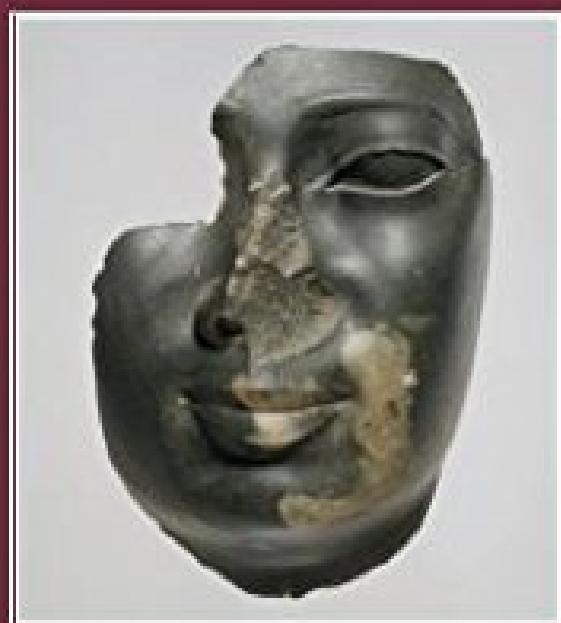


# THE HELLENISTIC COURT

MONARCHIC POWER AND ELITE SOCIETY  
FROM ALEXANDER TO CLEOPATRA



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BITHYNIA AND CAPPADOCIA:  
ROYAL COURTS AND RULING SOCIETY IN THE  
MINOR HELLENISTIC MONARCHIES

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**1. The minor monarchies and the direction of modern scholarship**

As an integral part of the make-up of the Hellenistic monarchies, the royal court was a focused reflection of those features of state power inherent in each of those kingdoms. Its structure and functioning reveal both characteristics that were common to all Hellenistic states as well as distinctive peculiarities caused by geographic, ethno-political, cultural, religious, and other factors. However, apart from very rare exceptions, the scholarly literature has almost always concentrated on Alexander's empire, the Successors' states and the three major Hellenistic monarchies ruled by the Antigonid, Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the minor Hellenistic monarchies in Anatolia have tended to be unjustifiably neglected as a brief review of modern scholarship illustrates.

First of all, there is the superficial fact that Bithynia, Pontos and Cappadocia, along with Parthia and some other states, were not subdued by the Macedonians; or if they were, it was only for a short time. They arose as independent kingdoms as a result of military resistance against the Successors and were led by members of a hereditary Anatolian aristocracy who actively but selectively borrowed elements of Greek culture and Macedonian statehood.<sup>2</sup> This must have *a priori* affected relations between the local and Greco-Macedonian population, the number and status of Greek *poleis* and, consequently, the structure of the ruling society and royal courts in those kingdoms.

Since Theodore Reinach in the late nineteenth century, historiography has paid considerable attention to 'the Oriental element' in the structure of the royal court and politics of the kingdom of Pontus: the court harem and eunuchs, the practice of naming the king's progeny, composition of the body of 'friends', Achaemenid genealogy and titlature, Persian and Anatolian dynastic symbols, etc.<sup>3</sup> This is especially true for the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus, historically the most significant period

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of rule and the one richest in literary evidence. In recent years in particular, many specialists have addressed these issues, so in relation to Pontos the subject may be considered heavily studied.<sup>4</sup> However, the cases of Bithynia and Cappadocia are quite different, even though both kingdoms have, since Reinach, frequently been viewed as elements composing, together with Pontos, a certain unity (an apparent geographical unity first of all).<sup>5</sup> Curiously enough, in works on general subjects there appear side-by-side two definitions of Asia Minor's monarchies: either they are qualified as 'barbarian' or 'semi-barbarian' states,<sup>6</sup> or, on the contrary, the authors stress the close resemblance between the Anatolian kingdoms and the major Hellenistic states, especially in respect of the main features of political and socio-economic development.<sup>7</sup> This dichotomy, however, is largely imaginary, a result of insufficient attention being paid to the fact that, although originally 'semi-barbarian', the states of Asia Minor evolved gradually in the same direction as other Hellenistic states. This naturally leads to the necessity of studying the ways and means by which that evolution occurred, and this is what the present chapter aims to do. Another basis, on which Anatolian monarchies may be treated as typologically close to each other, is their assignment to 'second-rank' Hellenistic states,<sup>8</sup> although there is no doubt that the genetic links between Pontos and Cappadocia caused by their shared Iranian and Achaemenid heritage within this unity were much stronger than their ties with Bithynia.<sup>9</sup>

Until not long ago the history of the Bithynian and Cappadocian monarchies had been insufficiently studied, which may be viewed as a kind of historiographic paradox. In modern classical studies there have been only two books dedicated especially to the history of the Bithynian kingdom, one sixty years ago by the Italian scholar Giovanni Vitucci and the other by the present author.<sup>10</sup> For Hellenistic Cappadocia there is no monograph at all. There are reasons for this, not least the state of the sources. The history of these areas of Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period is very scantily reflected in both the works of ancient historians and the epigraphic evidence (the numismatic material is somewhat better, as Reinach has already demonstrated).<sup>11</sup> As a result, the Bithynian and the Cappadocian kingdoms are overshadowed by their neighbours in Asia Minor, Pergamon and Pontos, to say nothing of the major Hellenistic states. At the same time, the history of the Roman provinces, which came to replace these monarchies, is far better attested and attracts more attention on the part of researchers; this is why the Hellenistic period is often treated as no more than a kind of 'introduction' to the Roman epoch. If the Cappadocian and the Bithynian kingdoms do become objects of dedicated research (as the 'predecessors' of the Roman provinces), it is, as

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a rule, conducted in a purely empirical manner and attempts at conceptual generalization are still very rare.<sup>12</sup> Finally, one might witness a kind of ‘inertia’ in the development of historiography, which is chiefly oriented towards further elaboration of well-researched subjects, to the detriment of other, less popular ones.

The situation changed significantly when in 2009 there appeared a sound book by a German researcher Christoph Michels, dedicated to three kingdoms of Asia Minor: Bithynia, Pontos, and Cappadocia.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, this monograph must be appreciated as a serious breakthrough in the study of Hellenistic Asia Minor. However, written in quite a traditional manner and essentially following the scheme that was, brilliantly implemented in Elias Bickerman’s study of the Seleucid state,<sup>14</sup> the book gives a full and clear idea only of the state institutions of the three monarchies in Asia Minor, not of their historical development. It appears even more important that Michels speaks chiefly of the Hellenization of the royal courts and societies of those kingdoms and of the matrimonial, dynastic, and philhellenic policy of their royal houses.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the specifically local character of the Anatolian monarchies is, in my opinion, again overlooked to a considerable degree.

The main purpose of my work is quite different. I aim to identify those elements of the court societies of Bithynia and Cappadocia that are purely local and which are therefore largely independent of Greek and Macedonian ethno-social structures and political and cultural traditions. An analytical study of such elements will enable us to recognise the peculiarities of the structure of monarchic power in these two states and may help us to study and explain a number of crucial events in their dynastic and political history. It should be noted that direct literary evidence for the everyday life and functioning of the royal courts in Cappadocia and Bithynia is very limited and consequently it is most fruitfully analysed in the context of our understanding of the structure of their ruling society more broadly.

## **2. Two royal houses: differences and similarities**

If we start with an analysis of the nature of the court society’s ‘core’ in Bithynia and Cappadocia, i.e. the dynasty itself, its origin, the monarchical figure and his close relations, then the existence of local roots is beyond doubt. In the genealogy of Bithynian kings cited by Memnon of Herakleia the dynasty’s origins go at least as deep as the second half of the fifth century.<sup>16</sup> All the early representatives of the dynasty have non-Greek (evidently original Bithynian) names, such as Doidalsos, Boteiros, Bas, Zipoites; Memnon also contains rather accurate chronologies of their ages

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and length of rule.<sup>17</sup> The sole royal male name of Hellenic origin to gain a foothold in the Bithynian ruling house was Nikomedes (for the exception of Sokrates, see n. 22). Its appearance, according to Glew's interesting, though not fully proved, hypothesis, had resulted from the supposed xenic relations between the first Bithynian king Zipoites and a noble man from the Island of Kos named Nikomedes, son of Aristander who had served under Antigonos Monophthalmos.<sup>18</sup> This is very likely the first example of Greek cultural standards adopted by the Bithynian ruling house, but, later, names of local origin prevail in the dynasty again: Ziaelas, Prusias, and probably Mukaporis.<sup>19</sup> The wives of the first members of the dynasty whose names we know (more specifically, only those of Nikomedes I) also had non-Greek names: Ditzela<sup>20</sup> and Etazeta.<sup>21</sup> Based on the fragmentary literary reports, there may have existed official or unofficial concubinage at the Bithynian court at least in the final period of the dynasty's existence.<sup>22</sup>

The peculiarity of the political and legal status of the Ariarathid royal house in Cappadocia was that, being of Persian origin, they were foreigners to the native population of Cappadocia, which should always be taken into account when analyzing the Cappadocian kings' internal and external policies and the propaganda employed by them.<sup>23</sup> Diodorus, in his narrative of the Cappadocian dynasty, gives a multi-generational and detailed genealogy of the Ariarathids, the main features of which may be identified as follows: 1) an effort to emphasize the family's ancient Persian origin and kinship with the Achaemenids, for which purpose the writer employs Iranian 'heroic' traditions (as in Polybius' fragment about the origin of the Cappadocian kings' rule); 2) a parallel wish to prove that the rulers in Cappadocia were indigenous and did not act in the capacity of Achaemenid satraps, but from the very beginning were almost independent kings.<sup>24</sup>

Apparently, this version was created in the reign of Ariarathes V as he is depicted by Diodorus in exceptionally flattering colours.<sup>25</sup> Although there is no doubt that the genealogy is a sham (especially its earlier stages), it seems that these examples enable us to state with much confidence that the Bithynian and Cappadocian rulers had court historiographers who also performed propagandistic functions.<sup>26</sup>

As these 'minor monarchies' developed militarily and politically, it became necessary for them to find other ways of legitimising their power. Of great importance here were the marriages that took place between the members of the Seleucid dynasty and the royal houses of Cappadocia and Pontos and, to a certain degree, Bithynia. Two points deserve particular attention. Firstly, these marriage alliances were a very serious concession on the part of the Seleucids to 'minor dynasties': the marriage of the successor to the Cappadocian throne, the future Ariarathes III, to the *sister*

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(wrongly considered by scholars to be the daughter) of Antiochos II Theos (ca 260 BC) was the first of its kind where a female descendant of the Macedonian royal line was married without compulsion to a member of the barbarian political elite.<sup>27</sup> Earlier, Lysimachos who was held captive by Dromichaïtes, king of the Getai, was *forced*, as Pausanias stresses, to marry his daughter to the king.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Macedonian rulers of Asia showed *de facto* that they recognized the status of the Anatolian aristocracy as nearly equal to their own.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, the Asian rulers appreciated this step at its true value, which, in my opinion, is confirmed by Georgios Syncellus, the Byzantine chronicler. Syncellus, apparently relying on a trustworthy tradition, gives the numerical lengths of the three Anatolian dynasties, figures that at the first sight appear to be quite obscure. But detailed analysis demonstrates that this ‘reckoning of the regnal years’, which was by no means identified as a royal era in the strict sense, takes its beginning from the moment that their matrimonial links were established with the Seleucids.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. The nobility

Besides marital and dynastic politics, an important feature of any Hellenistic court society was an ability to overcome very numerous dynastic crises typical of that period. Once again, Bithynia and Cappadocia appear to have had something in common, which distinguished them from the majority of Hellenistic monarchies.

Analysis of literary reports (those by Memnon in the first place) allows us to speak with much confidence of the existence of a thick stratum of local aristocracy in Bithynia commonly referred to as simply *hoi Bithynoi*, which in crucial times exerted their influence (which must have rested on a certain institutional foundation) upon the state of affairs in the country. As an example, evidently not by accident, Zipoites II, Nikomedes I's younger brother and enemy in the civil war of the 270s, is described by Memnon as *Zipoites ho Bithynos*:<sup>31</sup> apparently, he tried to oppose his philhellenic brother by appealing to traditional Bithynian institutions and identity.<sup>32</sup> Undoubtedly, the most vivid examples of the Bithynians' activity in the arena of domestic and even foreign politics are the events of the civil war of 250s, when, after the death of Nikomedes I, they attempted to resolve the dynastic crisis by organizing the marriage of the king's widow to his brother, and later formed a resistance movement against the usurper Ziaelas, the late king's son from his first marriage.<sup>33</sup> This is probably the very period to which we should date the inscription from Kallatis which, according to Vinogradov's restoration, speaks of a Bithynian embassy sent to a certain king where the *Bithynoi* acted as an independent political force.<sup>34</sup>

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Finally, the official power to rule the country in the time of its occupation by Mithridates VI Eupator during the first war against Rome may have been delegated by the Pontic king to no one individual but to members of the highest Bithynian nobility, as it is shown by the wording of the Treaty of Dardanos cited by Memnon, where *Bithynoi* are also mentioned.<sup>35</sup> In this context, one should also understand the title *Basileus Bithynōn* evidenced in Ziaelas' letter to the people of Kos and, probably, restored also in the letter of Nikomedes IV(?) to the citizens of Aphrodisias: both letters contain the titlature of the 'legitimate' king, who had united the country under his rule after periods of internal disturbance, and thus assumed to a certain degree the powers of 'Bithynians'.<sup>36</sup>

In Cappadocia we can also find traces of certain powers held by the local aristocracy; let us list the instances of the exercise of those powers in chronological order. According to Strabo, after the victory over Antiochos III, the Romans concluded treaties and alliances with nations and kings and all of the kings were personally and exclusively afforded that honour with the exception of the king of Cappadocia, who was honoured together with his people (*ethnos*).<sup>37</sup> Most probably, it is the Cappadocian nobility that the 'people' should be understood to mean.<sup>38</sup> Next, the dramatic situation that had emerged in the country after the widow of Ariarathes V had killed five of her six sons was, as narrated by Justin, resolved by means of intervention by the Cappadocians: the latter murdered the cruel queen and enthroned the sole survivor of her children under the name of Ariarathes VI.<sup>39</sup> Finally, following the death of the last representatives of the Ariarathid line, the Roman Senate granted Cappadocia 'liberty', which the Cappadocians declined. After that, the country held a vote to elect a new king. As a result, rule over the country was passed to Ariobarzanes, who became the founder of a new dynasty.<sup>40</sup> In the assessment of these episodes one can hardly agree completely with Ballesteros Pastor who believes that, in contrast to the Pontic kingdom where the appointment of a successor was the king's exceptional prerogative, in Cappadocia a candidate for the throne *was to be approved* by the people.<sup>41</sup> The above examples do not provide a basis for stating that such an arrangement was customary; most likely, the Iranian and Cappadocian nobility interfered in the course of dynastic crises only in truly critical situations (this, perhaps, rested on some formal procedures). In addition to that, the nobility had certain 'rights of representation' in interstate affairs, which were not at all connected with approving a new monarch.

A reason for the existence of certain powers held by the local nobility in Bithynia and Cappadocia should probably be looked for not in their common roots, but in the similarity of their statuses in the court societies of both

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dynasties which from their very beginning had ‘national’ (i.e. more traditionalistic) rather than ‘personal’ origins. It seems permissible to draw an analogy to the powers of the Paphlagonians in running the state<sup>42</sup> and even to the probable existence in Macedonia, alongside the monarchical power, of certain state-governing organs associated with the traditional aristocratic institutions.<sup>43</sup> In the case of Cappadocia we must not altogether discard the influence of the Achaemenid concept of the ‘people-army’ (*karā*) clearly expressed, specifically, in the Bisutun Inscription, where it occurs over fifty times.<sup>44</sup> However, in these states there were also other political and legal mechanisms to settle internal crises, which have not yet attracted due attention on the part of researchers. It is fairly certain that these means had local ethnic roots: Thracian in Bithynia and Iranian in Cappadocia.

**4. Stability and instability**

One may observe a very peculiar mode that existed in Bithynia and that served to alleviate dynastic strife and its consequences. In the course of such dramatic events, the country would have been divided into several semi-independent domains according to the number of dynasty members aspiring to central authority (sometimes even more than two). This may be viewed as analogous to the *paradynastai* that existed in Thrace, a traditional institution that assumes the division of the territory into several parts under the authority of the different members of the royal house.<sup>45</sup> Three events of the kind may be traced in Bithynia’s history, and it is unlikely to be a coincidence that they were connected with those same cases in which it was necessary to exercise the powers of the *Bithynoi* (on whom see the beginning of the previous section).

The first of these events was the war against Nikomedes I that was fought by his brother Zipoites ‘Bithynos’ who held the area of Bithynia known as Thynian Thrace. This need not suggest that Zipoites had usurped power in that area, as he might have had a legitimate right to it. The second event was the civil war between Nikomedes I’s sons from his two marriages that ended, as Memnon records, ‘by agreements’, which appeared advantageous to Ziaelas’ enemies, the Herakleians.<sup>46</sup> So, it is unlikely that Ziaelas would have immediately become the ruler of the whole of Bithynia, as most scholars believe. Evidently, part of the country was under the rule of his stepbrother Zipoites III, who unexpectedly resumed his claims to the throne about thirty years later.<sup>47</sup> Dionysios of Byzantium’s reference to a Bithynian ‘king’ named Moukaporis is probably best understood in the context of one of these episodes: he could be a brother of either Nikomedes or Ziaelas.<sup>48</sup> We know that both these kings had more than one brother, each of whom might have laid a claim to his own domain in



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a situation of fierce dynastic disturbances under respective circumstances. Finally, the conflict that resulted in the division of the country between the last Bithynian king Nikomedes IV Philopator and his stepbrother Sokrates in 93/92–89/88 has reliable enough numismatic evidence: during that time two series of tetradrachms were struck with different royal portraits minted in various Bithynian cities.<sup>49</sup>

The Cappadocian kings, as far as we can judge, wishing to ensure stability for their dynasty, attempted to reproduce certain Achaemenid norms, such as power transfer by a living and still capable king to his successor.<sup>50</sup> According to Diodorus and Justin, it was Ariarathes III himself who passed the throne to his son Ariarathes, who was still a boy.<sup>51</sup> And Ariarathes IV, too, intended to transfer power prior to his death to the youngest of his sons, the future Ariarathes V Philopator.<sup>52</sup> We should not discount the possibility that all these episodes, which lay stress on the relations of ‘true kinship’ inside the ruling house, were strongly emphasized in Ariarathes V’s propagandistic program in order to prove the chance character of the first (that we know of) severe dynastic crisis, namely the removal from power of Ariarathes V by his brother Orophernes, and to create a good image of the dynasty.<sup>53</sup> But there is other evidence based on independent tradition which relates to a similar episode connected with the later Cappadocian dynasty of the Ariobarzanids. For instance, the procedure of abdication of the father in favour of his son – the transfer of the diadem in the literal sense – is described in detail by Valerius Maximus, who records the power transfer from Ariobarzanes I to Ariobarzanes II in 63.<sup>54</sup> As it took place in the presence of Pompey, Sullivan believes that the leading part in this case was played by concerns of foreign policy, namely the Roman intention to replace the old king, who had previously lost his throne many times and who was apparently faced with strong opposition to his power inside the country, with a more advantageous figure.<sup>55</sup> But in this case there functions a certain legal mechanism which had regulated relations in the ruling house as far back as the Ariarathids’ reign. In this instance, Herodotus’ evidence may clarify the nature of these events: the Persians had a custom in accordance with which the king when launching a military expedition was to nominate his successor, and this is what took place before the death of Darius I in 486 when monarchic power was transferred by him to Xerxes.<sup>56</sup> The purpose of this proceeding is obvious, to ensure appropriate power transfer in the state should the king perish in war. But it should be mentioned that this practice (which had already undergone significant changes according to our literary sources) contributed little to the preservation of internal political stability in Cappadocia.

**5. Life at court**

Unfortunately, due to the scarcity of literary evidence little is known of the daily life of the Bithynian and Cappadocian royal courts. To all appearances, in the reign of Nikomedes I, the Bithynian capital of Nikomedia founded by him was a centre of culture, science and arts.<sup>57</sup> This is testified, for example, by the work of the sculptor Doidalsos, the creator of the famous 'Bathing Aphrodite', and, quite probably, the effigy of the dynasty's protector Zeus Stratios placed in the chief temple of Nikomedia.<sup>58</sup> It is probable that this very statue had served as a prototype for the image most commonly used on Bithynian royal tetradrachms, starting in the reign of Prusias I, perhaps as a symbol of his victory over the Galatian Aegosages in 216 BC (see Fig. 14.1).<sup>59</sup> Already Nikomedes I, who generally proved to be quite an energetic ruler, talented general and diplomat, was, from the words of the comic poet Euphron reported by Athenaeus, a connoisseur of culinary art.<sup>60</sup> The traditional pastime of that monarch was hunting, for which purpose there were quite favourable conditions in Bithynia. Arrian, as reported by Tzetzes, recorded the first-class Molossian dogs bred by Nikomedes I. His grandson Prusias II not only received the ironic nickname of *Kynēgos*, the Hunter, but also created a whole zoo.<sup>61</sup> Hunting was also very popular among the local aristocrats as testified by Bithynian funerary *stelai*.<sup>62</sup> The same Prusias II is accused by the Kalchedonian historian Nikandros for his love of luxury, comfort and drinking. Interestingly, according to Nikandros, a cupbearer to a Bithynian Nikomedes (apparently, one of Prusias II's three successors, each of whom had the same name) was called Secundus, although, obviously, it is unlikely that he was a Roman (more likely, he was a freedman).<sup>63</sup>

In spite of Bithynia's economic and political crisis at the beginning of the first century BC, the court at Nikomedia was still famous for its luxury.



Fig. 14.1: Silver tetradrachm of Prusias I of Bithynia. Obverse: a diademed portrait of Prusias. Reverse: Zeus (Stratios?) crowning the name 'Prusias' with a wreath (courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, [www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)).

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So, Cicero condemns the Bithynian kings' custom of using a sedan chair (*lectica*) with eight bearers, a custom that was also adopted by Verres.<sup>64</sup> This theme of Bithynian luxury is continued in the famous story about the young Caesar's stay as a guest of Nikomedes IV Philopator.<sup>65</sup> Galen in his work *On the Antidotes* mentions that a certain king Nikomedes used some medical means to protect himself against poisoning.<sup>66</sup> This information testifies in favour of two obscure passages suggesting that Nikomedes III was poisoned, unlike his luckier 'favourite enemy' Mithridates VI Eupator.<sup>67</sup> In general, the Bithynian royal court differed little in all these respects from other courts.

It is not quite clear where and how the members of the Bithynian royal house ended the course of their lives. Nikomedes I's wife Ditzela was mauled to death by his dog and buried in the new capital, Nikomedia.<sup>68</sup> The royal burial places may be the vaults, raided already in ancient times, near the settlement of Uchtepeler in the vicinity of the city of Izmit (the modern name of Nikomedia).<sup>69</sup> But the question of Prusias I's burial place has not yet been unequivocally resolved. Unfortunately, Dio Chrysostom's report does not conclusively indicate whether that king was buried in Nikomedia or Prusa-ad-Olympum.<sup>70</sup> There are also doubts concerning Prusias II. The splendid monumental sarcophagus in the vicinity of Nikaia that has partially survived to the present day is sometimes considered to be his burial place as the king always showed a strong preference for that city rather than the capital, at least towards the end of his reign.<sup>71</sup> So far as we see, there did not exist a common royal necropolis in Bithynia.

We are still less informed about analogous aspects in the history of the royal court in Cappadocia. With relative confidence one can speak only of the special role of the royal feasts, including those given on the occasion of a new king's accession to the throne, which probably originated with the Achaemenids. Polybius tells of *hégemones* in Cappadocia who were summoned to a feast by Ariarathes V while Diodorus informs us of the honours granted after the accession 'to the friends, to those in the positions of authority and the other subordinate officials' – the events described here are probably the same.<sup>72</sup> Richard Frye believes that provincial governors, satraps, and members of the local nobility who were at the court of the Achaemenid King of Kings may have been the monarch's table companions, which was considered to be the highest honour.<sup>73</sup> This should probably also be viewed as a manifestation of Persian traditions on Cappadocian soil. Finally, we do not have grounds to distrust the reports about those changes which took place at the Cappadocian court (and, to a certain degree, in society as a whole) as a result of Ariarathes V Philopator's energetic activity as a 'promoter' of Greek culture, education, and

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philosophy, which he knew well and valued.<sup>74</sup> We also need to mention here the devotion of the usurper Orophernes to ‘refined Ionian extravagance’ (τὴν Ἴακὴν καὶ τεχνιτικὴν ἀσωτίαν), which Polybius claimed he introduced into the kingdom, an accusation that may stem from Orophernes’ stay in Ionia where he had been sent to avoid possible dynastic crises.<sup>75</sup>

We have listed those parts of the history of Bithynia and Cappadocia in which the interaction of the court society and the ruling society took place chiefly in the state-political sphere. Yet what did those structures look like in their purely ethnic aspect?

### 6. Ethnicity and power: at court and beyond

Strong evidence has recently been presented that there had existed in Bithynia numerous social strata which in their main parameters differed considerably from what may be observed in other Hellenistic states. On the basis of a complex study of the Hellenistic-era Bithynian funerary *stelai* from the countryside and spread across the region, Thomas Corsten concluded that the individuals who had borne non-Greek names and had been buried under high-quality and expensive *stelai* (most of which bear an image of a horseman and a battle-scene) had been high-ranking military colonists – cavalry officers and owners of large estates and land possessions.<sup>76</sup> It is also significant that soon after Bithynia had become a Roman province, native names on such monuments disappeared to give way to Greek and, later, Latin ones.<sup>77</sup> As for the bearers of those indigenous names,<sup>78</sup> they, undoubtedly, might have belonged to the Bithynian ruling society.

Based on epigraphic evidence, ethnic Bithynians may be traced as holding governing posts of various levels. The best known is the inscription in honour of Meniskos, *epistatēs* of Prusa-ad-Olympon, son of Ze(n?)obrodios.<sup>79</sup> From an inscription found between Nikaia and Prusa it is known that Susarion, son of Theophilos, performed the functions of *grammateus* (secretary) to the *dioikētēs* (the inscription also contains other local names).<sup>80</sup>

The Bithynian court reveals the presence of the king’s ‘friends’ and, probably, bodyguards (*sōmatophylakes*).<sup>81</sup> Their ethnic composition is hard to judge with any confidence due to the lack of evidence. Yet two of Prusias II’s courtiers, who together with the king were proclaimed *proxenoi* and *euergetai* of the Kretan *polis* of Aptaera, had Thracian-Bithynian names (all in all, we know of six Bithynian ambassadors who, most probably, were the king’s ‘friends’).<sup>82</sup>

As to the ‘friends’ of the Cappadocian king, there are in total five

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individuals who are known either as royal *philoï* or as ambassadors; it is curious that four of them were connected with the usurper Orophernes.<sup>83</sup> It is possible also to add to this list a certain Theotimos, mentioned by Polybius.<sup>84</sup> The name of Orophernes' ambassador to Priene, Hyperanthes, could be Iranian, something which has previously been overlooked.<sup>85</sup> King Ariarathes IV's 'friends' are collectively mentioned alongside his children and army in a decree of Kos,<sup>86</sup> and the Cappadocian kings' 'friends' in general are noted by Strabo.<sup>87</sup> The formula used in the Koan inscription fully complies with the requirements of Hellenistic diplomatic conventions, whereas the possession of vast and exceedingly rich areas of land and strongholds by the king's 'friends', mentioned by Strabo, as unanimously agreed on by scholars, adequately reflects phenomena of purely Iranian origin.<sup>88</sup> It may sound ironic, but we have no information as to how far the native Cappadocian population had access to power in their own country: there is no evidence from this period that could throw light on this question.<sup>89</sup> The only possible exception could be notorious Gordius, Mithridates Eupator's 'agent' at the Ariarathid court (mentioned many times in Book 38 of Trogus' work) as far as the non-Iranian, perhaps Cappadocian,<sup>90</sup> character of his name might suggest. It seems best to confine ourselves to the proposition that in Cappadocia there existed a mixed Iranian and Cappadocian nobility that composed the basis of the local ruling society.

## 7. Conclusions

To draw a conclusion, I would like to observe the following. The literary evidence demonstrates that the royal courts of both Bithynia and Cappadocia, although possessing some distinctive characteristics, do not reveal any fundamental differences in the basic features of their organization and daily life from what may be observed in other Hellenistic monarchies. But the functioning of the court societies in these states demonstrates that their obvious distinctiveness was rooted in the pre-Hellenistic past, and, importantly, that quite a significant role was played by those social forces that composed a considerable part of the ruling society. Despite the vagueness of our information, there is little doubt that this system did not undergo any radical change over the Hellenistic period (unlike, for example, the states of Egypt or areas of Asia belonging to the Seleucid empire). This ethno-social and political order became enriched through the inflow of Greeks and Macedonians (apparently, Bithynia enjoyed a greater inflow due to its geographic location),<sup>91</sup> but the local population certainly remained subjects of their traditional monarchs and not of the western newcomers. The upper social strata in the states of

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Hellenistic Anatolia maintained their social and political positions, and, despite the indubitable presence of Greeks and Macedonians (military and civilian functionaries, doctors, historians, scientists, artists, etc) at the royal courts of Bithynia, Pontos and Cappadocia, we cannot apply the characteristic advanced by Christian Habicht in relation to the ruling society of the Hellenistic states as almost exclusively Greek and Macedonian:<sup>92</sup> evidently, the situation in a large part of Anatolia was quite different. Therefore, Bithynia, Cappadocia (and Pontos, as far as we may judge from the results of other studies) should be seen as representing a distinctive aspect of the development of Hellenistic civilization, one which is characterized by a balanced synthesis of Greek-Macedonian and Iranian-Anatolian principles.<sup>93</sup>

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**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that it was the example of these states that C. Habicht made use of in order to formulate the notion of *The Ruling Society* (*die herrschende Gesellschaft*) – one of the key concepts in understanding the nature of the Hellenistic world (Habicht 1958; English translation: Habicht 2006). For a similar focus see Strootman 2014's study of court society.

<sup>2</sup> See on Pontos and Cappadocia: Ballesteros Pastor 2013; on Bithynia: Scholten 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Reinach 1890.

<sup>4</sup> On these subjects, see, for example: McGing 1986; Portanova 1988; Olshausen 1990; Bosworth and Wheatley 1997; McGing 1998; Gulenkov 2001; Højte 2009; Ballesteros Pastor 2015 and many others.

<sup>5</sup> Reinach 1888.

<sup>6</sup> Jones 1940, 21; Rostovtzeff 1941, 552; McShane 1964, 59, 96; Klose 1972, 2; Avi-Yonah 1978, 171; Kreißig 1984, 177.

<sup>7</sup> Vitucci 1953, 127; Zel'jin 1953, 153; Eddy 1961, 165; Walbank 1981, 75; Heinen 1984, 422; Adams 2007, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Kobes 1996; on the second-rank powers in the wider Hellenistic context see Koehn 2007.

<sup>9</sup> On this very basis (apart from the natural geographical factor) they were grouped into a complex of states and studied in a very recent and comprehensive dissertation: Ghita 2010a.

<sup>10</sup> Vitucci 1953 – this short monograph is now rather dated; Gabelko 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Reinach 1888.

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<sup>12</sup> To a degree, a similar tendency may be traced already in older research: Magie 1951. Other examples: Harris 1982; Fernoux 2004; Bekker-Nielsen 2008; Madsen 2009 (on Bithynia); Sözen 1998; Thierry 2002 (on Cappadocia).

<sup>13</sup> Michels 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Bikerman 1938.

<sup>15</sup> This approach was employed in Hannestad's sound article (1996) and Fernoux's monograph (2004, 23–111).

<sup>16</sup> Memn. *FGrH* 434 F1 §12.3–5.

<sup>17</sup> For the most detailed discussion of the origin, onomastics and genealogical links of the Bithynian dynasty, see Gabelko 2005, 415–57.

<sup>18</sup> Glew 2005. Such a case of naming one's son and heir to the throne after a person of no royal rank appears rather unusual, but its historical authenticity may be supported by the existence of extremely close links between Bithynia and Kos in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, which were shown in the letter of Ziaelas to the people of Kos (*Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 456 = *RC* 25 = Rigsby 1996, 11 = *IG* XII 4, 1 209) as well as in the message addressed to them by an 'unknown king' (Rigsby 1996, 12 = *IG* XII 4, 1 213): there are strong grounds to associate the latter document with the Bithynian royal house too (Gabelko 2005, 214–18, 482–3, Balakhvantsev, 2011). But, on another hand, there is an opinion that Nikomedes may have taken his Greek name by changing an original Bithynian one (on the moment of ascending the throne?), see Hannestad 1996, 74; cf. Gabelko 2005, 421, n. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Dionysius of Byzantium, *Per Bospori navigatione* 96.

<sup>20</sup> Arr. *Bith.* F63 Roos (apud Tzetz. *Chil.* 3.950). Arrian points to the Phrygian origin of this woman; cf. the similar name 'Dintizila' in *I.Prusa* I, 80 and in inscription from Şile: Peschlow et al. 2002, 436–7. Pliny the Elder (*HN* 8.144) gives instead of this name the rather unclear 'Consingis'. It is very likely that there is a corruption in the manuscript tradition (see Gabelko 2005, 428; Corsten 2006a).

<sup>21</sup> Memnon *FGrH* 434 F1 §14.1. This name has Thracian roots: Corsten 2006a, 121.

<sup>22</sup> The second Nikomedes III Euergetes' son, Sokrates, was born by the king's concubine, Hagne by name, a native of Kyzikos (Gran. Lic. 35.29.7 Flemish). It should be noted that, although concubinage would not be unexpected in the Cappadocian kingdom due to a high density of Iranian-Achaemenid political traditions, there is no direct evidence for it. Still, a son of a certain king Ariarathes named Demetrios, mentioned by Polybius under 155/4 (33.12.1), was probably not the son of Ariarathes V Philopator, the reigning Cappadocian king, who would have been too young at the time. Consequently, he must have been a son of the previous monarch, Ariarathes IV Eusebius, born by some unknown woman (a concubine?). See Hopp 1977, 77 n. 102; in more detail: Gabelko 2009b, 109–10.

<sup>23</sup> As in Pontos, too: McGing 1998, 106.

<sup>24</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.19.1–9, 21–22, cf. Polyb. F90.

<sup>25</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.19.8, 21–22.

<sup>26</sup> For the fullest account of the Ariarathid royal house, its dynastic policy and propaganda, see Breglia Pulci Doria 1978; Panitschek 1987–1988; Müller 1991, Günther 1995; Debord 1999, 98–101, 105–10; Gabelko 2009b.

<sup>27</sup> Gabelko and Kuzmin 2008, 142–53, arguing that it was the sister not the daughter. The woman in question was Stratonike, treated in detailed by Alex McAuley in this volume, chapter 7, section 3, in the context of a discussion of Seleucid marriage policy.

<sup>28</sup> Paus. 1.9.6. On this marriage see Seibert 1967, 95–6.

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<sup>29</sup> The reason why the Seleucids took this step should be looked for in geography (it was this state which possessed vast areas in Asia Minor and lay in proximity to Pontos and, especially, Great Cappadocia and was therefore interested in normalizing relations with them) as well as in the fact that the Seleucid dynasty, in consequence of the marriage of its founder, Seleukos I, to Apama, was partly of Iranian origin (Strabo 12.8.15; Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6). On this: Harders 2016, 27–35; Engels and Erickson 2016, 39–45, 51–9; Ramsey 2015, 87–97.

<sup>30</sup> In detail, see Gabelko 2009a. However, more significant for the Bithynians, who were commonly in a state of tension with the Seleucids, were, later on, their matrimonial links with the Antigonids; see Seibert 1967, 116; Gabelko 2005, 245, 432–3.

<sup>31</sup> Memnon *FGrH* 434 F1 §9.5.

<sup>32</sup> As Xenophon's famous passage (*Anab.* 6.4.2) reports, the Bithynians were traditionally hostile towards Greeks.

<sup>33</sup> The only source is again Memnon *FGrH* 434 F1 §14.1–2.

<sup>34</sup> *SGDI* 3089 = *I.Kallatis* 7 l. 10. This hypothesis was generally supported by Avram (2003, 1193–6).

<sup>35</sup> Memnon *FGrH* 434 F1 §25.2. The treaty also mentions Cappadocia, but only as a land – not the Cappadocians as a people.

<sup>36</sup> Ziaelas: *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 456 = *RC* 25 = Rigsby 1996, 11 = *IG* XII 4, 1, l. 1; Nikomedes: Reynolds 1982, 20–6 no. 4, line 1. See also Gabelko 2005, 383 n. 298. The well-known episode in which Nikomedes II assumed power after he had rebelled against his father, Prusias II, unpopular in Bithynia, and was declared king by the Bithynian soldiers (App. *Mithr.* 5) can hardly serve as an indicator that Bithynian troops possessed any 'formal' rights to enthrone kings. That was an example of usurpation of power, and in such cases, of course, legal norms are pushed aside.

<sup>37</sup> Strabo 12.2.11.

<sup>38</sup> Reinach 1890, 149; Sullivan 1990, 55; Mastrocinque 1999, 29 n. 63.

<sup>39</sup> Just. *Epit.* 37.1.4–5. By mistake, Justin refers to Ariarathes VI's mother as Laodike, but there is a unique coin minted on behalf of this queen together with her son where she bears the name of Nysa (Simonetta 1977, 29, table 3 no. 11; Simonetta 2007, 60–1, 129 table X no. 1).

<sup>40</sup> Strabo 12.2.11; Just. *Epit.* 37.2.8.

<sup>41</sup> Ballesteros Pastor 2005, 127–8.

<sup>42</sup> The events of the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, connected with the occupation of this country by Mithridates VI Eupator and Nikomedes III Euergetes (Just. *Epit.* 37.4.3–9) and consequent enthronement of the latter's son who then took the Paphlagonian dynastic name Pylaimenes (see Gabelko 2005, 353–5, 368–9), suggest that the Paphlagonian aristocracy actively participated in them.

<sup>43</sup> The discussion about the role of the army and the people's assembly in Macedonia has a rather long history presented in the numerous works of such scholars as F. Granier, N. G. L. Hammond, A. Aymard, F. W. Walbank, R. M. Errington, P. Briant, E. Borza, M. Hatzopoulos. See the useful historiographic review by Kuzmin 2009, 21–9 (the author himself is rather skeptical concerning the significant rights of the 'Macedonians' under the Antigonids).

<sup>44</sup> DB. 18E, H, N; 19F, K; 24F; 25B, E, I, K, S, V; 26F, P, 27H; 28H; 29F, P; 30H; 31H, L; 33F, J, L, P; 35I, N; 36B, D, E, J; 38J, K, O; 41B, F, G, L, P, 42D, J; 45C, J, O; 46H; 47C, H; 50B, F, G; 71L; 74B; F.



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<sup>45</sup> On the Odrysian kingdom see Zlatkovskaya, 1971, 230–2. A similar practice is attested in Epirus (see Kazarov, 2009, 402–10, with earlier literature), but it is impossible to think of a common origin of these institutions in the two countries.

<sup>46</sup> *FGrH* 434 F1 §14.2

<sup>47</sup> This idea was advanced (without much argumentation, however) rather long ago. See Reinach 1888, 232; cf. Habicht 1972, 390; De Souza 1999, 56; in most detail see Gabelko 2005, 205–6, 442–3; Balakhvantsev 2011. For an attempt of Zipoites III (Tiboites) to regain power with the help of the people of Byzantion during the war against Prusias I in 220: Polyb. 4.50.8–9.

<sup>48</sup> Dionysius of Byzantium, *Per Bospoi navigatione* 96. The name is found among Thracian kings: it was the name of one of the members of the royal house of the Odrysians (*IG II/III*<sup>2</sup> 3443), a tribe with which the ‘official’ genealogy of the Bithynians proclaimed their kinship. See Gabelko 2005, 73–5.

<sup>49</sup> De Callataÿ 1996, 79–80, 275–7; Gabelko 2005, 378–80. This situation took place during the period of Nikomedes’ expulsion from Bithynia, but the continuation of his coinage could reflect the possible formal division of the kingdom between two rivals.

<sup>50</sup> It may well be that Diodorus’ rather obscure reports about the co-reign of the earlier Ariarathids (31.19.3–4, 6) should be interpreted in this way. The co-reign of Ariaramnes and Ariarathes (III), however, is evidenced by numismatic materials. See Gabelko 2009b, 105 (with sources and earlier literature).

<sup>51</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.19.6; Just. *Epit.* 29.1.4.

<sup>52</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.19.8. See Müller 1991, 408; Günther, 1995, 51–2 n. 22. There is little doubt that the groups of local nobility, who supported pro-Pergamene and pro-Seleucid views, were involved in the dramatic events at the court in Mazaka in the 160s – 150s (Günther 1995, 54); in this situation, however, one can hardly suspect that they possessed ‘official’ leverage to exercise influence on Ariarathid dynastic policy.

<sup>53</sup> Cf.: Müller 1991, 407.

<sup>54</sup> Val. Max. 5.7. ext. 2

<sup>55</sup> Sullivan 1980, 1137, who at the same time rightfully observes that this aim, quite logical by itself, was not achieved.

<sup>56</sup> Hdt. 7.2–4. There is also valuable epigraphic evidence on this event – the so-called ‘Harem Inscription’ from Persepolis (XPf 4E). On Achaemenid succession practice see Briant 2002.

<sup>57</sup> For Nikomedes’ attempt to buy the statue of Aphrodite of Knidos (Pliny, *HN* 8.12; 36.21), see Corso 1990.

<sup>58</sup> Arr. *Bith.* F20 (apud Eustath. *ad. Dionys.* 355). It is noteworthy that Zeus Stratiotes was also believed to be the protector of the Pontic dynasty, see Cumont 1901.

<sup>59</sup> For an analysis of this image, see Le Rider, 1983. Hannestad 1996, 80–1, however, believes that it could be identified with Zeus Nikephoros. For victory over Aegosages, Polyb. 5.111.1–7.

<sup>60</sup> Euphron F11 = Athen. 1.7d–f. This report is also important due to the fact that it indicates that Nikomedes had been in ‘Scythia’ – it is the only piece of direct evidence for contacts between Bithynia and territories north of the Black Sea.

<sup>61</sup> Arr. *Bith.* F63 Roos (apud Tzetz. *Chil.* 3.950). The mention of dogs in connection with the ‘Thracian king’ (Nikomedes I) in the prophecy of the Kalchedonian oracle

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reported by Zosimos (2.36–7) also seems quite trustworthy, see Parke 1982; Gabelko 2009c, 217–8. For Prusias the Hunter and his zoo, see App. *Mithr.* 2; *Suda*. s.v. Thēria.

<sup>62</sup> See the stele of Mokazis (Merkelbach and Blümel 1995); see also Cremer 1992, 25, 126–127; Taf. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Nicand. *FGrH* 700 FF1–2.

<sup>64</sup> Cic. *In Verr.* 2.5.27, cf. also Catull. *Carm.* 10, where Bithynian bearers feature prominently.

<sup>65</sup> Suet. *Caes.* 2, 49; Dio Cass. 43.20.4; on this episode, Osgood 2008.

<sup>66</sup> Galen. *De antidot.* 14.147.

<sup>67</sup> Gran. Lic. 35.29.7; Pliny the Elder *NH.* 8.65.5; on poisoning, see Winder, this volume.

<sup>68</sup> Arr. *Bith.* F63 Roos (apud Tzetz. *Chil.* 3.950).

<sup>69</sup> Gabelko 2005, 34 n. 68.

<sup>70</sup> Dio. Chrys. 47.17. For a review of the opinions on this passage, see Leschhorn 1984, 280–1.

<sup>71</sup> Prusias II was, however, killed in Nikomedia (App. *Mithr.* 7; Diod. Sic. 32.21; Zonar. 9.28). On this monument, see Kleiner 1957.

<sup>72</sup> Polyb. 31.17.1; Diod. Sic. 31.21.1.

<sup>73</sup> Hdt. 5.24; Frye 1963, 107–8. On the Achaemenids' table companions and counsellors, see Wieschöfer 1980.

<sup>74</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.19.7, perhaps alluding to a lost passage of Polybius. For a compendium of data concerning the philhellenism and euergetism of the Ariarathids, see Michels 2009, 122–41.

<sup>75</sup> Polyb. 32.11.10. Of course, this phrase could reflect the negative attitude of Polybius to the Cappadocian usurper.

<sup>76</sup> Corsten 2007. Fernoux 2004, 93–111, nevertheless, sees in this monument various aspects of the hellenization of the Bithynian population, which seems to be right only in part.

<sup>77</sup> Corsten 2006b, who believes that an explanation of this phenomenon could be that from the beginning of Roman rule native Bithynians were confined to the lower social strata.

<sup>78</sup> On the ratio of the common Thracian and specifically Bithynian onomastics, see Gabelko 2005, 515–23; Cf. Özlem-Aytaçlar 2010. I am inclined not to stress their common identity, mostly on the basis of the specific character of the names from Corsten's list, the majority of which are not attested in Thrace, but only in Bithynia.

<sup>79</sup> Robert 1937, 228–35; *I.Prusa* I no. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Şahin 1982, 305a–307a no. 1588. It has been pointed out that the indigenous names of this inscription belong to the men of the younger generation and women (Guinea Diaz 1997, 31–2). Could this fact indicate a 'de-hellenization' (of course, local and temporary) of the Bithynian *chōra*?

<sup>81</sup> Friends: Robert 1937, 238; Savalli-Lestrade 1998, 193–4; bodyguards of Nikomedes II: App. *Mithr.* 5, cf. *Mithr.* 6: five hundred selected Thracians from Europe, who guarded Prusias II in the course of the same events.

<sup>82</sup> Olshausen 1974, 255–8.

<sup>83</sup> Olshausen 1974, 261–3; Savalli-Lestrade 1998, 194–7.

<sup>84</sup> Polyb. 32.11.9; but, in so far as the text of this passage is corrupt, it cannot be

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excluded that this person should be identified with Orophernes' ambassador to Rome, Timotheus (Polyb. 32.10.4).

<sup>85</sup> RC 63; Olshausen 1974, 260 no. 182; Savalli-Lestrade 1998, 195; the name belonged to a very high-born Persian, the son of Darius and Fratagune, who died in the battle of Thermopylae, Hdt. 7.224, cf. Xenophon of Ephesos 3.2.2.

<sup>86</sup> Pugliese Caratelli 1972; Piejko 1983; Gabelko 2009b, 108.

<sup>87</sup> Strabo 12.2.9. See Magie 1951, I 201, who emphasizes that 'they [the great nobles] appear to have enjoyed greater power here [in Cappadocia] than in Pontos'.

<sup>88</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 1998, 197; Michels 2009, 31, esp. Ghita 2010b.

<sup>89</sup> See, however, several Cappadocian names in the important inscription from ancient Hanisa: Michels 2013.

<sup>90</sup> Robert 1963, 526, 548–9.

<sup>91</sup> Tarn and Griffith quite reasonably note that Bithynia was more hellenized than Pontos and Cappadocia (1952, 170–1). The reason for this may have been not only geographical factors, but also the fact that Bithynia's ethno-cultural heritage was not as vast and various as the Iranian tradition in Cappadocia and Pontos (Cary 1932, 98).

<sup>92</sup> Habicht 2006, 29–30, who examines the 'great' Hellenistic monarchies and makes some reservations in this context only concerning the 'old ruling group of Persians and other Iranians'; the states of Asia Minor are not involved here. Nevertheless, in Pontus with its strong Iranian traditions one might possibly find amongst the representatives of its ruling society the Paphlagonians as well, see Gabelko 2013, 117–27.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. the peer-polity interaction of Scholten 2007 and Michels 2013.

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