

With or Without You: Some Late Hellenistic Narratives of Contemporary History *

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If we wanted to compose an account of how the consolidation of Roman rule in the Greek East between 146 BC and the Augustan age was understood and debated in Rome, we could base it on a number of familiar sources: some fragments of Polybius, some speeches by Cicero (notably the *pro Flacco* and the *de lege Manilia*), the latter's correspondence (especially from his time in Cilicia), Sallust, Appian (both the *Mithridatic War* and the *Civil Wars*) and several of Plutarch's *Roman Lives*. Some extracts from Diodorus, Justin and Athenaeus would help complete the picture. There is no way to make up for the loss of the works of Posidonius of Apamea, Theophanes of Mitylene, or Philip of Pergamum — all Greek intellectuals who wrote histories of their own times and were familiar with Roman motives and practices.

Roman perceptions and representations are only part of a far wider picture. Between the second and the first centuries BC a number of different approaches to contemporary history coexisted and interacted, both within and outside the Greek world. This paper is not yet another attempt to write the history of anti-Roman feelings in the Greek world.¹ It is, on the contrary, an attempt to illuminate some aspects of a debate on recent and contemporary history, which involved Romans, Greeks and other constituents of the Hellenistic world at that period, and whose scope was not restricted to the defence or critique of Roman rule.

One of the central contentions of this study will be that the epigraphical evidence can offer invaluable insights into how history was narrated and understood in this period. A fitting starting point is offered by the great trauma of the First Mithridatic War and the emergence of the charismatic figure of the king. The problems posed by that defining moment shaped the Roman perception and understanding of the Greek East for decades to come.

1. Different versions of the same war: Sallust, Justin, Appian, Athenaeus (and their sources)

The importance of the conflict could not escape an acute historian like Sallust. The letter of Mithridates Eupator to the Parthian king Arsaces is more than a rhetorical piece or a

* This paper was first presented at a seminar held in April 2008 at Swansea University under the auspices of KYKNOS — The Swansea and Lampeter Centre for Research on the Narrative Literatures of the Ancient World; I am greatly indebted to the Swansea and Lampeter colleagues who took part in the discussion. I should like to thank Riet van Bremen, Guido Schepens and the editors and anonymous referees of *SCI* for their constructive comments and criticism on various versions of this article. Working drafts of this paper have appeared in the *Lampeter Working Papers in Classics* (http://www.lamp.ac.uk/ric/workin_papers/index.html).

¹ A noble topic, of which the best discussions are probably by H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt* (Berlin 1938) and J.-L. Ferrary, 'La resistenza ai Romani', in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci. Storia Cultura Arte Società*, 2.3 (Turin 1998), 803-37.

clever intermezzo in the grand narrative of the *Historiae* (4.69 Maurenbrecher). It is an important text, which fully deserves to be included within the tradition of the history of Roman rule in the Greek East, and is one of the most remarkable anti-Roman narratives that survived. The context of the letter is quite clear. In the fall of 69 BC, Mithridates Eupator was on the verge of total defeat: he had been driven out of his kingdom by the Romans, and his ally and son-in-law, Tigranes, had lost the battle of Tigranocerta. As Lucullus was unable to pursue the offensive during the winter, Mithridates found refuge in Armenia, where he tried to organise a comeback. Having abandoned any hope of acting as a philhellenic king with a view to rallying support from the Greek cities, he was compelled to think of a new strategy against Rome. He thus decided to seek the support of the king of Parthia and to coordinate an Eastern campaign against Rome.²

The letter of the king calls for an alliance with the Parthian monarch, and includes a detailed analysis of the political and strategic situation that would make such an alliance feasible. Although it is perfectly possible that there were diplomatic contacts between the two kings at that time — Mithridates' diplomacy was notably wide-ranging, as his dealings with the Italian Allies during the Social War show — there is no independent evidence to prove that the two kings corresponded.³ Indeed, it is virtually certain that the letter included in the *Historiae* is entirely Sallust's fabrication, as can be gleaned from the scope, the arguments and the style. What is typically Sallustian is the rhetorical and historical *tour de force* that characterises the letter, first by developing *per absurdum* the offer of an alliance, outlining the reasons why Arsaces may not want to strike an alliance with Mithridates, and then by developing an account of the motives and the ideological themes of an implacable enemy of Rome, in Latin, and within an account of Roman contemporary history. The letter is not merely about Mithridates; it is a formidable opportunity for Sallust to reflect, through the words of an enemy, of a barbarian, upon the nature of the Roman imperial strategy, its flaws and its darker sides. This text, on the whole rather understudied, calls for closer scrutiny.

Mithridates does not only propose an alliance to the king of Parthia; in the opening paragraph, he makes it clear that he intends to put both his strategic experience (hence the insistent advice on how to gain Tigranes' support) and his long-standing familiarity

² The recent bibliography on Mithridates and the wars he fought against Rome is extensive, and often invaluable: see B.C. McGing, *The Foreign Policy of Mithridates VI Eupator King of Pontus*, Mnemosyne Supplementum 89 (Leiden 1986); J.G.F. Hind, 'Mithridates', *Cambridge Ancient History IX* (Cambridge 1994²), 129-64; L. Ballesteros Pastor, *Mitridates Eupátor, rey del Ponto* (Granada 1996); F. de Callataÿ, *L'Histoire des guerres mithridatiques vue par les monnaies*, Numismatica Lovaniensia 18 (Louvain-la-Neuve 1997). T. Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator roi de Pont* (Paris 1890) remains essential reading, as well as its extended German edition *Mithradates Eupator König von Pontos* (Leipzig 1895).

³ On Mithridates' contact with the Italian Allies, see Diod. Sic. 37.2.11 and Posid. fr. 253 (E-K), l. 89-92; see also C. Nicolet, 'Mithridate et les "ambassadeurs de Carthage"', in R. Chevallier (ed.), *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à André Piganiol* (Paris 1966), 807-14; McGing (above, n. 2), 85; M. Pobjoy, 'The First Italia', in E. Herring and K. Lomas (eds.), *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC* (London 2000), 187-211. On his later relationship with Sertorius, see McGing, *ibid.* 137-39.

with the Romans, their motives and their ways at Arsaces' disposal.⁴ The discussion of the making of the Roman empire is at the same time the core of the guide for the good prince that the old king offers to his addressee, and a prologue to Mithridates' own autobiography which follows in the next part of the letter. Moreover, it is a brief summary of an anti-Roman version of the history of the empire, of its making and its aims: it is an anti-Roman account, by a non-Roman, who despises the Romans and their greed, and systematically questions their right to call themselves just or equitable victors.

We could not be further away from the modern supporters of the 'defensive imperialism' theory, or from E. Gruen's influential (and controversial) thesis that Rome's conquest of the Greek East was not the outcome of a systematic strategy, and was made possible by 'short bursts of activity, rather than continuous vigilance'.⁵ The Romans are here described as consistently driven by an ambition to rule and to increase their wealth: *una et ea uetus causa bellandi est, cupido profunda imperi et diuitiarum* (§ 5). A whole sequence of precedents is brought in support of this argument: the war against Philip V of Macedon was a flagrant case of a breach of trust, as the Romans had pretended to be the king's friends until the Carthaginians started to pose a substantial threat to their position. A similar ruthlessness was shown towards Antiochus III. Perseus was treated even more wickedly: after the battle of Pydna (168 BC) he found shelter in the sanctuary of Samothrace, and when the Romans captured him they vowed not to kill him, but they later went on to cause his death by depriving him of sleep. The relationship with Eumenes too was entirely corrupt: the king owed his dominions to the treacherous victory of the Romans over Antiochus, and his standing was consistently ridiculed by the Romans' abuse. Against this background, it is not surprising that Mithridates dismissed the testament of Attalus III as a forgery and considered the Roman annexation of Bythynia an illegal act. What we have here is more than the powerful rhetorical objective of a *suasoria*: it is an unreservedly hostile narrative of the making of the Roman empire.⁶

⁴ L. Ferrero Raditsa, *A Historical Commentary to Sallust's 'Letter of Mithridates'* (Diss. Columbia, New York 1969) remains a valuable starting point; F. Ahlheid, 'Oratorical Strategy in Sallust's Letter of Mithridates Reconsidered', *Mnemosyne* 41 (1988), 66-92 is a perceptive discussion of the letter as 'a dynamic process of persuasion' (74). The contemporary political implications of Sallust's account of the war against Mithridates must have been obvious in the Thirties, not least because it featured the involvement of the Parthians: cf. R. Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Cambridge 1964), 222-24.

⁵ E.S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1984) 723.

⁶ Sall. *Hist.* 4.69.5-9 M: *qua primo cum rege Macedonum Philippo bellum sumpsere, dum a Carthaginiensibus premebantur amicitiam simulantes. ei subuenientem Antiochum concessione Asiae per dolum auortere, ac mox fracto Philippo Antiochus omni cis Taurum agro et decem milibus talentorum spoliatus est. Persen deinde, Philippi filium, post multa et uaria certamina apud Samothracas deos acceptum in fidem, callidi et repertoires perfidiae, quia pacto uitam dederant, insomniis occidere. Eumenen, cuius amicitiam gloriose ostentant, initio prodidere Antiocho, pacis mercedem: post, habitum custodiae agri captiui, sumptibus et contumeliis ex rege miserum seruorum effecere, simulatoque impio testamento filium eius Aristonicum, quia patrium regnum petiuerat, hostium more per triumphum duxere. Asia ab ipsis obsessa est, postremo Bithyniam Nicomede mortuo diripuerunt, cum filius Nysa, quam reginam appellauerat, genitus haud dubie esset.*

A clear motive, greed, is singled out as its purpose, and the consistent breaches of trust and pacts are a major theme. The traditional Roman claim to *fides*, which was so crucial to the emergence of the *bellum iustum* myth, is disposed of with no possibility of appeal. The intrinsic link between greed and disloyalty features prominently in Mithridates' account of his own dealings with Rome. Rome was the aggressor, because it could not tolerate the presence of a rich and independent kingdom on the fringes of her empire, and only the treacherous conduct of Mithridates' general Archelaus, who was in charge of the contingent sent over to Greece by the king, brought about Mithridates' defeat. The rumour that Archelaus had been bribed by Sulla is also reported by Plutarch, who insists at length on the close relationship between the two in the period that followed the battle of Chaeronea and preceded the Dardanus agreement (86/85 BC).⁷ Plutarch's account suggests that, surely, other contemporary sources on the Mithridatic war dealt with Archelaus' alleged treachery, and gave it a prominent role in the account of the conflict.

Sallust had several good reasons to include Mithridates' censure of the Roman empire within his *Historiae*. First, as E. Bickerman remarked, the theme of greed and injustice is crucial to Sallust's historical vision, and especially to his interpretation of the political history of the Republic.⁸ Second, giving voice to an anti-Roman, especially to Mithridates, was a challenging and inspiring task for an historian who owed so much to the Thucydidean method of confronting different interpretations of history through the medium of rhetoric.⁹ Sallust's fascination with the model of the corrupt king who meets a tragic destiny, as evinced by his portrayal of Jugurtha, must have played a part too.

It would be futile to address the problem of Sallust's source by returning to the old devices of traditional *Quellenforschung*.¹⁰ S. Mazzarino has suggested that the bitterly anti-Roman arguments of the letter echoed the line of Metrodorus of Scepsis (*FGrHist* 184), a Greek intellectual who joined Mithridates and eventually Tigranes, and paid for this mistake with his life.¹¹ We know that Metrodorus was sent by Mithridates on a diplomatic mission to Tigranes requesting help against the Romans, that he was nicknamed 'Misorhomaïos', that he wrote a history of the reign of Tigranes and that Cicero knew his work — but it is hard to grasp much more than that from the seventeen fragments of this author collected in *FGrHist*, which have an ethnographic focus.¹² Even

⁷ Plut. *Sull.* 23.1-5.

⁸ E. Bickerman, 'La lettre de Mithridate dans les Histoires de Salluste', *REL* 24 (1946), 131-51, at 147-51.

⁹ See the survey of the Thucydidean influences on the letter of Mithridates in T.F. Scanlon, *The Influence of Thucydides on Sallust*, Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften n. F., 2. Reihe, Bd. 70 (Heidelberg 1980), 173-74, 208-10.

¹⁰ Cf. the sensible assessment in McGing (above, n. 2), 154-60.

¹¹ S. Mazzarino, *Il pensiero storico classico* 2.1 (Rome-Bari 1966), 374. See the new edition of Metrodorus' testimonia and fragments in S. Marastoni, *Metrodoro di Scepsi. Retore, filosofo, storico e mago*, Hellenica 24 (Alessandria 2007), 27-52, followed by a valuable commentary. See also J.M. Alonso-Núñez, 'Un historien anti-romain, Métrodore de Scepsis', *DHA* 10 (1984), 253-58; M. Mazza, *Il vero e l'immaginato. Profezia, narrativa e storiografia nel mondo romano* (Rome 1999), 21-22.

¹² Cic. *Orat.* 2.360; *Tusc.* 1.59. On the nickname, see Plin. *NH.* 34.16.34; cf. the implicit attack in Dion. Hal. 1.4.3.

Posidonius and Theophanes, two ostensibly sympathetic narrators of the making of the Roman empire, cannot be ruled out.¹³ They may well have reflected the importance of Mithridates' account in some sections of their comprehensive works, and Sallust might have somehow used information drawn from these works in writing the letter of Mithridates. One can only wonder how Sisenna, Sallust's pro-Sullan predecessor, or indeed Sulla's *Commentarii*, portrayed the role of Archelaus in Sulla's military success. The question is of course bound to remain unresolved, like so many others. It is, therefore, worth restating the obvious: Sallust had access to an impressive number of sources, both for the recent and for the slightly more remote past, which are completely lost to us. What must be stressed, however, is that the letter of Mithridates was a brilliant encounter between the needs of a *suasoria* and the bold attempt to include an unapologetically anti-Roman account of the making of the Roman empire. It was impossible to write a proper narrative of Mithridates without confronting the factor that had made the king of Pontus so successful, at least in the early 80s: the huge 'political capital' of hatred and repulsion that Rome had accumulated in the East, both in Greek and non-Greek milieux, which, as Sallust's Mithridates remarks, was chiefly caused by Rome's unbridled greed, especially in Asia Minor. It may be almost unremarkable that this sentiment featured prominently in several historical non-Roman narratives of the period; it is remarkable, however, that even some Roman sources thought it appropriate to take account of it.

A similar approach can be found in Pompeius Trogus, the author of a universal history, who lived in the Augustan age. The abridged version of Trogus' account of Mithridates' achievement provided by Justin leaves no doubt that it was portrayed as an outcome of the king's imperial ambition, and not as a consequence of Rome's treacherous policy. However, it featured an important statement of Mithridates' viewpoint in the form of a speech addressed to the soldiers on the eve of the full-scale attack on Asia Minor (Just. 38.4-7).¹⁴ The speech was originally in the oblique form, unlike those composed by Sallust and Livy, but it still carried enough conviction to lead the later epitomiser of Trogus' history to summarise it. Again, this piece of Mithridatic propaganda appears to contain ample historical data. This time, the focus is not the questionable record of Rome as an imperial power, but the attempt to refute the city's alleged invincibility. Mithridates insisted on a number of historical precedents that suggested that Rome was more vulnerable than commonly assumed, as demonstrated by Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and the Gauls, enemies who at different times had posed a severe threat to her existence.¹⁵ Yet, the major hope was provided by Rome's Italian neighbours. News had recently come that the Marsian war was raging, and that there was

¹³ Much has been made of the opposite choices of Metrodorus and Theophanes: see Fuchs (above, n. 1) 14-15, 43-44; P. Pédech, 'Deux grecs face à Rome au I^{er} siècle av. J.-C.: Métrodore de Scepsis et Théophraste de Mitylène', *REA* 93 (1991), 65-78, at 66-71; L.M. Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic. Provincial Perspectives on Roman Rule* (Oxford 2006), 31-32.

¹⁴ See E. Adler, 'Sallust and Pompeius Trogus on Mithridates', *CJ* 101 (2006), 383-407, with interesting thoughts on the readership of both authors.

¹⁵ On Trogus' interest in the Gauls, see Mazzarino (above, n. 11), 487-88.

a fair chance that the civil war would erupt.¹⁶ The emphasis then shifts to the responsibility for the war, which is again accorded to Rome, who had conquered Greater Phrygia and increased the pressure on their former ally. The theme of Roman treachery takes an interesting turn: Mithridates argues that Rome consistently mistreated all the kings that used to be her allies, usually by attacking them after taking advantage of their friendship. Mithridates claims to be the last in a long list, which includes his father Pharnaces, Eumenes of Pergamum, and Perseus of Macedon. Even the seemingly excellent relationship with Masinissa was eventually terminated and followed by an act of aggression against his grandson, Jugurtha. In a development that seems more Roman than ‘Pontic’, Justin’s Mithridates argues that the Romans have an unwavering hatred of kings, and that their foreign policy provides proof for that.¹⁷ What follows is more in tune with what we know of Mithridates’ propaganda.¹⁸ A twist of anti-Romulism may be found in the king’s report that Roman greed is a legacy bequeathed by their foundation myth — something to be expected of a people that claimed descent from a she-wolf. There is perfect agreement with Sallust in this respect. After a digression dedicated to recording the invincibility of the Mithridatic household, Mithridates tells his soldiers that the Romans deepened their interest in the East because they realised how rich it was. They had nothing to fear about the forthcoming invasion, he sums up: the Greeks of Asia would welcome them as their liberators.

A Roman response to these hostile reconstructions of the recent past appears to have been put forward in the immediate aftermath of Mithridates’ defeat. Appian’s *Mithridatic Book* features a version of the speech that Sulla supposedly gave at the Dardanus conference in the winter of 85/84 BC.¹⁹ Its addressee is Mithridates, of course, and the argumentations of the speech may be read as deliberate answers to the points that must have featured in Mithridates’ propaganda before the outbreak of the war. Again, putting forward hypotheses as to the source used by Appian seems a pointless exercise. It is a safe guess that a version of the speech featured in Sulla’s autobiography, but we cannot be certain that it was used by Appian or by his source. At any rate, Sulla’s speech at Dardanus is an invaluable source for a Roman viewpoint on the crisis — as one cannot speak of *the* Roman viewpoint at that period, given the unprecedented instability and

¹⁶ Just. 38.4.13-14: *ac ne ueteribus inmoremur exemplis, hoc ipso tempore uniuersam Italiam bello Marsico consurrexisse, non iam libertatem, sed consortium imperii ciuitatisque poscentem; nec grauius uicino Italiae bello quam domesticis principum factionibus urbem premi, multoque periculosius esse Italico ciuile bellum.*

¹⁷ Just. 38.6.7-8: *hanc illos omnibus regibus legem odiorum dixisse, scilicet quia ipsi tales reges habuerint, quorum etiam nominibus erubescant, aut pastores Aboriginum, aut aruspices Sabinorum, aut exules Corinthiorum, aut seruos uernasque Tuscorum, aut, quod honoratissimum nomen fuit inter haec, Superbos; atque ut ipsi ferunt conditores suos lupae uberibus altos, sic omnem illum populum luporum animos inexplebiles sanguinis, atque imperii diuitiarumque auidos ac ieiunos habere.*

¹⁸ D.G. Glew, ‘The Selling of the King: a Note on Mithridates Eupator’s Propaganda in 88 B.C.’, *Hermes* 105 (1977), 253-256; E. Salomone Gaggero, ‘La propaganda antiromana di Mitridate VI Eupatore in Asia Minore e in Grecia’, in *Contributi di Storia Antica in onore di Albino Garzetti*, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto di Storia Antica e Scienze Ausiliarie dell’Università di Genova 14 (Genoa 1977), 89-123; McGing (above, n. 2), 88-108.

¹⁹ App. *Mithr.* 57-58.230-240.

conflict that marked the handling of the Mithridatic war by the Roman governing class and Sulla's peculiar position in the conflict.

Appian's account is overwhelmingly favourable to the cause of Sulla and Rome, and not simply because the issue of Archelaus' loyalty to his king is never raised. Appian devotes only a few lines to summarising Mithridates' intervention at the beginning of the conference, while Sulla's speech takes up a whole chapter. It is conceivable that Appian's second-century AD readership was not terribly interested in the king's case — but the impression is that the whole of Appian's narrative is consistently sympathetic to the Roman cause. Even so, Mithridates' allegation that Roman greed was the motivation for the whole war is echoed; the invasion of Asia Minor is presented as a case of self-defence. Sulla's response is lengthy and vigorous. It presents a very detailed case for Rome's reaction to Mithridates' attack, and the details of the response strongly suggest that Rome quickly built an alternative interpretation of the war and its background against that of Mithridates. Sulla speaks in the first person, but he acts as the spokesman of the whole Republic. Since Ariobarzanes' restoration to the throne of Cappadocia was decided by a decree of the Senate and was duly accepted by Mithridates, raising the issue again several years later was improper. The allegation of greed is refuted by claiming that Mithridates' conquest of Phrygia, never ratified by the Senate, was made possible only after the king bribed M.' Aquilius; the allegation of treachery is countered by arguing that Mithridates had tried to eliminate Nicomedes of Bithynia before invading his territory, and that the timing of the invasion of Asia was clearly dictated by the outbreak of the Social War. The massacre of thousands of Italian residents in Asia Minor was consistent with this conduct. It is noteworthy that Sulla also mentions the massacre of 1,600 Greeks who were accused of being loyal to Rome, and that of the tetrarchs of Galatia who were slaughtered when returning from a banquet.

The heart of Sulla's response is dedicated to Mithridates' misdemeanours, to his greed and disloyalty to Rome, to his neighbours, and to his partners and allies, both before and during the war. Sulla's version was directed to both Roman and Greek audiences. Accordingly, Mithridates was seen as an intruder and a common enemy. The parallels between the two accounts are quite clear; the allegations of greed and disloyalty appear to be interchangeable. There is more than inane propaganda in this debate. The memory of Mithridates' feats remained an important presence in the political and intellectual landscape of the Greek East in the Roman context.²⁰ The themes of the common enemy and of the 'intruder' are particularly important in both these alternative narratives, and they appear to have influenced the historical record quite significantly.

²⁰ On the role of political memory in the Greek East under Roman rule, see C.P. Jones, 'Memories of the Roman Republic in the Greek East', in O. Salomies (ed.), *The Greek East in the Roman Context*, Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens 7 (Helsinki 2001), 11-18; for a like-minded survey of Macedonian memories in the Near East, cf. T. Spawforth, 'Macedonian Times: Hellenistic Memories in the Provinces of the Roman Near East', in D. Konstan and S. Saïd (eds.), *Greeks on Greekness. Viewing the Greek Past under the Roman Empire*, Cambridge Classical Journal Supplementary Volume 29 (Cambridge 2006), 1-26. See also the important methodological points in A. Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2005), 215-16.

They feature prominently, for instance, in the famous account of the rise to power of the pro-Mithridatic faction in Athens. We learn about it from a long passage in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, which is probably derived from Posidonius, and whose central point is the unsuitability of philosophers to be rulers. Athenion, the Peripatetic associate of Mithridates who rose to power in 88 BC, is portrayed in unreservedly negative tones throughout the passage for his populist rhetoric, his tyrannical ambitions, or his shameless display of wealth when he returned to Athens from his encounter with the king.²¹ Yet, the main allegation was that his registration as a citizen was illegal: he was the son of an Egyptian slave, who had lain with her master, himself a passionate student of Aristotelian philosophy. Athenion was a fake citizen, and therefore a *παρέγγραφος* — a fact that made his pretension to be the new champion of the people a hollow pose, and his accusations against Roman inability to understand democracy a pointless exercise. Athenion's later moves, which brought the city to the brink of Civil War and include a significant number of confiscations and exiles, were therefore doubly ironic: although he was not a legal citizen, he had the power to harm and send hundreds of worthy citizens into exile. The irony is only increased by the fact that Athenion, who was supposedly a follower of Aristotle, was expected to exercise restraint and good sense.

2. Between Rome and Mithridates: Nysa and Alabanda

No matter how fascinating it may be, the story of Athenion must be used cautiously. We can only speculate on its source, and the extent to which Athenaeus revised the original version (or versions). The conflicting traditions concerning the background to and the motives of the First Mithridatic War are very instructive as they illustrate both the complexity and the comprehensiveness of the discourses forged by both sides, and the shrewdness of Mithridates' propaganda. They also restate, yet again, the immense significance of the conflict, which was seen by many — Greeks and non-Greeks — as an opportunity to do away with Roman rule for ever, to revive the cause of Greek independence, and reverse the trend of Roman victories in the Mediterranean that had lasted for a century at least. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mithridates' first military attack was accompanied by a full-scale propagandistic effort, which included a comprehensive interpretation of the history of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean, entirely centred on the problem of Roman greed. It is a safe guess that the theme featured prominently in the contemporary historiographical tradition; it is fortunate, but surely not fortuitous that Sallust included it in his *Historiae*.

The competing traditions composed by Rome and Mithridates leave another equally important player out of the picture: the Greek cities, whose strategic role should not be underestimated, even in a world dominated by two large powers. Local traditions on the recent past were as rich and creative as any other political tradition of the time, and a

²¹ The bibliography on this episode is very rich: for two recent authoritative discussions, see G.R. Bugh, 'Athenion and Aristion of Athens', *Phoenix* 46 (1992), 108-23; K. Bringmann, 'Poseidonios and Athenion: a Study in Hellenistic Historiography', in P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey and E. Gruen (eds.), *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History and Historiography*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 26 (Berkeley-London 1997), 145-58.

number of inscriptions show it very forcefully. The main concern of the public inscriptions of Greek cities in the late Hellenistic period was to restate independence and autonomy, but other themes and agendas could play a prominent role too. An inscription from Nysa reveals how the memory of Mithridates could prove useful even after the king's defeat. Some time after the end of the war, an inscription was put up to celebrate the deeds of a local citizen, Chaeremon. It was a complex document, consisting of four parts: a civic decree, a letter from the Roman proconsul C. Cassius, and two letters from Mithridates. The decree is a brief summary of the honour decreed in favour of Chaeremon. The letter of the proconsul is addressed to the city of Nysa, and it gratefully acknowledges the support that Chaeremon lent to the Romans by bringing 60,000 modii of wheat flour to their camp at Apamea. The inscription must be dated to the immediate aftermath of the war, probably between 87 and 86, and it may have proved advantageous to the city when Sulla carried out his reorganisation of Asia Minor, and had to decide on the status of the community. Cassius makes it clear that he intends to report Chaeremon's initiative to the Senate and the people of Rome.²² The king's two messages are, however, by far the most remarkable and instructive testimony (*RC* 73 and 74). They were not addressed to the city, but to an associate of the king, the 'satrap' Leonippos, and they gave instructions for the capture of Chaeremon, who was labelled as a long-standing supporter of the 'most detestable' enemy of all, the Romans. The first letter mentions a substantial reward for anyone who captures or kills Chaeremon or his sons; the second simply urges Leonippos to get hold of the culprit. The two messages were issued at different points of time: in the first, Chaeremon has just secured the escape of his children to pro-Roman Rhodes, while in the second he is reported to have sought asylum at the Artemision in Ephesus. Chaeremon's activities at Ephesus greatly worried the king, who blamed Chaeremon for the resistance that he met at that stage of his invasion. Both letters, despite their brevity, do not spare violent attacks on Chaeremon and the Romans. The definition of the Romans as 'common enemies' is the most striking rhetorical feature of this text, with its deliberate echoing of the familiar epithet 'common benefactors', which occurred so often in late Hellenistic epigraphy with reference to the Romans.²³

The messages conveyed by these texts are truly multi-layered. First of all, they are an exception to the rule that history is always written by the winners. These are texts written

²² *SIG*³ 741 I = *RDGE* 48. The obvious parallel is J.M. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome* (London 1982), no. 3, a letter in which the proconsul Q. Oppius acknowledges the city's support of his cause and pledges to reward it in the future. Further bibliography in F. Quass, *Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens. Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (Stuttgart 1993), 130.

²³ See C. Wehrli, 'Sur la formule «Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ κοινοὶ εὐεργέται πάντων» («Les Romains, communs bienfaiteurs de tous») dans les inscriptions grecques de l'époque républicaine', *SicGymn* 31 (1978), 479-496; A. Erskine, 'The Romans as Common Benefactors', *Historia* 43 (1994), 70-87. I am following Mommsen's emendation: the stone has πρὸς κοινοὺς πολεμίους διαπέμπεται Ῥωμαίων — but both Mommsen and Welles print Ῥωμαίους in the accusative. Although it is not difficult to imagine Chaeremon sending messages to 'the common enemies of the Romans' urging them to switch sides, a parodic reference to the Romans as 'common enemies' appears more fitting to the context.

by the king, which probably had a wide circulation during Mithridates' invasion, and it was probably not difficult to get hold of copies even when the war was over. Their duplication, without changes or cuts, is the best testimony to Chaeremon's distinguished service to the Roman cause and to the independence of the city. The voice of the king was still audible, but it was now turned against Mithridates and utilised to glorify Chaeremon. The barbarisms of Mithridates' Greek stood as a reminder that the king, who claimed to be a supporter of the Hellenic cause, was no less an outsider than the Romans.²⁴ The two letters were an indirect contribution to the biography of the great man too, which the letter of C. Cassius completed, and they constituted a short epitome of family history, with their pointed reference to Chaeremon's sons, Pythodoros and Pythion, whose escape to Rhodes secured the continuation of the family even after Chaeremon's death, and who were most probably the promoters of the monument in honour of their father. Finally, the inscriptions were an indirect piece of evidence for the position of the city, which could quite rightly claim to have been one of Mithridates' main targets, and to have been a safe shelter for its Roman residents in the time of the pogrom that accompanied Mithridates' assault. The second letter makes it clear that a number of Romans escaped with Chaeremon's children and that Mithridates' insistence on Rome being the common enemy could easily be turned against him: his solidarity with Leonippos in the name of the fight against the Romans pales in comparison to the common resistance of the Romans and the notable from Nysa. Whatever the position of the city during the war, its decision to honour its prominent pro-Roman citizen was logical and politically sensible.

The dossier on Chaeremon is remarkable for both its structure and contents, and especially because of the manner in which it blends Roman and Pontic traditions on the war and, indirectly, sheds light on Roman rule as well. Decrees in honour of respectable citizens were not at all unusual in the cities of the Greek East, even before the coming of Rome, and they serve as documents of great importance for the study of Roman rule. It is not fortuitous that several such texts date to the age of the Mithridatic Wars or to its immediate aftermath. The life of a notable from a Greek city of Asia Minor in that period was certainly eventful, and could even be dangerous. A lengthy decree from Alabanda in Caria celebrates the life and achievements of a local notable called Pyrrha[kos].²⁵ The opening section is lost, as well as the final lines, but the focus of the decree is quite clear: most of its fifty lines deal with the *beneficia* that Pyrrha[kos] offered to his community, both on a public and a private level. His most impressive feat, however, was the diplomatic missions that he carried out on behalf of the city. He went to Rome twice, the first time to restate the friendship of the city to Rome (οἰκειότης and φιλία), and then to discuss a fiscal matter (περὶ φόρων). Both missions were successful, thanks to the rhetorical ability of Pyrrha[kos], who even addressed the Roman senate, and was rewarded with a bronze statue on the return from his first embassy. The second mission to Rome was followed by yet another, ostensibly on the same matter, to an unspecified king. Perhaps the purpose of this last diplomatic effort was to bring the deliberations of the Roman Senate, who had issued an immunity decree, to the attention of that king. The

²⁴ See Welles, *RC*, 299.

²⁵ *ISE* 3.169.

outcome of the final embassy remains unknown, since Pyrrha[kos] died during this mission (ἐν πρεσβείᾳ). The cause of death is not specified.

The main problem presented by the inscription is its chronology. F. Canali de Rossi has recently argued that the king mentioned in the inscription cannot be Mithridates, as previously argued by Willrich, because Mithridates never intended to receive orders from the Roman Senate.²⁶ Surely, things are more complex than that. The tradition on the background of the war suggests that Mithridates did try to play the part of Rome's loyal friend at various stages, and that he did accept the resolutions of the Roman Senate on at least one occasion, when Ariobarzanes was restored to the throne of Cappadocia. Secondly, it is not certain that the decree of the Roman Senate was meant to be called into play in the negotiation with the king on the tributes. Mithridates seems to be a better candidate than Eumenes of Pergamum: the serious diplomatic efforts of the city fit well in the context of the aftermath of the Mithridatic war, when securing immunity from Roman taxation was a crucial issue for the communities of Asia Minor, and Mithridates still had an interest in Caria. The most likely dating is some time in the Seventies, not long after 78 BC, when Apollonius Molon (himself a native of Alabanda) was allowed to address the Senate in Greek for the first time ever.²⁷ Since the decree explicitly celebrates the might of his oratory, it is more likely that Pyrrha[kos] also spoke in his native language, some time after Apollonius opened up that possibility. The death of Pyrrha[kos], however, should not be used as a criterion for the dating of the inscription: there is no evidence that the ambassador met a violent death, or that he was seen as an enemy of the king. Surely, if Pyrrha[kos] was killed by Mithridates, a violent death at the hands of Rome's most bitter enemy would have been a badge of honour after the end of the war, much as it was for Chaeremon of Nysa. It is inconceivable that the inscription — which is remarkably detailed, and includes a chronological summary of Pyrrha[kos]' activities, in which his merits are carefully listed along with the honours that were granted him during his lifetime and after his death — would have omitted such an important detail.

What makes this inscription so remarkable is the insight it provides into the diplomatic activities of a Greek city in the Roman context, and the concern it shows in celebrating the contribution made by a local notable to his community. Both these aspects find their parallel elsewhere. The *senatusconsultum* voted in 81 BC on the status of Stratonicea in Caria (*RDGE* 18) is abundant in details. The numerous clauses in this text are further testimony to the complexity of diplomatic negotiations in this period, and to the level of knowledge and expertise of both sides to these negotiations. A decade later, the declaration of civic freedom started to be modelled on a standard and more generic format, as shown by the *lex Antonia de Termessus* (*RS* 19); this was not the case in the aftermath of the Sullan resettlement of the province of Asia.

²⁶ F. Canali de Rossi, 'Morte di un ambasciatore di Alabanda', *Scienze dell'antichità* 6-7 (1992-1993) [publ. 1996], 35-40, with a summary of the earlier bibliography; contra, P. Gauthier, 'Trois exemples méconnus d'intervenants dans des décrets de la basse époque hellénistique', in P. Fröhlich and C. Müller (eds.), *Citoyenneté et participation à la basse époque hellénistique*, Hautes études du monde gréco-romain 35 (Paris 2005), 79-93, at 85-89.

²⁷ Cic. *Brut.* 90.312.

3. Making the case for the polis: Colophon, Metropolis, Pergamum, Heraclea Pontica

The celebration of local grandees in lengthy and detailed inscriptions was quite common in the Greek world, and it is a pattern widely reflected in the evidence of this period, even well before the Mithridatic war. The most impressive example is surely the series of decrees voted at Colophon in honour of the local grandees Polemaios and Menippos, dated to the last quarter of the second century BC.²⁸ Both these texts have received a considerable amount of scholarly attention since their publication, and they do not need detailed discussion here. Two points, however, deserve to be stressed for our purposes. First, these texts give an impressive amount of detail: the account of the lives of Polemaios and Menippos comprises hundreds of lines, carefully divided up into columns and skilfully carved on stone in small size letters. They contain plenty of valuable information on the career and the diplomatic achievements of the two individuals, and they carefully list the honours that they were awarded by the city. These inscriptions are not simply wonderful pieces of craftsmanship; they are detailed narratives, which gather and organise a significant body of biographical information. Secondly, they are consistently organised around a civic viewpoint: the two men were born and raised in Colophon, they left the city to pursue their studies in Athens, came back some time later and performed distinguished diplomatic services for their fellow-citizens. These texts should not be read only as honorary inscriptions, or as evidence for the dealings between Colophon and some external powers. They are, for all practical purposes, pieces of local history, which outline the main steps of the foreign policy of the city through the achievements of two prominent individuals. At the same time, they are biographical texts, albeit with a strongly encomiastic tone. The scope of the inscriptions goes beyond the mere political and diplomatic spheres, and encompasses the upbringing and education of the two men. What emerges is a well-rounded portrait of two remarkable individuals, who end up representing the best qualities of their city, and are its finest personification.²⁹ Biography is capable of becoming a form of local history.³⁰

²⁸ J. and L. Robert, *Claros I. Décrets hellénistiques*, Paris 1989. See also J.-L. Ferrary, 'Le Statut des cités libres dans l'empire romain à la lumière des inscriptions de Claros', *CRAI* (1991), 551-77; Quass (above, n. 22), 135-38; G.A. Lehmann, 'Polis-Autonomie und römische Herrschaft an der Westküste Kleinasiens. Kolophon/Klaros nach der Aufrichtung der provincia Asia', in L. Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, *Studia Hellenistica* 36 (Leuven 2000), 215-38.

²⁹ See the general remarks by M. Wörle, 'Vom tugendsamen Jüngling zum <gestressten> Euergeten. Überlegungen zum Bürgerbild hellenistischer Ehrendekrete', in id. and P. Zanker (eds.), *Stadt und Bürgerbild im Hellenismus* (Munich 1995), 241-50.

³⁰ For a recent discussion of Greek biography as an essential constituent of Greek historiography, see G. Schepens, 'Zum Verhältnis von Biographie und Geschichtsschreibung in hellenistischer Zeit', in M. Erler and S. Schorn (eds.), *Die griechische Biographie in hellenistischer Zeit*, *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 245 (Berlin - New York 2007), 335-62, who also provides an invaluable summary of the extensive bibliography on this issue.

Again, several similar cases suggest that the Claros decrees are part of a wider development. The two decrees in honour of Apollonios from neighbouring Metropolis, recently published by B. Dreyer and H. Engelmann, provide ample biographical information on the dedicatee.³¹ The earlier decree, passed some time between 145 and 143 BC, sheds light on the education of Apollonios, on the widespread prestige that he earned during his youth and on his subsequent involvement in local politics, which culminated in his participation in several diplomatic missions and in resolving a controversy on boundaries with the neighbouring communities. This decree contains no provisions for the public display of the text, which are however explicitly set out in another decree for Apollonios, passed during the Aristonicus War, certainly before 130. The interpretation of the decree is problematical in some respects, especially concerning the development of the Aristonicus War. However, the justification for the honours decreed for Apollonios is quite clear. The decision was taken after his death, in acknowledgement of the contribution he had made to the campaign against Aristonicus (l. 17-18: 'he undertook both to say and to do everything against the man who had appropriated the throne for himself against the decisions of the Romans'). Apollonios' deeds and his eventual death in the campaign earned him the gratitude of the city, and a bronze statue was erected in his honour in the agora. Moreover, his sons, Attalos and Hegesandros, readily agreed to fund the construction of a *herōon* where the grave of the great man would be located. The similarities with the case of Chaeremon are apparent. The emphasis is on local pride and on the gratitude of the city, although there is an important section on the biography of Apollonios. The honours decreed for the great man are rather extraordinary, but it is interesting to note that the city did not sustain the whole financial burden: the *herōon*, while endorsed by the city, was built on private land, and at the expense of Apollonios' sons.

A further step was taken a generation later, at the time of the First Mithridatic War, when Diodoros Paspáros from Pergamum earned a distinguished record through civic service in diplomatic missions and public benefactions. His activity was especially remarkable in the aftermath of the conflict, when Diodoros visited Rome and obtained substantial fiscal concessions for his city, which had been severely punished in the Sullan reorganisation of the province of Asia. The achievements of Diodoros led to the establishment of a personal cult, whose most prominent features were the creation of a

³¹ B. Dreyer and H. Engelmann, *Die Inschriften von Metropolis I* (= IK 63) (Bonn 2005). See the excellent discussion by C.P. Jones, 'Events Surrounding the Bequest of Pergamon to Rome and the Revolt of Aristonicus: New Inscriptions from Metropolis', *JRA* 17 (2004), 469-85; see also B. Virgilio, 'Sui decreti di Metropolis in onore di Apollonio', *Studi Ellenistici* 19 (2006), 249-268, republished in T. Gnoli and F. Muccioli (eds.), *Atti del convegno di studi «Incontri tra culture nell'Oriente ellenistico e romano». Ravenna 11-12 marzo 2005* (Milan 2007), 71-86. On the Aristonicus War, see P. Brun, 'Les Cités grecques et la guerre: l'exemple de la guerre d'Aristonicos', in J.-C. Couvenhes and H.-L. Fernoux (eds.), *Les Cités grecques et la guerre en Asie Mineure à l'époque hellénistique*, Collection Perspectives Historiques 7 (Tours 2004), 21-54; F. Coarelli, 'Aristonico', in B. Virgilio (ed.), *Studi ellenistici XVI* (Pisa 2005), 211-40.

tribe named after Diodoros, the setting up of a golden statue, and the assignment of a sacred precinct. The precinct was home to the display of a number of inscriptions that recorded both Diodoros' achievements and his benefactions. Instead of a full, systematic account of his life and deeds, such as the Colophonians had constructed for Polemaios and Menippos, the Pergamenes chose to celebrate the achievements of their fellow-citizen by juxtaposing various moments in his life. However, the outcome is comparable: the recent history of the city could be studied through the achievements of its most prominent citizen, and the cult of Diodoros was prominent in the whole city.³²

The case of Diodoros has received a great deal of scholarly attention and quite rightly so, since its evidence is so rich and remarkable in many respects.³³ It is important, however, to see it as part of a wider phenomenon. Two generations before Diodoros, a Pergamene notable called Menodoros was honoured in a civic decree that celebrated his manifold abilities.³⁴ He was celebrated as a distinguished citizen already as a young man, both as a priest and a successful athlete, and he was a decisive figure in the transition to 'democracy' — i.e. the regaining of complete autonomy after the end of Attalid rule — and played a leading role in the negotiations with the Roman committee that was in charge of setting up the new province of Asia between 133 and 129. His dealings with the first Roman governor, M. Aquilius, were equally beneficial to the city, which could reap the rewards of Menodoros' forthright methods (*παρρησία*). The honours decreed by the city are unknown because the text of the inscription breaks off after line 24. However, the text is explicit enough: at Pergamum, as in other cities of Asia Minor, recording the honours voted for a prominent citizen was an excellent opportunity to provide a summary of recent history, and to describe the deeds of a distinguished citizen within the wider context of the city's policies.

The merging of an account of local history with the celebration of the deeds of an individual was not exclusive to inscriptions. As is well known, most of the rich tradition of local history that was produced in the Greek world did not survive. The little that is left can be gleaned from Jacoby's collection of fragments. A similar fate befell the copious production of *politeiai*, *nomima* and *nomoi*, whose connection to local history

³² We cannot tell to what extent the history of Pergamum featured in the work of Philip of Pergamum; on the little we know about its historiographical agenda, see the extract from Philip's *prooimion* in *IG* 4².687 from Epidaurus, with P. Goukowski, 'Philippe de Pergame et l'histoire des guerres civiles', in C. Brixhe (ed.), *Hellenika Symmeikta* 2 (Paris 1995), 39-53.

³³ For a handy inventory of the whole dossier, see D. Kienast, 'Diodoros Paspasos', *RE*, Suppl. XII (Stuttgart 1970), 224-32, no. 61, at 224-25. The best discussion of its chronology and context is C.P. Jones, 'Diodoros Paspasos and the Nikephoria in Pergamon', *Chiron* 4 (1974), 183-205; see also C.P. Jones, 'Diodoros Paspasos Revisited', *Chiron* 30 (2000), 1-14; H. Müller, 'Pergamenische Parerga', *Chiron* 33 (2003), 419-45, at 433-45. P. Gauthier, *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs (IV^e-I^{er} siècle av. J.-Chr.): contribution à l'histoire des institutions*, BCH Supplement 12 (Paris 1985), 51-53, 59-60 has some important remarks on the evolution of public honours in the late Hellenistic period, largely based on the dossier of Diodoros.

³⁴ *SEG* 50.1211; the *editio princeps* is M. Wörrle, 'Pergamon um 133 v. Chr.', *Chiron* 30 (2000), 543-76, followed by an invaluable historical commentary.

was (as one might expect) very close and significant.³⁵ Strands of local historical traditions have been identified and studied in all the great historical narratives that have come down to us, from Herodotus to Herodian. However, the only work of local history known in some detail is Memnon's *History of Heraclea Pontica*, summarised in Photius' *Bibliotheca*.³⁶ The date of its composition is uncertain, but it contained a detailed section on the Mithridatic Wars and their aftermath, in which a local notable, Brithagoras, played a leading role. After several vicissitudes, Brithagoras ended up spending the last decade of his life as part of Caesar's entourage hoping to obtain recognition for the city's autonomy from the new man in power. The hope went unfulfilled, as far as we know, since Brithagoras died before obtaining Caesar's *beneficium*; and the later legal status of the city is unknown. There are no Heracleian inscriptions mentioning Brithagoras or his diplomatic commitment, but it is safe to assume that his efforts found some recognition in the epigraphical record, as well as in the historical work of Domitius Callistratus, Memnon's apparent source (*FGrHist* 433).

Memnon appears to be, in many ways, a typically Hellenistic historian, with his liking for the all-embracing historical interpretations on the nature of Roman rule, or his taste for the portrait of the remarkable individual, be it Mithridates Eupator or Brithagoras himself. It is not surprising that his local history was influenced by the modes and forms of the new great historiographical sub-genre of the Hellenistic age — biography. In this respect, the lines of contact between literature and epigraphy are deeper than it has often been thought.³⁷ A considerable part of the public epigraphy

³⁵ See the invaluable survey in G. Schepens and J. Bollansée, 'Frammenti di politeiai, nomoi e nomima. Prolegomeni ad una nuova edizione', in S. Cataldi (ed.), *Poleis e Politeiai. Esperienze politiche, tradizioni letterarie, progetti costituzionali (Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Storia Greca. Torino, 29-31 maggio 2002)* (Alessandria 2004), 259-85. For a wide-ranging historiographical discussion, see also G. Schepens, 'Ancient Greek Histories. Self-Definition through History Writing', in K. Demoen (ed.), *The Greek City from Antiquity to the Present. Historical Reality, Ideological Construction, Literary Representation* (Leuven-Paris-Sterling 2001), 3-25; cf., from a different angle, K. Clarke, *Making Time for the Past. Local History and the Polis* (Oxford 2008), 169-93.

³⁶ *FGrHist* 434. Memnon has received quite a lot of scholarly attention lately: see F. Santangelo, 'Memnone di Eraclea e il dominio romano in Asia Minore', *Simblós* 4 (2004), 247-61; Yarrow (above, n. 13), 138-45; D. Dueck, 'Memnon of Herakleia on Rome and the Romans', in T. Bekker-Nielsen (ed.), *Rome and the Black Sea Region, Black Sea Studies 5* (Aarhus 2006), 43-61; P. Desideri, 'I Romani visti dall'Asia: riflessioni sulla sezione romana della Storia di Eraclea di Memnone', in G. Urso (ed.), *Tra Oriente e Occidente. Indigeni, Greci e Romani in Asia Minore. Atti del Convegno internazionale Cividale del Friuli, 28-30 settembre 2006* (Pisa 2007), 45-59.

³⁷ The point has already been made in some contributions devoted to the early Hellenistic period: K. Rosen, 'Ehrendekrete, Biographie und Geschichtsschreibung. Zum Wandel der griechischen Polis im frühen Hellenismus', *Chiron* 17 (1987), 277-92, esp. 288-90, with convincing remarks on the political implications of the moral dimension of honorary decrees; R.M. Errington, 'Biographie in hellenistischen Inschriften', in K. Vössing (ed.), *Biographie und Prosopographie. Internationales Kolloquium zum 65. Geburtstag von Anthony R. Birley*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 178 (Stuttgart 2005), 13-28, where the emphasis is mainly on Athenian material (cf. the passing reference to the consequences of the coming of Rome at 27).

produced in the transition between the second and the first centuries BC was about some prominent individuals: the examples discussed above are only a selection of the most significant cases. The pattern is quite familiar: a set of honours was awarded to a prominent individual; the inscription recording this decision then became the occasion for a full summary of his biography, his public activity, and his place in the history of the city. It is true that most of these documents were part of a monument, and were usually accompanied by a statue — often a crowned one. However, they were lengthy and detailed texts, which were meant to be read carefully by those who were capable of doing so. They definitely deserve to be included within an account of the development of Greek biography, not least because they developed a typical feature of Hellenistic literature, the biographical encomium, which enjoyed increasing success since Isocrates' day.³⁸ At the same time, of course, they were typical historical document of their own time, with their emphasis on the role of the local elites, their careful recording of the euergetic activity of an individual, and their explicit stress on civic autonomy in the difficult context of Rome's rising hegemony.

There was, of course, a tradition of civic decrees in honour of prominent citizens throughout the Hellenistic period, and especially in the second century BC, as shown by the cases of Archippe of Kyme or Pamphilos of Adramytteion.³⁹ These figures played a crucial role as intermediaries between cities and rulers; their role was crucial in the world they lived in. However, the inscriptions that pay tribute to them do not have a biographical *côté*; the honours are carefully recorded and the merits of the dedicatees are duly celebrated, but there is no attempt to build a full-scale biographical narrative. The same may be said about the lengthy inscription in honour of Kallias of Sphettos from the Athenian agora (270/269 BC) and the even lengthier decree for the benefactor Protogenes of Olbia (late third-early second century BC).⁴⁰

It appears that a change of perspective intervened in the second century BC, and became even clearer in the first century. The decree that the Greeks of Chersonnesus voted in honour of Mithridates' general Diophantos from Sinope ca. 107 BC is a text of great complexity, which provides a wide-ranging narrative and reveals clear literary ambitions.⁴¹ However, it is not a full-scale biography either, as the account of Diophantos' merits starts with his military involvement in the area. Again, the decree focuses on his achievements, not on his life. After all, he was a foreigner; the city could claim no credit for his upbringing and education. On the other hand, it is not surprising to find a biographical framework in the chronicle of the history of Paros written by

³⁸ A.D. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), 81-82.

³⁹ Archippe: *SEG* 33.1035-41; Pamphilos: *IvAdramytteion* 17.

⁴⁰ Kallias: T.L. Shear, Jr., *Kallias of Sphettos and the Revolt of Athens in 286 B.C.*, *Hesperia Supplement* 17 (Princeton 1978) = *SEG* 28.60; Protogenes: *IOSPE* 1².32 = *Syll.*³ 495.

⁴¹ *IOSPE* 1².352 = *Syll.*³ 709, with A. Chaniotis, 'Das Ehrendekret für Diophantos (*IOSPE* I² 352) und die Geschichtsschreibung', in A. Fol, V. Zhivkov and N. Nedjalkov (eds.), *Acta Centri Historiae Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 2 (Sofia 1987), 233-35; Chaniotis (above, n. 20), 210-11. On the historical context of the inscription, see L. Boffo, 'Grecità di frontiera: Chersonasos Taurica e i signori del Ponto Eusino (*SIG*³ 709) *Athenaeum* 67 (1989), 211-59.

Sosthenes in the first century BC, recounted in an important inscription from Paros.⁴² The history of the city is told through the account of the life of its greatest citizen, the poet Archilochus, and a series of quotations from his poems. Sosthenes' work may safely be dated to the early first century BC, but the source that he used, the local historian Demeas, dates back to the third century (*FGrHist* 502). In this remarkable text, the boundaries between contemporary history and biography are successfully elided, and the exemplary life of an illustrious citizen becomes a vantage point on the history and the identity of a whole community. Sosthenes' endeavour, however, had an unapologetically antiquarian flavour, which the other first-century texts that we have discussed so far did not (and could not afford to) have. They are immersed in the thick of a complex political process, in a bitter fight for autonomy and freedom that required new political and ideological strategies.

4. Epigraphy, biography and local history: Aphrodisias and Priene

As noted above, autonomy is the central issue underlying most of the epigraphical evidence for the Hellenistic period, and the coming of Rome did not bring about substantial changes.⁴³ Even when there is no evidence for honorary decrees for one or several prominent citizens, the focus of the public epigraphy of the Greek cities of Asia Minor conveys a picture of civic autonomy and local pride. There is plenty of evidence in Aphrodisias recording the activity of local notables, especially that of the great C. Zoilus, the imperial freedman whose acquaintance with Augustus brought so many rewards to the city. The inscriptions in his honour, however, all have a factual tone, and are on the whole rather dry — quite similar to the famous *s.c. de Asclepiade sociisque* that records the privileges bestowed upon Asclepiades from Clazomenae, Polystratos from Carystus and Meniskos from Miletus on account of their services to Rome (written in Greek, but passed in Rome in 78 BC), or to the dossier that defines the special status of Octavian's admiral Seleucus of Rhosus (consisting of documents that can be dated between 36 and 31 BC).⁴⁴ We seem to have better luck with the anonymous citizen whose bravery is celebrated in five late Republican inscriptions along with a careful

⁴² *IG* 12.5.445 and *Suppl.* = *SEG* 15.518. For a useful survey of the problems posed by this text and the earlier chronicle by Mnesiepes inscribed on the same monument, see C. Marcaccini, *Costruire un'identità, scrivere la storia: Archiloco, Paro e la colonizzazione di Taso* (Studi e testi 20) (Florence 2001), 116–48, who however overlooks the important discussion in A. Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften. Epigraphische Beiträge zur griechischen Historiographie*, HABES 4 (Stuttgart 1988), 57–68.

⁴³ The systematic study of territorial inviolability shows that there is a fair amount of continuity between Hellenistic and Roman times: see K.J. Rigsby, *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1996), esp. 27–29.

⁴⁴ Respectively *RDGE* 22 and 58. See A.J. Marshall, 'Friends of the Roman People', *AJP* 89 (1968), 39–55; A. Raggi, 'Senatus Consultum de Asclepiade Clazomenio Sociisque', *ZPE* 135 (2001), 73–116; id., *Seleuco di Rhosus. Cittadinanza e privilegi nell'Oriente greco in età tardo-repubblicana*, Studi Ellenistici 18 (Pisa 2006), whose chronological reconstruction I am following here.

record of his *cursus honorum* and of the tributes paid to him, but the fragmentary nature of these texts prevents us from making the most of their potential.⁴⁵

However, the public epigraphy of Aphrodisias is most remarkable for its series of documents that deal with the status and the privileges of the community. The best-known example of public epigraphy at Aphrodisias is the so-called ‘archive wall’ (the south wall of the north *parodos* of the theatre) which contains a series of inscriptions preserving official messages sent to the city by several Roman governors, the triumvirs, and a number of emperors until Decius, all gathered and put up in the early third century AD.⁴⁶ This group of texts, however, is of limited interest to us as it mainly focuses on the imperial period. Other features of the epigraphical and monumental landscape at Aphrodisias are more directly relevant to our period. In the Augustan age the northern end of the theatre stage hosted a monument in honour of a local notable called Artemidoros, who led the forces of Plarasa/Aphrodisias in the First Mithridatic War. The monument appears to have included copies of at least three inscriptions that recorded some important moments in the history of Aphrodisias in the early first century BC. When the orchestra and stage were remodelled in the second half of the second century AD, Artemidoros’ monument was apparently dismantled, but at least three inscriptions that were part of it were re-inscribed and displayed again (*AR* no. 2-4). They were copies of copies, as their imperial lettering unmistakably suggests, but they were still worth displaying in one of the most prestigious sites of the city.⁴⁷

Indeed, a credible version of Aphrodisias’ early history could be written, and indeed displayed, through inscriptions that recorded a number of dealings with the Roman power on the life and affairs of the community. The loyalty that it showed during the Mithridatic War could still be relevant, or at least worth recording even several centuries later. The city, as is well known, supported the Roman governor at a difficult moment during the war against Mithridates. The arrangements made by the city are set out in a decree of the Council and the People (*AR* no. 2), which insists at length on the complete commitment of the community to the Roman cause, and ends with the famous emphatic

⁴⁵ J.M. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, JRS Monographs 1 (London 1982), nos. 28-32.

⁴⁶ ‘Archive-wall’: Reynolds (above, n. 45) nos. 6-21. The use of the word ‘archive’ in this context is not unanimously accepted: see e.g. A. Chaniotis, ‘Vom Erlebnis zum Mythos: Identitätskonstruktionen im kaiserzeitlichen Aphrodisias’, in E. Schwertheim and E. Winter (eds.), *Stadt und Stadtentwicklung in Kleinasien*, Asia Minor Studien 50 (Bonn 2003), 69-84, at 73; cf. also 82: ‘ein epigraphisches Dossier, das viel eher einem historiographischen Werk als einem Archiv ähnelt’. The whole paper is invaluable, especially for its emphasis on the dynamic construction of local identity at Aphrodisias.

⁴⁷ I follow the reconstruction of Reynolds (above, n. 45), xv, 11. The focus of the available inscriptional evidence on the events related to the Mithridatic War is a blessing for the students of this period, but has the unwelcome consequence of overshadowing the early history of the city, especially the process that led to its foundation: I. Savalli Lestrade, ‘Devenir une cité: *poleis* nouvelles et aspirations civiques en Asie Mineure à la basse époque hellénistique’, in Fröhlich and Müller (above, n. 26), 9-37, at 20. One could only speculate whether this was an intended consequence or not.

statement that ‘without the rule of the Romans we do not choose even to live’.⁴⁸ A pilaster found near the north *parodos* of the theatre displays the text of the letter which Oppius sent to the city after the war to acknowledge its support, promising his patronage in the years to come (*AR* no. 3). The city claimed to owe everything to the support of Rome and to have done everything within its power to prove its loyalty. Such a claim did not conflict with a strong emphasis on civic autonomy. The other face of the pilaster on which *AR* no. 3 was inscribed displays a letter of the Bithynian king Nicomedes IV (?), which records the diplomatic contacts between the city and the kingdom in the early first century BC (*AR* no. 4).

Aphrodisias is an exceptional city in many respects, but it is not an isolated case. The eastern end and the adjoining sideway of the antechamber of the temple of Athena Polias at Priene hosted another impressive epigraphic ‘archive’, which began with the famous edict of Alexander and ended with a series of texts on territorial disputes that had concerned the city, as amply discussed by S. Sherwin-White.⁴⁹ The dossier was apparently started under Lysimachus, and was expanded over time. The most recent item in this collection was the arbitration of a Greek state (*IvPriene* 42) from the second half of the second century BC. The records of the political life of the city in the subsequent decades are found elsewhere, in another dossier which reflects a different agenda. The Nordhalle of the agora is home to an extraordinary collection of inscriptions, magisterially published by F. Hiller von Gaertringen in 1906, but often overlooked in later scholarship.⁵⁰ As at Aphrodisias, this is a collection of loosely connected inscriptions, prominently erected in a public space, which sheds light on various episodes of the history of the city. The Nordhalle was built by the Cappadocian king Orophernes around 150 BC as a reward for the loyalty and friendship of the Prienians. The inscriptions of the northern wall have different datings and are written in different hands.⁵¹ What renders this dossier most remarkable is its biographical focus: the inscriptions do not deal with important public acts, but with the lives and achievements of several local notables. A Roman citizen who probably had his acme in the age of Caesar (and at any rate after the Mithridatic War), Aulus Aemilius Zosimus, has three decrees in his honour, all shedding light on his activities as city magistrate and on his many benefactions to the community (*IvPriene* 112, 113, 114).⁵² Other local grandees

⁴⁸ *AR* no. 2, l. 13-14: χωρὶς τῆς ἰ vac ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας οὐδὲ ζῆν προαιρούμεθα vac. The decree was inscribed on one metope and is part of the frieze of the Doric entablature that runs across the remodelled stage.

⁴⁹ References, a full historical discussion and a drawing may be found in S.M. Sherwin-White, ‘The Edict of Alexander to Priene: a Reappraisal’, *JHS* 105 (1985), 69-89, esp. 69-72.

⁵⁰ F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene* (Berlin 1906), nos. 107-30; see the historical introduction at XVIII-XX. See P. Fröhlich, ‘Dépenses publiques et évergétisme des citoyens dans l’exercice des charges publiques à Priène à la basse époque hellénistique’, in Fröhlich and Müller (above, n. 26), 225-56, which is very useful on prosopographical matters and on the economic background of the dossier.

⁵¹ Hiller von Gaertringen, *IvPriene* 82-83.

⁵² R. Kallet-Marx, *Hegemony to Empire. The Development of the Roman Imperium in the East from 148 to 62 B.C.*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 15 (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford 1995), 278, n. 73 argues for a later date, possibly after 40 BC. The identification of the πόλεμος mentioned in Hiller von Gaertringen *IvPriene* 113, l. 41-42 is rather problematical.

gained a fair share of honour too: Athenopolis (107), Moschion (108), Herodes (109), Menedemos (110), Krates (111), Herakleitos (117) and another dedicatee whose name is not preserved (115). The dedications have different dates, but share some important structural features. They have a biographical approach, usually starting from the education of the dedicatee, such as the decrees for Menippos and Polemaios. They celebrate at some length the virtues of decency and generosity of the dedicatee, they carefully record the euergetic initiatives of the dedicatee and of his family and — when applicable — they mention the dealings of the individual with Rome. The inscriptions for Moschion and Herodes, for instance, can be dated by the reference to their contacts with M. Perperna, who crushed Aristonicus' revolt around 130 BC; Krates certainly acted on behalf of his city at least a decade later, as he dealt with the *publicani*, trying to contain their abuse, and tax-farming was introduced in the province of Asia by the *lex Sempronia* of 123/122 BC.⁵³ The career of Zosimus fits well with the difficult conditions in the aftermath of the Mithridatic Wars and with the economic crisis that the cities of the province of Asia faced due to Sulla's retaliation. Zosimus was the first to hold the office of *stephanophoros* after the conflict, and he gained prestige and gratitude through his numerous financial benefactions. The origin of Zosimus' fortune is suggested by his very name: he was the son of a Sextus, and he was of libertine descent. Zosimus was one of the many Roman citizens that resided in Asia Minor, where he, or perhaps his father before him, accumulated a huge fortune, surely through their dealings with the Greek East.⁵⁴ Zosimus settled in Priene, and became a leading citizen in his adoptive community while retaining his Roman citizenship. Rome, however, has a marginal presence in the narrative that these inscriptions sketch. Priene and its notables are at their centre: their own individual experiences, their merits, and their background, which is a matter of pride both for the individual and his community. Some of the documents put a strong emphasis on the intense diplomatic activities of the dedicatees, which were extraordinarily wide ranging and, at least in Moschion's case, were funded by the envoy himself, as a normal act of euergetism. We know that besides visiting neighbouring communities like Magnesia, Tralles and Cibyra, he met two kings of Syria, the king of Egypt, and even the ruler of Petra in Arabia.⁵⁵ Another important aspect of the euergetic activity was the financing of public sacrifices which are carefully recorded in the dossier. The sacrifices funded by Herodes have a special characteristic, in that their meat was destined exclusively for the members of the Boule and the current magistrates. This innovation was taken up by other notables (and has striking parallels at Pergamum) which P. Hamon has persuasively linked to a process of internal differentiation within the local elites.⁵⁶ Other texts give details of the public funerals that were awarded to

⁵³ See Kallet-Marx (above, n. 52), 147-48.

⁵⁴ D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950), 256; N. Purcell, 'Romans in the Roman World', in K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2005), 85-105, at 87-88.

⁵⁵ Magie (above, n. 54), 168; Gauthier (above, n. 33), 73-74. Kallet-Marx (above, n. 52), 278 notes that the dossier for Zosimus is concentrated on internal affairs and has nothing on diplomatic missions; this may be seen as the symptom of a crisis.

⁵⁶ P. Hamon, 'Le Conseil et la participation des citoyens: les mutations de la basse époque hellénistique', in Fröhlich and Müller (above, n. 26), 121-44, at 127-29 (with references).

some of the dedicatees, and even of the composition of their solemn funerary processions. The rewards of being a *euergetēs* had to be showcased at all times in order to encourage as many citizens as possible to undertake this role, which was a necessity for the city.⁵⁷

The most extraordinary aspect of these documents is their length: the dedication to Moschion is 383 lines long; that for Herodes has 279 preserved lines. They may not be very complex texts in themselves, with their fairly predictable sequence of merits and public duties, but they are so exceptionally detailed that it is difficult to make them fit in the usual tradition of honorary epigraphy. Yet, they do belong to the select number of honorary inscriptions from the late Hellenistic period that have a clear biographical framework. They are certainly not ‘reader-friendly’: they are written in small letters, and they could have hardly been legible even to most of the literate residents of the city (no matter what view we take concerning literacy rates in the ancient world).⁵⁸ One might even speculate that they were circulated in a different format as well, possibly as pamphlets. We are explicitly told that one of Zosimus’ great merits in his capacity of *grammateus* of the Boule and the People was to arrange for public records to be transcribed on papyri and parchments.⁵⁹ It can be argued that such a keen interest in record-keeping was matched by the intent to single out some of those lengthy texts and to publish them as free-standing pieces. It is worth noting that a few decades earlier, towards the end of the second century BC, political biographies and autobiographies started to circulate in Rome.

* * *

Let us go back to our starting point. Like many of his contemporaries, Sallust knew how central the whole experience of the Mithridatic Wars had been in the making of the Roman empire, and how significant the figure of the king was. He was uninterested, however, in collecting the evidence on the manner in which the Greek communities of Asia Minor came to terms with Mithridates, his project and the king’s defeat. It is to this aspect of the diverse political and cultural landscape of early first century Asia Minor that we have turned our attention in the second part of this paper, which dealt with the evidence for attempts to write a history of the period from a local perspective. In his seminal book on history in Greek inscriptions, A. Chaniotis remarked that there was a

⁵⁷ E. Chiricat, ‘Funérailles publiques et enterrement au gymnase à l’époque hellénistique’, in Fröhlich and Müller (above, n. 26), 207-23, at 222.

⁵⁸ Ancient literacy has been intensely debated over the last couple of decades. W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA - London 1989) is a seminal contribution, although not everyone accepts the conservative estimate of the literacy rate in the ancient world that is one of its central contentions. See also J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *Literacy in the Roman World*, JRA Supplementary Series 3 (Ann Arbor 1991); A.K. Bowman and G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge 1994); A. Mackay (ed.), *Orality, Literacy, Memory in the Ancient Greek and Roman World* (Leiden - Boston 2008).

⁵⁹ See Hiller von Gærtringen, *IvPriene* no. 112, l. 23-26; 113, l. 17-18; 114, l. 9-11, 28-30. The inscriptions leave us in no doubt about how important a contribution this was to the stability of the city’s position in the wider world: see Hiller’s commentary on *IvPriene* 112, l. 23-26; Quass (above, n. 22), 297-98; Purcell (above, n. 54), 88.

lull in historical interest between the second and the first centuries BC; in his view, the Roman conquest had depressed any serious attempt to think about history, or quite simply tell it.⁶⁰ The inscriptional evidence that we have discussed here suggests quite a different picture. A number of documents published during the last two decades and the reinterpretation of known materials point to an unremitting interest in local history on the part of the Greek cities and their elites.

What is quite new, and definitely remarkable, about the late Hellenistic evidence is the fact that local history was often told through inscriptions in honour of local notables who distinguished themselves by their benefactions and by their diplomatic abilities. The process is already noticeable towards the end of the second century, but it appears to become more prominent in the aftermath of the First Mithridatic War. As usual, we need to be cautious in setting too firm a chronological limit, since much of the evidence has not survived. As it was so often the case in the Hellenistic world, the new kind of epigraphy that emerged towards the end of the second century BC gave scope for experiment and diversity, and the forms and methods varied from city to city. Most of the time, it was the city itself that spoke through the official language of its decrees; in other cases the role was filled by documents written in other contexts and by foreign hands, as is the case at Nysa. The consistent feature is the strongly biographical focus of these inscriptions, as a result of which biography and local history came together. The thriving success of the biographical genre in the Hellenistic period must be only part of the explanation. It is through biography that the connection between individual and city could be most strongly asserted, and the emphasis on the local tradition and enduring legacy of a community could be most forcefully restated. At the same time, celebrating the extraordinary contribution of an individual was a good service to historical accuracy. After all, it was thanks to a growing network of personal associations that the Roman rule in the Greek East consolidated so strongly after the Mithridatic crisis and the Sullan resettlement.

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⁶⁰ Chaniotis (above, n. 42), 136-37; but cf. the same author's discussions of *IOSPE* 1².352 mentioned above in n. 41. Cf. also the different approach of the general discussion by L. Boffo, 'Epigrafi di città greche: un'espressione di storiografia locale', in: *Studi di storia e storiografia antiche per Emilio Gabba* (Como 1988), 9-48, and, most recently, Clarke (above, n. 35), 319-38.