University of Alberta

Bithynia: History and Administration to the Time of Pliny the Younger

by

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Abstract

Bithynia is a region in Asia Minor, in modern day Turkey. Bithynia existed as a kingdom well before any involvement with the Romans. As the Roman Empire expanded, Bithynia became another of her border provinces. In this thesis this region is examined from its earlier history onward. The administrations of its early kings, contact with Alexander the Great and quarrels with neighbouring nations are dealt with in a concise manner. Early contact between Bithynia and Rome is also detailed, encompassing three Mithridatic Wars and the eventual absorption of Bithynia into the Roman Empire. The laws of Pompey are examined, as well as the changes brought about by the Emperors down to Trajan. The study concludes by examining the correspondence between Trajan and his specially appointed governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, in the early 2nd century A.D.

Dedication

I was only able to pursue my love of Classics through the support and understanding of both my families. For that and more I would like to acknowledge and thank them all.

Thanks also to my supervisor Dr. Jeremy Rossiter for assisting my work, and for considering my difficult schedule. Even though he didn't know it I probably would have quit writing this thesis a number of times if not for his encouragement.

Preface

Thesis notation:

Within the body of the text throughout this paper I have adopted the concise parenthetical citation: New MLA style (Modern Language Association). This eliminates all but explanatory footnotes, with quotes giving parenthetical citations directly in the body of text. A citation will generally list only the page number, unless an abbreviation of the text title is also necessary (due to multiple works by the same author).

Occasionally the author's name will appear in the citation, if necessary to prevent confusion and it does not appear in the text. An example of the citation (10:2.4) refers the reader to the tenth book, letter two, line four. The citation (3) simply refers to page three. In both of the above cases the author in question would have been mentioned in the text. For ease of reference, the introductory section of this thesis contains full bibliographic information within the text. In a few sections throughout this work, title abbreviations appear in the citation format, and these are clarified below.

Abbreviations:

When it is occasionally necessary to list the title of a book within the concise parenthetical citations, the following abbreviations are used (full information in Bibliography):

CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CERP	Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces
DGRG	Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography
RFPE	Roman Foreign Policy in the East
RRAM	Roman Rule in Asia Minor
RWDC	The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom
FLP	Fifty Letters of Pliny

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Introduction

This study of Bithynia covers the period from the fourth century B.C. until the rule of Trajan in the early second century A.D. Although occasional reference is made to historical events before the fourth century, the study essentially begins with the Seleucid period, since it is during this period that Bithynia first emerges as a unified kingdom. Discussion of Bithynia in the pre-Seleucid era, during the Achaemenid (Persian) period, is limited to a few episodes involving Xenophon, Alexander the Great, and the first Bithynian dynasts.

A student of History or Classics would most likely run across the name Bithynia only in passing, perhaps while studying the career of Pompey the Great, or while reading the letters of Pliny. Indeed a few maps of the Roman world do not even list Bithynia when showing the eastern provinces. One can easily find studies concentrating solely on individual provinces of the Roman Empire, such as Britain, Gaul or Spain. However, such comprehensive information is not readily available (in English) for the province of Bithynia[1] . It is only through a broadly based study of a wide range of works, both ancient and modern, that one can begin to gain a sense of this Roman province. Therefore, I have attempted to gather the

[1] A number of early works in German are cited by A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, 1966, 528-9.

most reliable evidence and information, and put together a study on this somewhat neglected area. In doing so restrictions had to be placed on the scope of the paper, and decisions had to be made regarding areas of concentration and research. Information on Bithynia in the Seleucid Period is the least documented by far. Valuable information can be found in the narratives of Herodotus and in the histories of Alexander the Great. A second area of concentration is the history of Bithynia during the years of Pompey, Sulla and Lucullus (at the time of the Mithridatic Wars). This period, when the Roman Empire was still in its formative stage, is well documented, and it is not difficult to draw out the details pertaining specifically to the province of Bithynia. The second chapter then continues the history through to Trajan's rule in the early second century A.D. At this point the historical narrative shifts to a more intense examination of the state of affairs in the province, made possible by the extant correspondence of Pliny the Younger. The tenth book of Pliny's letters contains the most detailed information on this province, which presented complex problems for Trajan and his appointed man. The final third of this paper details facts gleaned from Pliny's correspondence.

Although the quality and quantity of the evidence is uneven, I have endeavoured to present a free-flowing narrative of the history of Bithynia.

In each section details are added which round out the whole picture. For example, the first chapter deals with the pre-Roman history of Bithynia, but also includes a section on the geography of the province, as well as a history of her most important cities. The second chapter chronicles the Roman involvement in the province, including the three Mithridatic Wars. It also includes the tax reforms of Lucullus and discussions on the politics of the region. The third chapter deals primarily with the letters of Pliny, but covers the role and authority of provincial governors in Trajan's time.

Bibliographic Outline

The scholarship available on the history of Bithynia presents a variety of problems. The most obvious difficulty is the uneven treatment of the subject. Certain periods of history and particular key topics are covered exhaustively, whereas little or nothing is said of other periods and topics. Additionally, discussion of the best documented subjects, such as the career of Pompey, tends to be repetitive and is rarely put into any sort of broader historical context. The works which are cited in the text or which appear in the bibliography represent the more useful studies, in terms of coherent text, compelling arguments and overall completeness. A handful of the

works cited contain small amounts of information on the subject, yet are deserving of mention due to their treatment or presentation of the material. It is important to keep in mind that each chapter covers a significant period of time and/or information. Therefore, not every historic figure or piece of legislature or even each conflict is included.

In the first chapter, the early history of Bithynia, a wealth of information is provided in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, particularly vol. 7.1 (1984) chapters 4 (E. Will) and various lesser sections. Here, in the context of a study on the Hellenistic world, there are plentiful references to Bithynia. In *Anatolia - Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor* (1993) Mitchell provides an up to date study which builds on earlier writings while concentrating on specific themes such as the arrival of the Galatians (Celts), and the impact of Roman rule in Anatolia. Sherwin-White's *Roman Foreign Policy in the East - 168 BC to AD 1* (1984) presents a concise introduction to Bithynian history (dating from 189 - 133 B.C.). This work provides a detailed study of Roman policy in the East, with Bithynia given brief mention in certain sections. Sherwin-White offers insight into possible motivation and political manoeuvring on the part of the Romans. Magie's *Roman rule in Asia Minor* (1950) provides early information on Bithynia, as well as an excellent description of the

geography of the land. *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (1971) by A.H.M. Jones contains valuable detail on the early history of Bithynia and her cities, but with less reference to the original sources than many other scholars. Here, pertinent information is found exclusively in the section on Bithynia and Pontus. McGing's article "The kings of Pontus: some problems of identity and date", *Rheinisches Museum 129* (1986) 248-259, examines the issues of royal lineage and dating of ascension which provide an entire subject area of their own. There are, however, details here which are useful for the early history of the region. This list of scholars and works is not a complete bibliography for the first chapter, but rather a list of the essential modern readings for the period. The complete narrative of the history of Bithynia builds on these works, including information from many additional scholars (and even encyclopaedic manuals).

In the second chapter, the Roman involvement in Bithynia, several articles from the ninth volume (2nd ed.) of the CAH: *The Roman Republic 133 - 44 BC* , (1994) are invaluable. J.G. Hind's "Mithridates" 129 - 164, and Sherwin-White's "Lucullus, Pompey and the East" 229 - 273, contain the bulk of this volume's relevant information. Mitchell and A.H.M. Jones (above) are utilised in this section of the thesis as well, focussing on the Roman era of Bithynia. These four works complement each other in

covering details on the Roman takeover of the province and the arrangements of Pompey. In-depth biographies of key Roman figures are provided by Seager's *Pompey: a Political Biography* (1980), Greenhalgh's *Pompey the Roman Alexander* (1980) and Keaveney's *Lucullus - A Life* (1992). *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (1978) by C.P. Jones includes a section on the taxing of the new province. B.F. Harris' "Roman sovereignty and the survival of Hellenism", *ANRW* 2 (7.2) (1980) 857 - 901, presents an excellent overall study of the history of Bithynia including pre-Roman times.

The Ancient Sources

The ancient sources, in translation or original text, form an essential basis for the research in this thesis. In the study of ancient history, extant information can be sparse, providing a limited number of sources to rely upon. Political influence, bias, veracity and even quality of the original information all present the researcher with problems. To deal with these, given the nature of this thesis topic, I have attempted to include information generally accepted by the majority of modern scholars. This includes such things as dates of consulships, wars, and key figures involved.

With this in mind, I have found the following sources to be of value. Thucydides and Xenophon provide early information on Bithynia, but this is unfortunately quite scant. Arrian, Diodorus, Polybius and Strabo all provide facts on pre-Roman Bithynia and her kings. Arrian was writing more than four hundred years after the death of Alexander the Great, but is generally considered one of the best sources of knowledge of this area. Diodorus' critics claim that his main purpose was literary, rather than scientific. He is somewhat hesitant to include details and technicalities, preferring rhetoric. Polybius was a 2nd century B.C. Greek writer who championed the Roman cause in his writings. However, even he did not justify Rome's actions during the Punic Wars. Strabo's *Geography* is criticised in times as a mixture of opinions and observations of other writers, some of which were invalid. Yet Strabo's first hand experiences are considered to be of great value. Pliny and Strabo are of primary importance as a commentary on the cities of the region. Pliny, of course, had direct experience with the cities of his province, as will be detailed in chapter 3.

For Roman Bithynia, Plutarch, Appian and Diodorus contain descriptions and details of the key figures such as Pompey, Lucullus and Sulla. Plutarch is considered to be first and foremost a moralist, tempered

perhaps by a sincerity in his writings. In his case, it is vital to examine not only what is written, but also what is omitted. Appian's historical information is generally considered useful to supplement and sometimes correct other writers (for the period after Julius Caesar). Diodorus is mentioned above. Strabo expands upon the make-up of the province and on the cities founded by Pompey. The *Discourses* of Dio Chrysostom add detail to certain cities of Bithynia, including the nature of their quarrels. Dio, a contemporary of Plutarch, is very rhetorical in style, but his works are generally considered to offer useful historical information. Pliny, used extensively in the third chapter, also provides some information about Bithynia before his governorship. He refers, for example, to the trials of governors of Bithynia and makes statements which reveal his attitude towards Greeks in general.

In the third chapter the focus of research shifts, almost exclusively, to the letters of Pliny the Younger. The Loeb Classical edition provides original text and translation, the starting point from which additional sources are consulted. Sherwin-White's *The Letters of Pliny* (1966) and his condensed *Fifty Letters of Pliny* (1969) both include introductions with valuable notes on the letters. The Penguin Classics *The Letters of the Younger Pliny* (1969), edited by B. Radice, contains an extensive

introduction. Vidman's *Etude sur la correspondance de Pline le jeune avec Trajan* (1972) offers a study of the correspondence covering many topics, from the character of Pliny to the state of the province. This work and Yves Hucher's translation of Pliny (1966) provide two of the better French editions. Helen Tanzer's *The Letters of Pliny the Younger* (1936), although somewhat dated, is included primarily for its excellent companion to the letters, pp. 199 - 287.

Chapter 1: Pre-Roman Bithynia

The Early History of Bithynia

Before the fourth century B.C., the name Bithynia referred to an area in the peninsula of Chalcedon inhabited by a people known as Bithynians. Scylax of Caryanda recorded that the Bithynians were formerly Mysians, but received their new name from Thracian Thynians or Bi-thynians in the fourth century B.C. (Grant 112). These inhabitants were sporadically active in nearby Asia Minor and in the regions occupied by the Greek coastal cities. Xenophon was familiar with the territory of Asia Minor and he referred to the area between the Euxine and Heracleia as Thrace-in-Asia, adding: "For a trireme using oars it is a long day's voyage from Byzantium to Heraclea, and between those two cities there is no other Greek or allied city, only Thracians and Bithynians" (Warner 279). The origin of the Bithynians is similarly expressed by Strabo: "Now as for the Bithynians, it is agreed by most writers that, though formerly Mysians, they received this new name from the Thracians - the Thracian Bithynians and Thynians - who settled the country in question" (12:3.1-2). Strabo goes on to confirm that Scylax the Caryandian first testified to the above facts (12:4.8). Another source of information for this early period is the

historian Thucydides, who records the following: "Not long after, Lamachus, who had sailed into the Pontus, having anchored in the river Calex, in the territory of Heraclea, ... went by land through the Bithynian Thracians, who are situated across the strait in Asia, to Chalcedon, the Megarian colony at the mouth of the Pontus" (4.75). Little is known about the earliest rulers of this region, but a Bithynian dynasty can be said to have begun under Doedalsus between 440 and 430 B.C. In 334 B.C. Alexander had entered Asia, bringing his army into direct contact with the Greek colonists of Asia Minor and the Persian powers. Alexander did not venture far north in Asia Minor, with the extent of his efforts being an unsuccessful attack on Bas, ruler of Bithynia, and his acceptance of a non-aggression treaty with the Paphlagonians. Bas was the son of Boteiras, who was the successor to Doedalsus, noted above. The unsuccessful attack was carried out, not by Alexander himself, but by the Macedonian Calas, who was the first 'satrap' Alexander appointed. Calas had control over areas of Hellespontine Phrygia, and also Paphlagonia. His defeat at the hands of Bas occurred some time before 328 B.C.[1] Bas was succeeded by Zipoetes (ca. 328 - 280 B.C.) who also resisted submission to Alexander's forces. Zipoetes defeated two expeditionary forces launched by Lysimachus' generals, and later resisted Lysimachus as well. While Zipoetes was in power, Lysimachus' control did not include the realms of Bithynia or

[1] See Arrian (1:17 and 1:25) with Bosworth's notes p. 127.

Pontus. Lysimachus did, however, control Thrace (up to the Danube), Macedon, Thessaly, and the rest of Asia Minor, with the exception of Byzantium, a free city. Zipoetes continued his strong rule by repelling Seleucus I Nicator, defying the newly forming Seleucid empire. By 297 B.C. he had taken the official title of king, and in regal fashion founded Zipoetium, a namesake city. He died shortly after 280 B.C. having defeated Antiochus I. The inheritance fell to his two surviving sons Nicomedes and Zipoetes II, who immediately disputed their shares.

The Celts

At the time of Zipoetes' death Nicomedes I (280 B.C. - 255 B.C.) had eliminated all of his brothers, except for Zipoetes II. Zipoetes sought alliances with the Seleucid King, and immediately seized the Chalcedon Peninsula. Nicomedes took advantage of the presence of migrating Celtic forces which were occupying the Balkans and entering the Greek world. Heinen succinctly states: "Whereas the Thraco-Macedonian empire of Lysimachus had managed to resist the pressure of the Celts thrusting down from the north, the fall of Lysimachus at the battle of Corupedium (281 B.C.) ushered in new developments in this area also" (422). Two bands of Celts in particular, led by Leonorios (the lion) and Lutarios (the wolf)

were present in Thrace and sought access to Byzantium. Mitchell provides additional information for this period, pertaining to the Celts: "While Lutarios' men slipped over the Hellespont, the larger band under Leonorios came to an agreement with Nicomedes I of Bithynia, and crossed the Bosporus at Byzantium, where the two groups linked up again" (15). According to a Byzantine historian, Zosimus, this series of events was heralded by an oracle which bade ill results. Nicomedes undoubtedly placed his immediate ambitions over power and land above any tenuous omens about the future. His brother Zipoetes had support from the Seleucid King Antiochus I, and Nicomedes succumbed to the temptation of the available Celtic aid. With the assistance of the Celts, Nicomedes was able to resist his brother and also weaken the growing strength of the Seleucid kingdom. By 277 B.C. the campaign against Zipoetes was completed and Nicomedes had enlarged his kingdom, mainly to the south-east. Bithynia had grown from a small dynasty of tribes into an independent state of some power. At this time Nicomedes founded Bithynium, which was a colony of Bithynian settlers, strategically placed to hold territory newly acquired from the Paphlagonians. This city is named by Arrian in the section of his Bithynian history, accompanying mention of the foundation of Nicomedia. Nicomedes, as mentioned, founded Nicomedia on the gulf of Astacus, intending this new city to replace

Zipoetium (founded in 297 B.C.) as the capital of Bithynia. Smith emphasises that this new foundation "thus fixed his power securely in the country along the eastern shore of the Propontis" (*DGRG* 404). With Nicomedia as the capital, strategically located near the sea, the influence of Hellenization began to have an impact on Bithynia. Nicomedes attempted to co-exist with his Celtic allies, and he maintained generally friendly relations with neighbouring Greek areas. Magie comments on the nature of Nicomedes' policies: "Although ruthless in acquiring the territory of those Grecian cities whose harbours and lands they coveted, they maintained friendly relations with many which lay outside the scope of their ambitions, and in general, endeavoured to take their place among the princes of the Hellenic world" (311). Nicomedes was a competent and driven monarch, possessing a shrewd grasp of politics. His appearance was barbaric, but his name and ambition were wholly Hellenic. His coins depicted Greek gods and he received honours at Cos and Olympia. He allied himself with Chalcedon and Heracleia (by returning the captured site of Cierus) to strengthen his position against the Seleucid empire. He incorporated allied, friendly, and captured cities into his kingdom, including Nicaea. This city, originally founded by Antigonus under the name of Antigoneia, was later renamed (and refounded) by Lysimachus for his first wife. Dio Chrysostom stated that its citizens were Greeks, more

precisely true Macedonians, and not second class mercenaries or such.[2] The presence of such a city could only aid in the process of Hellenization. Nicomedes died around 254 B.C. leaving his kingdom to a son, another Zipoetes, from a second marriage. Unfortunately an elder son from the previous marriage, Ziaelas, disputed this will.

Ziaelas

Ziaelas had been in exile in Armenia, and from here enlisted the aid of a Celtic tribe (the Tolistobogii), beginning what amounted to a civil war in Bithynia. Mitchell comments briefly on the results of this conflict: "The people of Heracleia Pontica eventually succeeded in mediating between the brothers, bringing a damaging civil war to an end. The Galatians (Celts), deprived of the profits that they will have hoped to gain, turned on Heracleia, and invaded its territory as far as the river Calles, returning home laden with booty" (19). Indeed the Gauls were also involved in the affairs of Pontus under Mithridates and of Cappadocia under Ariobarzanes. Ziaelas became Nicomedes' successor, and he is known to have expanded Bithynian territory slightly, as well as to have maintained the previous friendly relations with Greek cities. Ziaelas maintained some friendship with the Ptolemies, no doubt in order to deter his powerful Seleucid

[2] For additional information see Jones (*CERP* 150).

enemy, and its ally Pontus. Ziaelas died approx. 230 B.C., fighting the Galatians during an insurrection propagated by the discovery of Ziaelas' plan to eliminate certain Galatian chieftains. His son Prusias (d. 183 B.C.) immediately became king and was the first to abandon the policy of friendly relations with the neighbouring cities.

Prusias

In 211 B.C. Rome and her allies, the Aetolians and Attalus I of Pergamum, declared war on Philip V of Macedon. Prusias, being the brother-in-law of Philip, and seeing potential for expansion, sent troops and ships to the aid of his Macedonian ally. He also invaded Pergamum, taking advantage of Attalus' attentions elsewhere. Thus by 205 B.C., Prusias had incurred the hatred of Pergamum, and yet only the disapproval of Rome. Prusias' friendship with Philip gained him the territories of Cius and Myrleia, which had been razed in the last stages of the conflict. These acquisitions extended his territory in the west, up to the Rhyndaeus river. Cius and Myrleia were later refounded as the important cities of Prusias-on -the-Sea (*ad Mare*) and Apamea.[3] In 197 B.C. Prusias extended his rule to the east by taking Cierus and Tieum, two dependencies of Heracleia. Cierus was renamed as Prusias (*ad Hypium*). Prusias, personally injured in

[3] On the cities of Bithynia, see below pp. 29 - 39.

the battle, failed in an attempt to take Heracleia, which remained independent of the Bithynian kingdom. At this point his old ally Philip was weak, and his choices for alliances lay between his old enemy the Seleucids and the recently encountered Romans who were allied with his other rival Attalus. This was the setting in which Antiochus III offered an alliance with the Bithynian king. Prusias instead accepted a quick counter-proposal from the Scipios, and Rome. Through this proposal he spared his kingdom from conflict, but as he gave no direct assistance to Rome, he collected none of the prizes of war. Indeed some of the arrangements went against his better interests, provoking new hostilities, short of a war. After Antiochus' defeat he took advantage of the confusion to take territory, which he considered to be his own, and even enlisted the assistance of Hannibal. Rome's hated enemy had fled to Bithynia for refuge, a short lived sanctuary, as commented on by Ellis: "He was traced by Roman agents and, realising that he was trapped is recorded as saying: 'Let us now put an end to the life that has caused the Romans so much anxiety.' He took poison" (100). Under Prusias I Bithynia achieved perhaps its greatest territorial dimensions, as well as acquiring political power and wealth. Prusias encouraged commerce and Greek culture, both of which were still new to some locals.

Prusias II

Prusias II succeeded his father around 183 B.C., but he was not of the same energetic or able nature, involving himself in small squabbles over minor territory. Sherwin-White summarises: "The second Prusias, succeeding about this time, found it necessary to cooperate with Eumenes of Pergamum when both were threatened by the operations of Pharnaces of Pontus in Galatia and Paphlagonia. The alliance did not survive their victory (*RFPE* 44). The ancient sources are less than favourable to this second Prusias. Diodorus of Sicily states: "Since King Prusias had repulsive features and had become physically effeminate through soft living, he was detested by the Bithynians" (32.19). Polybius, in his histories, denigrates Prusias II at length: "King Prusias was an ill-favoured man, and though possessed of fair reasoning power, was but half a man as regards his appearance, and had no more military capability than a woman; for not only was he a coward, but he was incapable of putting up with hardship, and to put it shortly, he was effeminate in body and mind through his whole life, a defect that no one, and least of all the Bithynians, like to see in a king" (36.15).

Although he received such bad press at the hands of historians regarding his physical appearance and military prowess, Prusias II did

have some success. He followed his father's lead in establishing connections with the Hellenic centres around him and abroad. To his credit, the Aetolians placed a statue in his honour at Delphi. Much of his praise and adulation from the Greeks came as a direct result of lavish gifts and purchased friendships. Prusias' dealings with Rome could be described as conciliatory, cautious, and even servile, that is, until Eumenes of Pergamum died and Prusias entered into open war with Attalus II. Rome, at the request of Attalus, sought to stop this action three times through emissaries and commissions, all unsuccessfully. A fourth commission, coupled with Attalus' mobilising forces to the field and his brother Athenaeus' fleet's harassment of the Bithynian coast, brought Prusias to heel. Shortly thereafter, in 149 B.C., Prusias' son Nicomedes II returned from Rome (where he had assumed a role as his father's envoy) and entered Bithynia with an army. Rome seemed not to notice this rebellious invasion against the old monarch. Nicomedes II, who took on the surname Epiphanes, defeated his father's forces in a battle, from which Prusias II himself escaped. Emissaries from Nicomedes II went so far as to murder the defeated king as he sought sanctuary in the Temple of Zeus in Nicomedia. This action, and the presence of Nicomedes II, was welcomed by the Bithynian people, and was not openly opposed by Rome. One possible explanation of the Senate's acceptance, or at least neutrality to this

act is given by Sherwin-White: "Appian's detailed narrative of the deposition of Prusias in 149 B.C. by Attalus II of Pergamum in favour of his son Nicomedes II suggests that an influential group induced the Senate to connive at the affair, preoccupied as it was at that time with the question of Carthage and Macedonia, while Polybius implies that the majority, who disapproved of the move against the old king, were bamboozled" (*RFPE* 46).

Nicomedes II and III

Nicomedes II (149 - 127 B.C.) seems to have acted honourably during his reign, even if he acquired it dishonourably. His time in Rome had earned him friends and had instilled in him respect for Rome and her power. He proved himself useful to the Senate when he responded to their call for aid to suppress Aristonicus' revolt. He cultivated friendships with the neighbouring Greeks, in a more sincere fashion than simply showering them with gifts at a whim (as his father had done). Magie notes: "He was honoured by the Ionian Federation, and the city of Priene founded a cult for his worship, with a priest and a stated sacrifice" (318). Although friendly with Rome, he did not receive special status, as exemplified by the fact that at least once his request for territory in Phrygia was refused.

Nicomedes II was succeeded by his son, Nicomedes III (127 - 94 B.C.), whose gifts to the Greek cities won him the surname of Euergetes. Many monuments were dedicated to his honour, especially at Delos and Argos. At home, however, the financial state was quite dire. Economic conditions in Bithynia had reduced many of the inhabitants to slavery, at the hands of Roman money-lenders and *publicani.* This situation prompted Rome to enact a decree saying that no free man from an allied state should be held in slavery. Nicomedes III tried his hand at politics and attempted to extend Bithynia's control over parts of Paphlagonia and Cappadocia. His efforts met little success. He died in 94 B.C., perhaps by being poisoned, and was discredited at Rome. His successor would inherit only an impoverished kingdom, an easy target for nearby powers.

Nicomedes IV

Nicomedes Philopater (94 - 74 B.C.) was the eldest of two sons, the younger, named Socrates, having been born of a concubine. Nicomedes had inherited a kingdom with a powerful enemy (Mithridates VI), a debt of assistance to Rome, and another heir to vie for the throne. Mithridates promptly (92 B.C.) drove out Nicomedes IV out and placed Socrates as a puppet-king on the throne. Nicomedes was restored in 90 B.C. by Roman

forces under M. Aquillius, and then ordered by Aquillius to invade Pontic territory. This precipitated the First Mithridatic War (89 B.C.) which led to Nicomedes' second expulsion and second restoration - this time by Sulla in 84 B.C.[4] From this point on he ruled in relative peace, always at the call of Rome. At his death in 74 B.C. he bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, apparently without an heir (though he had a legitimate daughter). It is not surprising that a claimant appeared as the son of Nysa, Nicomedes' second wife. This pretender applied for rulership, unsuccessfully, to the Senate, and then took no further action. The bequest was approved by the Senate, and Marcus Juncus, the governor of Asia was commissioned to annex Bithynia and organise it as a province of Rome. This brought the early history of Bithynia to a close, and ushered in the beginning of the new Roman era of Bithynian history.

[4] Additional details provided in Ch. 2 with the Roman involvement.

Geographical Borders

In broad geographic terms Bithynia occupied a region of northwest Anatolia bordering on the Bosporus and adjacent Black Sea coast. The province was strategically located between Europe and inner Anatolia, and the East. The Bithynian kingdom which was bequeathed to Rome in 74 B.C. had essentially the same boundaries as those established by Prusias II. Its borders are not always easy to determine, since ancient sources either differ in the geographical information provided, or are vague in geographic terms. In the west Apamea and Prusa were frontier cities, whereas Apollonia on the Rhyndacus was in the province of Asia. The western part of Bithynia included the shore of the Propontis from the Bosporus to Rhyndacus. Lake Dascylitis separated Bithynian from Byzantine territory whereas the southern slopes of Mount Olympus, occupied by Mysians, lay in the province of Asia (and belonged to the Attalid kingdom). The northern slopes of Mount Olympus and the site of Prusa mark the southern border of Bithynia, which then extends to the Sangarius. Other towns close within the southern boundary (besides Prusa) include the later Hadriani, Leucae on a branch of the Sangarius, and Bithynium (later Claudiopolis). Bithynia bordered Mysia on the west and on the south, Phrygia and Galatia. Jones clearly shows some of the

difficulties involved in unravelling the evolving geography of the province: "Under the principate the middle valley of the Sangarius was in the province of Bithynia, and if, as is probably the case, Livy's statement that the Tembris and Sangarius united near Bithynia and the united stream thenceforth flowed through Bithynia is borrowed from Polybius, the boundary of the kingdom was the same as that of the province" (*CERP* 152). The Sangarius is one of the principal rivers of Asia Minor, originating from Mount Adoreus in Phrygia. It flowed through Bithynia into the Euxine (Black Sea), and was one of the eastern boundaries of Bithynia in early times. In 74 B.C. the eastern border was ill-defined. It existed within the central plateau of Anatolia marked by the ranges that divide Bithynia from the mountainous district of Paphlagonia. More precisely, along the Euxine coast the eastern most city was Tieum, and in the interior the eastern most city was Creteia. Heracleia remained an independent area, free within Bithynian territory. The Euxine formed the northern border of Bithynia, extending from the outlets of the Sangarius and Tieum in the east to the straits of Byzantium and Chalcedon in the west. Within these borders lived a diverse stock of peoples, commented on by historians, modern and ancient. Smith illustrates the complexity of the ethnic makeup as follows: "Strabo adds that it is difficult to fix the limits of the Bithyni, and Mysi, and Phryges, and also of the Doliones, and of the

Mygdones, and of the Troes; 'and the cause of this, that the immigrants (into Bithynia) being soldiers and barbarians, did not permanently keep the country that they got, but were wanderers, for the most part, driving out and being driven' out" (*DGRG* 404).[5]

Internal Geography

In topographical terms, Bithynia was an area of wide diversity. Her maritime borders (Propontis especially) provided useful harbours for trade and communication. In the south, as mentioned above, lay Mount Olympus on the principal mountain range in Bithynia, which extends eastward from the Rhydacus. Along the coast of Bithynia, east of the Sangarius, the terrain is hilly to mountainous; but inferior in altitude to the mountain ranges of the deeper interior or the range of Olympus or even to those peaks to the east. Sangarius is the one great river present in Bithynia, tracing out a twisting course through the land. The river enters the south-eastern corner of Bithynia and bends, curving its way through the mountains which continue the Olympus range to the east. From here, the river flows northward into the Euxine. Magie provides a detailed description as follows: "The broad basin of its lower course, known in late

[5] See Smith (*DGRG* 403-406) for extensive information on interior sites and place names, including a number of references not included in more modern sources. Also see maps pp. 101-103.

Antiquity as the Regio Tarsica and in modern times as Ak Ova, was the largest, as well as the most beautiful of the Bithynian plains. This region together with the district that borders on the Euxine, abounding in grain and fruit, produced the rich harvests which caused Bithynia to be called 'the greatest and best of lands' " (302-3). The lower (Bithynian) part of the river, which divided Bithynia roughly in half, was navigable, and contained abundant fish.

The regions west of the lower Sangarius were the best part of the country, with fertile plains and well-wooded areas. Here there were hilly areas, all along the coast of the Propontis, indented by the Gulfs of Nicomedia and Cius (to the south). It was this part of the Bithynia which held the chief cities of the kingdom, especially so towards the Propontis coast. There were three major lakes in this western region, the first was called Sophon (Sabanja), and lay between the Sangarius and Nicomedia. This is the lake to which Pliny the Younger referred to in Letters 10:41 and 10:61, sent to the Emperor Trajan.[6] The second lake, the Ascania, was larger than lake Sophon, and stood beside Nicaea. Both of these lakes were formed by mountain basins, filled with fresh water. The third lake, the Apolloniatis (Abullionte), was also a mountain lake, through which the Rhyndacus flowed, and it also held fish.

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6 Pliny suggests uniting this lake to the gulf of Astacus via a canal or other means. In his replies Trajan expresses caution, but also interest.

East of the lower Sangarius, mountains rise up along the northern bank of the river as it runs its course from east to west. Along this rugged region small plains and rocky defiles permit the course of small affluents of the Sangarius. Here again, Magie describes this area with due detail: "Through this rugged country extended the magnificent forests of firs, oaks and beeches which were famous in Antiquity and later caused the Turks to give to the mountains along the Euxine coast the picturesque name of 'Mother of Trees' " (303). Farther to the east lay beautiful plains belonging to the upper Hypius, and further still the cities of Prusias and Bithynium.

Geographically Bithynia possessed a variety of landscapes and territories. Mountains and river valleys accompanied steppe-like plains; abundant supplies of timber were augmented by quarries of fine marble; all surrounded by fertile coastlines dotted with harbours. Bithynia also enjoyed a variety of agricultural crops and provided, at times, extensive pasturage. These features, taken in conjunction with the borders outlined above, can give some feel for the region as a whole. This description, combined with the early history of Bithynia, adds clarity to the setting of the stage for events to come under Roman domination. A third element, included to complete this brief study, is a more detailed look at some of

Bithynia's most important cities. The following review of the key cities provides further information on the resources and physical make-up of the land, and also includes discussion of events in the early history of Bithynia. Some aspects of the role of these cities in the Roman period will also be mentioned.

The Cities

The cities dealt with here, in alphabetical order, are Apameia, Bithynium, Cius, Chalcedon, Nicaea, Nicomedia, Prusa, and Prusias on the Hypius. Several of the cities listed have more than one name, which will be included under the individual description. As well, every attempt has been made to be consistent in the spellings of the city names, whereas variations do exist. As a general rule the spellings used in this thesis are those most commonly used by modern scholars.

Apameia

Located northwest of Prusa and situated on the Gulf of Cius, Apameia lies on the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara). The city was originally named Myrleia, and was a colony of Colophon. Philip V of Macedon captured this town during his war against Pergamum (c. 202 B.C.) and later gave the site to his brother-in-law Prusias I. Prusias, acquiring the site for Bithynia, rebuilt it and renamed the new city Apameia, after his wife. Apameia became a Roman colony some time after the rule of Augustus (or perhaps Julius Caesar); this date is inferred from the use of the name 'Julia' found on local coins in the Roman period.

Earlier coins are stamped as belonging to Myrleian Apameia. The name Apameia appears in Pliny (10:47-8). Pliny, as the Bithynian governor and administrator, was asked to investigate the public debtors, revenues and expenditures of Apameia. Their response was positive and cooperative, even though they claimed previous exemption from proconsular investigation. Trajan, in his reply, compliments their attitude: *"Remuneranda est igitur probitas eorum, ut iam nunc sciant hoc, quod inspecturus es, ex mea voluntate saluis, quae habent, privilegiis esse facturum"* (Pliny 10:48). A number of the cities of Pliny's Bithynia are referred to in his tenth book of letters, and this source is invaluable for information on the period. A more detailed examination of Pliny's correspondence will be presented in the third chapter.

Bithynium

Bithynium was located in the eastern interior of Bithynia, founded by Nicomedes I. Strabo describes Bithynium briefly: "In the interior of Bithynia are, not only Bithynium, which is situated above Tieium and holds the territory round Salon, where is the best pasturage for cattle and whence comes the Salonian cheese, but also Nicaea" (12:4.7). Magie describes the area in this way: "Across the ridge which forms the eastern watershed of

the basin of the Hypius lay Bithynium, the most easterly of the cities of the kingdom and on the great road leading to Pontus" (307). He goes on to detail the site and some of the remains. The city was built on a low hill and was surrounded by well-watered plains. There were also thermal springs near this area, which were probably of commercial value to the city. Bithynium was renamed Claudiopolis in Roman times, and this name is found in Pliny's correspondence. Pliny wrote to Trajan, on one occasion, regarding a huge bath-house at Claudiopolis (10:39,40).

Cius

The second of two ports on the Gulf of Cius, the other being Apameia, Cius occupied the very eastern tip of the gulf. It was colonised by Ionians from Miletus and achieved size and importance through the trade-routes which it connected, in particular those leading eastward to the Sangarius and southeastward into Phrygia. The cities of Cius and Apameia served, and were enriched by, the commercial interests of Nicaea and Prusa. Cius was older by far than these latter two cities, and had been free until the latter fourth century B.C. After this time it was held by local tyrants, enjoying only brief periods of autonomy. The city was razed around 202 B.C., along with Myrleia, by Philip V of Macedon. As with Apameia,

Prusias I rebuilt Cius, however he renamed this city after himself, calling it Prusias. Strabo writes: "Cius was razed to the ground by Philip, the son of Demetrius and father of Perseus, and given by him to Prusias the son of Zelas, who had helped him raze both this city and Myrleia, which latter is a neighbouring city and also is near Prusa. And Prusias restored them from their ruins and named the city Cius 'Prusias' after himself and Myrleia 'Apameia' after his wife" (12:4.3). Strabo adds that this is the King Prusias who welcomed Hannibal. Prusias, also known as *Prusias ad Mare*, was established by Rome as a colony. The city is not mentioned by Pliny in his tenth book of letters.

Chalcedon

Chalcedon was a colony of the Megarians located on the Bosporus, opposite to Byzantium. Its Megarian origins are confirmed by cults and institutions, and mentioned by Thucydides. Built on the Asiatic (east) side of the Bosporus this choice of site was seen by ancient writers in terms ranging from favourable to foolish. As far as being favourable, it was better located than most of the Hellenic cities, and the land surrounding it was fruitful. The land was also flatter, and easier to settle, than the hills of Byzantium. On the other hand, as Hammond reiterates: "It was called the

'city of the blind' (cf. Hdt 4.144) because its founders missed the then uncolonised site of Byzantium, with which city its history throughout antiquity was closely linked" (225). A primary disadvantage which Chalcedon suffered was the movement of fish, one of the sources of wealth of Chalcedon and Byzantium, towards the European shore. Ancient sources explain this movement as the result of the fish being frightened away from the Asiatic shore, perhaps by a projecting white rock. A more likely explanation, however, is the water's current, which not only moved the fish, but also made landing on the eastern shore more difficult for shipping. Although Chalcedon was dwarfed in importance by its sister-city, it enjoyed profit from the trade that passed between the Euxine and the Aegean and across the Bosporus as well. Chalcedon remained free in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., falling to the Persians sometime after 387 B.C. It fell to Lysimachus but regained its freedom by 281 B.C. Chalcedon allied with Byzantium and at times with Heracleia and Mithridates I of Pontus. It fell to Philip V, but was free after his defeat in 197 B.C. After this it became an ally of Rome, assisting against Philip's son Perseus, while still maintaining its independent freedom. When, in B.C. 74, Bithynia passed into Roman hands, Chalcedon was part of that kingdom. Smith adds: "When Mithridates invaded Bithynia, Colta, who was the governor of the time, fled to Chalcedon, and all the Romans in the

neighbourhood crowded to the place for protection" (*DGRG* 597). Chalcedon failed to provide refuge when Mithridates captured many of her defending ships and put over three thousand Romans to the sword.[7] In Imperial times Chalcedon was a free city, but is not mentioned by Pliny in book ten.

Nicaea

Nicaea was one of the most important cities of Bithynia, rivalling Nicomedia. The city was situated on the level and fertile eastern shore of lake Ascania, which was ringed by mountains. The earliest settlement on this site was probably named Ancore, and was inhabited by the Bottiaeans. This settlement was conquered later by Mysians, and later still by Antigonus, after the death of Alexander. By 301 B.C. Lysimachus enlarged and fortified the site, refounding it in the name of his wife Nicaea. The fortifications were necessary as the city had no natural defences. One of the remarkable features of Nicaea was its great regularity in city design, as commented on by Strabo: "Nicaea was first founded by Antigonus the son of Philip, who called it Antigonia, and then by Lysimachus, who changed its name to that of Nicaea his wife. She was the daughter of Antipater. The city is sixteen stadia in circuit and is

[7] For additional details see Plutarch, *Lucullus*, sec. 8 - 10.

quadrangular in shape; it is situated in a plain, and has four gates; and its streets are cut at right angles, so that the four gates can be seen from one stone which is set up in the middle of the gymnasium" (12:4.7). After Lysimachus the city came under the control of the kings of Bithynia, beginning with Zipoetes, and from then on remained a royal residence. It passed into Roman hands with the rest of Bithynia in 74 B.C. In Roman times Nicaea held an extensive territory, and vied with the provincial capital Nicomedia for recognition. The dispute was often reduced to the petty issue of which city would be called a metropolis -- apparently setting a precedent. Dio Chrysostom addressed this dispute in his thirty-ninth oration, written in an attempt to settle the quarrel. Apparently Nicomedia was the rightful metropolis, with Nicaea being a close second. Grant mentions one of the benefits granted by Rome to this second place city: "In 29 Octavian (soon to be known as Augustus) authorised the Romans in Bithynia to dedicate a shrine at Nicaea to Rome and the deified Julius Caesar" (430). Pliny makes reference to Nicaea several times in connection with expenditures of money and lesser matters (10:31,39/40, 83/84). Nicaea lacked certain commercial advantages, which Nicomedia enjoyed as a port, and was dependent on Cius for harbour trade and communication. Additional geographic details are provided by Magie: "(Nicaea's trade with Cius) was connected by a road leading along the

southern shore of its lake. The eastern prolongation of this route afforded communication with the valley of the Sangarius and thus with Phrygia and Galatia. Another road, running across the mountain-range on the north, connected it with Nicomedia" (305). Trade along these roads, coupled with the fertile immediate territory, enabled Nicaea to attain great prosperity and wealth.

Nicomedia

Nicomedia, the capital of Bithynia, was located on the north-easternmost tip of the Propontis, in an area called the *Sinus Astacenus*. In early times Lysimachus had destroyed the town of Astacus, near Nicomedia's future site. In 264 B.C. Nicomedes I refounded a Megarian colony named Olbia, transferring the inhabitants of Astacus to this new site. Nicomedes made this new city of Nicomedia the capital of Bithynia, replacing Zipoetium. Nicomedia soon became a prosperous city, flourishing above all others. Its prosperity was based on four factors: its capital status, the fertile surrounding lands, its situation on an important trade route linking Europe and the east, and also on its port. This last factor is not to be discounted, and Stadter notes: "Its merchants handled as well an extensive sea trade between the Aegean and the Black Sea" (3). After Pompey's settlement

Nicomedia continued in its preeminent position as the capital of the province of Bithynia-Pontus, becoming, as well, the seat of the provincial assembly and a site of the imperial cult. Nicomedia's port gained further importance as a naval headquarters. Dio Chrysostom, writing in the late first and early second centuries A.D. commented on many of the facets of this city[8]. It was a diverse and evolving centre -- rich, yet influenced by social discontent. The city rivalled Nicaea, as mentioned above, and both city's citizens strove to build grand monuments and to maintain their superiority. Pliny mentions Nicomedia numerous times giving additional insight into this city (10:31, 33/4, 37/8, 41, 49, 74). It is useful to remember that although Nicomedia was the capital of Bithynia, it was not the residence of the Roman governor. Roman governors seldom established permanent headquarters in any one city under their jurisdiction. This is evidenced by Pliny's own travels, and the necessity of the governor to come to the people of his province. During the second and third centuries A.D. Nicomedia also served as a residence of the Emperors, especially those who engaged the Parthians and/or Persians.

Prusa

Prusa, often called *Prusa ad Olympum*, was located at the northern foot

[8] See Dio, *Discourses*, esp. oration 38/9.

of Mount Olympus in Bithynian territory. Prusa had a claim to fame as the birthplace and home of the famous Greek orator Dio Chrysostom. Prusias is reputed to have founded this site on the advice of the Carthaginian Hannibal, and whether this is true or not does not detract from the grandeur of the location. The location of Prusa was genuinely impressive, lying on the Mysian side of Mt. Olympus, facing fertile plains to the northeast. The snow-capped Mt. Olympus provided abundant timber from its lower slopes and also defence on three sides. Prusa was also situated near thermal springs which came to be called 'royal waters' and had reputed healing powers. These springs served the city as a source of commerce as well as a point of attraction and grandeur. Prusa, although it occupied a beautiful location with natural resources, did not rival the cities of Nicomedia or Nicaea. Stated simply it was not as grand in terms of size, history or foundation. The city was joined, by easy access, with Apamea and Cius. In Roman times Prusa was a standard middle-sized city of the Bithynian province. It paid an annual tribute to Rome, a standard stipendiary practise within the empire, based on its size and prosperity. Some of Pliny's more intricate legal questions involve Prusa and/or her citizens (10:17,23/4,58,70/1,81). A closer look at this area and its legal problems is provided through Pliny's governorship in Bithynia, a topic dealt with in Chapter three.

Prusias on the Hypius

Also known as *Prusias ad Hypium*, this site was originally known as Cierus and was situated on a hillside overlooking the plain around the river Hypius and facing the mass of Mt. Olympus. The ancient site was most likely colonised from central Greece (Thebans) and brought into the possession of Heracleia. The site was taken by Zipoetes, the Bithynian king but returned to Heracleia by Zipoetes' son, Nicomedes, in 280 B.C. (in return for the their assistance against Antiochus I). Prusias I recaptured the site almost a century later, renaming it after himself, as he had done at Cius. The city lay along an important road linking Nicomedia with Amastris in Paphlagonia. The early Roman coins from this city appear to have started under Vespasian (A.D. 69-79). Prusias on the Hypius is not mentioned in the tenth book of Pliny the Younger.

Chapter 2: The Roman Province

Introduction to Roman Bithynia

In 74 B.C. Nicomedes IV, the last king of Bithynia, died and bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman Republic. Before this date Rome had become increasingly involved in this region, particularly against the advances of the Pontic King Mithridates VI. It would be more than a decade of war and strife before the region could truly be called a Roman province. The early Roman presence and interest in this region (mentioned in the first chapter) will be examined in greater detail in this chapter. During the years of Nicomedes' rule, Rome was involved in numerous dealings in Asia Minor and the neighbouring territories. For the entire period encompassed by the three Mithridatic Wars (89 - 65 B.C.) administration in Asia was overshadowed by the Roman military presence. Indeed it can be said that the administration of Roman provinces in the East was always affected by the presence of the Roman army. The Roman commanders, however, did not act in unison or uphold the policies of administration set by their predecessors. The actions of one commander, such as Lucullus, cannot indicate the actions of another, especially in the area of administration. An indication of this lack of cooperation is provided by a glance at the specific

case of Lucullus, who is dealt with more in-depth later in this chapter. Lucullus chose to effect changes in previous policies concerning matters of tax collecting and debt recovery. His attitude of leniency and humanity ultimately led to his removal through intrigue and under-the-table tactics by political opponents. These opponents were his own statesmen - not foreign forces. The clear points which can be said about the Roman administration of Bithynia are: 1) that administrative control shifted, sometimes rapidly, between authorities, 2) that politics and greed often dictated administrative policy rather than a set plan or good sense, 3) that one must be careful in oversimplifying the scene into individual provinces. In some instances administrative decisions were influenced by the interplay of neighbouring regions or coalitions of allied powers. At other times administrative decisions were based on the influence of individual cities[1] . The situation was further complicated by many problems affecting the Roman world at this time. These problems included internal strife and civil unrest, notably the Social Wars (91 - 89 B.C.), a Spanish revolt (involving Sertorius), an increasing issue of piracy in the eastern Mediterranean and the Mithridatic Wars. With all this in mind it is useful to examine Roman influence in general first, then to focus on the administrative policies which pertain to Bithynia in particular.

[1] For example when Pompey was governor and was arranging the provinces of Bithynia and Pontus, Amisus enjoyed the status of his overall (but not continuous) seat of power. This fact alone brought a great deal of wealth and building projects to this city. See below, p. 56 ff.

The period under study here begins early, around 91 B.C., and proceeds through to 63 B.C., by which time Bithynia-Pontus had been organised as a single (joint) Roman province. The drawing up of the *Lex Pompeia* [2] detailed the new Roman province and gave order to the eastern Roman domain. After this settlement only minor changes were brought about by Julius Caesar, Augustus and the Emperors to follow. The course of events detailed here will then carry into the third chapter - an area of concentrated administrative interest in Trajan's time. A period for which a great deal of information is preserved, thanks to the writings of the specially appointed governor of Bithynia-Pontus, Pliny the Younger.

Roman Involvement before 74 B.C.

In 91 B.C. Rome was distracted by the allied states within Italy (Social War) and Mithridates was plotting wars in the East. He urged his son-in-law Tigranes to enter Cappadocia, using Gordius as an agent. Ariobarzanes fled to Rome, and Mithridates then removed Nicomedes from the Bithynian throne, to be replaced by Socrates Chrestus. The Senate ruled that both kings be restored, and appointed Aquillius with this commission. In the attempt to complete his assignment Aquillius gathered

2 There were a number of laws bearing the title *Lex Pompeia* , with this one being most easily distinguished as the Bithynian law. This law is referred to frequently by Pliny the Younger in his letters (10:80,112,114).

loyal forces and moved into position. With this show of force and will on the part of the Romans, Mithridates retreated from Bithynian territory. After restoring Nicomedes to the Bithynian throne, Aquillius entered Cappadocia and forced Tigranes back to Armenia. Under Aquillius command the Roman administration of Bithynia and Cappadocia took on the form of heavy handed intimidation. Nicomedes and Ariobarzanes were restored in name, but were in debt to their Roman patrons. Nicomedes was compelled into an invasion of Pontus in the hope of acquiring the booty necessary to pay off his bribes he had promised to Aquillius. Ariobarzanes was pressured to invade as well, but realising his weak state, he declined. Nicomedes' personal debt to Rome for his restoration was compounded by his kingdoms grave financial state. The appalling level of debt present in Bithynia is commented on by Mitchell: "It is likely that Galatia <at this time> remained a source of slave labour, as it had in the second century, although probably not on the large scale attested in Bithynia, where Nicomedes IV complained that his kingdom had been virtually depopulated by slave trading, a traffic that he was probably forced to encourage in order to maintain the country's liquidity and its ability to pay Roman dues" (30). Nicomedes moved into Pontic territory up to Amastris, forcing Mithridates either to withdraw further, or to commit to war. The Pontic king complained to Rome, sending an envoy, Pelopidas, to attempt

negotiation. The Senate arrogantly rebuffed Pelopidas. As he was in this way denied the course of dialogue he committed to war. Mithridates sent his son Ariarthes into Cappadocia, driving Ariobarzanes out again. The Pontic king even went as far as to threaten action against the rest of Asia, Achaea and Africa. Aquillius considered these threats and sent Pelopidas back with word that war had been declared. This began the first Mithridatic War (89 B.C.), and it had been undertaken without the ratification of the Senate and People of Rome.

In 89 B.C. Mithridates won victories in Western Pontus and Bithynia, occupying sections of Phrygia and several Ionian cities.[3] By 88 B.C. Mithridates had organised the coast of Asia and conquered areas to the north and south (Paphlagonia, Caria, Lycia and Pamphylia). He incited, and cooperated in, the massacre of some 80,000 Italians and Romans (the prime target being *publicani* and officials). Their crime was stated as: "Having created the prevailing climate of aggressive greed (*pleonexia*) and acquisitiveness (*philokerdia*), and for encouraging the evils of malicious litigation" (Hind 148). At this time C. Cassius was governor of Asia, with his seat at Pergamum, and Aquillius was again commissioned to deal with the events. In the ensuing hostilities Nicomedes' forces were defeated and he retreated to join Aquillius' position. Aquillius did no better at

[3] For details of this war, see Sherwin-White (*RFPE* 121 ff.).

Protopachium (in E. Bithynia) soon after. The Roman forces were compelled to retreat to Rhodes with Cassius safe but separated from Aquillius. Aquillius fled to Lesbos but was handed over by the Mytilenes to Mithridates, who had him killed.

The royal presence of Mithridates was welcomed by many tax-paying communities which had endured the oppression of Roman and Italian money-lenders. Other cities, however, which had enjoyed some privileged status or wealth under Roman occupation were not so willing to join the king (e.g. Ilium, Chios, Rhodes). Mithridates, acting in true Persian style, set up satraps in W. Asia and '*episcopoi*' - overseers, in many cities. He remitted for five years all taxes to friendly towns and cancelled many debts, as well as instituting a number of acts of philanthropy. The Roman Senate declared war and L. Cornelius Sulla was appointed (by lot). After eighteen months Sulla moved east with five legions. The delay was political, giving Sulla time to secure, as best he could, his position at home[4]. He also needed time to gather money (aided by the sale of the Treasures of Numa). Mithridates over-extended his forces into Greece, and met resistance from Bruttius Sura, legate of C. Sentius, governor of Macedonia. Sulla gained time through Sura's resolve and in 87 B.C. arrived in Greece assisted by the quaestor L. Lucullus. Mithridates

[4] Political, and to a lesser extent military, details pertaining to this war are presented in a very basic manner here, as they have entire studies dedicated to them.

retreated, facing losses and revolts in Asia. The Treaty of Dardanus, proposed by Sulla, was signed in the autumn of 85 B.C., with terms relatively favourable to Mithridates. By the terms of the agreement Bithynia was returned to Nicomedes, Cappadocia given back to Ariobarzanes and Mithridates was given rule in Pontus (as a friend and ally of Rome). An indemnity of two to three thousand talents was to be paid.

In comparison many cities in Asia, whole communities, were required to pay large indemnities totalling 20,000 talents. This, imposed upon communities whose fortunes, public and private, had been lost in war, was crippling for years to come. This vast indemnity, the destruction of many cities, financial ruin of communities, combined with the lack of ships to patrol the Aegean, all resulted in an increase in the already crippling pirate presence. Piracy progressed beyond the high seas to land raids on cities, ensuring a threat to the Mediterranean area until 67 B.C.

In 83/2 B.C. Licinius Murena was left by Sulla to deal with the reestablishment of the province of Asia. Murena, moving beyond his post in Asia, interfered with Mithridates and raided into Pontus with little provocation. Sulla sent his emissaries to deal with this dispute (the 2nd Mithridatic War). It was Sulla's aim from the beginning to maintain the

status quo in Cappadocia, Galatia and Bithynia, and having already made a peace with Mithridates, he was hampered by his own appointed man. Additionally, the peace ending this second conflict was never ratified by the Senate. The period following this was rife with intrigue, civil war and political wrangling. Nicomedes retained control, effectively as a Roman puppet, of Bithynia until 75 B.C. In 74 B.C., after Nicomedes' death, a number of provincial controls changed hands quickly, leaving Lucullus in charge of Asia and Cilicia, and handing Bithynia over to M. Cotta. Lucullus actively sought the position in Cilicia through favours and political wrangling, since it was the most likely spot for action to come. M. Antonius was given three years to deal with the piracy. At this time Mithridates had made some ominous moves, but did not invade Bithynia until the spring of 73 B.C.

The Roman Province from 74 B.C. to 63 B.C.

In 74 B.C. Nicomedes willed his kingdom to Rome, following the example of Attalus III of Asia[5] and Ptolemy Apion of Cyrenaica. The Senate heard and rejected claims of a bastard son (who did not have

[5] When Attalus III bequeathed his kingdom to Rome in 133 BC, Rome treated this province as a client kingdom, interfering little directly. Greater Phrygia was given to Mithridates V of Pontus. Many of the autonomous cities of Asia remained independent.

provincial support). After annexing Bithynia, Roman *publicani* moved into the region, going as far as to establish themselves in the independent city of Heraclea, setting up their centres of tax-collection in opposition to the status and rights of the city. In response the citizens readily submitted to the pressures of Mithridates in the years to come, by murdering the Romans and sending five ships to join the Pontic fleet. This happened in early spring 73 B.C. when Mithridates marched through Paphlagonia into Bithynia. Consuls were assigned their place in the 3rd Mithridatic War; Lucullus was to command a legion from Italy as well as those in his provincial control, while Cotta was to hold a naval blockade in Bithynia against the Pontic fleet. Cotta was defeated at sea and was forced, with his surviving land forces, into nearby Chalcedon. Mithridates continued towards Cyzicus, and it was at this point, stopped and harassed by Lucullus, that Mithridates withdrew. The Roman legates Triarius and Barba captured Apamea, Prusa and Nicomedia, enforcing a military administration (further disrupting any semblance of government). The war proceeded generally against Mithridates and in 71 B.C. he fled to Armenia, drawing Roman attention to King Tigranes. Appius Claudius, a Roman diplomat with surprisingly little diplomacy ensured the lack of cooperation from Tigranes through sheer arrogance. In 70 B.C. Lucullus was left to deal with the situation. Appius was sent off to Ephesus

to deal with the reorganisation of Asia - and presumably of Bithynia as well. Triarius, at this time, was based in Bithynia but is not seen again until 68 B.C. At this later date the legate Fabius was besieged in Cabira, where he was relieved by the forces of Triarius, arriving from Bithynia (or Asia) at the request of Lucullus.

Lucullus and his Administrative Arrangements

When Lucullus was in command, forcing Mithridates to withdraw from many engagements, his treatment of captured areas in Pontus and elsewhere reflected his personal morality. In Amisus he checked the plunder and killing of citizens, and actually set about restoring the city, in Roman fashion, as a surrendered property. He assisted in rebuilding and recovery, even settling new colonies on abandoned territory. Lucullus also directed and supported the restoration of Sinope, and both became autonomous cities within the province's administration. Many cities in Asia Minor, were still burdened by the indemnities imposed by Sulla, and Bithynia's economic troubles remained. As ever, Roman financiers were on hand after the tides of war had receded a little, to lend out money to citizen and city alike. *Publicani* who had lost money and risked life and limb in 88

B.C. were here once more, emphasising the profit potential to be had. Some justified the imposition of incredibly high interest rates and severe contracts as danger pay, or necessary as a result of the weakened Italy (from civil war) which needed funds. Cities, en masse, sold off buildings and treasures, while the Roman tax-collectors appropriated private lands and citizens alike under harsh payment terms. By the time that Lucullus turned his attention from warfare to tax reforms, general indebtedness had already increased some sixfold in areas of Asia.

Lucullus was still in the field in 67 B.C. but was essentially out of the fray. His men were battle weary, and were aware of his imminent removal from the Asian arena. They had not seen the plunder and booty that they desired, nor had they enjoyed all of the comforts that some commanders acquiesced to their soldiers. Lucullus was unable to accomplish many goals because of his rebellious men and their general lack of obedience. It is somewhat ironic that by this time Mithridates had gained a respect for this one Roman soldier. Also in 67 B.C. Glabrio had still done nothing, and Lucullus' hands were tied. Greenhalgh sums up the situation well: "The incompetent Acilius Glabrio, who had succeeded Lucullus in Bithynia and Pontus, was now cowering in the relative safety of Bithynia. He was not only incapable of recovering Pontus but even seems to have feared to go

and collect the few troops who were still with Lucullus as the latter stood doggedly on guard against Mithridates in the wilds of Galatia" (105). In late 67 B.C. Lucullus was replaced and transferred into safer regions of Galatia. This was a political manoeuvre, which unfortunately for Rome allowed Mithridates a period of recovery. As stated, Acilius Glabrio, consul in this year, lingered in Bithynia instead of immediately taking over Lucullus' Eastern command. Marcius Rex brought three legions from Italy into Cilicia and Bithynia to deal with the problems.

Before he returned to Rome in 66 B.C. Lucullus had fixed interest at a rate of no more than 10-12% per year, and forbade the interest to exceed the principal amount. Compound interest was punishable by complete absolution of the debt. Additionally no debtor could be forced to pay more than 1/4 of his income per year. Under this system signs of prosperity had returned even by the time Lucullus left. The leniency of Lucullus' new system allowed those wealthy citizens who had escaped unharmed from the past to contribute to the alleviation of the distressed. In the end it was Lucullus' policies regarding *publicani* and their profits which, at least partly, resulted in his removal from power. Those against Lucullus spread rumours that he was delaying the war, seeking wealth from the battlefield rather than glory for Rome. Those that had been receiving tax monies

from this area needed no rumours to hate Lucullus. With Lucullus gone the region could have easily become unmanageable, except for the arrival of Pompey, a general with every bit as much military genius as his predecessor.

Pompey's Eastern Settlement

Into this setting Pompey arrived, having dealt with the entire Mediterranean pirate problem in quick succession.[6] Pompey was given power in Bithynia, Pontus, Cilicia, and a command against Mithridates. His *imperium* was equal to that granted to him to deal with the pirates, and was increased by the authority to declare peace and war without prior reference to the Senate.[7] Unlike Pompey's military successes, which are generally acknowledged as brilliant, his administrative measures, on the other hand, bear a spectrum of opinion. For instance, C.P. Jones is less than generous in his statement: "After the final defeat of Mithridates, Pompey combined Pontus and Bithynia into a single administrative region or 'province'. The new province was thus born from the accidents of war,

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[6] The *Lex Manilia* of 66 B.C. specified his power. For more complete information on Pompey, see Greenhalgh, *Pompey the Roman Alexander*, or Seager, *Pompey: a Political Biography*. and intro. p. 6. Many additional sources are available.

[7] For additional information see Seager (40-43).

with little regard for geographical or ethnic demarcations, or even for the convenience of the governor" (C.P. Jones 2). He goes on to state that this awkward administrative set-up endured, basically intact, until Diocletian. Few scholars, however, have criticised Pompey's administration unreservedly. Bithynia had been bequeathed to the Romans in 74 B.C. and had endured war for a decade. The final organisation of the province, entrusted to Pompey, occurred some ten years after the death of the last Bithynian monarch. This was not surprising or even unprecedented. One may consider the case of Cyrene, where Ptolemy Apion bequeathed his kingdom to Rome in 96 B.C., yet twenty-two years elapsed before it was properly organised as a Roman province. In the intervening years Rome maintained the freedom of Cyrene's cities, only imposing its right to collect some revenues. With regard to the actual organisation of the Bithynia and Pontus it is a matter of opinion whether or not Pompey acted haphazardly and without concern even for the governor. Arguments supporting Pompey's experienced decisions are clear. A.H.M. Jones emphasises: "Pompey rightly saw that it would be impossible for an annually changing Roman governor, totally inexperienced in administrative work and unfamiliar with the country and the people, to undertake the direct administration of the country" (158). Self-governing local officials were the immediate solution, and would serve as a long term policy as

well. It is also worth considering that a large number of the inhabited cities were organised according to Hellenistic traditions - not Roman ones.[8] Pompey was concerned that those areas with a Mediterranean coastline should be under Roman rule, while allowing native rulers to administer inland regions. An example of this was Tigranes (an ally of Mithridates at times) who was recognised as King of Armenia, and allowed to rule as a Roman client. Cities fell under Roman jurisdiction, yet were still granted a large amount of autonomy. The Roman Republic was still in the process of mastering provincial governing and did not possess the necessary military or administrative machinery to achieve total control. This is not to say that Pompey did not put certain detailed policies into play. Pompey's goal was to allow skilled men to govern provinces, but he wished to establish a firm interval between proconsular power from the holding of a magistracy. He declared that five years were to pass between a magistracy and a provincial command. This made the office of pro-magistracy, in effect, a separate office, rather than simply an extension of consulship or praetorship.[9] Pompey required that locals could not hold a civil office or sit in a senate until they reached the age of thirty, and also stated that all ex-officials become members of the local senate. There was, however, no provision

[8] Strabo is an excellent source of information regarding the make up of the land and the arrangements made by Pompey in the Pontus, but he is silent on Bithynia.

[9] This was modified by Augustus (see below, pp. 62-63). Provincial commands and the power associated with them led to corruption in some (see below, pp. 66-69). Details of the chain of command and progression of offices is not, however, a topic to be dealt with in this study.

made for payment of an admission fee to the senate by those elected by local censors. Under Pompey's law individual cities of Bithynia (and Pontus) were permitted to bestow citizenship on anyone of their choice so long as that person was not a citizen of another Bithynian city, and also to remove local senators from office. These political aspects of Pompey's law, as enacted in the province, are referred to by Pliny in his correspondence to Trajan decades later (10:80, 112, 114).

Geographically Pompey's organisations reflect keen thought and concern. In the course of his campaigning Pompey had founded cities in his name (and in the title 'Magnus'). In the Pontic interior Pompey developed several towns into cities, joined existing communities into three new cities, and completed Mithridates' Eupatoria into his own Magnopolis. Large tracts of land in Mithridates' former kingdom, previously governed by royal families, were distributed among Bithynian and Pontic civic territories by Pompey. Nicomedia and Amastris became the two capitals of the joint province of Bithynia-Pontus and other cities found themselves in control of new and large territories. The division of royal, unused, or disputed land was practical and effective in Bithynia assisted by the existence of established cities with known boundaries. The royal lands which city states received (*territorium*) became *agri publici* and was taxed.

Pharnaces, son of Mithridates, was granted rulership in the Bosporus, north of Bithynia. The Galatian ruler Deiotarus was given territory which served as a buffer between the lands of Armenian Tigranes and Parthian Phraates. Later, Augustus changed the border following the death of Deiotarus' son. Bithynia's southern border was partially defined by the limits of Paphlagonia, under the dynasts Pylaemenes and Attalus. Some of what was previously northern Paphlagonia was, however, annexed into the province of Bithynia. Amisus served as a provincial seat of government for Pompey for several years (65 - 62 though not continuous), and was rewarded with extensive territory. Wacher (333) argues that the Romans, while restoring their presence after Mithridates' withdrawal, were generous if not strenuous promoters of individual cities. As well, certain smaller communities were raised to the status of a city, or *polis*. In many cases the policies of Pompey allowed Rome time to deal with the Eastern cities and become enriched by them rather than be bogged down with controlling them. There were a few problems which developed in certain areas. For instance, in Bithynia Pompey had arranged for permanent membership in city councils, dependent on adlection by a censor, or the local equivalent. This particular policy was alien to Greek practice, and in some cities led to the development of a fixed (hereditary) curial class, and to class antagonism within cities. Obviously not all of Pompey's solutions

worked for every city, or people, but in general, as Rome accepted, his policies would remain relatively unchanged for a long time. The changes, or influence, in Bithynia of the men of power after Pompey will be considered next, up to the Emperor Trajan.

Bithynia-Pontus under the Late Republic and Early Empire

The administrative arrangements implemented by Pompey retained their effectiveness and basic structure for many generations. The longevity of this is testament to the fact that Roman governors, and Emperors, enacted only small changes, if any, in Bithynia. Recorded history in various forms reveals little additional information regarding this region for the period of time between Pompey's settlement and the end of the Roman civil wars. What is certain, is that Bithynia continued to be a source of wealth for Roman businessmen, and those in the business of revenue collecting.[10] This wealth was, of course, nothing new for those engaged in the business of taxing Bithynians, and the same wealth would influence many governors to come, some to the point of criminal conviction. Indeed Papirius Carbo, the first local governor after Pompey, was prosecuted along with other provincial magistrates on charges of

[10] For a broader discussion, see C.P. Jones (2).

extortion. A subsequent governor, C. Memmius, seems to have fallen short of extortion, but not of plunderous taxation. The tax collecting which so benefited the Italian *publicani* and so damaged Bithynia for years was based on a law of Gaius Gracchus (in 123 B.C.) and was still in effect at the time of the Roman acquisition of this new province. This law was later abolished as part of Caesar's reforms in provincial administration.

One of the major factors contributing to the importance of Bithynia was its situation on the major routes linking Europe and Asia. Augustus maintained the status quo of rule in most of Asia Minor. Further east, Armenia served as a buffer state, ruled over by friendly clients, while the intervening provinces, especially Bithynia-Pontus, served with stability for supply lines and centres of communication. As well as a strategic location Bithynia enjoyed profits from its resources and domestic production. Wacher (509) notes Bithynia and Pontus among other provinces (Phrygia, Galatia, Pisidia, Cappadocia and Lycaonia) as suppliers of woollen goods, and retainers of guilds of weavers, dyers and fullers. Here Wacher separates Bithynia and Pontus, perhaps to emphasise that both regions of the new joint province were productive. Bithynia also provided some of the processed tunny (salt-fish) which was an important part of the Roman diet. Increasingly the Roman way of life began to permeate this region.

Under Augustus a temple to Rome and the deified Caesar was built at Nicaea. In an effort not to create conflict, Nicomedia, Nicaea's rival, was allowed to build a temple to Rome and Augustus. The idea of divine kingship was still generally repudiated by Romans, as well as many in the West, yet was considered natural in the East. It was almost necessary for authenticity of worship to consider someone as great as the Roman Emperor to be divine. In his overall administrative settlements of 27 B.C., Augustus required that the province of Bithynia-Pontus was to be governed by annual proconsular senators of praetorian rank, with the assistance of a legate and a quaestor. More will be said concerning the set-up and control of the provincial governors in the next chapter. The region continued to rise in prosperity, as much of the empire did under the principate, with stable rule. It should be noted that much of the wealth was in the hands of the upper classes which held power in councils and offices of importance. This fact played a part in the later trouble experienced in the province when vast sums of money were being squandered on extravagant building schemes. Under Claudius some administrative features of notice are 1) that Bithynian coinage was issued by a Bithynian council and 2) that the earliest Bithynian advancements are noted in the Senate. Over the years of Roman rule following Claudius many proconsuls are reported to have misgoverned Bithynia-Pontus. So many

maladministrations, as stated by Williams (11), that the province 'topped the list' for prosecutions of governors. This trend seems to have continued until the time of the Emperor Trajan.

Trajan's Bithynia

Important issues pertaining to Bithynia, and the appointment of her governors became very apparent by the time of the Emperor Trajan. Through the letters of Pliny the Younger the daily reality of Bithynia is brought to light in detail, with topics ranging from administration to personal observation of events. Two of the more famous cases of official corruption were reported by Pliny even before his appointment to Bithynia.[11] In his tenth book of letters Pliny corresponds with Trajan, giving invaluable historic insight into this region. The appointment of Pliny to Bithynia, along with its unique nature and importance, will be examined in the following chapter. Administrative details will be the main focus of concern, with much of the evidence drawn from the letters directly.

[11]The trials of Julius Bassus and Varenus Rufus, recounted by Pliny (4:9, 5:20, 6:5, 6:13, 7:6, and 7:10).

Chapter 3: Pliny the Younger

The administration of the joint province of Bithynia-Pontus becomes much clearer in the early second century A.D. This is due to information gathered from the correspondence between Pliny the Younger and the Emperor Trajan. An examination of this correspondence is possible because of the existence of the ten books of letters, by Pliny, which have survived intact. The details of their survival and their authorship is not discussed here, except to mention the following: the first nine books have been generally accepted as works edited and compiled by Pliny himself, while the tenth book was compiled after his death. This fact is important for accepting the genuine praise and authenticity of the replies sent by Trajan to Pliny. Trajan's responses often emphasise the nature of Pliny's appointment, and add to the entire study of the administration of this province.

Pliny the Younger

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, adopted son of the Elder Pliny (his uncle), was an accomplished lawyer, a respected Roman statesman and a wealthy landowner. He was also appointed by the Emperor Trajan to serve

as special administrator of the province of Bithynia-Pontus. Pliny the Younger enjoyed writing, refining and compiling his letters, although he did not consider himself a great talent. His collected letters contain details of his life and give invaluable insight into the Rome of his day. More importantly, for this study, the tenth book of these letters provides remarkable detail into his experiences and administration in 2nd century Bithynia. Although he did not acquire his Bithynian post until A.D. 110[1], when he was in his fifties, Pliny had, by this time, served a full career. His earlier offices include military service in Syria[2] , entrance into the Senate as a quaestor, and promotion to the tribunate and praetorship. Two of his appointments of note (between A.D. 93 and 100) were in Rome and involved financial administration.[3] In A.D. 100 he held the consulship and soon after was nominated by Trajan for membership into the esteemed priesthood - the Augurs. But Pliny was more of an advocate than a military man, and as Sherwin-White remarks: "He was a notable legal figure, who could and did claim to be second only to the outstanding orator Cornelius Tacitus, the historian" (*FLP* xi). Three of Pliny's most important court cases involved the accusation or defence of provincial governors being tried on charges of extortion. In the last two cases Pliny defended governors of Bithynia (Julius Bassus in A.D. 102/3

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[1] See p. 74 below for a brief discussion on the dates of his term as governor.

[2] The governor of Syria sent him to examine the accounts of certain army auxiliary units.

[3] Three years as *praefectus aerarii militaris* and three years as *praefectus aerarii saturnii.*

and Varenus Rufus in A.D. 106/7). His accounting of these cases is recorded in his letters (4:9, 5:20) and his experiences in these matters foreshadowed his appointment to come. These cases, and other circumstances leading to Pliny's appointment to this province, are worth examining (later in this chapter), utilising the letters as evidence. It is also useful to look at the state of the joint province at this time, and comment on some aspects of the provincial administration.

Provincial Administration

Under Augustus, the provinces were divided into two categories, Senatorial (public) and Imperial (the Emperor's own). The Senate retained control of the public provinces which were generally peaceful, civilised, and inhabited by a large number of Romans. "Augustus left the government of the public provinces unchanged, so anxious was he to restore the old Republican system" (A.H.M. Jones, *Augustus*, 99). These provinces were assigned to governors, appointed by the Senate for yearly terms. The appointments to Asia and Africa were given to ex-consuls, with ex-praetors to the rest. According to the later *lex Pompeia* of 52 B.C. former consuls and praetors had to wait five years before drawing for a province.

The Imperial provinces were subject to Augustus, as proconsul and Princeps. His legates were assigned posts based on their skills, for a period of time of his choosing. Terms were usually more than one year, with three being standard. A legate which was an ex-consul would be placed in a province of military importance (with two or more legions). The legates of Augustus each bore the title of *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. A few of the Emperor's own provinces were governed by hand-picked men of the equestrian order, given the title of prefect.[4] One of Augustus' first appointments of this type was Cornelius Gallus, an equestrian, placed as governor of Egypt in 30 B.C. By the end of his reign Augustus controlled nearly twice as many provinces as the other proconsuls. He controlled the large province of Spain, and the wealthy provinces of Egypt and Syria, but for the most part his provinces were "... barbarous and recently subdued areas" (A.H.M. Jones, *Augustus*, 107).

The joint province of Bithynia-Pontus was under Senatorial control throughout the rule of Augustus and the Emperors down to Trajan. Trajan, however, made an exception to the status-quo of administration, with his special appointment of Pliny the Younger. Pliny was governor of Bithynia-Pontus with the title of *legatus Augusti*. He was additionally honoured by the title addendum of *consulari potestate* which granted him

[4] For further information see A.H.M. Jones, *Augustus*, especially Ch. 8 on the provinces.

the extra authority (and dignity) of consular power.

The Role of Governor

The authority of a provincial governor concerned military and judicial matters, and was near-absolute, thus explaining some of the abuses which resulted. In Rome a magistrate could be directed, controlled or hampered by colleagues, the Senate or even public opinion. In a province a governor could either accomplish great good or, unhampered as he was, succeed in bringing about great harm. The end of the term of office was often one of the few ways to remove a corrupt administrator. In some exceptional cases, bad reports would reach Rome and result in a successor and perhaps even a court trial. "Although three years was a usual term of office in the later Republic, all governors did not retain their commands long enough to acquire the three fortunes of which Verres spoke, one for his defenders, one to bribe the jurors on his return, and one to keep for himself" (Stevenson 65). This is not to say that the governor was isolated from Rome -- merely that his control was great enough to abuse the administration, and still carry out his orders in many cases. Provincial governors would correspond with Rome from time to time, receiving instructions and assistance, and sending reports or requests. Some

governors took specific instructions with them to their provinces, which, they were responsible to see carried out. And an account would be given, especially considering that their successor would not accept any blame for faults present upon his arrival. If a governor wished to make fundamental changes in a province (such as constitutional changes, administrative changes, etc.) he would need the consent of the Senate. Indeed, the governors were held in place legally by the individual *Lex Provinciae* of his province. "These documents were drawn up soon after annexation by a body of *legati*, entrusted with this duty by the Senate and the people, and generally took their name from one of the consuls of the year" (Stevenson 68). Provincial documents laid out general administrative principles pertaining primarily to justice and taxes. Bithynia retained the *Lex Pompeia* even to the time of Trajan, which fixed such matters as the age limit for municipal magistrates, fees to be paid by senators, qualifications for citizenship in a town and in its governing council, and regional boundaries. The lex Pompeia was binding, although it had not encountered the above mentioned process. Charters of different provinces differed for the sake of the province and its smooth efficiency; uniformity was not the goal.

Provincial Councils

Part of the framework set up to assist a governor in running the province took the form of individual *concilium* (councils). This body was composed of members representing the various factions in the province. In Bithynia-Pontus there were actually two separate councils. The delegates of these bodies would meet at least annually to celebrate the worship of the Emperor, his cult linked with the goddess Roma. "(The councils) were presided over by one of their number, who in the west bore the title of *flamen* or *sacerdos* of the province, though in the east the title was sometimes not explicitly religious, eg., Asiarch or Bithyniarch" (Stevenson 112). Other duties of these organisations included dealing with internal disputes and maintaining their own good standing with the Princeps. This entailed such responsibilities as providing oil for their gymnasia, providing public works, etc. Unfortunately, many of the cities in Bithynia-Pontus began to compete to outdo each other in their homage. Glorification of the city, honours to the Emperor and mismanagement of civic finances became a great concern by Trajan's time. This was a primary reason behind Pliny's appointment to the province. (See sections to follow). To the regret of some governors, one of the powers of the council was to monitor the provincial administration. Local councils sometimes appointed officials to

look into complaints and problems of administration. Reports of corruption or incompetence could result in the launch of a prosecution against the local governor[5] . This type of provincial action against Roman governors is described by Pliny, with his first hand experiences as an advocate. The accounting, given in his letters, details not only the serious nature of the charges but also indicates some of the character of the man whom Trajan chose to solve the problems in the joint province.

Provincial Governors

In A.D. 99 Pliny conducted a case against the governor of Africa, Marius Priscus, while Pliny was engaged in his Treasury posting. The case and its successful conclusion is described in two of the letters (2:11,12). Early in the first letter Pliny states: "A case which has attracted attention because of the celebrity of the defendant, has set an example of severity which will do a great deal of good, and is unlikely to be forgotten because of the importance of the issue involved" (2:11). From the outset the reader can see that Pliny is interested in the punishment of corrupt officials, for the sake of the greater good. He also expresses the idea that corruption is an issue of great importance. Priscus was tried on the charges of accepting bribery money and goods, and also on the more serious charges of cruelty

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5 A joint provincial prosecution would be the only option possible, since this type of matter would simply be too costly for any individual.

and corrupt administration. As the description of the case proceeds, the oratory and persuasive skill of the lawyers becomes increasingly important. Pliny is arguing for justice for the provincials, while the defence is fighting for leniency from fellow high class Romans. Priscus is eventually found guilty, with the decision of the consul-elect being upheld: "Cornutus Tertullus, the consul-elect, who always stands out for his strict adherence to the truth, then proposed that the bribe of 700,000 sesterces which Priscus had taken should be paid by him into the Treasury." (2:11) This victory by Pliny (though not his alone) was witnessed, as stated in the letter, by the Emperor Trajan, who presided over the latter part of the trial. Indeed, the following is said of Cornutus: "He ended his speech by stating on behalf of the Senate that, by our conscientious and courageous handling of the prosecution entrusted to us, Tacitus and I (Pliny) were considered to have correctly carried out the duty assigned us." (2:11)

Pliny describes another important court case in which he finds himself on the other side of the court, defending an accused governor - the Bithynian governor Julius Bassus. In this case Pliny sides with the defendant, considering him a victim of legal harassment on more than one occasion. Pliny describes this case, and the defendant, quite differently from the previous one. Instead of seeking to bring a governor to justice,

he now must "... deal with the informers who were plotting to make a profit for themselves, and finally to speak of the reasons for (Bassus') unpopularity with every disturber of the peace, such as Theophanes himself." (4: 9) Theophanes was the representative of the province and in charge of the prosecution. In this case the governor had accepted gifts, which the prosecution called theft and plunder, and Pliny acknowledges the presence of some guilt. But in his mind the guilt seems more owing to a lack of wisdom then to corruption. In the end the eloquent defence was successful in so much as Bassus was found guilty of illegally accepting gifts, but was not forced to lose his status in the Senate.

In A.D. 106/7 Pliny defended another governor of Bithynia, Varenus Rufus. The description of this case is much more brief and Pliny seems to hold it as less important. In the letter Pliny is more concerned with asking for a critique of his speech, than with the morals of the case. What is made clear, however, is that the Bithynians are having more trouble with their governors, and that their manner of prosecution is second rate. Pliny describes the prosecutor in the following terms: "I was opposed by one of the Bithynians, Fonteius Magnus, whose words were many and arguments few, for, like most Greeks, he mistakes volubility for fullness of expression; they all pour out a torrent of long monotonous periods without

taking breath." (5:20) One must remember, though, that Pliny is writing as a scholar here, concerned with techniques of speaking rather than personal opinion.

A clear expression of the attitude which Pliny held towards the Greeks, and another glimpse into the man's nature, can be seen by examining more of his letters. In a later letter (8:24) Pliny writes to Valerius Maximus, a Roman official beginning his governorship in the province of Achaea (Greece): "Remember that you have been sent to the province of Achaea, to the pure and genuine Greece, where civilisation and literature, and agriculture, too, are believed to have originated;" (8:24) He goes on to emphasise the respect owed to these peoples, and the right they should have to mindful rule. To rule them with tyranny, in his mind, would be "... an act of cruelty, ignorance and barbarism" (8:24). More of Pliny's thinking is revealed as the letter proceeds, including his ideas on how to govern. He holds love and respect as more enduring and laudable than obedience out of fear. He feels that no ruler will be despised without just cause. He goes on to write: "Never, never forget (I must repeat this) the official title you bear, and keep clearly in mind what it means and how much it means to establish order in the constitution of free cities, for nothing can serve a city like orderly rule and nothing is so precious as freedom;" (8:24) By a

fortunate coincidence, this man to whom Pliny writes was also a quaestor in Bithynia, and in this office gained respect, honour and the Emperor's recognition. It is important to note here that the local population of Bithynia was not free like the Achaeans, nevertheless they still deserved fair rule. In fact, the Achaean posting was a reward to the quaestor for his excellent service with the Bithynians. Throughout this letter it is apparent that Pliny holds fairness and justice very high in his personal moral code. He admires an administrator who can maintain order, yet do so with a manner of rule which the provincials will esteem. These personal qualifications, as well as his administrative experiences, stand behind Trajan's decision to appoint the joint province to Pliny.

Pliny's Appointment

The letters which comprise the tenth book of Pliny's correspondence cover a wide spectrum of subject matter. In most cases a letter written by Pliny to the Emperor is followed by a reply by Trajan. Pliny's letters are, inevitably, more lengthy and formal, whereas Trajan often asserts his point in a very concise manner. On a number of occasions Trajan's replies give important clues to the purpose of Pliny's appointment to the joint province.

These letters, mostly from Trajan, will be the focus of this next section, building on information detailed earlier in this study.

The mission given to Pliny the Younger was, in short, to restore order to the finances and public life of the cities of Bithynia-Pontus. This duty is mentioned in general terms in the correspondence. "*Meminerimus idcirco te in istam provinciam missum, quoniam multa in ea emendanda adparuerint*" (10:32). This province was, as stated by Sherwin-White, a land in which the civilisation was Greek, and the local administration was based on a number of large self-governing Greek cities. They were rich and prosperous, but their government was corrupt and inefficient (*FLP* xiv). Large amounts of local money were being wasted on extravagant buildings and projects, meant either to promote the individual city or, in some cases, the Emperor. There were examples of corruption at the higher levels of administration, and local politics were rife with intrigue and factional quarrelling. In A.D. 109 Trajan resolved to send Pliny to the province as a special Legate, to assist in the administration of this rather mismanaged province. "He came to the conclusion that to clean up the mess a senior ex-consul, known to have been chosen especially for the job by the Emperor, was needed" (Williams 15). Pliny had proven himself in important financial posts in his earlier career and had experience

dealing with the governors of Bithynia in court.

The first clear mention of his special appointment is made in the following terms: "*Provinciales, credo, prospectum sibi a me intelligent. Nam et tu dabis operam, ut manifestum sit illis electum te esse, qui ad eosdem mei loco mittereris* " (10:18). This indicates that Pliny is to make it very clear, if it is not already so, that his authority here has the Emperor's support. Soon afterwards, Pliny sent a number of letters to Rome detailing various administrative problems he had encountered. The correspondence continues until Trajan comments on the appointment again: "*Meminerimus idcirco te in istam provinciam missum, quoniam multa in ea emendanda adparuerint* " (10:32). In this letter the conditions of penal servitude are awry and Trajan is quite certain that Pliny should, and can, deal with the situation. The subject of the appointment does not directly arise for some time after this letter, but Trajan does show support for his man by leaving matters in Pliny's court on most occasions (see next sections). A further indication of the character of the new legate is provided in 10:75 and 10:76. A wealthy individual, Julius Largus, had died and left a large sum in the hands of Pliny, whom he had never even met. Pliny was to allot the funds in the most appropriate manner. Trajan responds to this news with the simple statement: "*Iulius Largus fidem tuam*

quasi te bene nosset elegit " (10:76). One of the last letters sent by Trajan to Pliny expresses the fact that even after quite some time confidence in the Emperor's choice had not wavered. "But it was for this purpose that I chose a man of your wisdom, that you might exercise control over shaping the habits of that province and lay down those rules which would be of benefit for the permanent tranquillity of the province." (10:117).

Dating the Letters

Pliny reached his province in September, and dispatched letters to Trajan for the rest of that year, a second year, and the beginning of a third (calendar) year. It is likely that Pliny died before he was able to write another formal birthday greeting to the Emperor (on Sept. 18). The correspondence comprises a total of 121 letters, which were collected and published after the governor's death. If one takes the date of A.D. 112 as Pliny's death, this would begin his term in A.D. 110. I have accepted the date of A.D. 110 as the start of Pliny's governorship, examining only briefly the issue of alternative dates. On this topic I agree with the statement by A.N Sherwin-White: "These questions of date, which can be discussed only in relation to the whole collection, do not affect the

understanding of the letters themselves" (*FLP* xviii). In B. Radice's introduction to *The Letters of the Younger Pliny* (15 ff.) the date of A.D. 111 is used for Pliny's arrival in the province, with no discussion on this choice. Syme argues at length for the third optional date: "For 109 a firm preference has been expressed in the standard commentary. The argument runs as follows. The two new year congratulations sent by Pliny during his tenure of the province (X: 35,100) carry no reference to the consulate which the Emperor assumed in 112, for the first time since 103" (184).

Book Ten

In this section I will briefly examine the letters of book ten, concentrating on several areas of Pliny's administration. The study will be broken down as follows: Judicial matters, financial concerns, political disorder, and some additional miscellaneous endeavours. Not all of the letters of book ten will be included in this study. The omitted letters, for the most part, deal with requests of advancement on behalf of others, formal greetings and salutations on special occasions, requests for grants of citizenship, and such matters. These, as such, were necessities of life, but not necessities in the study of the provincial administration.

The Letters (Judicial matters)

As an advocate Pliny dealt with the law in Rome on a regular basis, but the scope of issues presented to him in Bithynia would prove quite different. The administrative duties of a provincial governor included judicial matters, and this is made clear in the letters (Book 10). "The prime duty of a governor was the preservation of order, and the basic form of his activities was that of going round the province on a fixed circuit holding judicial sessions at each of a certain number of cities. The judicial session was known as a *conventus* " (Millar 64). Pliny did not limit his scrutiny of his province to cases which were brought to him in these conventions. In 10:29 Pliny writes to Trajan concerning the matter of two slaves discovered among the army recruits. Pliny consults the Emperor because it is he who is the true head of the military, and in this case finds that Trajan requested this case be sent to his Legate. Here, Pliny is simply required to hold a hearing and ascertain the exact nature of their recruitment. The penalty, and party to be punished, depends on the circumstances of their enlistment. In the very next pair of letters Pliny is again presented with a legal issue involving slaves. It has been brought to his attention that convicted men, in various cities such as Nicomedia and Nicaea, are functioning in the role and office of public slaves - receiving an

easier life and even monetary rewards. Pliny sees this as unacceptable, and yet there is a complication. Many have been at their slave-like careers for more than ten years, and some say that they were actually legitimately raised to their new position. In his letter Pliny explains the situation concisely, including his own suggestions, feelings and possible concerns. Trajan expresses his confidence in his man, emphasising the need for change to be made in this situation. Trajan seems, in this instance, to be more severe than Pliny, insisting that even the old men in question be given work of a penal nature. This particular example illustrates one aspect of Pliny's governorship that is often overlooked. Here Pliny has noticed, and is attempting to rectify, a situation which is awry. It is not a blatantly obvious problem (like some of the financial issues which follow), but it is an injustice. It is also clear that this situation has existed for, at the minimum, ten years without the attention of previous governors. If Pliny were intent simply on keeping to his agenda, attending to his duties as required, and requesting advice only when absolutely necessary, he would not be investigating matters deemed too trivial by previous governors. It is most unlikely that anyone was truly being harmed by this situation, and evident that it could have gone unnoticed for years to come. Pliny, in this case, has gone to an effort towards furthering his mission in two ways: 1) he has found disorder without it being brought to him as a matter of

urgency, and (2) he has requested the time and advice of the Emperor to resolve this issue which many would have found not worth the trouble. This second point is worth noting since many critics of Pliny the Younger will point out that he writes all too frequently to Trajan, and requests clarification on matters all too trivial. Trajan's reply to this letter indicates quite the opposite. Trajan does not brush the situation off or act in any way annoyed by the bother, instead he confirms that this is the business of his Legate, and suggests advice.

In the second year of his appointment Pliny dealt with more important matters of judicial concern, in which he consulted with the Emperor. One, in particular, (10:56/7) was a rather complicated matter involving persons who were exiled, and their subsequent residence. Without providing all the details of this episode, it is enough to point out that in this instance Trajan takes a hand in dealing with the matter. The issue is not left to Pliny's authority, except in the case of one (unnamed) individual whom Pliny is to have arrested. Obviously some matters were important enough to go above the authority of the local governor. Had Pliny dealt with this matter at his own discretion, it may have come back to haunt him later. Along these same lines (matters of authority) Pliny presents the case of a certain Flavius Archippus (10:58-60 +addenda). In this instance the defendant of a

legal suit invoked letters of authority and praise from no less than the Emperors Domitian and Nerva. In deference to this, and in his usual method of operation, Pliny consults Trajan, explaining the case in precise and neutral terms. Trajan is unmoved by the show of support and simply states: "This, however, my dearest Secundus, does not imply that, if anything in the way of a fresh accusation is laid against him, you should suppose that less notice is to be taken of it" (10:60).

As his term continued, Pliny dealt with other matters of judicial importance, and the records of these are evident throughout the tenth book of letters. In the individual cases one can see aspects of Pliny's character, Roman Law, the Emperor's nature and the spirit of his rule. In brief, some of the cases found are as follows:

Letters 65/6 - The rights of 'foundlings' or foster-children is discussed. Roman rulings do not cover Bithynia specifically and Trajan makes a ruling for Pliny to follow.

Letters 72/3 - Pliny is unsure if he should follow Senate decrees based upon Senatorial provinces with Proconsuls as governors. Trajan requests the decrees to examine.

Letters 77/8 - Pliny suggests that a legionnary garrison be placed in a frontier town (Juliopolis) to administer justice. This is not acceptable to Trajan, who throughout the correspondences is very sparing with military assistance.

Letters 81/2 - The orator Dio Chrysostom is involved in legal wranglings. Trajan is more interested in financial accountings than in possible treason charges against Dio. This is another sign of the spirit of the rule.

Letters 83/4 - Trajan suggests certain men to advise and assist Pliny in settling a matter of an intestate will.

Letters 92/3 - Trajan advises Pliny that he is not to interfere in Amisus, a free and confederate city, as far as they intend to set up "*eranoi*" or benefit societies. Trajan is, however, adamant that this is forbidden elsewhere.[6]

Letters 96/7 - The Christian Episode - This letter and the reply is perhaps the most quoted letter from Pliny's writings. For this study it bears no more importance than its existence as another example of the spirit of the times under the Emperor Trajan, where Christians were not to be sought out and hunted.

In the last year of his appointment Pliny wrote about three more judicial issues, each with aspects related to the province of Bithynia-Pontus itself. In Letters 10:108 and 10:109 the issue is brought up concerning the rights

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6 This is dealt with more later (p. 91) where one will see that Trajan opposed the forming of a society of firemen.

of the provincial cities to collect monies owed. Pliny states: "I have discovered that the right of prior claim was granted to them by very many of the proconsuls, and that this has come to have the force of law" (10:108). Trajan is supportive of this claim, being hesitant to introduce and enforce a new, encompassing edict. Instead he says simply: "*Quo iure uti debeant Bithynae vel Ponticae civitates in iis pecuniis, quae ex quaque causa rei publicae debebuntur, ex lege cuiusque animaduertendum est*" (10:109). Letters 10:112 and the corresponding 10:113 make mention of the city laws instituted by Pompey which come into play even during Pliny's governorship. Pliny confirms that the two halves of this split province are still subject to Pompey's laws, but that areas of administration are lacking. In this case the judicial matter is an appeal (by Pliny) to streamline the entrance of elected members into the local senates, considering entrance fees and excessive numbers of persons attending. In reply Trajan again chooses to keep to the laws of the individual city, instead of enforcing new rules. It appears that the principles laid down by Pompey, although incomplete, still play an important part in this province. This is confirmed in the next two letters. Pliny is still struggling with the question of membership in local senate groups. This time the dilemma is that local senates hold members who have citizenship elsewhere, and Pompey's law states that entrance to a local senate is restricted to local

citizens.[7] Trajan chooses, and advises, that the course of least impact be taken. No one is to be ejected from their position of power in retrospect, but in the future the law of Pompey was to be observed. These examples of judicial matters are indicative of only the highest level of importance. Pliny would surely have dealt with many additional cases and judicial proceedings which would not have required imperial advice. His own experience would ensure that Pliny was capable of dealing with everyday, more trivial matters. Indeed, as mentioned earlier (10:77/8), Pliny is instructed to be active in protecting the local citizens from injustice, without the aid of a legionnary garrison. Judicial matters, however important as an aspect of provincial government, were not the primary reason behind Pliny's appointment. His focus and mission was financial, and the letters in the tenth book abound with examples of the mismanagement of finances. These cases are examined next, as Pliny deals with a number of financial woes.

The Letters (Financial)

Pliny's tenth book of letters begins by covering events prior to his arrival in the joint province. Epistle fifteen was sent to the Emperor as Ephesus had just been reached by sea, and the true correspondence from

[7]Technically the restriction is that the member cannot be a citizen of any other Bithynian city, so perhaps they could be a foreigner. Somehow this restriction had been relaxed, and unfortunately Pompey's law did not deal with ejection of such members.

Bithynia begins two letters later. On September 17th Pliny arrived in the province, just in time to celebrate the imperial birthday - a good omen. But the new governor does not end his letter with birthday pleasantries. He states: "At the moment I am examining the expenditures, revenues and debtors of the state of Prusa; from the very process of investigation I am learning more and more that this is necessary" (10:17A). Incompetent, if not illegal, transactions are immediately evident, prompting Pliny to initially inform Trajan and in a second letter (17B) request a surveyor. Despite his Legate's claim that large sums of money could be recovered Trajan does not send men to assist, rather he emphasises the idea that the provincials must see Pliny as their guide. He has been sent, with the imperial power and support, and if assistance is needed it can be found in the province. Trajan's responding letter also shows a personal attachment to the governor, with comments on the journey and titles of affection. This style of correspondence will remain evident throughout Pliny's entire assignment.

The first financial matter brought up, apart from the initial assessment of general finances, involved a bath-house for the people of Prusa (10:23/4). The requirements imposed upon the construction of a new facility seem clear - there must be money available without new taxes,

there must be a reasonable need, and the money must not detract from any future, necessary, expenditures.[8] Spending money efficiently on a practical project is both advised by Pliny the governor and approved by the Emperor. In contrast Pliny soon (early in the second calendar year) describes a situation in Nicomedia involving aqueducts. Letter 10:37 demonstrates one level of financial mismanagement in existence in the province at this time. The people of Nicomedia had spent 3,318,000 sesterces constructing a supposedly necessary aqueduct, and the project had then been abandoned. At some subsequent date, after demolishing the first structure, another 200,000 sesterces were invested to construct another, which was also abandoned. Pliny indicates that a water supply exists, and that the water transfer idea is feasible, requesting an engineer or architect to ensure the success of a third venture. In response Trajan acknowledges the necessity of the water, but rightly asks that this matter be investigated thoroughly. It is certainly not enough that the project be completed on the third attempt. The Emperor even goes so far as to suggest that persons have most likely benefited from this flagrant misuse of money, and that corruption, rather than incompetence, is the source of the problem. He asks that the problem not only be investigated, but that he be informed of the result. This example, although quite severe, is not yet the pinnacle of the financial mismanagement that Pliny was faced with in Bithynia-Pontus.

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[8] Which may include the practice of providing olive oil for the public gymnasia.

Nicaea's Theatre

In Letter 10:39 Pliny writes to Trajan concerning a partially incomplete theatre in Nicaea. On first examination, without complete accounts, Pliny states his fear that over ten million sesterces have been "swallowed up" by this project. Worse yet the building shows signs of disrepair, poor construction material, and even inadequate foundations. The future of this costly site is doubtful, with the choices of completion, abandonment, or even demolition equally possible. It further appears that value was placed on the utilisation of expensive construction materials, rather than proper and solid ones. This seems to be another case in which civic emphasis was improperly placed. Wealth and prestige, self-congratulation with extravagance, all placed before simple practicality or responsibility. Even more grand schemes, such as a colonnade on either side, and a gallery, awaited the construction of the main building. "These same people of Nicaea began, before my arrival, to restore a gymnasium which had been destroyed in a fire, on a much more lavish and extensive scale than before, and they have already spent a considerable sum; the danger is that it will have been to little practical purpose; for it is ill-planned and rambling" (10:39). In this case it seems that foolish pride and wasteful spending, rather than corruption, has contributed to the state of affairs. Pliny's

request for an architect from Rome is again denied, but Trajan is supportive. All that is required by the Emperor is the decision of his appointed governor, assisted if necessary by local advisors and architects. In this instance Trajan seems amenable in many ways, surprising perhaps given the level of financial waste. He refers to the projects as the result of over ambitious *Graeculi* who all love a gymnasium! The letter continues in fact to cover another financial situation in Claudiopolis, involving a bath-building, which receives a similar response. This letter exemplifies the fact that financial reform was required in the province, and that Pliny was certainly on the job. Trajan's responses of confidence in his man, considering the staggering sums involved, demonstrate the trust already established by Pliny in his earlier career. Pliny does, of course, continue to write and inform the Emperor concerning all matters of any consequence, often asking advice when it would seem to the reader to be unnecessary. This, I believe, is more of a polite and respectful measure rather than an actual need for guidance or permission, and certainly does not demonstrate any lack of skill or confidence inherent in the governor. Other financial concerns preserved in the tenth book of letters, as conveyed by Pliny follow:

Letters 43/4 - Pliny reduces money wasted on sending envoys (with simple pleasantries) to Trajan and the governor of Moesia. The Emperor finds

this wise, as he does not need a yearly, personal greeting from the Byzantines.

Letters 47/8 - Pliny is unsure as to his authority in Apamea when the citizens mention that earlier proconsuls had let them regulate themselves. Fortunately, the citizens are receptive to his investigations regardless, and Trajan confirms that he should accept their trust.[9]

Letters 54/5 - Here the correspondence shows an interesting discourse regarding the sums of money which Pliny has already and is currently receiving. Pliny is concerned that the capital not remain idle, and that it gain interest. Loaning the money out was the most common manner to increase an investment, but Pliny finds the market for loans sparse. He proposes, with approval, that a lower loan rate, to suit the finances of the individual area, be promoted. Trajan's approval is tempered with a mention that persons should be in no way forced to accept a loan, even with favourable rates. It would not be in accordance with the spirit and justice of the age.

Letters 90/1 - Sinope needs a water supply and it will be built most assuredly so long as the architecture is sound and the town can support the expense. Pliny mentions that money would not be wanting, and one suspects that a thirsty colony would receive their water from Trajan even if

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9 Pliny ensures that the letter sent to Trajan is complete, with all information relevant, and all statements from the Apameans in a memorandum. Trajan does not need the additional information since the citizens accept Pliny's authority, but he welcomes and reads it.

they were poor.

Letters 98/9 - Beautifying (and sanitising) Amastris would require covering a sewer running along a main street. Pliny assures the Emperor that money would not be lacking for this necessary expense, and with this diligence Trajan is content.

Letters 110/11 - These letters reveal once again the mind set of both Pliny and Trajan. Money is at issue, which could be forced mercilessly from the hands of a good citizen. At issue is Trajan's personal policy forbidding public grants of money to individuals. However, the citizen in question received his gift some twenty years past. I have no doubt that Pliny knew the imperial response even when he requested the clarification of principle. Trajan replies: "Let us disregard whatever was done for this reason twenty years ago. For I wish the interests of individuals in each place to be safeguarded, no less than those of public funds" (10:111).

Letters 118/19 - Perhaps the generous spirit of the rule and the reputation of the governor as honest to a fault contributed to this discourse. Here, a number of athletes have the gall to complain about the timing of their triumphal monies paid from games. They are expecting money at the time of the game, rather than the later date of their actual triumphant entrance into their respective cities. Their greed extends even further, however, into pay for games made triumphal at a later date by the Emperor himself.

Trajan agrees with Pliny that there is no merit to the complaints, and that the matter take up no further time.

The examples of financial correspondence, mentioned in this section, cover a majority of the cases present in the extant letters of the tenth book. Earlier pairs of letters mentioned under the judicial section, which contained financial aspects, were not discussed further. Now, a third category of letters will be briefly examined, focussing in on the political and social disorder and problems present in Pliny's province.

Political and Social Issues

In addition to the obvious financial reform needed, Pliny was also charged with the social and political tasks of governing. He had been sent by Trajan to straighten out the confused finances of the cities and to prevent any outbreak of social unrest. The problem was not so much the lack of funds as their misuse, in large part inspired by a sense of competition between cities and between individual members of the ruling aristocracies in each city (Stadter 3). Additionally, social unrest of any

sort could be dangerous in this province which had wealth and geographic importance.[10] In Letters 10:33 and 10:34 a side of the Emperor Trajan is revealed which one might not suspect. Pliny writes that a fire in Nicomedia caused inordinately large damage due to the pathetic inactivity of the local people, and the absence of any fire fighting tools or organisation. He requests than an association of firemen be created, limited to 150 members with supervision and practicality. Trajan replies in this way: "You are in fact following the example set by very many people in conceiving a plan that an association of firemen could be established at Nicomedia. But let us recall that that province and especially those cities have been troubled by cliques of that kind" (10:34). These troubles mentioned involved quarrels between rival groups in cities of that province. Trajan is almost annoyed in his response, and is obviously quite adamant in his refusal. He continues in the letter to affix to any group a hidden agenda of political intentions. Graciously the Emperor allows for equipment to be on hand for the public use against future fires. Another correspondence involving political issues can be found in Letters 10:79 and 10:80. This example alone testifies to the credentials necessary in a governor of any calibre. Pliny must arbitrate and sort through Pompeian law, amended in certain instances by Augustus, and further contorted to apply to cases for which it was not originally intended. The issue is simply

[10] See Ch. 1 for a reminder of Bithynia's importance as a buffer province, and its wealth.

the matter of age, and the necessity to be at least thirty years old for certain memberships. From Trajan's reply it is clear that Pliny's years of administration and advocacy in Rome have paid off. The Emperor concurs, mentioning his own thoughts on the matter.

It is not entirely possible to separate Pliny's letters into three distinct sections. Court cases and issues of public order, already examined under the judicial section, have demonstrated some of the social and political turmoil in the province. Financial concerns also have many roots in social or political matters. Pliny's letters provide one of the clearest and most concentrated sources of information on Bithynia, ending this brief study into the early history and administration of that region.

Chapter 4: Overview and Conclusion

In three separate sections the examination of this province has covered a period starting before 440 B.C. and extending down to the reign of Trajan in the early 2nd century A.D. Various factors have been considered in the study of this province, including the uneven nature of the evidence (sources), changes in the administrative structure during the stages of Bithynia's evolution, and the value of Pliny's letters. These factors all contributed in different ways to the overall picture presented - - an understanding of the administration of a single province through an extended period of time. In concluding this work it is worthwhile to review these factors as they affected the development of Bithynia as a Roman province.

Pre-Roman Bithynia

In this thesis the more detailed, pre-Roman Bithynia begins in the Seleucid period, although segments of information regarding the origins of Bithynia are mentioned by Xenophon and Strabo, who himself credits Scylax of Caryanda for earlier details. Thucydides mentions the Bithynian Thracians in passing, as noted in the first chapter of this study. Bithynia appears in the historic record again when, fortuitously, Alexander the

Great passed by the area. In 334 B.C. Bas, a dynast of Bithynia, successfully resisted the advances of Calas, one of Alexander's appointed rulers. Bas was the son of Boteiras, who in turn was the successor to Doedalsus, one of the earliest known Bithynian dynasts. The term dynast is more appropriate than king, given the early administrative policies in this region. By the time Zipoetes (c.a.328 - 280 B.C.) succeeded Bas, the dates at least become fixed with certainty. More details begin to emerge regarding the basic history and to some extent the administration of the region of Bithynia. Zipoetes assumed the title of "Βασιλευς" in 297 B.C. and founded a city in his own honour. Celtic presence and pressure, successfully resisted only for a time by Lysimachus (in Thrace) brought change to the area. Nicomedes resorted to an alliance with the invading forces to gain power over potential rivals, securing his position by 277 B.C. Bithynia was now an independent state, with a king, fully emerged from its earlier tribal fragmentation. Nicomedia, located near the sea, became the new capital, and the process of Hellenization began in earnest. Nicomedes ruled successfully as a monarch, maintaining friendly relations with most Greeks. The monarchy of Bithynia followed a royal blood line, with the inherent consequences of quarrelling and political manoeuvring. Nicomedes died and was replaced by a son from an early marriage named Ziaelas. His son, Prusias I, became king in 230 B.C. and broke off the

previous friendly relations with Greek cities. This administrative change reflected the thinking of Prusias, who placed the ideas of empire and power above any philhellenic feelings. It is also at this time that Rome enters the picture, through the complex web of alliances existing between herself, Pergamum, Macedon and Bithynia. Within a few years Prusias I had extended Bithynian territory to its greatest extent, fostered commerce, and had acquired political power and wealth. He had also succeeded in gaining the annoyance of Rome.

Towards Roman Rule

Prusias II came to power in 183 B.C., as a ruler much less impressive than his father. Information on this era, and specific details of the rulers, is provided by writers such as Diodorus and Polybius. Both authors are critical of Prusias II in regards to his nature and physical attributes. Prusias was servile at first to the wishes of Rome, but in the end found himself in conflict with Roman interests. Nicomedes II deposed his father in 149 B.C. with the approval, or at least acceptance, of Rome. Polybius and Appian provide the most information for this period, and Appian continues to give account of the conflicts to come. By the reign of Nicomedes III (127 - 94 B.C.) Bithynia had become subservient to the

wishes of Rome, and more significantly, economically controlled and oppressed by Roman *publicani.* The enmity between the Bithynian kings and Mithridates, king of Pontus, is evident by the fact that Mithridates risked Roman intervention to drive Nicomedes IV out of Bithynia. Three Mithridatic wars followed (88 - 65 B.C.), in a period which saw Bithynia evolve from an impoverished nation bequeathed to the Roman people into a Roman province. Plutarch is the best source for the lives of the important players in this period of conflict, and is useful in filling out Appian's history of the same period. As stated, Bithynia did not become a true province overnight. During the period of war and transition which followed 74 B.C. the administration of the province shifted hands several times, between military commanders and even different Roman officials. Roman legates vied for control, and commanders fought on the battlefield for reasons of conviction or personal glorification. The province was organised by the *Lex Pompeia* by 65 B.C., which laid out a system of administration. Lucullus had previously placed certain controls over the financial administration of debt, which played a role in the successful future of the province. Pompey's organisation of the province was an excellent work, achieved by a military general rather than a bureaucrat. His basic ground rules remained in place beyond the time of Trajan and Pliny.

The province of Bithynia-Pontus became an important and prosperous joint province as the Roman Republic shifted to an Empire. M. Hoff details the close connection between the imperial rule and the eastern provinces. "The link between Roma and Octavian/Augustus among the cities of the Greek East followed quickly on the heels of Octavian's Aktian victory in 31. The provinces of Bithynia and Asia received permission on 29 to dedicate sanctuaries to Roma and Octavian at Nikomedia and Pergamum respectively" (Hoff 190). Bithynia was important for a number of reasons: primarily, it occupied a strategic location along the major routes linking Europe and Asia, a buffer province with supply lines and communication routes. Secondly, Bithynia was rich with natural resources and would, in time, be economically productive as well.

Roman Bithynia-Pontus

The new province laid out by Pompey prospered in turn with the rest of the Empire. Benefiting from the *Pax Romana* and augmented by local wealth Bithynia-Pontus acquired the stature of an important imperial province, albeit a problematic one. Her cities began to vie with each other in expenditures and quests for title and honour. Governors sent out to this province in particular were recalled or brought up on charges of bribery

or extortion at an alarming rate. This was an unfortunate and dangerous trend, as the eastern provinces were beginning to have a voice in the Roman senate. The extent of this voice is noted by J. Wacher: "It was the city, and the wealth, culture, and political expertise it conferred, that took easterners into the Roman senate in increasing numbers. Not surprisingly, they came in the greatest strength from the cities of western Asia Minor: nearly a third of the total from the Greek east" (Wacher 339).

Pliny the Younger, in his years as an advocate at Rome, dealt with the prosecution and defence of governors of Bithynia. The Emperor at this time (by A.D. 100) was Trajan, and Pliny had served under his rule well, delivering an impressive address on the imperial accession. Trajan chose Pliny as a special legate, with extra authority, to organise the administration of this troublesome province. As a source for this time period in Bithynia, Pliny is invaluable. His letters sent from the province to Trajan give extraordinary detail into conditions in the East and into the role of a provincial governor. Trajan was taking extra steps and placing more control over this province than had been attempted by his predecessors. Concerning this control over the provinces by the central Roman power, the following has been said, even in general handbooks: "Of this world of diminishing autonomy and growing governmental

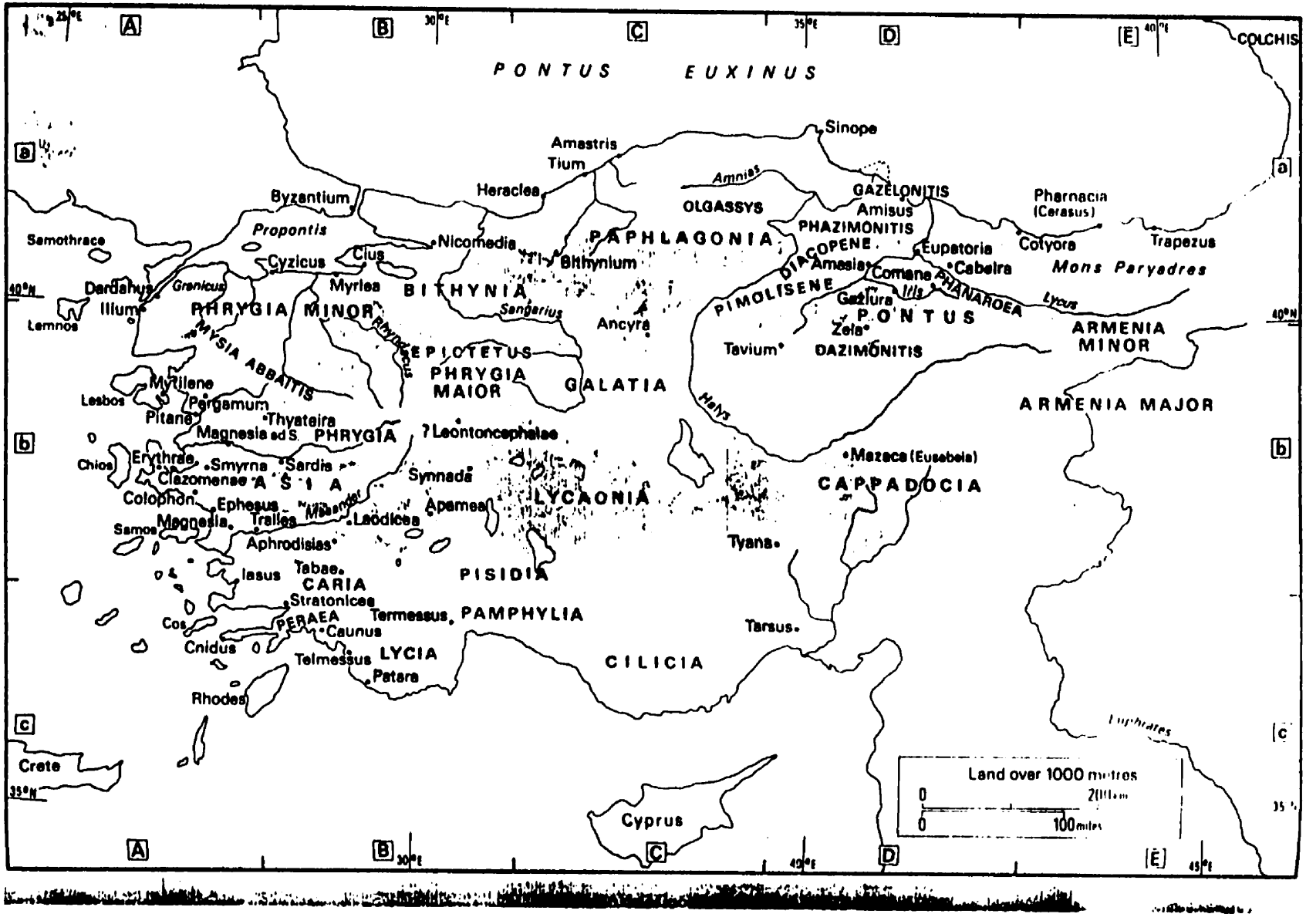
solicitude the experience of the Younger Pliny in Bithynia is not untypical" (Boardman et al. 569). But Pliny himself was quite exceptional. He personally valued his letters and writings enough to gather and edit them, compiling personally the first nine books. The tenth book, published after his death, contains the correspondence from Bithynia, and is an excellent source of information on Bithynia-Pontus. Owing to the fact that Pliny wrote requesting advice on matters small and great the letters also reflect on the Emperor himself, and the spirit of his rule. Pliny's experiences may or may not have been untypical, but his appointment was a special mandate, and his concern and dedication were exemplary. In the letters of the tenth book there is evidence that the administrative measures laid out by Pompey still applied to the joint province. Trajan upheld these guidelines, with only minor changes suggested when necessary. For further information on the cities of Bithynia, during Pliny's governorship, Dio Chrysostom's orations (38-51) deal with Bithynia in general, while 38 and 39 pertain to Nicomedia and Nicaea in particular. When the evidence of Pliny the Younger and Dio is taken together, names and details of most of the cities of the province are given. There are, however, cities which are not named, and little additional information is given.[1]

[1] An overview of the cities of the joint province is covered in Chapter 1.

In this study I have attempted to examine the province of Bithynia for some 500 years of history, looking in particular at its administration and political history. An imbalance of detail is inevitable, and this is reflective of the sources and information available. Pliny the Younger provides almost 100 letters from his governorship of this province, and consequently a full third of this study is devoted to the province during his tenure. After Pliny, the history of Bithynia-Pontus become sketchy for the next century or so, until the age of the Tetrarchs. It is my hope that this study of Bithynian history, up to the time of Pliny, will prove useful to anyone interested in the province as an administrative unit.


A
B
C
SARMATIA
BASTARNAE
M Palus (Sea of Azov)
Phanagorea
Nymphaion
Theodosia
Taman Str
Chersonesus
SCORDISCI
Danubius
Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea)
PAIONES
Sinope
Amastris
Heraclea
PAPHLAGONIA
Amisus
PONTUS
Bosporus
Byzantium
Chalcedon
Amphipolis
MACEDONIA
Thasos
Propontis
Nicaea
Nicomedia
Halys
Amasia
Cyzicus
Prusa
Sangarius
Zela
EPIRUS
Lemnos
Lampsacus
Alexandria Troas
Tenedos
BITHYNIA
Megalopolis
Magnesia
Demetrias
Passinus
GALATIA
COLOPENE
THESSALY
Melitaea
Sciathos
Pergamum
Mazaca
AETOLIA
Chaeronea
EUBOEA
Chios
Clazomenae
Philomelium
CAPPADOCIA
Ephesus
Apamea
Pappa
Samos
Tralles
Iconium
Cybistra
Zacynthos
ACHAEA
Athens
Aphrodisias
LYCAONIA
Priene
Miletus
Alabanda
L Caralis
Delos
Isaura
Adana
Cilician Gates
COMMAGENE
PAMPHYLIA
Soli
Mallus
Phaselis
Side
Cnidus
LYCIA
Olympus
CILICIA
Epiphania
Myra
Coracesium
Antioch
Rhodes
SYR
Cnossus
CRETE
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
Emesa
Mediterraneum Mare (Mediterranean Sea)
Byblos
Berytus
PHOENICIA
Anti-Libanus M
Tyre
Damascus
Alexandrion
Joppa
Philadelphia
Jericho
Jerusalem
JUDAEA
CYRENAICA
Alexandria
Gaza
Pelusium
EGYPT
Petra
Nilus
Bitlis Modern place-names underlined
Land over 1000 metres
0 500 km
0 300 miles
a
b
c
d
e
45°N
40°N
35°N
30°N
20°E
25°E
30°E
35°E

9 The East


PONTUS EUXINUS
COLCHIS
Sinope
Amastris
Tium
Amnias
Heraclea
Byzantium
OLGASSYS
GAZELONITIS
Amisus
Pharnacia (Cerasus)
PHAZIMONITIS
PAPHLAGONIA
Propontis
Samothrace
Nicomedia
Bithynium
Eupatoria
Cotyora
Trapezus
DIOPENE
Amasia
Cabeira
Comana
Mons Paryadres
Cyzicus
Clus
Myrlea
BITHYNIA
PIMOLISENE
Gazlura
PHANAROEA
Lycus
Iris
Dardanus
Granicus
Ilium
PHRYGIA MINOR
Sangarius
Ancyra
P O N T U S
Zela
ARMENIA MINOR
Lemnos
Rhyndacus
EPICTETUS
Tavium
DAZIMONITIS
MYSIA ABBAITIS
PHRYGIA MAIOR
GALATIA
Halys
Mytilene
Lesbos
Pergamum
Pitane
Thyateira
Magnesia ad S.
PHRYGIA
? Leontoncephalae
ARMENIA MAJOR
Erythrae
Chios
Smyrna
Sardis
Mazaca (Eusebeia)
Clazomenae
A S I A
Synnada
CAPPADOCIA
Colophon
Ephesus
Apamea
LYCAONIA
Magnesia
Tralles
Laodicea
Samos
Aphrodisias
Tyana
Iasus
Tabae
CARIA
PISIDIA
Stratonicea
PERAEA
Termessus
PAMPHYLIA
Tarsus
Cos
Caunus
Cnidus
Telmessus
LYCIA
CILICIA
Patara
Rhodes
Euphrates
Crete
Land over 1000 metres
0
200 km
0
100 miles
Cyprus
A
B
C
D
E
a
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c
25°E
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35°E
40°E
45°E
40°N
35°N

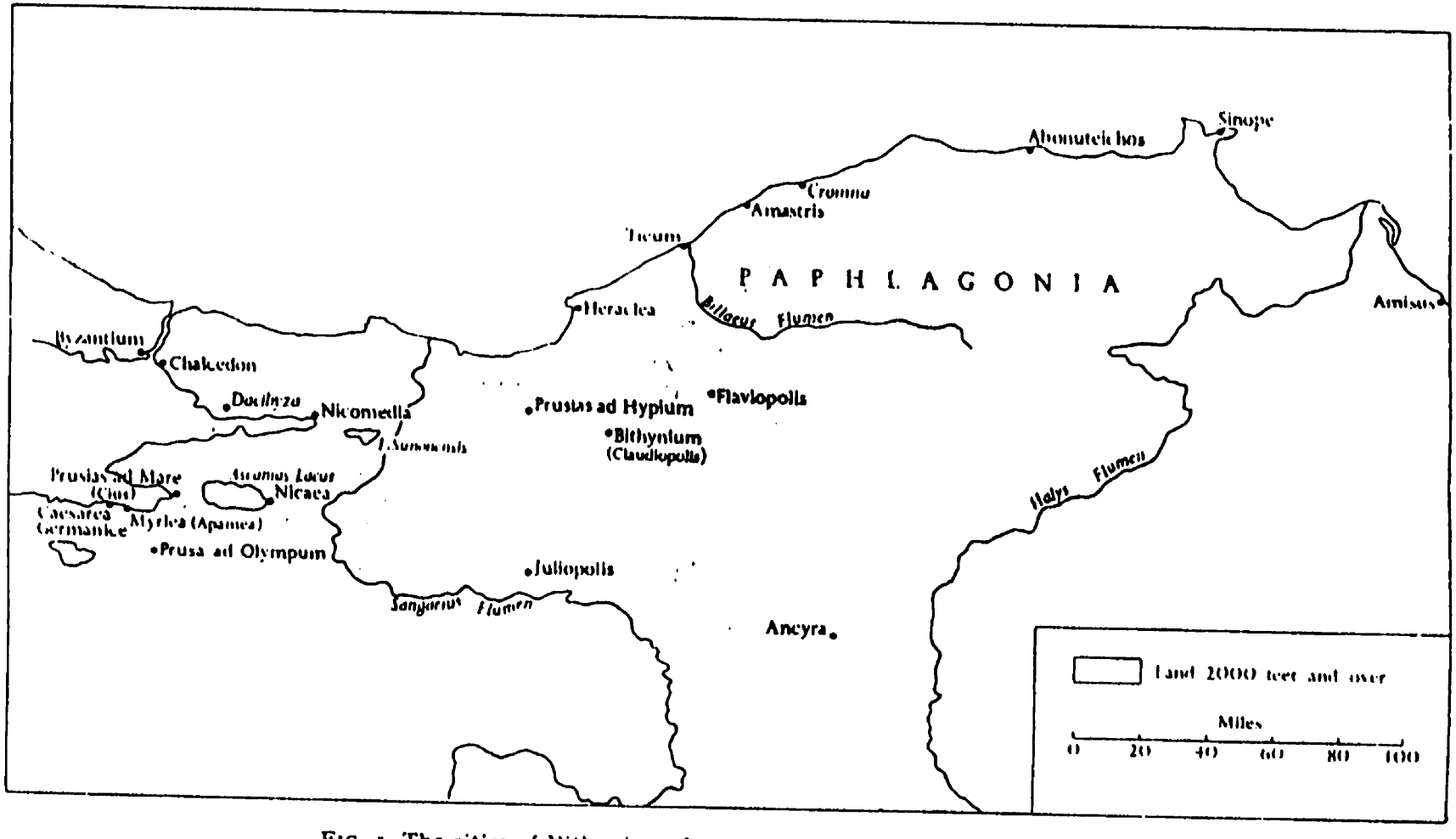

FIG. 1. The cities of Bithynia and proconsular Pontus, and adjacent areas

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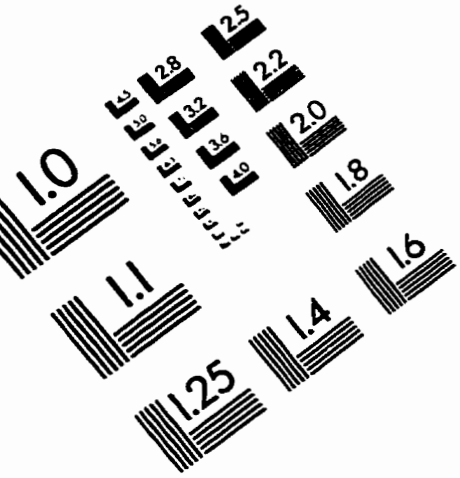

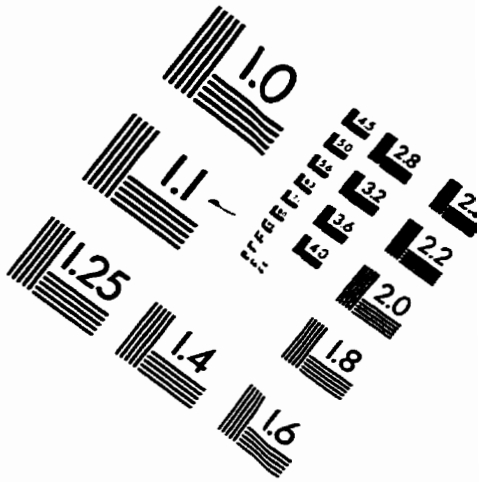

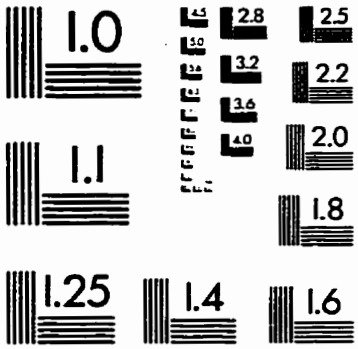

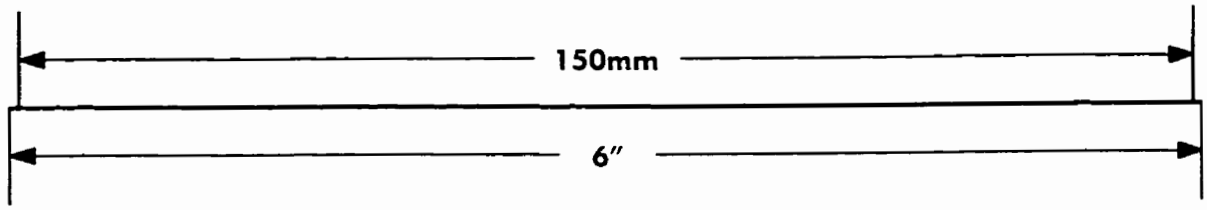

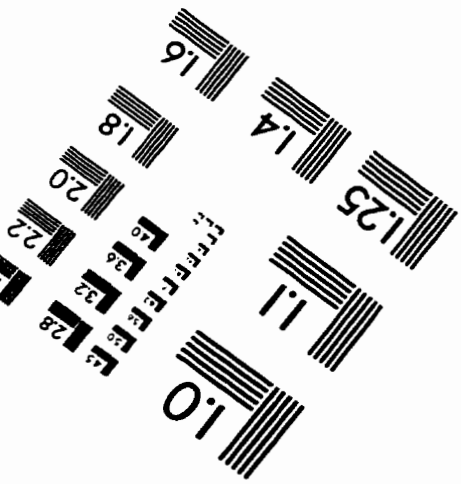

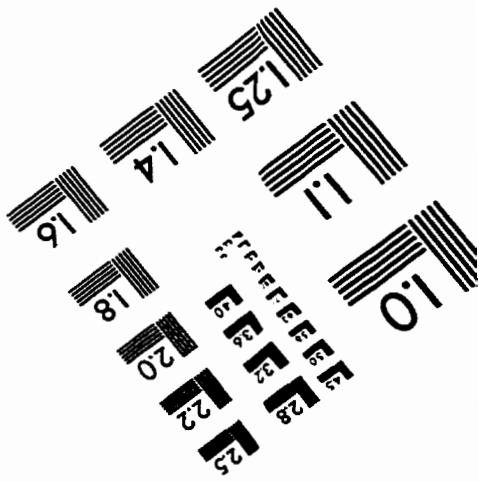

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