

THE 'ULTIMATE FRONTIER':  
WAR, TERROR AND THE GREEK *POLEIS*  
BETWEEN MITHRIDATES AND ROME

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“On the one hand, we have to see the world in terms of the choices made by these local communities; on the other, we have to remember that Rome was not the only imperialist power [in the East], and that Roman control was fluctuating and incomplete throughout most of the century.”<sup>2</sup>

In 88 Mithridates VI Eupator instigated a great number of Greek *poleis*. With Ephesus at its head, they systematically murdered, on the same day, all the *romaioi* who for decades had controlled their ports and were in charge of collecting *vectigalia* in the name of Rome.<sup>3</sup> All of this took place a few months after Mithridates' spring intervention in the province of Asia, when the Pontic kingdom took advantage of the Republic's

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<sup>2</sup> F. Millar, 'The Mediterranean and the Roman revolution: politics, war, and the economy', in H.M. Cotton—G.M. Rogers (eds.), *Rome, the Greek World, and the East* vol. 1 (Chapel Hill—London 2002), 224–225.

<sup>3</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 22; 54; 62; Cicero, *pro Lege Manilia* 3.8; 5.11; Cicero, *pro Flacco* 57; 59; Livius, *Periochae* 78; Velleius Paterculus, 2.38.1; Valerius Maximus, 9.2.3; Tacitus, *Annales* 4.14.2; Plutarch, *Sulla* 24.7; Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* 6.2.2–3; Eutropius, 5.5.2; Florus 1.40.7. See, most recently: S. Alcock, 'Making sure you know whom to kill: spatial strategies and strategic boundaries in the Eastern Roman Empire', *Millennium* 4 (2007), 13–20; T. Ñaco—B. Antela-Bernárdez—I. Arrayás-Morales—S. Busquets-Artigas, 'The impact of the Roman intervention in Greece and Asia Minor upon civilians (88–63 BC)', in B. Antela—T. Ñaco (eds.), *Transforming Historical Landscapes in the Ancient Empires, BA.R., Int.Ser.* 1986 (Oxford 2009), 38–39; A. Mayor, *The Poison King* (Princeton 2009), 13–26.

weakness, still in the midst of the Social War, to advance decisively over Roman territory. Later on, in 85, the deportation of the majority of the population of the city of Chios, also under Mithridates' orders, had the contrary effect on Greek public opinion, which largely rejected it, even in the cities that had initially supported the Pontic king.<sup>4</sup>

Both cases indicate that the Mithridatic Wars elevated the scale of violence in the Eastern Mediterranean to rates that were previously unknown, with intense combats and harsh reprisals. Nevertheless, neither army suffered the most in the conflict; the situation of intense war and prolonged periods of 'cold war' notably increased collateral damage, which took the form of sieges and plunder of the urban centres, seriously affecting its inhabitants. Confronted with such atrocities, it was very difficult for the *poleis* to respond unanimously, for they were socially and politically divided; a situation that was undoubtedly used by both powers. The support to either Mithridates or the Republic depended on who controlled the city at each moment, either the *demos* or certain aristocratic factions. After all, the survival of these elites also depended on the eventual success or failure of their political alliance with one of the two superpowers.<sup>5</sup> It is precisely this 'ultimate frontier', understood in geostrategical terms, that this article will analyze in detail, using evidence from the cities of continental Greece, the islands and Asia Minor.

### SIX TOWNS, TWO SUPERPOWERS, ONE DESTINY

During the year 101/100, Athens suffered a harsh slave revolt.<sup>6</sup> The economic losses resulted in the impoverishment of a good portion of Athenian society.<sup>7</sup> In the following decade, the most significant posts in

<sup>4</sup> Appian *Mithridateios* 46–47; Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 23; M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1941), 2; 941–942; W.Z. Rubinsohn, 'Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos and Rome's conquest of the Hellenistic east', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 8.1 (1993), 31–33; R. Kallet-Marx, *Hegemony to Empire* (Berkeley—Los Angeles—London 1995), 271; L. Ballesteros Pastor, *Mithridates Eupator, rey del Ponto* (Granada 1996), 130–133; J. Thornton, 'Terror, terrorismo e imperialismo. Violenza e intimidazione nell'età della conquista romana', in G. Urso (ed.), *Terror et pavor* (Pisa 2006), 290–291.

<sup>5</sup> F. Santangelo, *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire* (Leiden-Boston 2007), 20–49; J.M. Madsen, 'The ambitions of Mithridates VI: Hellenistic kingship and modern Interpretation', in J.M. Højte (ed.), *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom* (Aarhus 2009), 191–201.

<sup>6</sup> *SIG*<sup>2</sup> 711; E. Badian, 'Rome, Athens and Mithridates', *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976), 105–128; S.V. Tracy, *IG II<sup>2</sup> 2336* (Meisenheim am Glan 1982), 155–182.

<sup>7</sup> S.V. Tracy, 'Athens in 100', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 83 (1979), 233.

Athenian politics were held by a reduced number of figures,<sup>8</sup> probably the only ones with sufficient capital to confront the elevated costs of the main positions of public responsibility.<sup>9</sup> The source of wealth of this dominating group, with Medeios of Piraeus at its head, apparently came from the commerce of the island of Delos.<sup>10</sup> Actually, the men who monopolized political posts during the decade of the 90s also did the same with the rest of the offices on Delos. In 91, Medeios was elected and then re-elected Archon several times until 88,<sup>11</sup> and in 88/7, *anarchia* was declared. This unusual situation is reflected in Athenion's speech, in which he judged the Roman senate responsible for the situation in Athens. Thus, with the support of many impoverished citizens,<sup>12</sup> Athenion seized power in Athens.<sup>13</sup> He then sent Apellicon of Teos to Delos to assure Athenian control over the Delian treasure.<sup>14</sup> The mission was unsuccessful, and nothing more is known of Athenion or Apellicon.<sup>15</sup> Shortly after, the Pontic general Archelaos reduced Delos by force.<sup>16</sup> The money obtained helped finance the government of the Epicurean Aristion, who governed Athens as a loyal ally of Mithridates until Sulla deposed him in 86.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Athens, the city of Kos almost brought disaster on itself in 88 by joining the *poleis* of Asia that had sided with Mithridates. Fortunately

<sup>8</sup> P. MacKendrick, *The Athenian Aristocracy 339 to 31 BC* (Cambridge 1969), 55; E. Badian, op. cit. (n. 6), 106; Tracy, op. cit. (n. 6), 159–164.

<sup>9</sup> D. Glew, 'The Selling of the King', *Hermes* 105 (1977), 255; S.V. Tracy, op. cit. (n. 7), 207.

<sup>10</sup> On Athens and Delos: C. Habicht, *Athens from Alexander to Anthony* (Cambridge 1997), 246–263. On the Roman interests in Delos, see: C. Hasenohr—C. Müller, 'Gentilices et circulation des Italiens: quelques reflexions méthodologiques', in C. Hasenohr—C. Müller (eds.), *Les Italiens dans le Monde Grec* (Paris 2002), 13–16; C. Habicht, 'Roman citizens in Athens (228–231)', in M.C. Hoff—S.I. Rotroff (eds.), *The Romanization of Athens* (Oxford 1997), 9–17; C. Hasenohr, 'Les Italiens à Délos: entre romanité et hellénisme', *Pallas* 73 (2007), 221–232. On Athens and Rome: E. Candiloro, 'Politica e cultura en Atene da Pidna alla guerra Mitridaica', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 14 (1965), 134–176.

<sup>11</sup> An unprecedented event in Athenian politics: E. Badian, op. cit. (n. 6), 108.

<sup>12</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.20.5.; B. Antela-Bernárdez, 'Between Medeios and Mithridates: The Peripathetic Constitution of Athens in 88 BC', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 171 (2009), 105–108.

<sup>13</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 5.212–213; L. Ballesteros Pastor, 'Atenión', *Studia Historica. Historia Antigua* 23 (2005), 385–400.

<sup>14</sup> C. Hoff, 'Sulla's siege of Athens in 87/6 BC and its aftermath', in Hoff—Retroff 1997, op. cit. (n. 10), 34; B. Antela-Bernárdez, 'Sila no vino a aprender Historia Antigua', *Revue des Études Anciennes* 111.2 (2009), 475–491.

<sup>15</sup> B. Antela-Bernárdez, op. cit. (n. 12).

<sup>16</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 214D–215B; Appian, *Mithridateios* 28; Pausanias 1; 20,5; Plutarch, *Lucullus* 12.1.

<sup>17</sup> G.R. Bugh, 'Athenion and Aristion', *Phoenix* 46 (1992), 108–123.

for Kos, its actions at the beginning and end of the Pontic dominion of Asia were sufficient to avoid the direct consequences of Roman revenge, because, like Chios, Kos protected the Roman and Italian settlers from the massacre that spread throughout the Asian cities.<sup>18</sup> Kos only accepted to surrender to Mithridates' demands out of pure necessity, for the island was not prepared to sustain a Pontic assault, like neighbouring Rhodes had done.<sup>19</sup> Instead, the latter showed itself a loyal ally of Rome. From the beginning of Roman intervention in Hellenistic affairs, at the end of the third century BC, Rhodes played a predominant role in the relations between Rome and the local powers, although the tensions that broke out periodically conditioned the policy of the city for the following centuries. After Pydna (168), the Republic punished Rhodes' ambiguous attitude during the Third Macedonian War. This was carried out by directly attacking the commercial capacities of Lycia and Caria and creating the free Port of Delos.<sup>20</sup> Considering the complex Romano-Rhodian relationship of the second century, as well as their behaviour during the First Mithridatic War, it is hardly surprising that the Rhodians adopted a resigned and loyal alliance with Rome, conscious that the latter unquestionably dominated the whole Mediterranean, despite the temporary victories of Mithridates.<sup>21</sup>

During the very last period of the First Mithridatic War, Pergamon and other Asian *poleis* were directly involved in combat (Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 24.4). The imminent arrival of Fimbria forced Mithridates to flee the city that he had made his capital since the winter of 89, while he helplessly watched the defection of most of the Asian *poleis*.<sup>22</sup> There are three inscriptions that refer to the king's period at Pergamon that are dedicated to his supporters: two in

<sup>18</sup> A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East 168 BC to AD 1* (London 1984), 240.

<sup>19</sup> K. Buraselis, *Kos. Between Hellenism and Rome* (Philadelphia 2000), 15.

<sup>20</sup> E.S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the coming of Rome* 1 (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1984), 39–40.

<sup>21</sup> Its role as a Roman ally may already be seen in the campaigns against the pirates: H.A. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World* (Liverpool-London 1924), 208–209; Ph. de Souza, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge 1999); Ph. de Souza, 'Naval battles and sieges', *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* (Cambridge 2008), 1; 435–437.

<sup>22</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 52; 56; Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* 6.2.10; Livius, *Periochae* 83.1; Plutarch, *Sulla* 23.7; *Lucullus* 3.4; Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 24.5; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, op. cit. (n. 4), 175–180; F. de Callataÿ, *L'histoire des guerres mithridatiques vue par les monnaies* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1997) 5; 40–42; 286–293; 321–325; 332.

honour of respective *strategoi* (I.Perg. 453–454) and one dedicated to the priest Asclepiades (I.Perg. 474). A fourth one might have honoured a pro-Roman *strategos*, who, at the arrival of Fimbria, resisted in the acropolis (I.Perg. 455; IGRR 4, 298).<sup>23</sup> The inscription records the stress suffered in Pergamon in those days; a divided city and symbol of the adherence of the Asian cities to the Pontic cause,<sup>24</sup> which had, furthermore, participated in the massacre of *romaioi* decreed by Eupator.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that the *strategos* took over the reign of the city after the flight of the king, as the leader of the pro-Roman elite faction and, therefore, initiated the transition towards the restitution of Roman control.<sup>26</sup>

During the Mithridatic wars, the destiny of Heraclea Pontica was marked by a calculated equidistance between Rome's interests and those of the Pontic king. Most of the historical evidence for this period derives from the historian, Memnon who was probably of Heracleian origin.<sup>27</sup> Despite the geographical proximity of Pontus, Heraclea's pro-Roman character was well established since the beginning of the second century, probably thanks to a certain military alliance of mutual protection.<sup>28</sup> After receiving several legations from Heraclea during the war between Antiochus III and Rome (192–189), Memnon records the brothers Publius and Cornelius Scipio sending a letter ratifying, in the name of the senate, the terms of a military alliance. It was promulgated through a double inscription in bronze (Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 18.6–10). However, since there exists a similar inscription referring to Heraclea under Latmos, this may cause a degree of confusion. This inscription, attributed to the second Heraclea and dated to

<sup>23</sup> T. Drew-Bear, 'Deux décrets hellénistiques d'Asie Mineure', *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 96 (1972), 435–471; C.P. Jones, 'Diodoros Paspáros and the Nikephoria of Pergamon', *Chiron* 4 (1974), 198–199.

<sup>24</sup> B.C. McGing, *The Foreign Policy of Mithridates VI Eupator King of Pontus* (Leiden 1986), 94–108; B. Virgilio, *Gli Attalidi di Pergamo* (Pisa 1993), 73–74.

<sup>25</sup> M. Sartre, 'Tuez-les tous ou les Grecs, Rome et Mithridate VI Eupator', *Histoires Grecques* (Paris 2006), 315–323.

<sup>26</sup> Virgilio 1993, op. cit. (n. 24), 74–75.

<sup>27</sup> H.B. Mattingly, 'Rome's earliest relations with Byzantium, Heraclea Pontica and Callatis', in A.G. Poulter (ed.), *Ancient Bulgaria* (Nottingham 1983), 1; 241–143; 249–250; L. Jonnes, *The inscriptions of Heraclea Pontica* (Bonn 1994); S.Y. Saprykin, *Heracleia Pontica and Tauric Chersonesus before Roman Domination. VI–I centuries BC* (Amsterdam 1997).

<sup>28</sup> S.M. Burstein, *Outpost of Hellenism: the emergence of Heraclea on the Black Sea* (Berkeley—London—Los Angeles 1976), 1–3; D.B. Erciyas, *Wealth, aristocracy and royal propaganda under the Hellenistic kingdom of the Mithradatids* (Leiden-Boston 2006), 11; 13.

c. 190, mentions a letter, in which both Scipios recognized the ‘freedom’ of the city, just before announcing the arrival of L. Orbius, “so that no one should trouble you” (CIG 3800, lin. 16–17), perhaps as the head of a hypothetical Roman garrison. Actually, in the midst of the Macedonian War in 171, Heraclea Pontica sent two triremes to Chalcis, where the Roman fleet of M. Lucretius was docked, although the latter refused the reinforcements (Livy, 42.56.5–7). This dispatch must have been part of the military obligations assumed by various cities of the Black Sea, Heraclea among them, established in the treaty that ended the war between Pharnaces of Pontus and Eumenes II of Pergamon (183–179). In fact, the inscription, which preserves some of its clauses, already reveals the increasing Roman influence over the region, which was made more explicit at the end of the Third Macedonian War in 168.<sup>29</sup>

#### CONFRONTING MITHRIDATES & ROME: COLLATERAL DAMAGE AMONG THE GREEKS

The commercial and mercantile capacity of the port of Delos was completely linked to the maintenance of the circulation of goods from the recently created Roman province of Asia.<sup>30</sup> Many of the Italian residents in Delos were dedicated to the mercantile relations between Rome and the East.<sup>31</sup> Still, despite their number, there is no mention of any *Romaioi* from Delos having suffered the Ephesian Vespers.<sup>32</sup> Amiotti has showed the adherence (through clientage) of the majority of the victims, probably *negotiatores*, to the Marian party. Additionally, we also know of the links that existed between the governing elite of Athens, through Medeios, and the Marian faction during the decade of the 90s, if not before.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, blaming the senate of the Athenian *anarchia*, Athenion’s words must be taken into consideration. It is very probable that, despite the theo-

<sup>29</sup> Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 23.1; J.-L. Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et impérialisme* (Rome 1988), 150–154; n. 88; J. Ma, *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor* (Oxford 2002), 367.

<sup>30</sup> E. Will, *Histoire Politique du Monde Hellénistique 2 (323–30 av. J.C.)* (Nancy 1982), 382–383; S.V. Tracy, op. cit. (n. 6), 146–153.

<sup>31</sup> C. Hasenohr, ‘Les collègues de magistris et la communauté italienne de Délos’, in Müller—Hasenohr 2002, op. cit. (n. 10), 67–76.

<sup>32</sup> G. Amiotti, ‘I Greci ed il massacre degli Italici nell’ 88 a. C.’, *Aevum* (1980), 132–139.

<sup>33</sup> S. Byrne, ‘IG II<sup>2</sup> 1095 and the Delia of 98 / 7’, *Zeitschrift Papyrologie Epigraphik* 109 (1995), 59.

retical autonomy of Athens after the end of the Achaean War,<sup>34</sup> Rome would have favoured the creation of a dominant group through which to manage its relation with Athens.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, this pro-Roman aristocratic group maintained its economic position through the onerous Delian commerce, as is clear from the case of Medeios.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the figure of Athenion remains as a sort of opposition to the 'conservative' elite, represented by Medeios. Athenion and Apellicon,<sup>37</sup> as well as their salient supporters, including Aristion, were all rich descendants from foreign families with mercantile links to Delos, and had recently acquired citizenship.<sup>38</sup> In addition, they were also the commercial competitors of the *negotiatores* and the Italians, who were allied to the aristocrats led by Medeios. Thus, in opposition to the traditional and pro-Roman elite of Medeios, the crisis in the 90s gave rise to a new social and economic group, which aligned itself to Mithridates for the necessary support to gain power in the city and depose the old aristocracy.<sup>39</sup> Despite everything, Delos returned to its economic prowess; the pillar, that in conflict, sustained the resources of the two groups. Whoever controlled Delos would control Athens.

The internal struggle in Athens over the control of Delos was also a fight between Mithridates and Rome. At the same time, it also meant a dispute between the supporters of Marius and the Sullani. Once the command against Mithridates was granted, and the king's supporters substituted the Marian elite, Sulla managed to renew the economic relations of the Delian *negotiatores* in his favour, eliminating the economic power of Marius' supporters in the East. After all, the First Mithridatic War highlights the complexity of the situation. It demonstrated the various links of power between Rome and Athens. The external conflict between Rome and Pontus, then, exposed the fight over the political control of Athens, as did the fight over the exploitation of the port of Delos by two groups of

<sup>34</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* 2.53; Strabo, *Geographica* 9.398; S. Accame, *Il dominio Romano in Grecia dalla guerra acaica ad Augusto* (Roma 1946), 163.

<sup>35</sup> A.K. Schiller, 'Multiple gentile affiliations and the Athenian response to Roman domination', *Historia* 55.3 (2006), 264–284.

<sup>36</sup> Schiller 2006, op. cit. (n. 35), 266–268.

<sup>37</sup> On the role of the philosophical schools in the Athenian uprising, see: Ferrary 1988, op. cit. (n. 29), 441–444.

<sup>38</sup> S. Dow, 'A leader of the Anti-Roman party in Athens in 88 BC', *Classical Philology* 37 (1942), 313–314.

<sup>39</sup> Cicero, *Brutus* 306; Plutarch, *Sulla* 14.9. On the fidelity of Athens to Rome until the 'anarchia' year, see: H.B. Mattingly, 'Some third magistrates in the Athenian new style silver coinage', in H.B. Mattingly (ed.), *From Coins to History* (Ann Arbor 2004), 86.

wealthy Athenians, one traditional, the other composed from new rich men.<sup>40</sup> For Athens, the result was one of the most brutal sieges in its history. As for Pontus, the transgression of its last boundary with Rome meant the beginning of its own decomposition as a state.<sup>41</sup>

The inhabitants of Kos opened their port to Lucullus' fleet and therefore their old alliance with Mithridates suddenly came to an end, very likely with dramatic consequences for the anti-Roman factions.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, the case of Cnidos, which also offered its port to the Roman forces is similar, but it did not avoid Sulla's reprisals.<sup>43</sup> An apparent will to cooperate was, therefore, not sufficient for the Roman commanders. An inscription found in Patara, Lycia, refers to the establishment of a garrison in Kos by contingents of Roman auxiliaries, commanded by a Lycian named Krinolaos.<sup>44</sup> At the beginning, Krinolaos' troops served Rhodes. Perhaps their service in Kos was of a different nature. This is a controversial matter, though. According to Ch. Marek, the Lycians would have kept an eye on the Pontic ships stationed at Kos, while K. Buraselis thinks that their role was to garrison the island to avoid an uprising.<sup>45</sup> A supporting factor to Rome's mistrust was the behaviour of Kos' forces. As a matter of fact, Lucullus incorporated the ships belonging to the *poleis* of Kos and Cnidos with his own fleet and attacked Samos, where he was defeated. After the loss, the ships of Kos and Cnidos returned to their ports, and no longer collaborated militarily.<sup>46</sup>

Sulla rewarded or punished those Ancient cities whose attitudes 'seemed' favourable to Rome. Therefore, because Kos had opened its port for the Romans towards the end of the First Mithridatic War, it found itself in a relatively good position and received mixed rewards: it acquired its freedom, but got no financial exemption.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, Rhodes

<sup>40</sup> On the Roman financial situation during the Social War: Plutarch, *Pompey* 1.4; Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* 5.18.26–27; M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge (1974), 702–703; de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 281; C.T. Barlow, 'The Roman government and the economy, 92–80 BC', *American Journal of Philology* 101 (1980), 202–219; Santangelo 2007, op. cit. (n. 5), 33.

<sup>41</sup> B.C. McGing, 'Subjection and resistance: to the death of Mithridates', in A. Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2005), 71–89.

<sup>42</sup> And that occurred between 86 and 85 BC. A. Keaveney, *Lucullus. A Life* (London & NY 1992), 25.

<sup>43</sup> Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 17.

<sup>44</sup> Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 151.

<sup>45</sup> Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 152–153.

<sup>46</sup> S.J. van Ooteghem, *Lucius Licinius Lucullus* (Namur 1959), 29; A. Keaveney, *Sulla. The Last Republican* (London 1992), 25.

<sup>47</sup> Sherwin-White 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 245.



gained a larger recognition, i.e., *immunitas*, for having resisted the Pontic forces practically on its own. Despite everything, these Roman concessions progressively lost their practical use. Such, for instance, was the case for Gytheion, a Peloponnesian city that suffered from the actions of M. Antonius Creticus as he was preparing to invade Crete in 71.<sup>48</sup> An example of the contributions Kos was forced to give the Romans is found in the Second Mithridatic War. Both the military operations of Murena and Aulus Terentius Varro are related to the use of ships from Kos.<sup>49</sup> Another intriguing problem, although difficult to solve with the available sources, is the evolution of coinage in Kos during the First Mithridatic War. The island as of 88 minted the *tetraoboloi*, i.e., since the Pontic invasion of Asia. Kos did not mint coins again until 40–30, and then only in bronze.<sup>50</sup> The reasons for this may be due to Mithridates partially depleting Kos' treasury as left by the Ptolomeic crown and, to the legal dispositions issued by Sulla.

Although resignation to Roman preponderance seems to have lain behind Rhodes' military collaboration, the initiative behind the anti-piracy campaigns came from Rhodes, not Rome, since it was the island's commercial routes which were most affected. Rhodes, then, was not immune to the growing interest in Mithridates from certain social circles of Asia. Cicero points out that honours and statues were dedicated to him in Athens and Rhodes (Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.2.159). In this sense, it is important to underline that Mithridatic supporters in the Asian cities mainly came from lower social classes, whilst in Rhodes the commercial and landowning elite held control over the powerful commercial and military fleet. Any kind of internal tension in Rhodes thus remains unknown, although control clearly remained in pro-Roman hands. A similar argument applies to Kos.<sup>51</sup>

Rhodes' long resistance against the Pontic forces is, therefore, a differentiating factor when comparing it with its neighbouring *polis*. This difference in 'foreign policy' is directly related to military capacity, since other factors bring the context of both cities together.<sup>52</sup> When the Pontic menace became a reality for the two *poleis*, Rhodes considered both

<sup>48</sup> Accame 1946, op. cit. (n. 34), 131–132; Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 130.

<sup>49</sup> Sherwin-White 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 154; Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 127.

<sup>50</sup> Buraselis 2000, op. cit. (n. 19), 126.

<sup>51</sup> J. Thornton, 'Misos Rhomaion o phobos Mithridatou? Echi storiografici di un dibattito diplomatico', *Mediterraneo Antico* 1.1 (1998), 302 ff.

<sup>52</sup> It hardly needs emphasising that both *poleis* are adjacent islands and in 88, kept a close alliance with Rome.

its military capacity and its internal and external affairs. Its insularity and naval capacity<sup>53</sup> were strong factors in favour of defending itself against Mithridates' troops. But military reasons are not enough to explain Rhodes' firm defence; in fact, it was the fear of Rome's return to Asia, which drove Rhodes to risk a siege or Pontic attack. Given that Rhodes had first-hand knowledge of the inflexibility of Rome's handling of unfaithful allies,<sup>54</sup> its attitude during the First Mithridatic War is plainly along the lines that they took after Pydna. After that conflict, Rhodes' firm alliance to Rome was rewarded with the concession of Caunus, Caria.<sup>55</sup>

As to Pergamon, the harsh punishments imposed by Sulla in 85 caused the most severe socio-economic crisis ever suffered by most of the Asian cities.<sup>56</sup> Actually, disorder ensued and some *poleis*, too committed with Mithridates' policies in Asia, could hardly avoid Rome's decisive reprisal.<sup>57</sup> Pergamon's condition as the old Mithridatic capital in Asia meant the loss of all its privileges and of its free and federated status.<sup>58</sup> Only through the intercession of eminent citizens, who were well thought of by Roman authorities, did Pergamon manage to overcome the severe crisis it suffered and to restore its links with Rome.<sup>59</sup> The political and economic situation resulted in the emergence of a new civil elite. Besides the Italo-Roman residents who, due to their wealth and influence, were integrated in city life, there were also notable Greeks who were able to take advantage of the situation and create great fortunes in commerce, through speculating and lending (Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 91). Paradoxically, these fortunes allowed them to establish friendly relations with the authorities and residing *romaioi*, as well as to become the saviours of their *poleis*, which earned them honours and exceptional privileges.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>53</sup> V. Gabrielsen, *The naval aristocracy of Hellenistic Rhodes* (Aarhus 1997), 38–40.

<sup>54</sup> B.C. McGing, 'Mithridates VI Eupator, Victim or Aggressor?', in Højte 2009, op. cit. (n. 5), 210.

<sup>55</sup> Kallet-Marx 1995, op. cit. (n. 4), 246. However, all Caria had been taken by Rome from the Rhodian dominion after the III Macedonian War.

<sup>56</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 62; Plutarch, *Sulla* 25.4; *Lucullus* 4.1; 20.4; Cassiodorus, *Chronica* 670. Ballesteros Pastor 1996, op. cit. (n. 4), 180–185; de Callatay 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 328; McGing 2005, op. cit. (n. 41), 87.

<sup>57</sup> Livius, *Periochae* 89.14; Plutarch, *Lucullus* 4.2–3; Suetonius, *Iulius* 2.1.

<sup>58</sup> Strabo, *Geographica* 14.1.38; Sallustius, *Historiae* 4.69; Appian, *Mithridateios* 15; 57; *Bellum Civile* 1.22; J.-M. Bertrand, *Inscriptions historiques grecques* (Paris 1992), 239–241 n. 136.

<sup>59</sup> J.-L. Ferrary, 'Les Grecs des cités et l'obtention de la *ciuitas Romana*', *Citoyenneté et participation à la basse époque hellénistique* (Paris 2005), 51–75.

<sup>60</sup> M. Sartre, *L'Asie Mineure et l'Anatolie d'Alexandre à Dioclétien* (Paris 1995), 160–164.

Diodoros Paspáros, whose political activity covered the whole period of Mithridatic wars, stands out among the *evergetai* of Pergamon.<sup>61</sup> His epigraphic record reflects the importance of his actions during the dramatic times in Pergamon and, in general, in the whole Asian province.<sup>62</sup> An inscription of Diodoros tells us how he tried to recover all property of those people who had been executed by Mithridates, or had died during the war (IGRR 4, 292). It seems to allude to the execution of 80 people from Pergamon in 86, who were accused of conspiring against the Pontic king, and whose property was afterwards confiscated.<sup>63</sup> It could, however, also refer to the execution of the Galatian tetrarchs, whose goods were similarly extracted (Appian, *Mithridateios* 46, 54–58), or even to the confiscations suffered by the pro-Pontic faction in Pergamon, who either committed suicide, were executed by Sulla, or fled with Eupator after Dardanos (Appian, *Mithridateios* 48).<sup>64</sup> As it happens, recovery of property lost by the proscribed during the war contributed to a reduction of social tension, and helped to reconcile civil life in Pergamon, which, due to the conflict, had been divided between followers and detractors of the king. This was especially problematic in a decimated city. Pergamon was in a very precarious state of affairs as a result of disturbances, persecutions and confiscations. This dramatic situation unleashed an intense diplomatic activity directed towards Rome, led by the most eminent members of Pergamon's elite, and headed by Diodoros. The latter was offered exceptional honours by his fellow citizens,<sup>65</sup> who were encouraged by the success of his embassies and his flawless administration as *gymnasiarchos*.<sup>66</sup> The restoration of the *gymnasion* and the celebration of the XXIX *Nikephoria* (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 23.1), the first since the beginning of the war (IGRR 4, 293), were both a responsibility of Diodoros' towards 69, and constituted the first signs of the recuperation of Pergamon.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup> H. Halfmann, *Éphèse et Pergame* (Bordeaux 2004), 29–30.

<sup>62</sup> IGRR 4; 292; 293; 294; Jones 1974, op. cit. (n. 23), 198; Virgilio 1993, op. cit. (n. 24), 78; 89.

<sup>63</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 48; Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* 6.2.8.

<sup>64</sup> McGing 2005, op. cit. (n. 24), 127; 129; Jones 1974, op. cit. (n. 23), 196–197; Virgilio 1993, op. cit. (n. 24), 73; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, op. cit. (n. 4), 155–160.

<sup>65</sup> P. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Athens 1985), 56–66; Virgilio 1993, op. cit. (n. 24), 76–77.

<sup>66</sup> Drew-Bear 1972, op. cit. (n. 23), 471; Jones 1974, op. cit. (n. 23), 203; Virgilio 1993, op. cit. (n. 24), 76; 82; 92.

<sup>67</sup> Halfmann 2004, op. cit. (n. 61), 29–30.

During the Social War (91–89), Heraclea Pontica decided to offer military support to the Republic, and, according to a controversial account of Memnon, even sent two triremes all the way to Italy.<sup>68</sup> If this were true, it would show the extent to which Heraclea went to keep alive its ancient military alliance with Rome (Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 21). Despite its theoretical neutrality, the Greek town must have been more disturbed by Pontic expansionism than by Rome's. Shortly after the defeat of Archelaos in Chaeronea (86–85), the Heracleian fleet freed the prisoners of the city of Chios, which had practically been destroyed by Mithridates on account of having supported Rhodes and Rome. Months later, Lucullus expelled the Pontic garrison left in Chios as a measure of protection. Mithridates' attempt to deport the massive population of Chios to Pontus created great discomfort in many Greek *poleis*, to the point that part of the elites started to conspire against the king. He, in turn, tried to attract the favour of the *demos* in these cities through the use of a clearly anti-aristocratic rhetoric (Appian, *Mithridateios* 48).<sup>69</sup>

This situation started to change at the beginning of the Second Mithridatic War, when both contending parties increased their demands. In fact, the 'Chios episode' meant the beginning of the end of Heraclea's apparent neutrality in foreign policy.<sup>70</sup> An episode in 82, as described by Memnon, is particularly revealing for its further political consequences.<sup>71</sup> The text notes the coinciding of two diplomatic delegations sent to Heraclea at the same time. One was dispatched by L. Licinius Murena, Sulla's promagistrate in Asia, the other by Mithridates (Cicero, *pro Murena* 15. 31–33). The leading elites of the city expressed their fear to the arrival of Murena's legates of what they considered an excessively close presence of

<sup>68</sup> D. Dueck, 'Memnon of Herakleia on Rome and the Romans', in T. Bekker-Nielsen (ed.), *Rome and the Black Sea Region* (Aarhus 2006), 43–62.

<sup>69</sup> Decree: R.K. Sherk, *Rome and the Greek East* (Cambridge 1984), n. 30. See also: T. Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator roi de Pont* (Paris 1890), 110–112; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950), 2; 969 n. 92; 1099 n. 18; Mattingly 1983, op. cit. (n. 27), 242–243; 250 (n. 24); de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 287 n. 47; Saprykin 1997, op. cit. (n. 27), 284ff.

<sup>70</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 46–47; Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 33; Plutarch, *Lucullus* 3.3. Sherwin-White 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 242; Kallet-Marx 1995, op. cit. (n. 4), 271; de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 318 n. 276.

<sup>71</sup> Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 26. 2: 'Therefore, they [the Heracleians] replied to the ambassadors that inasmuch as so many wars were erupting, they were hardly able to protect their own interests, let alone to provide assistance to others.' Transl. Jonnes 1994, op. cit. (n. 27).

Mithridatic armies to their *chora*. Even so, they did not commit themselves to the Roman demands either, with the excuse that their foremost preoccupation was to look after the defence of their own interests.<sup>72</sup>

Thanks to Memnon we know the circumstances under which Heraclaea switched to the Pontic faction in 74–73, although his account may not be very accurate. Thus, according to his version, Archelaos' fleet not only obtained provisions from the Greek city, but, taking two members of Heraclaea's elite hostage, Archelaos also forced the authorities to hand over five triremes to fight against Rome. Next, Memnon mentions the dispatch of Roman *publicani* to the city to collect money, to which the population responded with the killing of these Roman agents.<sup>73</sup> Considering these events, it is more logical to see the decision of supplying the Mithridatic fleet and the defection from the Roman side as a reaction to the previous and inconvenient presence of *publicani* in Heraclaea, and not the other way around. The decision would have been carefully deliberated during the inter-war period, and would then have been made effective at Mithridates' pressure. At the same time, all of this may be concealing an internal fight between the interests of the *demos*, better disposed to an alliance with the Pontic kingdom, and the interests of some aristocratic factions, reluctant to abandon the traditional pro-Roman policy, perhaps because they had previously established business with Romans and Italians.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the change of sides resulted in a long siege and the brutal plunder of the city undertaken by Lucullus' deputy, M. Aurelius Cotta, Lucullus' deputy (72–70; Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 35.5–9). Cotta had to face the consequences of his actions once he returned to Rome, losing not only the booty, but also his senatorial rank.<sup>75</sup> As a result, the senate decided to allow the

<sup>72</sup> D.G. Glew, 'Between the wars: Mithridates Eupator and Rome, 85–73 BC', *Chiron* 11 (1981), 111–120; Kallet-Marx 1995, op. cit. (n. 4), 196; de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 330–335; Saprykin 1997, op. cit. (n. 27), 293–294; J.-L. Ferrary, 'L'essor de la puissance romaine dans la zone pontique', A. Bresson et al. (eds.), *Une Koinè pontique* (Bordeaux 2007), 323.

<sup>73</sup> Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 27.5–6; Magie 1950, op. cit. (n. 69), vol. 1, 325; vol. 2, 1231; Sherwin-White 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 165–166; Dueck 2006, op. cit. (n. 68), 58.

<sup>74</sup> Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 29.4; Kallet-Marx 1995, op. cit. (n. 4), 302; Saprykin 1997, op. cit. (n. 27), 294–295; de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 361–362; Ferrary 2007, op. cit. (n. 72), 320–321; S. Mitchell, 'Geography, politics, and imperialism in the Asian customs law', in M. Cottier et al. (eds.), *The Customs Law of Asia* (Oxford 2008), 176–182; 201.

<sup>75</sup> Appian, *Mithridateios* 82; Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424),

restoration of Heraclea's civic institutions and port infrastructure, although the *polis* never regained its ancient splendour as a commercial enclave of the Black Sea, nor its previous status (Memnon (*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 424), 39.3; 40.2; Strabo, *Geographica* 12.3.1). Rome attempted to compensate, in this way, the damage done by Cotta, although it certainly could not forget the treason of an ancient ally.<sup>76</sup> In the end, Heraclea had paid a higher price than others for its sudden decision to back the Mithridatic party.

#### THE MITHRIDATIC WARS, THE 'ULTIMATE FRONTIER'

The wars between Rome and Mithridates VI emerge as the 'ultimate frontier' of the Hellenistic World. A series of boundaries were crossed, not only through the large number of victims among local non-combatants, but especially through the relevant political consequences of such events. Therefore, most *poleis* in the Eastern Mediterranean became the passive objects of desire for the two leading powers in the region: Rome and Pontus. They openly disputed for the political and military hegemony of the East. In this context, as Fergus Millar has suggested, most of the Greek towns were forced to make their own choices in foreign policy. They either aligned themselves with Republican commanders or the Pontic king.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, internal leadership was divided into several factions with opposing commercial, political and social interests, often different from the interests of the *demos*. Yet, in the end, there was no room for ambiguous positions. Any alliance, regardless whether it was started early or late in the conflict, posed a limit to the post-war conditions, and to the degree of economic and political recovery which the Greek *poleis*, and their social institutions, were going to enjoy when that 'ultimate frontier' finally ceased to exist.

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39.1–3; Reinach 1890, op. cit. (n. 69), 322 n. 3; Sherwin-White 1984, op. cit. (n. 18), 333–335; M. Alexander, *Trials in the Late Roman Republic* (Toronto 1990), 70; de Callataÿ 1997, op. cit. (n. 22), 351; Saprykin 1997, op. cit. (n. 27), 295 ff.; Dueck 2006, op. cit. (n. 68), 55–56.

<sup>76</sup> McGing 2005, op. cit. (n. 24), 151–152; Saprykin 1997, op. cit. (n. 27), 309–310; C. Eilers, 'A Roman East: Pompey's settlement to the death of Augustus', in Erskine 2005, op. cit. (n. 41), 90–93; H.-L. Fernoux, *Notables et élites des cités de Bithynie aux époques hellénistique et romaine* (Lyon 2004), 171.

<sup>77</sup> F. Millar 2002, op. cit. (n. 2), 224–225.