter 1 p.37.
[197] Sherwin-White A.N. (1966) p.681.
[198] Pliny *Ep.* 10.68-69, 10.92-93.

of Bithynia-Pontus.[199] Furthermore, it has been suggested that the hierarchy of the cities was based on the Roman preconception that the rich and the educated were better suited to rule than the plebeians.[200] Even so, Rome frequently discovered that the locals were inclined to corrupt the Roman ways. An example of this notion is the Roman practice of inviting people on special public and private occasions and distributing presents to them; the locals of Pontus-Bithynia appear to have transformed these events into large and expensive meetings,[201] similar to the benefit societies of Amisus.[202] Overall, the dual communities and the imperial policies seem to have led the natives of Pontus to adopt Roman practices; yet they tended to use them in a rather 'Pontic' way.[203]

The aforementioned policies governed the relations between Rome and the urbanised inhabitants of Pontus. No evidence provides information on the numbers and living conditions of the non-Hellenised natives, or on their dealings with the Romans. Pontus had strong Eastern constituents,[204] especially when compared with Bithynia, which displayed early urbanised Graeco-Roman elements.[205] The people with Eastern origin and culture who lived in the cities were Hellenised; yet, it is likely that most of the rural Eastern population was not. Mithridates VI tried hard to appeal to them, which indicates that their numbers and influence were far from negligible. It is probable that the Roman urbanisation processes would have considerably reduced their numbers. The rural non-Hellenised people would not have perceived much difference between Greek, Mithridatic and Roman policies, it being difficult to distinguish the fine line between Greek-Hellenised and Roman culture. It could be argued that for them, the righteous, or self-righteous, Roman administrators or corrupt tax-gathers were much the same as Persian, Hellenistic and Mithridatic agents. This 'continuity' was assisted by the association of the emperors with native deities,

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[199] Pliny *Ep.* 10.112-115.
[200] Woolf G. (1994) pp.123-124; Garnsey P. (1970).
[201] Pliny *Ep.* 10.116-117.
[202] The 'benefit societies' of Amisus were lawful because the city had the privilege of administering its own laws. However, Trajan was adamant that no other city should be allowed such institutions (Pliny *Ep.* 112-113).
[203] This sentence might be seen from a different perspective, when knowing that in modern Greek humour, the 'Pontians' hold a similar position to the 'Irish' in English witticisms. See also: Chapter 5 p.168.
[204] Philostr. *VS* 2.1 (553). Cappadocia was a neighbour of Pontus and had firm Eastern elements, while the Cappadocians were famous for their bad Greek [ibid 2.13 (594)]. Their Hellenisation was difficult, partly due to neighbouring Galatia which adopted to the Greek language to some extent, but retained its Celtic characteristics.
[205] Pliny *Ep.* 10.47-48; *CIL* 3.335, 8.18084; Suet. *Jul. Caes.* 49.2.

something that Persian, Hellenistic and Mithridatic dynasts had also done. By associating themselves with local cultural and religious perceptions, the Emperors ceased to be the distant invaders and were placed within the local religious framework. Their association with the cults of Mithra, Mēn and the local female divinities seems to have assisted the amalgamation between Roman and local Pontic elements reducing the image of 'the invader' and enhancing the notion of the 'benevolent father – emperor'.[206] It seems that under Roman rule, the old notion of establishing continuity and stability through religious amalgamation took the form of the imperial cult and the *koina*.

From the first century A.D. onwards, the *koina* became state institutions and the imperial cult became a kind of 'state religion'. Despite their autonomy, the *koina* of Asia Minor[207] (*koinon Asias*, *Bithynias*, *Phrygias*, *Syrias* and others) were linked to Rome as well as with each other, via the common object of the cult of deified Rome and the emperors. Under these circumstances, the existence of a *koinon Pontou* in the area would probably have been necessary due to the remoteness of Pontus and its lack of urbanisation, by comparison with other areas of Asia Minor. Although the *koinon* was an institution with religious character, it also had a 'political' role; it appears to have been an attempt by Rome to unite the cities of Pontus, in order to control them better. Unlike other *koina*, no literary evidence attests the existence of the *koinon* or *Koina*[208] *Pontou*, while the poor epigraphic and numismatic evidence frequently mystifies researchers.[209] Two offices are linked with the institution: the title of *archiereus Pontou*, which was held at various times by two women and an epicurean philosopher,[210] and the position of *pontarch*.[211] An inscription from Sebastopolis[212] honours the *pontarch*, M. Antonius Rufus, and his wife, Antonia Stratonice; it also records the main features of the imperial cult in the area. It refers to a lifelong foundation taking care of the annual processions and public feasts. The involvement of Rufus in the opening of a gymnasium might also be explained by the fact that it was part of his duty to promote the imperial cult. Baths and gymnasiums usually

[206] For the coins of Pontus with locals divinities and, possibly imperial, altars, see: Chapter 5 p.172.
[207] For the *koina* of mainland Greece since archaic times, see: Beck C. (1979).
[208] It has been suggested that two Pontic *koina* existed; they were both based on, or linked to, Amastris [Chapot V. (1923) pp.100-107].
[209] Kalinka E. (1933) pp.73 n.21, 96 n.67; Bosch C. (1935) pp.77; cf. *RE* Suppl. 4 (1924) col.932.
[210] *IGR* 3.79, 3.86-87, 3.90; Luc. *Alex.* 25, 43; Kalinka E. (1933) p.73 n.21.
[211] *CIG* 4183; *IGR* 3.69, 3.87, 3.90, 3.95, 3.97, 3.115, 3.1427; *BCH* 33 (1909) p.410 n.410
[212] *IGR* 3.115; Anderson J.G.C. (1900) pp.153-156.

included a room devoted to imperial imagery.[213] The *koinon* also held athletic competitions at its headquarters in Neokaisareia.[214] Shows with wild beasts and gladiatorial games would have enhanced the popularity of the emperor since they had the approval of the people.[215] As in other Hellenistic cities,[216] the imperial priests in Pontus[217] came from the local elite and were among the most prominent figures in the city. Since many of the *pontarchs* had strong links with Rome and the emperor,[218] it was to the advantage of the cities to honour such influential persons. The decrees of Augustus for the establishment of the *koina* and the imperial cult in the province of Asia was addressed to the Greeks, *koina ton en Asia (Bithynia) Hellenon* (plural).[219] Their membership was restricted to those recognised as *Hellenes*, but it is possible that the Hellenised inhabitants of the areas also participated since they could have answered to the description of *Hellen* by virtue of their adopted culture.[220] In the case of Bithynia, and most probably Pontus, the institution bore the title *to koinon ton en Bithynia poleon* (plural).[221] Such a title inevitably requires a Greek identity since the *poleis* were a Greek institution,[222] but it also embraces the Hellenised inhabitants of the cities. 'Pontus' would have been designated a geographical area since the member cities of the *koinon* seem to have belonged to three administrative districts, the provinces of Bithynia, Galatia and Cappadocia, during the second and third centuries A.D.[223] For almost three centuries, the communal identity of the Pontic *koinon* seems to have been strong enough to override administrative barriers which had placed their member cities under different Roman governors. This appears to have indicated a sense of belonging to the same group, but evidence on the nature of this identity is lacking.[224]

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[213] Nielsen I. (1993) p.108 n.93. A Marcus Aurelius Demetrius appears as "high priest and overseer of the imperial baths" at Naples, in Italy [British Museum Papyrus 1.178 lines 8-83 apud Lewis & Reinhold (1966) pp.233-234].
[214] Moretti L. (1953) n.69; Bean G.E. (1956) p.198 n.63.
[215] Amaseia: *IGR* 3.1439; Robert L. (1940) pp.50, 129-130. Amisus: *IGR* 3.95-97; Robert L. (1940) pp.50, 130-131. Sinope: *CIG* 4157.
[216] *IGR* 3.582-583 (Sidyma), 4.1302 (Cyme); *SEG* 27.938 (Tlos).
[217] *CIG* 4149, 4152; *IGR* 3.88-90, 3.95; Anderson J.G.C. (1900) pp.154-155.
[218] Woolf G. (1994) pp.126-127.
[219] Deininger J. (1965) pp.36-64. Augustus urged the native bearers of Roman citizenship to worship Rome and deified Julius Caesar (Dio 51.20.6-7).
[220] Mitchell S. (2000b) p.124. For members of the Asian *koinon* who originated from the small cities of the interior, which implies their non-Greek origins, see: Campanile M.D. (1994).
[221] Campanile M.D. (1993).
[222] cf. Chapter 2 p.45.
[223] Deininger J. (1965) pp.64-66; Chapter 5 p.141.
[224] Mitchell S. (2000b) p.126.

It could be argued that by analogy to other areas of Asia Minor,[225] the dual communities attended the festivals jointly. The existence of a rich variety of events during the celebrations brought Rome and the emperor into the religious[226] and civic[227] life of the inhabitants of the Pontic cities. It can be assumed that the emperor became associated with local deities and that the imperial cult was incorporated into pre-existing local religious traditions, as seems to have happened on mainland Greece.[228] For the inhabitants of the urbanised centres of Pontus, the imperial cult and the *koinon* do not appear to have segregated Roman citizens from non-Roman citizens and locals; rather it united the citizen body of each city as well as the various cities themselves, and both with Rome. By placing the emperor within the framework of local cults, by adopting the imperial imagery and by incorporating it into their own traditional structures, the cities validated their membership of the extended Roman 'family'.[229] As might be expected, not everybody would have enjoyed the gladiatorial games and the animal fights, which were almost exclusively connected with the imperial cult.[230] However, any protests seem to have been on moral grounds; they did not originate from the association of the games with the Roman way of life.[231] By honouring the emperor through the glorified institution of the imperial cult, the cities of Pontus appear to have declared their membership of the Roman empire;[232] by attaching themselves and their inhabitants to the Roman framework, they seem to have claimed a share of the Roman religious, cultural and historical concepts.

By focusing religious and festive events around the emperor, Rome emphasised its image as the central, benevolent power, although the variety of forms of the imperial cult[233] reflect a religious and administrative liberality within localities. The imperial cult and the *koina* cannot be seen as the prime unifying factor of the

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[225] Price S.R.F. (1986) pp.101-132. cf. At the Paphlagonian city of Gangra, the locals as well as the Roman businessmen who dwelled among them took the oath of allegiance to Augustus [*OGIS* 532; Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) pp.34-35].

[226] For possible imperial shrines, temples and buildings in Pontus-Bithynia, see: Pliny *Ep.* 10.17a, 10.75-76; *CIL* 3.336; Dio 51.20.7, 72.12.2; *IGR* 3.4, 3.90; Price S.R.F. (1986) pp.225-227.

[227] Suet. *Aug.* 57, *Dom.* 10; Pliny *Ep.* 10.17A, *Pan.* 92.4; Price S.R.F. (1986) p.87ff.

[228] *SEG* 11.923 (Gytheum, near Sparta).

[229] On mainland Greece, cults relating to Roma became quite common, maybe because her iconography seems to have followed the model of Athena [*IG* $2^2$.5102, $2^2$.5145; Price S.R.F. (1986) pp.41-44].

[230] Robert L. (1940) pp.240, 267-275. For the gladiatorial games and their connection with the Imperial cult, see: Chapter 5 p.164.

[231] Price (1986) p.89. Dio congratulated Rhodes for not having any gladiatorial shows [Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.122-123; Robert L. (1940) p.248].

[232] Price S.R.F. (1986) p.58.

[233] Nicolaus of Damascus 125 F 90 (Jacoby); Philo *Legatio* 149-151; Arr. *Peripl. P.E.* 1 (possibly). The imperial cults were constantly being invented and revised [Price S.R.F. (1986) pp.61-62].

whole empire, since Rome did not promote a cultural fusion. However, it could be seen as the prime unifying factor of the cities of each province and of the province itself with the central authority. The *koinon Pontou* does not seem to have influenced the political life of the region and no evidence indicates that it assisted in the creation of a provincial 'Pontic' identity. Eventually, the division of Pontus into three distinct administrative areas weakened the influence of its *koinon*, which appears to have lasted less than similar institutions in the Roman world, probably no later than the third century A.D.[234] Its disintegration might have been due to the lack of strong and stable civic bases in the region. The area of Pontus was ruled for more than two centuries as a Hellenistic kingdom with powerful eastern influences, while urbanisation was not as extensive as in the rest of the Roman provinces in Asia Minor. Mithridates VI and the Romans encouraged and promoted *poleis* and *poleis*-type institutions, yet by the third century A.D., the links between the cities remained weak.

The Mediterranean world always had a vague notion of the regions of the Black Sea coasts; it perceived them as within-but-almost-outside the civilised world. Sometimes, they were included in the Greek world,[235] although Phasis was considered to be 'the farthermost voyage'.[236] Occasionally, they were excluded and the whole Black Sea region was called 'barbaric'.[237] At other times, the inhabitants of the Euxine shores were presented as the last upholders of the classical traditions, living precariously on the fringe of civilisation.[238] The Hellenic world was usually ambivalent in its treatment of them and frequently denigrated their Greekness. The cities of Pontus might have regarded themselves as Greek; yet the Greeks of Ionia and mainland Greece seem to have been particularly aware of the fact that the Pontic people spoke differently. Their use of archaic words and their heavy accent distinguished 'their language' from the common Greek tongue. It might also have indicated their distance from the Hellenic identity, since language functions as an

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[234] Kalinka E. (1933) p.96 n.67.

[235] According to Braund, it is not evident whether Euripides included or excluded the coasts of the Black Sea from the Greek (religious) world, in which Aphrodite received a cult. However, indications for the cults of Aphrodite in the Black Sea areas suggest that Euripides placed Pontus at the fringe of the Hellenic world. Braund D. (1997) pp.121-122; Eur. *Hippol.* 1-4; Chapter 1 p.13 n.30

[236] Strabo 11.2.16. See also: Aristoph. *Wasps* 700; Plato *Phaedo* 109b.

[237] Paus. 1.20.4-7.

[238] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.5, 36.16ff; Ovid *Ex Pont.* 4.10.21-30. It has been suggested that Ovid presented Tomis and Rome as having a double face; they are both barbarian and civilized. Although Tomis is usually the negative opposite of Rome, the subtext indicates that Rome is also the negative counterworld of Tomis [Grebe S. (2001)].

identity symbol as well as a means of communication and a sign of culture.[239] If the origin and the accent of Marcus of Byzantium almost branded him as an outsider,[240] one may assume a less positive attitude towards the more ordinary individuals from Sinope, Amisus and the other Pontic cities. They were a favourite butt of humour from the beginning of the third century B.C., on the grounds of their alleged stupidity, odd dialect and general lack of culture;[241] this tradition still survives in modern Greece.[242]

In the (modern) Pontian culture,[243] traces of Roman imperial influence are negligible due to the prominent position and glamour of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire and the later Empire of Trapezus. The inhabitants of ancient Pontus might have unconsciously practised a mixed culture, yet they seem to have kept their ancestral identity; a large proportion of the population would have continued to see themselves as Greeks – Hellenised Easterners or Romans. By analogy to mainland Greece, it can be assumed that Roman material culture would not have posed a major threat to the Greek identity and the Romans who were attracted to Hellenism would not have abandoned their ancestral moral and cultural criteria. In many respects, the inhabitants of Pontus did not conform to the familiar categories of 'Roman', 'Greek' and 'barbarian'; they did not live exactly according to the Greek, Roman or Eastern norms, but they were by n means divorced from the civilised world. Although they might have tried to overcome or to compensate for their differences, they had to struggle with the very image of the 'distant, strange and alien' Black Sea region, which had not changed since Homeric times.[244] The division of the *orbis terarrum* and the *oikoumene* into two cultural provinces would not have been a pragmatic option, while a complete and total fusion of identities was equally unlikely. The Greek/Hellenised and the Roman identities were powerful enough to make their amalgamation into a single cultural system impossible. In Pontus, the acquisition of Roman citizenship (212 A.D.)[245] and the practical advantages of Roman rule[246] seem

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[239] Swain S.C.R. (1996) p.411; Introduction p.7; Chapter 1 p.39.
[240] Philostratus *VS* 529.
[241] Athen. 13.580e-581a. Middle and, sometimes, New Comedy engaged the foreign figures who were increasingly prominent. Plays under the title *Man from Pontus*, are attributed to Epigenes (before 376 B.C.) (*FCG* 3.537ff), Antiphanes (after 385 B.C.) (*FCG* 3.3ff; *FAC* 2.162ff), Alexis (after 350 B.C.) (*FCG* 3.382ff) and Timocles (around 325 B.C.) (*FCG* 3.537ff) [Long T. (1986) p.115].
[242] Chapter 5 p.171 n.203.
[243] e.g. Conclusion pp.180-182,
[244] Introduction pp.4-5.
[245] Appendix 1 pp.189-190.

to have facilitated the spread of an urbanised civilisation. By the beginning of the fourth century A.D., Greek and Roman characteristics appear to have predominated in the cities of the area. Eastern elements continued to exist, but they seem to have faded by comparison to the Graeco-Roman constituents. It could be argued that it was the coming of Christianity which resulted in the redrawing of the cultural map in terms of new oppositions.[247] The blending of the various cultures of Pontus with the 'universal' message of the Christian religion seems to have changed the way the people identified themselves.

Overall, the influence of Christianity in Pontus seems to be demonstrated by three factors: the early arrival of the Christian message to the area,[248] the evidence of the letter of Pliny (110 A.D.)[249] and the major role that the region had during the medieval – Byzantine era. The emergence of Christianity as a universal religion brought immense changes to the Roman empire with adherence to the concept of 'one God, one Ruler'. The new religion was not confined to a particular social or cultural group and, at the same time, it offered a new way of living, thinking and perceiving the environment, life and death.

Christianity could be regarded as one of the major elements of the modern Pontian culture, rather than the ancient way of life. Between the first and third centuries A.D., the new religion expanded rapidly, but it still appears to have been one more eastern cult, a *superstition*.[250] Especially in eastern Pontus, the local cult of Mithra remained a major religious focus and traces of it were to be found in Trapezus until as late as 1438.[251] Eventually Christianity prevailed, possibly by making certain allowances. The Mithraic tombs can still be seen in the rock-cut chapel of St. Sabbas,[252] while the Christian festivals simply replaced the pagan celebrations.[253] In

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[246] e.g. peace and security, urbanisation and road systems which facilitated intercultural communications and trade.

[247] Old: 'Greeks vs. Persians' and 'Greeks vs. Romans'. New: 'Christians vs. Romans', 'Christians (Romans) vs. Hellenes', 'Christians (Romans) vs. Barbarians', 'Christians vs. Muslims' and others.

[248] Chapter 5 pp.170-172.

[249] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96; Chapter 5 pp.172-174.

[250] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.8-9.

[251] Chrysanthos (Bishop of Trapezus) (1933) pp.128-131; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.182. The reciprocal influences of Mithraism and Christianity and the ferocious attacks of the Christian fathers against the Persian cult did not produce drastic results [baptism: Tertulian *De praescr. Haeret.* 40, *De baptismo* 5. Holy dinner: Justin *Apology I* 66. Marriage: Tertulian *De Praescr. Haeret.* 40. *CE* s.v. Mithraism.

[252] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.231. In the Pontic folk tale of Orphanos, the *light* and the *Sun–King* have an important role in the 'revival' of the Princess. Lampsidis suggested that the folk tale was associated with the Orphic mysteries and that it represented a genuine survival of the story of

addition, the Christian Saints seem to have substituted for pagan gods and divinities as protectors of the various aspects of everyday life.[254] By the third century A.D., Christianity had not yet achieved the influence and stature which it acquired in the later centuries after Constantine the Great (324-337 A.D.).

Christianity would have been brought to Pontus via the Jewish communities of the area, for which only traces and indirect evidence exist at the present moment. Forced migration[255] or the hope of profit[256] might have drawn many Jews to the centres of Hellenistic culture and they established themselves on the Black Sea shores between the fourth and the first centuries B.C.[257] The Jewish communities lived under various political regimes and they seem to have been significant in number and commercially successful, thriving with the assistance of the government.[258] The Hebrew nation never took kindly to Hellenism,[259] although certain compromises were made, like the use of pagan oaths in cases of legal necessity.[260] The widespread trading activity of the Jews demanded the development of relationships with other cultural elements and a portion of them seems to have been influenced by the Greek mentality and way of life. For example, it has been claimed that the Crimean Jews spoke and read Greek, prayed in Greek in the synagogue and gave their children Greek names.[261] Even so, they retained their autonomy in their community life, possibly due to their traditions which prohibited intermarriage.[262] In most cases, Roman statesmanship did not succeed in affiliating their communities; the Jews refused to be assimilated within the *Orbis Romanus* which could only succeed with the willing co-operation of both sides, conquered peoples and Rome alike.[263]

The Jewish communities upheld the memory of their origins by emphasising their ties to the land of their fathers. The Diaspora Jews frequently (re)settled in

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Orpheus [Lampsidis Od. (1976-1977) p.90]. However, it might be plausible that the story was a distant remnant of the cult of Mithra due to the popularity of the god in Pontus.

[253] For further indications of religious continuity, see: Conclusion pp.184-185.

[254] Chapter 5 p.12 n.21.

[255] Jos. *Antiq. Jud.* 12.7, 12.147-153.

[256] Jos. *Antiq. Jud.* 12.9-10.

[257] *Acts* 2:9-10, 18:2; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 14.110-118; Keller W. (1971) p.36; Pinkus B. (1988) pp.2-3; Stern M. (1969) p.278. For Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Bithynia and Pontus, see: *I Mac.* 15:22; *CIJ* 2.798-799; *Acts* 2:9, 18:2; *CIJ* 2.802; Schürer E. (1986) pp.35-36. For Crimea, Panticapeum and Gorgippia, see: *IOSPE* 2.304-306, 2.52-53, 4.404-405; *CIG* 2114b; *IGR* 1.881; *CIJ* 1.683-b, 1.688, 1.690-a; Schürer E. (1986) pp.36-38.

[258] Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 14.10, 14.235, 16.6.171; Pinkus B. (1988) p.2.

[259] Cohn-Sherbok D. (1996) p.40.

[260] Schürer E. (1986) p.37.

[261] Pinkus B. (1988) p.2.

[262] *Deuter.* 7.3-4; *Nehem.* 13.25-27; Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.

Palestine,[264] they also offered contributions and votive donations to the Temple,[265] while pilgrimage to Jerusalem seems to have been a frequent event.[266] The Pontic people who were present at the speech of St. Peter at the Pentecost appear to have been pilgrims.[267] When they returned to Pontus, they would have brought with them the first accounts of the newly formed Jewish faction, as Christianity appears to have been at that time. Amisus might have been the first city on the Black Sea coast to receive the news. The returning pilgrims and, later, the evangelists would have followed the northbound road from the Cilician Gates to Cappadocia and Galatia to reach Amisus and the Black Sea.[268] It has been suggested that Christianity would not have reached Amisus before 65 A.D.[269] This date was based on the notion that Christianity came to Pontus after its establishment along the main Eastern highway to Ephesus and other Asian cities (about 55-57 A.D). However, a counter proposal suggests that many of the Jewish and Gentile people of Pontus may have been introduced to the new ideas through the synagogues and the commercial and social contacts with the aforementioned pilgrims. The coastal cities of the Black Sea abounded with Jewish settlements and the Pontic synagogues appear to have been the place where Jews and Gentiles first discussed the new belief.[270] The reports on the new Jewish faction, Christianity, might have been either enthusiastic or sceptical;[271] still, when the first evangelists arrived in the area, some Pontic circles would have been either ready or at least, curious to learn more about Christianity. By analogy to other regions, it may be assumed that evangelists and Christian teachers started from the synagogues[272] and the public places of the Greek/Hellenised cities[273] and, then,

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[263] Bell H.I. (1972) p.10; Sherwin-White A.N. (1973) p.259.
[264] Stern M. (1969) pp.266-267.
[265] Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 16.6.171; Cic. *Flac.* 28.66-67.
[266] Keller W. (1971) pp.32-33.
[267] In antiquity, a particular group was linked with a defined territory. The province of Galatia occasionally included Lycaonia, Pisidia, Isauria and Paphlagonia, parts of Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia and Armenia Minor. Under these circumstances, the *Epistle to the Galatians* of St. Paul was addressed not to the people with Celtic origins, but to the inhabitants of the administrative district of Galatia. Similarly, the term *Pontic* in the *Acts* and the *First Epistle* of Peter does not appear to have referred to a group with internally defined Pontic identity. The appellation *Pontic* seems to have indicated the people from Pontus, which never seems to have had clearly defined borders. 'Pontus', as 'the Roman province of Pontus' became an independent, politically defined territory only in the third century A.D. [Laurence R. (1998a) p.5.; *Acts* 2:9; Peter *Ep. I* 1.1].
[268] Selwyn E.G. (1964) pp.45-47.
[269] Ramsay W.M. (1944) p.225.
[270] Jews and Gentiles gathered at the synagogues of mainland Greece and Asia Minor (e.g. *Acts* 14:1, 16:14, 17:4-5, 17:12, 17:17, 18:4, 19:17).
[271] e.g. *Acts* 13:50, 14:2-6, 16:19-24, 17:1-4, 21:27-28.
[272] *Acts* 9:26-30 (Damascus), 13:14-16 (Antioch), 14:1 (Iconium).
[273] *Acts* 14:8-18.

continued their preaching to the rural populations.[274] Such activities would have also brought the news that the Gospel was universal and addressed Jews and Gentiles alike.[275]

The tradition of the Christian church connects St. Andrew and St. Paul with the preaching which took place in and around the area of Pontus.[276] Chrysanthos regarded St. Andrew as the first bishop of Trapezus.[277] In the 19th century, the people of Trapezus viewed the chapel of St. Andrew in the city as their oldest Christian shrine; the place where Apostle Andrew had initially preached the Gospel.[278] In reality, the extent and the place of the apostolic labours of St. Andrew is not entirely certain. He appears to have preached successively in Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia and Scythia; from there, he continued his work in Byzantium, Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly and Achaia, where he died as a martyr at Patrae.[279] Although these accounts placed St. Andrew in and around the Pontic area, it is also possible that any connection with Pontus is simply legend developed since the ninth century.[280] Indeed, there is strong case that says that St. Paul never taught or intended to preach in Bithynia-Pontus.[281] It could be argued that the legends of St. Paul and St. Andrew originated from the need of the people to elevate the importance of their city by connecting their area with a prominent figure from early Christianity. The evangelisation of the region was not necessarily the work of one of the major figures of the Bible. However, traditions like these, in combination with the aforementioned evidence, suggest an early date for the arrival of Christianity in Pontus.

Indications of the establishment of Christianity in the area emerge from the letter of Pliny to Trajan (110 A.D.) concerning the Christians of Pontus and the

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[274] In Phrygia and Galatia, inscriptions attest to the fact that Jews also lived in rural areas. For relevant bibliography, see: Mitchell S. (1993) vol.2 pp.35-36.

[275] Peter *Ep. I* 2:9-10, 4:3; *Acts* 15:1-35; Paul *Gal.* 2:2-10; Kelly J.N.D. (1969) pp.4, 40 It has been suggested that an additional, yet not very substantial, reason for the initial expansion of Christianity might have been its non-Romanness; in the Hellenised world of the East, individuals rather than groups or communities might have considered the new religion as a way of expressing their opposition to the Romans [Elsner J. (1997) p.197].

[276] Euaggelidis T. (1994) p.61; *ΕΠΕ* pp.66-67; *CE* s.v. Andrew St. (Apostle and Martyr).

[277] Chrysanthos (Bishop of Trapezus) (1933) pp.114, 789. Chrysanthos reported a marble representation of the Apostle, which seems to have been erected near Trapezus and the iconoclasts attempted to destroy (middle of the eighth century A.D.).

[278] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.218.

[279] Euseb. *E.H.* 3.1. He died as a martyr on 30th November 60 A.D. *CE* s.v. Andrew St. (Apostle and Martyr).

[280] Chrysanthos (Bishop of Trapezus) (1933) pp.112-113; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.218.

[281] Ramsay W.M. (1944) pp.82-84.

attitudes towards them.[282] The letter seems to have illustrated the general attitude of the Roman state during the early second century A.D.;[283] it also reports the nature of the Christian persecutions and the extent of the establishment of Christianity in Pontus. The so-called secret religious sects of Bacchus,[284] Jahve[285] and Christ[286] appear to have been prosecuted due to their alleged crimes, such as theft, immorality and murder; the Christians were also treated as scapegoats.[287] One of their faults seems to have been that their close-knit communities and the loyalty of true followers made them a potentially hostile 'state within a state'.[288] According to Pliny, the ethics of Christianity would seem to have made the members of the new cult, people with a high moral code.[289] He reported that the Christians altered their regular practices to avoid breaking the law which forbade political societies.[290] However, this did not stop him punishing them because "their stubbornness and unshakeable obstinacy ought not to go unpunished".[291] It was obvious to him that their conformity to the law was superficial; by defying a magistrate, they openly disobeyed the state and they had to be punished for that, like any other individual or group.[292] Overall, the Roman state did not interfere in the religious beliefs and practices of the people, unless the particular religion affected the loyalty and patriotism of its members towards Rome.[293] At the time, non-Christians appear to have perceived the Christians as inhabiting the Roman state but acquiring their unity from within their group and not from the benevolent power of Rome. They were seen as identifying themselves primarily as Christians and then as members of the Roman Empire, something which

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[282] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96. See also: Lucian *Alex.* 25; Euseb. *E.H.* 4.23.6.

[283] Persecutions varied considerably depending on the province, the governors and the local circumstances. Indeed, they were largely dependant on the number and prominence of Christians in a particular area. Until the first official imperial edicts against the Christians (middle of the third century A.D.), the responsibility for the restraint of the new cult was left to the discretion of the individual governors or magistrates. The letter of Pliny refers to a particular time and place, but it came to represent the settled, milder policy of Trajan in relation to the Christians throughout the empire [Beard M., North J., Price S. (1998) vol.1 p.237, vol.2 p.276; Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.1-2; Ramsay W.M. (1944) pp.221-222; Tertulian *Apol.* 2.6-10; Euseb. *E.H.* 3.33].

[284] Livy *Hist.* 39.8-14.

[285] Tac. *Hist.* 5.6, *Ann.* 2.85; Juv. *Sat.* 14.96-106; Suet. *Claud.* 25.4; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 18.81-84.

[286] Tac. *Ann.* 15.44; Suet. *Nero* 16, *Claud.* 25.4; Minucius Felix *Octavius* 8-9.

[287] Tac. *Ann.* 15.44.

[288] Peter *Ep. I* 2.17, 5.9; Euseb. *H.E.* 3.33, 4.15.3-5; Ramsay W.M. (1944) p.354.

[289] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.7.

[290] Pliny *Ep.* 10.34.

[291] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.3.

[292] Pliny *Ep.* 3.9.15. Allegedly, the Bishop of Sinope, Phocas, died as a martyr after a dramatic conflict with the governor of Pontus, Africanus, over the question of the divinity of the emperor [*Acta Sanctorum* July 3 629-645 apud Price S.R.F. (1986) p.125; Chapter 1 p.12 n.21].

[293] cf. Chapter 5 p.145.

was unacceptable to Rome. In addition, their persecutions originated from personal and local enmities, as they were rarely the first priority of a governor.[294] The activities of some Christians from Pontus appear to have disturbed or offended the interests of certain individuals or groups, who brought charges against them.[295] By the end of the first century A.D., Christianity was already of some standing in the urbanised regions, especially around Amisus and eastern Pontus.[296] Those addressed in the *First Epistle* of Peter give the impression of an expanded Christian community in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.[297] Pliny reported that the new cult had spread to towns, villages and rural areas,[298] and Alexander of Abounoteichus considered that Pontus was full of Christians (middle of the second century A.D.).[299] By analogy to other parts of the Roman Empire, it could be argued that the social composition of the Christians of Pontus was quite diverse and included people from all social classes, from slaves to important men and women.[300]

When the Christian religion claimed that its message was for all, it appears to have indicated something more important that the abolition of sexual and social criteria for its members; it seems to have included all the inhabitants of the Roman world, irrelevant of their origins and culture.[301] The Roman traditions of gradually incorporating everybody into the Roman framework and the reforms of Caracalla do not seem to have eliminated the antagonism between the Greek and the Roman elements of the Mediterranean world. For example, it has been suggested that the language purism of the Second Sophistic (first – third centuries A.D.) provided a reassurance to the Greek elite of its social and political standing.[302] However, the Second Sophistic never played the role that the Enlightenment played for the French (1789) and the Greek (1821) Revolution, since the privileges of the Greek elite depended on the Romans.[303] With minor exceptions, the Greek upper classes never

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[294] Justin *Apol. II* 2; Pliny *Ep.*10.96.5-6. The ruling of Trajan, that anonymous accusations were invalid, referred to the area of Pontus. However, Christians commonly used it as a defence argument from the middle of the second century A.D. At that time, the jurists appear to have generalised the imperial judgements for a particular province to the whole Empire [Tertulian *Apol.* 2.6-7; Beard M., North J., Price S. (1998) vol.2 pp.238-239].
[295] Pliny *Ep.*10.96.5-6.
[296] Ramsay W.M. (1944) p.224.
[297] Peter *Ep. I* 1:1; Kelly J.N.D. (1969) pp.41-42. See also: Euseb. *E.H.* 3.1.
[298] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.9.
[299] Lucian *Alex.* 25, 38.
[300] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.8-9; Eusebius *E.H.* 5.1.20; Tertullian *To Scapula* 5 (Carthage).
[301] ibid.
[302] Swain S.C.R. (1996) pp.409-411.
[303] Plut. *Praec. reip. ger.* 17.2-4; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 48.10.

rebelled against Roman authority. When they opposed Roman individuals,[304] they did so by using the Roman system for their own advancement. In addition, it has been suggested that although many Romans actively expressed their admiration for the Greek world, their philhellenism excluded contemporary Greece and Greeks.[305] They had clearly defined borders between the ideal Greek past and the contemporary, inferior present;[306] for this reason, Roman philhellenism seems to have tried to link the Greek past with the Roman present. Plutarch appears to have placed prominent Greek and Roman individuals in the same moral universe, although he explored the cultural differences between the two in the *Moralia*. Similarly, most Emperors expressed their interest in Hellenic intellect, religion, music or athletics,[307] although in doing so, they seem to have emphasised the different aspects of being Roman. For example, membership of the *Panhellenion* of Hadrian was restricted to cities with Greek descent and the activities of the organisation partly revolved around the imperial cult. Although the intentions of Hadrian for this institution have not been determined, the *Panhellenion* seems to have celebrated the perceptions of Hadrian on Hellenism.[308] It would appear significant that none of the Pontic cities were members of the institution.[309] Overall, culture, education, and ancestry continued to play a major role in the self-definition of groups and individuals in the Roman Empire. However, Christianity seems to have been willing to incorporate everybody within its body, as long as its members defined themselves by their (Christian) religious beliefs and ethical codes.

As centuries passed and various other groups established themselves in Pontus, it is natural to assume that the terms *Greek* (*Hellen*), *Roman* and *Christian* were re-examined many times. The local culture never ceased to evolve and develop, adopting and adapting the elements which crossed its path. The people who established themselves in Pontus shared the same geographical space, language,

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[304] Pliny *Ep.* 4.9, 5.20, 6.13.
[305] Plut. *Sulla* 13.4; Florus 1.40.10; Tac. *Ann.* 2.53; Swain S.C.R. (1996) p.39.
[306] Pliny *Ep.* 8.24; Tac. *Ann.* 2.53.55.
[307] Tiberius: Suet. *Tib.* 70; Bowersock G.W. (1979) pp.140-141. Nero: Suet. *Nero* 7, 12, 22; Tac. *Ann.* 12.58, 14.14, 15.33; *SIG*$^2$ 814; Warmington B.H. (1969) pp.108-122; Griffith G.T. (1984) pp.208-210; Alcock S.E. (1994) pp.103-104. Hadrian: Eutropius 8.7; Ioannis of Antioch *FHG* 4.113; Calandra E. (1996). Marcus Arelius: Oliver J.H. (1970).
[308] For the *Panhellenion*, see: Dio Cass. 69.16.1-3; Spawforth A.J., Walker S. (1985) pp.90-92, pp.79-82 in connection with Oliver J.H. (1970); Woolf G. (1994) p.134.
[309] By contrast, many cities in Asia Minor, Egypt, Cyrenaica and others presented themselves as having Greek founders from the historical or mythological eras, although these might not have been legitimate

dances, music and food, practising this yet unnamed culture; they also seem to have attained a similarly localised concept of the divine.[310] After the exchange of population of 1922,[311] the people who left Pontus, and called themselves Greeks, *Romioi* or Christians, came to define themselves as *Pontians*.[312] The people who remained in Pontus, and called themselves Turks or Muslims, were mostly unaware of the terms *Pontic/Pontian* and the links of their culture with classical antiquity; at least until recently.[313]

Like the Greek colonists before them, the Romans continued to regard Rome (Italy) as their homeland and they were proud of their origin, culture and citizenship. Like the relationship between the Greek colonists and the natives, the interactions of the Romans with the other inhabitants of Pontus was unavoidable and it largely depended on mutual interests. The Roman influence on the mixed culture of the area seems indisputable. The Roman State tried to create a unity among the urbanised centres of the region and between Pontus and the central authority of Rome. The endurance of this fragile unity through the centuries depended primarily on cultural characteristics; they appear to have survived until modern times, despite numerous terminological and meta-narrative alterations.[314] As a cultural identity, the ancient culture of Pontus had Graeco-Roman features and it rested upon the adoption and adaptation of Greek, Eastern-Hellenised and Roman elements.

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claims. For example, the Greek origins of Cibyra are regarded as highly suspicious; Strabo reported that their descendants were Lydian [*IGR* 3.500.1-2; Strabo 13.4.17; Swain S.C.R. (1996) pp.9-10].

[310] Conclusion pp.182-185.

[311] For a summary of the events around 1922, see: Introduction p.1.

[312] Bryer A.A.M. (1991) p.321, 327.

[313] Asan O. (1998) p.26. cf. Conclusion pp.181-182.

[314] For example, the new religion used the Greek language as its medium and the scholars tried to find points of contact between Hellenism and Christianity. However, as Christianity was established, the *Christians* came to define themselves by opposition to the *Hellenes*. In the Christianised Empire, the term *Hellen* was redefined by common convention; it denoted people who still worshipped the old gods and studied philosophy. Theodosius (379-395 A.D.) made Christianity the sole state religion after suppressing the rebellion of a *Hellen* usurper, the westerner Eugenius. Since the term *Hellen* was associated with outlawed religious ideas and disloyalty to the state, it fell into disuse. As a result, the Greek speaking population of the empire, including Pontus, came to define themselves as *Romaioi*, a safe refuge in changing times. In Medieval times, the (Eastern) Christian-Roman Empire seems to have defined itself through opposition to the external invaders of the Muslim faith. This interpretation appears to have led to a meta-narrative concept which identified a *Christian* as a *Greek* and a *Muslim* as a *Turk*. In modern times, the people of Pontus appear to have conformed to politics, rather than with their cultural traits and characteristics. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.21.4-5; Euseb. *E.H.* 5.28.13-14; Justin *Apol. I* 5, 20, 44, 46, 54-60, *Apol. II* 8, 10; Hippolytus *Refutation of all Heresies* 5.7-11; *CE* s.v. Justin St., martyr; Eunapius *Lives of Phil.* 49; Fox C.R. (29 March 1996).

# Conclusion

This thesis has examined the possible interactions of the inhabitants of Pontus up to the fourth century A.D. The people seem to have been conscious of their Greek, Anatolian, Persian or Roman origins, although their way of life appears to have been made up of mixed cultural elements. Due to this cultural integration, no element should be undervalued in any discussion of identity in the Pontic area. It has been indicated that the original nature of some of these factors can still be found in the modern Pontian culture, although sometimes they might not be clearly manifested.[1]

The Greek trading and colonising activities in the area and the intensive association between Greeks and non-Greeks seem to have laid the foundations for the extensive influence of the Hellenic element. The Greek colonists founded *poleis*-type institutions, which urbanised the natural environment.[2] These institutions provided the basis for the further civic organisation of the area by the Mithridatids and the Romans. The importance of the Greek civic activities is attested by the survival of cities like Sinope, Trapezus, Heracleia and others to the present day; albeit with Turkish appellations (*Sinop*, *Eregli* and *Trabzon*).[3] The prevalence of the Greek element in ancient Pontus is also indicated by the significance of the Greek language and education during the Mithridatic years, the special privileges and the careful handling of the Greek cities by the Persian Kings,[4] the Mithridatic rulers[5] and the Roman Emperors.[6] The survival of Greek linguistic elements in the Pontian language from antiquity to modern times indicates the impact of the Hellenic language in ancient Pontus.[7] Furthermore, many modern Pontian customs, like the armed dances and the *momogeria*, seem to reflect

[1] e.g. The annual celebration of *s'a'tafia* and the Persian origins of the word *kemenzes* for the traditional musical instrument of Pontus.
[2] e.g. Chapter 1 pp.14-18.
[3] Chapter 1 p.40.
[4] Chapter 1 p.31.
[5] Chapter 1 p.37.
[6] e.g. Chapter 5 p.162.
[7] Chapter 1 p.40.

similar ancient Greek practices.[8] The continuity of Greek cultural and civic elements in Pontus throughout the centuries proclaims the importance of Hellenism in the identity of the people who were, or still are, affiliated with Pontus.

Another notable feature of the culture of Pontus is the indigenous Anatolian and the Persian element. It is indicated by the eastern terminology of the Mithridatic era[9] and by its traces in the Pontian language.[10] The eastern gods and their religious centres played a dominant role in the history of Pontus, while eastern religious practices and perceptions appear to have been incorporated into the relevant Greek customs.[11] The political and financial stability of the Persian rule provided more opportunities for intercultural communication than ever before. The meeting of the Hellenic and Eastern manners and customs might be seen as a sign of the naissance of a distinctive local culture. Despite the civic, trading and cultural exchanges and influences, no evidence indicates the emergence of a 'Pontic identity'; the individual inhabitants of Pontus continued to define themselves, and be defined by others, through their ancestral Greek and Persian-Eastern origins.

The civic and military administrative patterns of the Persians provided the spinal cord of the relevant models of the Mithridatic Kingdom, the so-called 'Kingdom of Pontus'.[12] The Mithridatic dynasts had Persian origins, but they had married into the Hellenistic Royal Houses of Asia Minor.[13] In their internal and external propaganda, they seem to have used extensively the idea of mixed culture, which was practised by themselves and by the inhabitants of their realm.[14] At least in the major city-centres of Pontus, on the basis of a lack of evidence to the contrary, by the first century B.C., the Eastern elements of Pontus appear to have been Hellenised to the extent that the Romans were unable to distinguish them from the Greek ones.

Rome used the civic organisation of the Mithridatic Kingdom as a basis upon which to establish its control over the extended area of Pontus.[15] It promoted *poleis*-type

[8] Chapter 4 pp.129-133, 136-138.
[9] Chapter 1 p.34; Chapter 4 pp.120-121.
[10] Chapter 1 pp.38, 39.
[11] Chapter 4 pp.119ff.
[12] Chapter 2.
[13] Chapter 2 pp.50-61 (Persian origins); Chapter 4 pp.109-110 (political marriages).
[14] Chapter 2 pp.42-43; Chapter 3 pp.94, 103-104.
[15] Chapter 5 pp.140, 150-151.

institutions, trade and intercultural communication. Unlike the first Greek colonists of the area, the Romans who established themselves in Pontus do not seem to have found an 'alien' culture;[16] on the contrary, they were able to incorporate into it features of their religion and Imperial notions of loyalty.[17] This subtle cultural influence appears to have encouraged the inhabitants of Pontus to adopt Roman customs by integrating them into their current practices.[18]

Overall, it might be said that the cultural interactions between the Greek and the Eastern-Persian elements created the possibility for the formation of a collective Pontic identity. The policies of the so-called 'Pontic Kings' and then of the Roman Emperors up to the fourth century A.D. seem to have intensified the processes of cultural amalgamation. The culture which was practised in ancient Pontus changed frequently due to the reciprocal influences it received. The present study has brought into view some of the shared cultural forms, whose overall structure is part of what refer to today as '(modern) Pontian identity'. While these forms cannot be regarded as set of objective criteria for the general definition of the 'Pontic-Pontian identity',[19] they do provide an insight into the way the ancient people of Pontus identified themselves and the way others perceived them; they also provide a basis for an initial understanding of the modern Pontian culture, although its was constructed with additional Byzantine, Ottoman and modern cultural elements.[20]

Any Pontic-Pontian identity must be associated with the geographical area of the south and southeast shores of the Black Sea, but not necessarily with a 'political' territory. In archaic times, the established indigenous villages and Greek colonies/cities never created a 'Pontic State'; the area was acknowledged as 'Pontus' or as the 'country of the Colchians, Mariandynians, Paphlagonians, Amazons, Macrones, Leucosyrians ad others'. Under the Achaemenids, it existed neither as an individual satrapy nor as a kingdom, but seems to have been officially part of Cappadocia.[21] Under the Hellenistic kings, Pontus was part of the 'Kingdom of Seleucus'. Later, it became the Mithridatic

[16] For the way the Greek colonists perceived the area, see Introduction pp.4-6.
[17] Chapter 5 pp.157-158, 163-167.
[18] Chapter 5 pp.159-160.
[19] Introduction pp.7-8.
[20] For bibliography on these issues, see: Introduction p.3 n.12
[21] Chapter 1 p.33.

Kingdom, despite the writings of Roman and modern authors, who persist in the use of the appellation 'Kingdom of Pontus' and 'King of Pontus'.[22] Only from the third century A.D. onwards did the term 'Pontus' denote an area of political existence, when for the first time by itself it became the *Diocesis Pontica*. The region within the (stable) political boundaries of the province could finally be seen as the domain where the *Pontici* lived and originated from. The pre-existing cultural notions, in combination with the politically defined Pontic Province, might be seen as assisting in the (subsequent) creation of an internally defined identity, incorporating further cultural elements.

The term 'Pontic-Pontian' suggests strong links between the culture and the geographical area of Pontus.[23] When the Christians of Pontus were forced to migrate in 1922, they tried to preserve their internally defined identity by every possible means. One of the ways was the association of their former physical environment with the current one through the same assemblage of toponyms, like the modern Greek suburb of *Sourmena* or the names of streets such as *Rizountos*, *Trapezountos* and others. Even after nearly eighty years, most elderly Pontian Greeks refer to Pontus as *i patrida* indicating *their* home, birthplace, fatherland and homeland, as well as a powerful memory of their association with an historic territory.

Today, the modern term *Pontian* constitutes a collective name for the people who inhabit(ed) or originated from the area of Pontus. Initially the word *Pontic* defined products from the Black Sea. No evidence demonstrates its use as an internally defined term for the identity of inhabitants of the south and southeastern shores of the Black Sea. However, a small amount of rather weak evidence indicates that, at some point after the fourth century A.D., the term *Pontic* seems to have denoted (the culture of) the people who lived or originated from that area. It is known that towards the beginning of the 19$^{th}$ century, mainly after the official establishment of the Hellenic State in 1832,[24] notions of 'nationhood' through religion and language influenced the ways people perceived themselves. The Christians of Pontus define themselves not as *Pontics*, but according to their clan origins (*Douberites*, *Pythianos* and others), or as *Roman Orthodox subjects of*

[22] Chapter 2 p.49.

[23] In modern Greece, the term 'Pontian' is used by: the people from Pontus who came to Greece after the exchange of population of 1922 and their descendants, those who were 'repatriated' in the 1980s from the ex-USSR and an increasing number of Turkish nationals who originate from the area.

*the Sultan*, or as *Greeks*. It was after 1922 and their arrival in Greece that they became *Pontians*[25] again, in much the same way as the *Peloponnesians*, the *Thessalians*, the *Cretans* and others. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish a similar analogy with the way the Muslims of Pontus defined themselves during the same period due to lack of relevant information. In the Ottoman Empire, as in all empires, military loyalty and civic obedience were required from the subjects, rather than cultural, linguistic or religious conformity. As such, religion did not seem to have been placed at the heart of the internally defined identity of a person; individuals from Pontus continued to support their homeland through local patronage, in spite of whether they were Muslims or Roman Catholics.[26] After the exchange of population of 1922, the inhabitants of Pontus regarded themselves as Turks which was synonymous with Muslim, and were largely unaware of the terms 'Pontus', 'Pontic' and 'Pontian'.[27] However, in recent years, the publication of Turkish books on matters related to Pontus appears to imply that the communal name (Pontic/Pontian) might be revived as a cultural indicator and used along with the official national identity of the individuals living there.

One of the major elements which promotes the regeneration of the common name appears to be the Pontian dialect-language. The Turks from Pontus, who are today in their thirties and forties, regard themselves as the last group of people to have learned *Pontiaka* as a mother-tongue. They use it in combination with the Turkish language; the *Pontiaka* being the language of the family and the village, Turkish being used at schools and work places. This bilingualism seems to have created a confusion over their internally defined identity. Although they consider themselves to be Turks, they feel left out by statements like, "The Turkish language is the only acceptable criterion for the definition of the Turkish people, since a Turk is the one who speaks Turkish".[28] Nevertheless, as more and more (Pontian) Turks try to find answers concerning their heritage, an increasing number of Turkish students and scholars study the history of the

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[24] *Dictionary of TCH* s.v. Greeks.
[25] Bryer A.A.M. (1991) p.327.
[26] ibid. pp.320-321, 324-325.
[27] Asan O. (1998) p.26.
[28] Bozkurt Güvenç, Türk Kimliği (The Pontic Identity) p.74 apud Asan O. (1998) p.37.

area, its culture and language. Eventually, they will make what they discover known to the wider public.[29]

Language, along with dances and musical forms, emerges as one of the symbols of the distinctive mixed culture which defines the Pontian customs. The Pontians who live throughout the world, including Greece and Turkey, consider the Pontian dialect-language, dances and music as the primary external symbols of their identity. These cultural determinants are deeply rooted and profoundly associated with the area. In antiquity, the Pontic culture was not developed overnight with the establishment of the 'Province of Pontus'. It began with the interactions between the Greek colonists and the indigenous population, who had already been influenced by the cultures of Çatal Hüyük and the Hittites.[30] As these cultural elements became more comfortably integrated, they gradually incorporated new factors. Each of the 'newcomers' left their cultural influence on the already established local culture. In Pontus, newcomers were constantly being transformed into 'natives', as other groups of previously unfamiliar culture established themselves in the area. Up to the third century A.D., Greeks, Persians and Romans could be regarded initially as immigrants and, after a few generations, as natives. With each new arrival, the 'natives' adapted and adopted the 'new' cultural elements. Languages, (armed) dances, civic institutions, military policies, rituals and theatrical practices intermingled, creating in the process a series of 'Pontic cultures'. The continuance of this cultural amalgamation with Byzantine, Arab, Central Asian and European elements resulted in the Pontian culture, at least, the one which was practised in Pontus until 1922. Its complex construction and nature reflected the mixed origins of the people who were externally, and in later centuries, internally, defined as Pontics or Pontians.

This gradual cultural integration of the willing[31] inhabitants of Pontus is further reflected in the religious perceptions. Throughout the centuries, a localised concept of the divine has generally been indicative of an analogous religious identity. The Greek and Roman mythological tradition was linked, directly or indirectly, with various areas of Pontus, like the Cape of Jason, the land of the Amazons and the land of the Trojan allies. The religious freedom of antiquity, the Hellenistic syncretism and the acknowledged

[29] For recent Turkish bibliography on the subject, see: Bryer A.A.M. (1991) pp.332-334.
[30] Chapter 1 p.23 n.132.
[31] Chapter 5 p.170 n.262.

eastern origins of a number of ancient divinities appear to have allowed the Mediterranean deities to assimilate the eastern ones, as was the case with Ma-Rhea-Kybele-Selene-Artemis-Athena-Bellona-Minerva. Similar identifications seem to have facilitated the interest of the 'strangers' in the local customs, adopting already established rites and adapting them to the extent that they could be accommodated within their own cults. The participation of the 'newcomers' in the local customary ceremonies contributed to their acceptance by the 'old' community. Since recognisable human behaviour was reflected in the gestures of the rituals,[32] their practice would have promoted unity and trust. Ritual has been perceived as a demonstrative form of communication, where people act collectively as though all were being guided by an invisible divine being.[33] The individuals and the sub-groups who participated in the rites might have given different names to this being; still, it represented the communal concept of the divine, which demanded a ritual and its precise performance by the people of Pontus. When the Christian religious leadership introduced festivals of Christian martyrs to the people of Pontus, as an alternative focus for the converts who had been accustomed to non-Christian celebrations, it seems to have utilised this communal concept of the divine.[34] As a result, St. Phocas seems to have taken over the responsibilities of Poseidon[35] and St. Mammas (Mamas or Mamos) manifests linguistic and iconographic similarities with Ma and Mên.[36] Furthermore, the Armenian church of the local martyr St. Mamas, on the east side of Mount Mithrion, might have replaced an eastern pagan cult, especially when it is taken into consideration that the Armenians of Trapezus originated from Persia.[37] The appellation of the worshipped divine being might have changed; yet, the continuity of the rituals created an additional cohesive element further unifying the members of the community. A union based on religious concepts serves as yet another testimony to the existence of a shared cultural identity.

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[32] During any religious ritual, one might expect one or all of these acts: kneeling, prostration, folding or raising of hands, singing, crying and wailing

[33] Burkert W. (1982) p.76.

[34] Fox C.R. (1986) pp.537-538.

[35] Chapter 1 p.2 n.21.

[36] St Mamas, Ma and Mên are closely associated with lions and shepherds.

[37] http://www.naxosnet.com/churches/agios-mamas.html; http://www.tmcwashdc.org/j002.html; *OMA* s.v. Mamas; Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1933) vol.1 p.229;

The fact that the places of worship remained the same would also have assisted the perpetuation of rituals and ceremonies, which enhanced the aforementioned feeling of belonging to the same community. The geographical locations where people worship the divine are often of paramount significance in the minds of the devout. It appears that people perceive divine power as being more effective, more able to hear and help in certain locations than in others.[38] This inseparable unity between place and the concept of the divine demonstrates the human need for religious continuity above modern concepts of 'race' and 'ethnicity'. In Pontus, sites of religious worship remained constant, despite the arrival of new immigrants, the civic changes and the frequent alterations of rituals and divine appellations.

The importance of the place of worship persisted even after the Christianisation of the people. As happened with the Imperial Cult,[39] it is likely that the Christian Church was influenced by the perceptions of the ex-pagan members of its congregation. At the conscious level, a distinction may have been drawn between the pagan idols and the Christian saints who have replaced them in the hearts and eyes of the people.[40] However, at a deeper level, a sense of continuity would have expressed itself through venerating the (now Christian) divine in the same place as its pagan counterpart. For example, on mainland Greece, in Eleusis, a cult of a female deity (Earth, Demeter, Virgin Mary) had been maintained from prehistoric times up to the year 1801, when it was destroyed by modern archaeologists who removed the focus of the cult, the ancient statue.[41] In Pontus, the transformation into churches and rock-cut chapels of many ancient temples and places of worship, like the shrine of Comana,[42] created a living link between past and present (until 1922). Similarly, stories and legends that connected important members of the Christian community, like St. Eugenius[43] and St. Basil,[44] with particular areas of Pontus

[38] Ramsay W.M. (1944) pp.465-467.
[39] Chapter 5 p.158.
[40] The worship and visual importance of the Christian images appear to have originated from the image-worship, pilgrimage and sacred art of the polytheistic Roman east. The Christian icons appear to have visualised the holy and, thus, their worship became a characteristic manifestation of medieval spirituality [Belting H., Likeness and Presence: A History of Image before the Era of Art, Chicago, 1994 apud Elsner J. (1997) pp.178-180].
[41] Thomson G. (1971) pp.19-20.
[42] Procop. *Wars* 1.17.18.
[43] Chapter 4 p.122.
[44] A number of *Letters* of St. Basil are related to the areas around Pontus, e.g. *Ep.* 24-25, 28-29 etc. Hamilton W.J. (1842) vol.1 p.343.

christianised the pagan landscape. In the early fifth century A.D., one of the stories connected with the 'girdle' of the Virgin, which was placed in a special church in Constantinople, linked it with a relic which the Emperor Justinian had brought from Zela. It appears that, in the old temple-city of Anahita-Artemis, the cult of the two rival virgins had overlapped. It is possible that the particular tradition referred to some relic of Artemis in Zela, which Justinian had found and added to the new shrine of the Virgin in his capital.[45] In 1985, Muslims still used the "Dragon's Fountain" as a place of supplication for the sick; the fountain was situated in a cave with a rock-cut apse near a nineteenth century church at Mount Mithrion.[46] It has also been reported that certain sacred places for the Christian Pontians, like the Monastery of Soumela, continue to be revered by the inhabitants of Pontus today. In Pontus, from antiquity to modern times, culture has managed to incorporate successive invaders and immigrants. The adaptability of the religious element to the needs and fears of the people assisted in the gradual blending of the newcomers with the established community and the creation of the Pontic culture, which was unnamed in antiquity.

A major factor in the construction of cultural identity, as opposed to social status, is its historical dimension. The individual defines himself through his community, which defines itself through its history and culture. Throughout the world, mythological traditions and historical records proclaim the continuance of the identity of a community as a means of legitimising its claims over land, natural resources and special privileges. As such, two definitive factors for the construction of an internally defined identity seem to be the creation and acceptance of a common myth of descent and a shared history. These factors appear to have been widely acknowledged in ancient Pontus, although a Pontic identity was never consciously defined.

The details of the Greek mythological tradition on matters concerning the Black Sea and Pontus[47] suggest that the history of the area was not separated from the history of the Greeks. As was reflected in art and literature, the region was an integral part of

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[45] Ebersolt J. (1921) p.54. No evidence exists from antiquity of an overt cult of a Virgin-Mother. However, "when this idea (of a Virgin-Mother) was propagated as a theological dogma by Christianity it might not have appeared wholly alien to the various stocks of Asia Minor who had been nursed in the older religion" [Farnell L.R. (vol.3-4 1907) p.306].

[46] Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. (1985) vol.1 p.207.

[47] e.g. Chapter 1 p.10 n.5.

Greek history, despite its physical, social and cultural marginality. A characteristic example of this is the Amazons, who dwelled in Pontus. Their geographical location,[48] their customs and life-style made them alien and dangerous.[49] However, they held an important place in the mythological-historical tradition of Greece and they were frequently represented with the attributes of Greek warriors.[50] Indeed, the city of Sinope might have been named after an Amazon, which attests to the connection of the region with the Greek myths of descent.[51] Under these circumstances, it appears even more plausible that the coins struck in Amisus under the rule of Eupator depicted the Amazon Lycastia.[52] Mithridates VI, who presented himself as an Easterner and a Greek, appears to have perceived his kingdom as an undivided political unit. From the Eastern point of view, the Mithridatic world was indivisible, if only because the King was the absolute monarch of a realm which had 'always belonged to his family'.[53] From the Greek-Hellenised point of view, Pontus was also indivisible because Greek history, literature and art had made the geographical area of the Mithridatic kingdom an integral part of the history of Greece. The mixed Graeco-Persian(Eastern) image and policies of Eupator[54] might be seen a demonstration of the shared history of the people of his kingdom. The Greek-Hellenised-Persian-Eastern descent, education, religion, manners and interests of the King appear as factors which would have encouraged similar notions of common descent and history in his subjects. The philo-Roman policy followed by the later Mithridatids might also be seen as an attempt to include the Roman element in the Mithridatic indivisible world.[55] From a Roman viewpoint, this world was also indivisible. In fact, Pontus could not have been divided from the Roman world, as Rome had included it in its official administrative, military and cultural life. In addition, the

[48] Aesch. *Prom. Bound* 415-416; Hdt. 4.110; Lysias *Fun. Oration* 4; Plut. *Thes.* 26. Even the word *Amazones*, as the women who came from a foreign, barbarian land, might have been derived from the *Amadounes*, which seems to have been related to the Persian *amadon* (to come). For other possible definitions, see: Nikolaidis S.A. (1964) pp.250-256.
[49] Isoc. *Panath.* 193, *Paneg.* 68; Plut. *Thes.* 26.
[50] Plut. *Thes.* 26-28.
[51] Andron from Tios 802 F 3 (Jacoby)
[52] Head B.V. (1911) p.497.
[53] Chapter 2 pp.50-51.
[54] Chapter 3. cf. Chapter 2 pp.44, 50; Chapter 4 pp.160-161. For the Greek and Eastern elements at the civic and military administration of the Mithridatic kingdom, see: Chapter 2.
[55] However, through the Wars, Rome became the 'opposite' against which the world of Mithridates identified itself.

Roman mythological tradition allowed for the creation of links with myths from extended cultures,[56] which appears to have assured the gradual incorporation of Pontus into the general history of Rome and its imperialism

Today, things are far more complicated. Although all the people with Pontic/Pontian culture indicate their identity through the ancient history and the culture of Pontus, a tendency for exclusion seems to exist. On the one hand, many of the (Pontian) Greeks question the right of the (Pontian) Turks to call themselves 'Pontians'. They consider that the Muslim religion and the late (11$^{th}$ century A.D.) arrival in the area of the Turks invalidate their claim to the term. On the other hand, many (Pontian) Turks legitimate their claims by saying that some of the ancient indigenous Anatolian tribes might have been of Turkish origin.[57] However, the evidence for this notion seems to be, at best, ambiguous. In addition, when the (Pontian) Greeks proclaim their 'pure' Pontic/Pontian nature, the (Pontian) Turks counter with the fact that they still inhabit the area, living, rather than remembering, the Pontic/Pontian culture. Apparently, with the passage of time, it has been forgotten that the Pontian culture owes its individuality to its acknowledged mixed nature and to processes of assimilation and differentiation which have operated since antiquity.

Although genetics might be invoked in an attempt to define an identity, this is a thesis in 'Classical Studies', not in 'Biology' or 'Sociobiology'. Besides, the concept of race based on blood purity strongly brings to mind 19$^{th}$ century notions which prevailed during the heyday of racist-scientific thought.[58] Considering that identity is constructed socially rather than biologically, it seems unlikely that any Pontic/Pontian identity refers to physical characteristics. It is doubtful, in any case, whether a 'true' or 'pure' Pontian can be defined. The concept of 'pure Pontian blood' is not really compatible with the mixed culture of Pontus. However, as science rapidly advances, it might be possible for someone to trace their genealogy to the genetic characteristics of particular peoples.[59] Still, the biological fact that a particular individual might be of Central Asian or European descent would not seem to eliminate their Pontic/Pontian cultural identity. The

[56] Cf. Chapter 5 p.157.
[57] Sabahattin E., Mavi ve Kara (Blue and Black) p.9 apud Asan O. (1988) p.44.
[58] For relevant bibliography, see: Roosens E.E. (1989) p.41.

results of biological research do not determine the nature of relationships between people. These results become important only when they accompany claims of legitimacy through descent, made with the view to acquiring social status, civic rights or territory. As it stands, the relationships between people of the same culture, but of different blood status, is controlled by those who have the authority to use the biological results in relation to the social order s they perceive it.[60]

The present study examined the interactions of the successive inhabitants and the cultural, linguistic and religious elements that existed and came to co-exist in Pontus, from around the eighth century B.C. until about the third century A.D. It has been observed that cultural and historical continuity gives legitimacy to notions of identity. Consequently, it remains to be seen how modern generations will use the knowledge and understanding of the ancient mixed culture of Pontus, either for its further development or for the confinement of its essence to a handful of its constituent elements.

[59] Around September – October 2000, the local radio stations of Kent asked for voluntary blood samples in order to be able to examine the extent of the influence of the Vikings in England.
[60] Roosens E.E. (1989) p.42-43.

# Appendix 1

## The Roman Citizenship

In the first and second centuries A.D., the eagerness of individuals and communities to obtain Roman citizenship and municipal status[1] imply that Roman citizens have had some practical advantages over the non-citizens. The petitioners were not moved simply by an empty, snobbish desire to be 'Roman'.[2] Roman citizens had more chances in securing a milder penalty than allies for the same offence.[3] For example, a recognised practice throughout the Empire was for governors to execute non-Roman citizens who admitted that they were Christians.[4] The Christians who were Roman citizens enjoyed the protection of Roman law, at least temporarily,[5] and had to be sent to Rome when they made appeal to the emperor.[6] However, a similar differentiating treatment seems to have been applied for free-born and freedmen.[7]

In Roman society, legal and political capacity appear to have depended not only upon the individual as defined or recognised by the civil law (free, slave, citizen or alien) but also upon his background or status. In theory, the citizens could seek the aid of a tribune or exercise the right of appeal against magistrates.[8] In practice, assistance was provided according to the social position of the accused.[9] The people in a governor's court could be proven dangerous for the governor himself. As a consequence, it appears that possession of Roman citizenship may not have necessarily hold the key for admission into the ranks of the privileged. For instance, not all *decurions* were citizens, but *decurions* were a privileged group before the law.[10] Gradations within the body of citizens made political, judicial or economic

[1] Tac. *Hist.* 1.8, 1.78, 3.55.
[2] Pliny *Pan.* 37.4-5; Aristides *To Rome* 63.
[3] *Acts* 16:21-22, 22:24-29; Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.4.
[4] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.3.
[5] Euseb. *E.H.* 5.1.47.
[6] Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.4; *Acts* 28.14-31.
[7] Tac. *Hist.* 1.46; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 18.65ff.
[8] Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 10.3.12; *Acts* 16:37-40, 22:24.
[9] Caesar *B.G.* 39; Garnsey P. (1966) pp.175-177
[10] Dio 49.22.6, 50.13.7; Tac. *Ann.* 6.40.2; Garnsey P. (1970) pp.265-266.

equality impossible. Members of the lowers classes did not count for much in comparison with men of rank, whether or not these were citizens.[11]

Since the second century A.D., the differentiation between citizens and non-citizens was based on a theoretical rather than a factual distinction.[12] Frequently, the learned men perceived the distinction as titular, since Romans and non-Romans enjoyed the advantages of the Empire alike.[13] It appears that the reforms of Caracalla confirming the Roman citizenship to all members of the empire,[14] in 212 A.D., had produced almost no reaction,[15] being the completion of a long process.

The edict of Caracalla did not introduce any material alterations in the social conditions of the Roman world, but it presented the Roman status as irrelevant of origins, culture or loyalty to the state.[16] It might be suggested that at the provinces at the borders of the empire, the edict would have further promoted the links of the people with the imperial power. The fear of the barbarians and the continuous internal strife among the cities would have made the people turn to Rome for strength and security. As a result, the sense of 'being a Roman', of belonging to the great Roman empire, would have acquired greater significance. However, it might be suggested that the vastness of the empire had the potential to create a feeling of isolation for the individual. If that was the case, it appears that people might have turned to their provincial identities which were expressed through a geographical basis and a localised culture.

[11] Garnsey P. (1970) pp.170-171, 262-271.
[12] Aelius Aristides *To Rome* 60-63, 74-76.
[13] Aelius Aristides *To Rome* 28-30, 65-66.
[14] Lewis N., Reinhold M. (1966) pp.427-428.
[15] Dio 78.9.5.
[16] Tac. *Ann.* 3.40.

# Appendix 2

## Table of the Mithridatic Dynasty[17]

| | |
|---|---|
| 336/7 – 301/2 | Mithridates of Cius |
| 301/2 – 265/6 | Mithridates, son of Mithridates of Cius. From about 281/0, he became Mithridates I Ktistes |
| 266 – 250 | Ariobarzanes I, son of Mithridates I Ktistes |
| 250 - ? | Mithridates II, son of Ariobarzanes I |
| ? – 187(?) | Mithridates III |
| 187 – 157 | Pharnaces I |
| 157 – 150 | Mithridates IV Philopator, Philadelphus, brother of Pharnaces I |
| 150 – 120 | Mithridates V Euergetes, nephew of Mithridates IV, possibly son of Pharnaces I |
| 120 – 63 | Mithridates VI Eupator |

[17] All the dates are B.C.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *AE* | L'année épigraphique (Paris) |
| *BCH* | Bulletin Correspondence Hellenique |
| *BMC Emp.* | Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum Catalogue (1923) |
| *BMC Ionia* | Coins of Ionia in the British Museum Catalogue |
| *Bull Epig.* | Bulletin Epigraphique ( J. and L. Robert) |
| *CAF* | Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta (T. Kock) |
| *CAH* | Cambridge Ancient History |
| *CCCA* | Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque (M.J. Vermaserer) |
| *CF* | Comicorum Fragmenta (Firmin Didot) |
| *CE* | The Catholic Encyclopaedia |
| *CIG* | Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum |
| *CIJ* | Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum |
| *CIL* | Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum |
| *CPL* | Corpus Papyrorum Latinarum (R. Cavenaile 1958) |
| *DB* | Darius at Behistan [Kent 1953 pp.4-5] |
| *DE* | Dizionario Epigrafico di antichit□ romane (E. de Ruggiero) |
| *Dictionary of TCH* | Dictionary of Twentieth Century History (Larousse, 1994) |
| *DN* | Darius the Great at Naqš-i-Rustam [Kent 1953 pp.4-5] |
| *EPE* | *Egkyklopaideia tou Pontiakou Ellinismou. O Pontos* (Malliari – Paideia 1991) (in modern Greek) |
| *Epigr. Anat.* | Epigraphica Anatolica |
| *FAC* | The Fragments of Attic Comedy (Edmonds, Leiden, 1961) |
| *FCG* | Fragmenta Comicorum Graecorum (A. Meineke) |
| *FHG* | Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum (Didot) |
| *FIRA* | Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani 2 (S. Riccobo and others) |
| *Harpocration* | Harpocration et Moeris (Berlin, 1833) |
| *HHN* | Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous (Ekdotiki Athinon) (in modern Greek) |
| *IG* | Inscriptiones Graecae |
| *IG Bulg.* | Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae (G. Mikhailov) |
| *IGR* | Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes (G. Lafaye) |

| | |
|---|---|
| *ILS* | Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae (H. Dessau) |
| *ILLRP* | Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Reipublicae (A. Degrassi) |
| *Ins. Delos* | Inscriptions de Delos No. 1497-2897 ( P. Roussel and M. Launey) |
| *Ins. HP* | Inscriptions of Heracleia Pontica (Lloyd Jones) |
| *IOSPE* | Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae (B. Latyshev) |
| *IRE* | Inscriptions of the Roman Empire 77-117 AD (London Association of Classical Teachers, Original Record No.8, 1971) |
| *LJS* | Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell Scot Jones) |
| *Not. Dig. Or.* | Notitia Dignitatum Orientis |
| *OCD* | Oxford Classical Dictionary[3] |
| *OGIS* | Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae (W. Dittenberger) |
| *OMA* | Orthodox Ministry Access. http://goa.goarch.org/access/calendar/ |
| *Or. Sib.* | The Sibylline Oracles, Books 3-5 (Rev. H.N. Bate, 1918, London) |
| *PBGV* | The Penguin Book of Greek Verse (C.A. Trypanis, 1971) |
| *PCG* | Poetae Comici Graeci |
| *PP* | Perseus Project. http://perseus.csad.ox.ac.uk/ |
| *PY* | Pylos Tablets |
| *RE* | Reale Encyclopädie Der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft |
| *SEG* | Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum |
| *SIG* | Syllogae Inscriptionum Graecarum (W. Dittenberger) |
| *Themes...* | Themata Neoteris kai Syghronis Istorias apo tis Piges (Athens) (in modern Greek) |

# Plates

**Plate 1**

A Dance of the momogeria

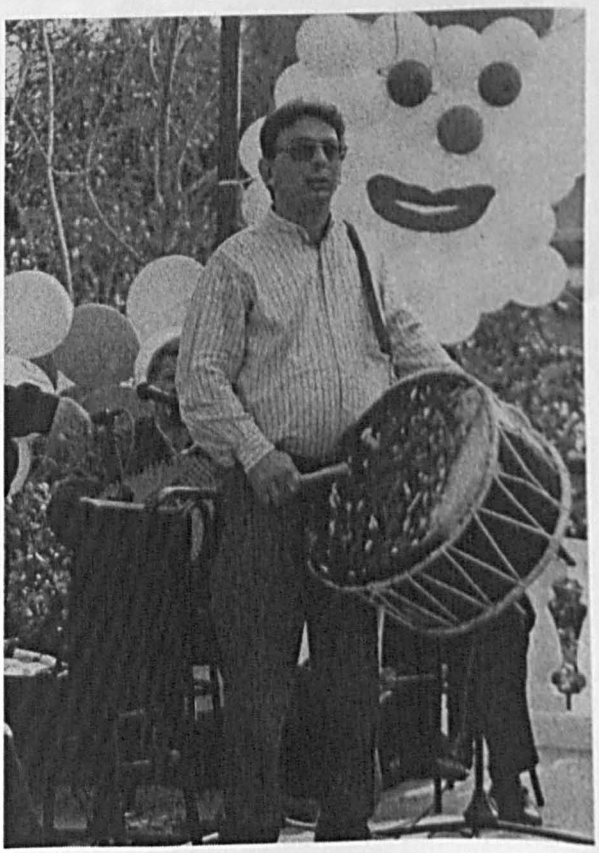


**Plate 2**

Drummer

**Plate 3**

The Doctor, the *momogeros* and the Devil


**Plate 4**

Competition between the Doctor and the Devil

**Plate 5**

Old Woman

**Plate 6**

A Pontian Hobby-Horse

**Plate 7**

The Wedding

**Plate 8**

S'a'tafia

**Plate 9**

S'a'tafia

**Plate 10**

S'a'tafia

**Plate 11**

The Greek Orthodox Church participating at s'a'tafia

**Plate 12**

The Greek Orthodox Church participating at s'a'tafia

**Plate 13**

The Dance of the Sabres

**Plate 14**

The Dance of the Sabres: Victory and Defeat


**Plate 15**

Dancing Serra in Trapezus, Pontus

**Plate 16**

Dancing in Sourmena, Greece

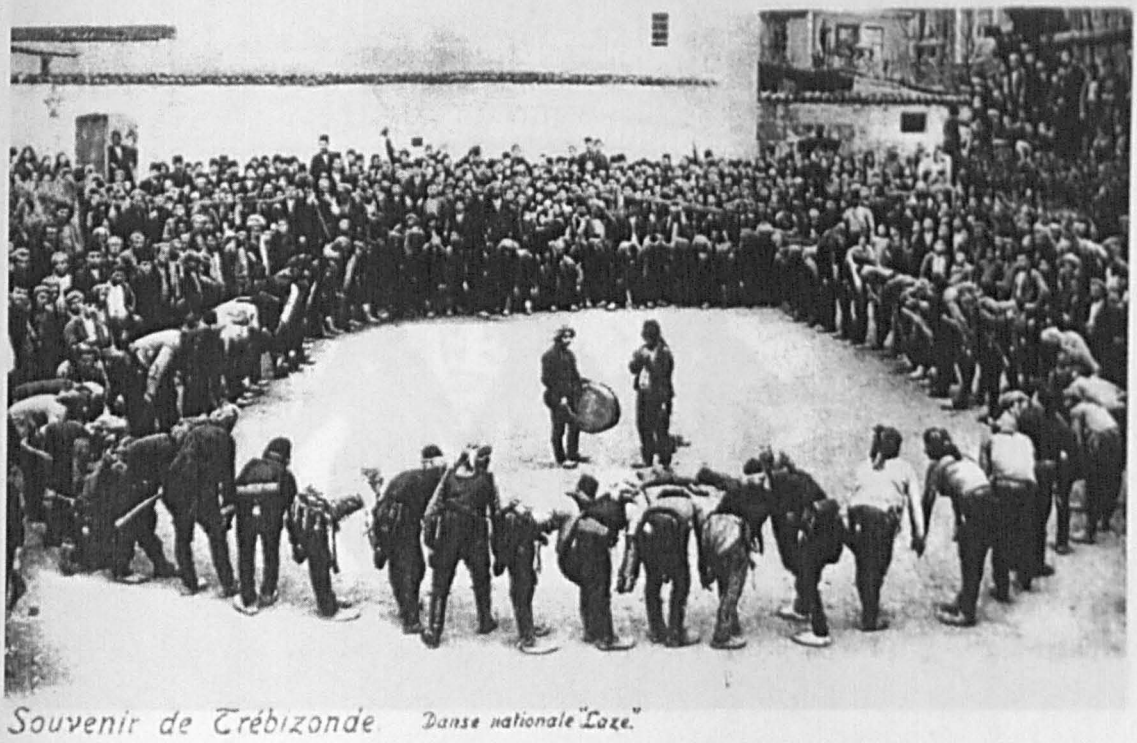



**Plate 17**

Dancing the Lazic dance in Trapezus, Pontus

**Plate 18**

Performing Pontian dances in Sourmena, Greece

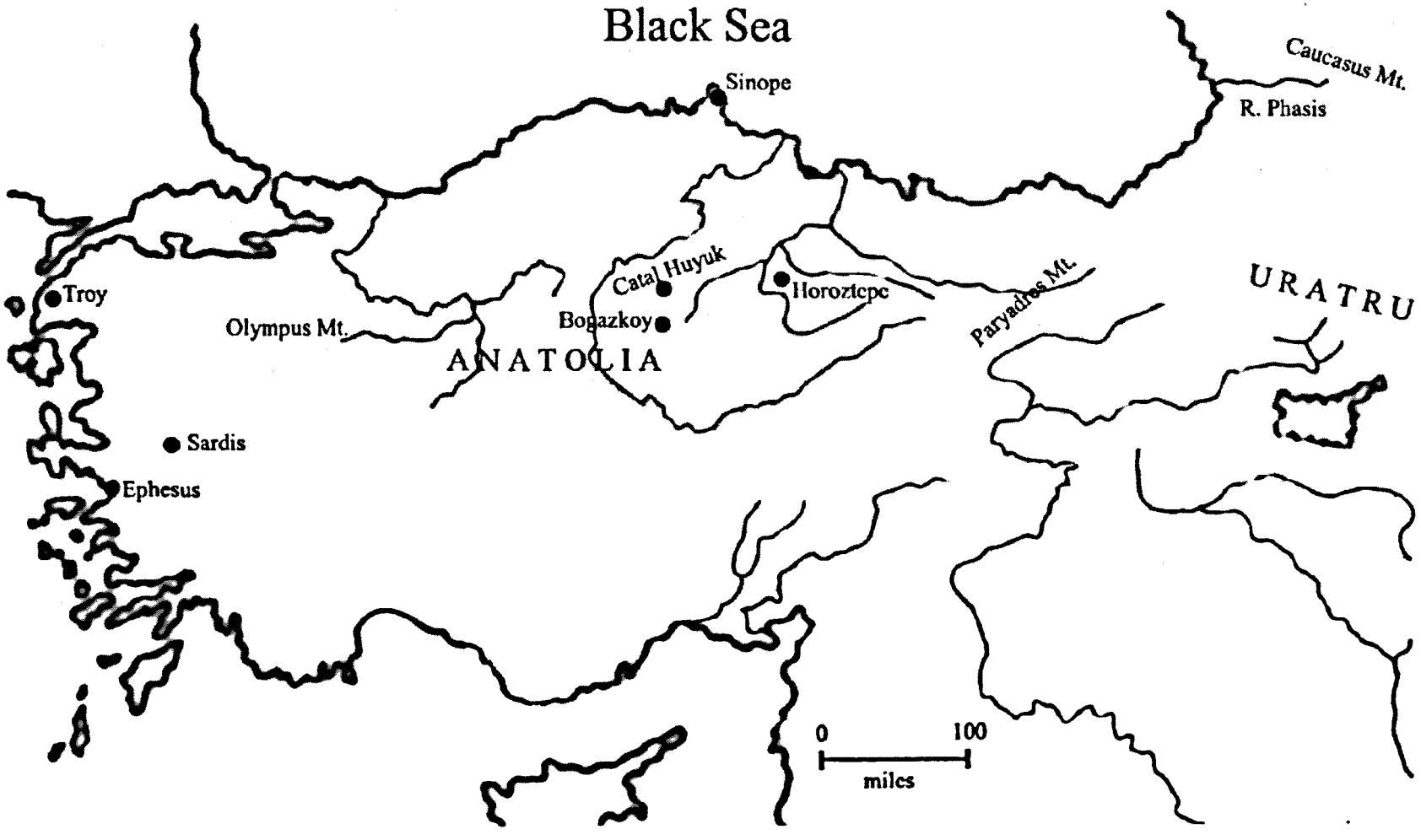
**Plate 19**

A Greek group performing Pontian dances in Sourmena, Greece

**Plate 20**

A Turkish group performing Pontian dances in Sourmena, Greece

# Maps




**Map 1**

Anatolia


**Map 2**

The Area of Pontus


**Map 3**

The Major Cities