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# Bithyniaka. Lost Memories

## di Eloisa Paganoni

Recent works have called attention to the cultural and propagandistic policies of the kings of Bithynia<sup>1</sup>. They carried out policies of prestige (re)presenting themselves as Hellenised sovereigns. They founded cities, carried out donations to Greek sanctuaries and modelled their coinage on Greek-Macedonians standards. Patronage of the arts too was part of these policies. The capital Nicomedia was the cultural centre of the kingdom and continued to be an important artistic *atelier* even after the kingdom disappeared<sup>2</sup>. Scanty evidence of the artistic production is surviving<sup>3</sup>, not to mention the literary one. Only a work was written with certainty at the Bithynian court. It is the *Periegesis* the anonymous author commonly called Pseudo-Scymnus dedicated to Nicomedes II (149-127 BC) or Nicomedes III (127-94 BC)<sup>4</sup>. In this work, the Bithynian

\* This paper is an extended version of a talk delivered in the international workshop "East and West: Comparing Methodological Approaches" (Padova - Verona, 16-17 March 2015). Abbreviations:

BNJ = I. Worthington (ed.), *Brill's New Jacoby*, <<http://0-referenceworks.brillonline.com./browse/brill-s-new-jacoby>>.

FGrHist = F. Jacoby (Hrsg), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Leiden 1923-1954.

FGrHistCont = G. Schepens - J. Bollansée - J. Radicke (edd.), *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Continued*, Leiden - Boston - Köln 1998.

FHG = K. Müller (ed.), *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, voll. I-V, Paris 1841-1879.

<sup>1</sup> Hannestad 1996; Fernoux 2004; Michels 2009. In general on Bithynia, see the canonical Meyer - Brandis 1897 and the recent Corsten 2010; Kleu 2013. In addition, on the kingdom of Bithynia, see Vitucci 1953; Scholten 2007; Yavuz 2010. On Bithynia in Imperial period, see Marek 2003; Bekker-Nielsen 2008; Madsen 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Corso 1990, *passim*; Cremer 1992, pp. 16, 20-21; Traversari 1993, pp. 22-25; Fernoux 2004, pp. 93-111, partic. p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the evidence of the artistic school of Nicomedia is constituted by funerary reliefs (Cremer 1992, pp. 16, 20-21). However, the most noteworthy piece of art of this school is a bronze statuette of satyr, dated to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Philipp 1987; cf. Fernoux 2004, p. 102; Michels 2009, p. 270). According to Arrian (Jacoby, FGrHist 156 F 77) and Pliny (NH 36.35), the sculptor Doidalses made the statue of the temple of Zeus in Nicomedia, which presumably was commissioned by a king of Bithynia. Many scholars argue that this king was Nicomedes I, the founder of Nicomedia (Magie 1950, pp. 1185-1186 n. 12; Corso 1990; Fernoux 2004, pp. 104-105; Andreae 2001, pp. 81-82). Against this assumption, some scholars highlight that there is no evidence to date Doidalses' activity, and so every attempt to point out his patron is speculative (Neudecker 1997; Michels 2009, p. 270; Stewart 2014, p. 183 fig. 106, commentary).

<sup>4</sup> On this work, see Bianchetti 1990; Marcotte 2000; Gabba 2003; Korenjak 2003; Boshnakov 2004. About its historical value, see the remarks in Cannavò 2012.

court is described as the ideal refuge for artists and intellectuals<sup>5</sup>. This flattering claim suggests the existence of a literary court production<sup>6</sup> and invites to investigate whether something else of this production is surviving. An answer to this question may come from the local tradition on Bithynia<sup>7</sup>.

### 1. Bithyniaka: a survey

Seven works of the “almost vanished” local production were devoted to Bithynia, and we can collectively call them *bithyniaka* (“things on Bithynia”), borrowing the title of some of them. Their presentation shall focus on three aspects: the personality of the authors, the topic of surviving fragments, and their circulation in ancient and medieval times.

1.1. Menecrates wrote a *Peri Nikaias*, of which just two fragments of mythical content have survived, thanks to Plutarch and Tzetzes<sup>8</sup>. We have no information about this author, even if he is commonly identified with Menecrates of Nysa near Tralles<sup>9</sup>. He was a pupil of Aristarchus<sup>10</sup>, lived in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and wrote a *Comparison between the Odyssey and Iliad* and maybe a commentary on Pindar. This identification is based on a coincidence: a *scholion* on Pindar’s *Isthmian* 4 says that, according to a Menecrates, Heracles is supposed to have had eight sons<sup>11</sup>. The same information is preserved in a fragment attributed to the author of the *Peri Nikaias*<sup>12</sup>. Recently, Strobel has identified Menecrates, the author of the *Peri Nikaias*, with a namesake, mentioned by Polyaeus, who was a general and lived in the late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC<sup>13</sup>. However, the author of the *Peri Nikaias* remains, in fact, unknown<sup>14</sup> as the features of his work do. We can assume that it was a local history of Nicaea from the origins to the author’s times.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. Scymn. ll. 50-60.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Fernoux 2004, pp. 72-73; Michels 2009, pp. 34-36; Primo 2010, p. 288. On the court literary production, see Weber 1997; von Hesenberg 1998; Strootman 2010.

<sup>7</sup> On local histories in general, see Laqueur 1926; Gabba 1982; Orsi 1994; Dana - Dana 2001-2003, pp. 93-94; Wiemer 2013.

<sup>8</sup> For an edition of these fragments, see Müller, *FHG* II, pp. 344-345; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 701; Menekrates *BNJ* 701.

<sup>9</sup> Müller, *FHG* II, pp. 344-345; Flacelière [- Chambry - Juneaux] 1957, p. 35 n. 2; Trachsel, Menekrates *BNJ* 701, *Biographical Essay*. On Menecrates of Nysa, see Hefermehl 1906; Göbel 1931; Damschen 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Strabo 14.1.48.

<sup>11</sup> *Schol. ad Isthmian* 4, l. 104.

<sup>12</sup> Menekrates *BNJ* 701 F 2.

<sup>13</sup> Strobel 2000; Polyaeus. 5.20. This Menecrates might be identified with a namesake, who, according to Polyaeus (8.57), rebelled against Seleucus after the battle of Curupedium (281 BC). On these men and their possible identification, see Mehl 1986, pp. 293-294; Mehl 1999; Mehl 1999 a. Without proposing any identification with namesakes, Bettalli 2003, p. 197 n. 121 argues that the author of the *Peri Nikaias* lived “nella prima età ellenistica”.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 701, p. 555, who cautiously dates Menecrates’ activity to the Hellenistic age.

1.2. As in the case of Menecrates, nothing is known to us about Demosthenes, except for his Bithynian origin. Nevertheless, scholars cautiously place him in the Hellenistic age<sup>15</sup>. The lexicographer Stephanus of Byzantium preserves the seventeen extant fragments<sup>16</sup>. Almost all of them contain geographical information, but not all can be assigned to one of Demosthenes' works, *Ktiseis* ("On Foundations") and *Bithyniaka*. This latter is supposed to have been an epic poem in at least ten books<sup>17</sup>. Nine of the surviving fragments were surely part of this work<sup>18</sup> and another one can be attributed to it for its content.

This is Fragment 15 (the only one preserving historical information), which mentions the conquest of the otherwise unknown city of Cressa by the king of Bithynia Ziaelas (c. 250-229 BC)<sup>19</sup>.

The authorship of Fragment 17 is debated. It is handed down by Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. Χάλκεια:

A city of Libya. *Polyhistor* in *Libyka* Book 3 (writes): 'Demosthenes, whom Polybius blames in Book 12, writing, «He is absolutely wrong also about Χάλκεια: it is indeed not a city, but copper mines»<sup>20</sup>.

According to this text, Stephanus is quoting a passage of Alexander *Polyhistor*, who, in turn, relates Polybius' criticism on Demosthenes. The first editors of the fragment, Müller<sup>21</sup> and Jacoby<sup>22</sup>, identify this Demosthenes with the Bithynian author.

Some scholars doubt that the reading is correct<sup>23</sup>: they argue that Demosthenes is traditionally considered an epic poet and that none of his extant fragments deals with Libya. Thus, they assume a copyist's mistake and propose to

<sup>15</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 699, p. 552 places him in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC or in the Caesarian age. Müller, *FHG* IV, p. 384; Schwartz 1903; Trachsel, Demosthenes *BNJ* 699, *Biographical Essay*, suppose he lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Hunter 1996 and Selzer 1997 take no position about the author's date. The identification of Demosthenes of Bithynia with the protagonist or dedicatee of the work *Demosthenes* by the third-century-BC poet Euphorion is ungrounded (Treves 1955, pp. 60-61).

<sup>16</sup> For an edition of these fragments, see Müller, *FHG* IV, pp. 384-386; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 699; Demosthenes *BNJ* 699.

<sup>17</sup> Schwartz 1903, col. 188; Powell 1925, pp. 25-27; Ziegler 1934, p. 18; Stadter 1980, p. 154; Hunter 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 FF 1-9.

<sup>19</sup> Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 F 15 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Κοῦσσα. On the supposed localization of Cressa, see Trachsel, Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 F 15, *Commentary*.

<sup>20</sup> Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 F 17 = Alexandros *Polyhistor* *BNJ* 273 F 46 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Χάλκεια: πόλις Λιβύης. ὁ Πολυῖστωρ ἐν Λιβυκῶν γ', ὡς «Δημοσθένης, ὡι μεμφομένου Πολύβιος ἐν τῷ ἰβ' ᾧδε γράφει· ἄγνοεῖ δὲ μεγάλως καὶ περὶ τῶν χαλκείων· οὐδὲ γὰρ πόλις ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ χαλκουργεία' (Polyb. 12.1.5)». On Alexander *Polyhistor*, see below.

<sup>21</sup> Müller, *FHG* IV F 15, p. 386.

<sup>22</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 699 F 17.

<sup>23</sup> Gisinger 1937, coll. 1321-1322; Walbank 1957-1979, vol. II, p. 318; Pédech 1961, p. 1; Ottone 2002, pp. 164-167; Walbank - Habicht 2011, p. 341 n. 5; Trachsel, Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 F 17, *Commentary*.

correct Δημοσθένης in Τιμοσθένης<sup>24</sup>. This would be Timosthenes of Rhodes, Ptolemy II's naval commander and the author of some geographical works<sup>25</sup>.

In my opinion, Müller's and Jacoby's proposal cannot be rejected *a priori*. Firstly, the assumption that Demosthenes' *Bithyniaka* was an epic poem does not seem to rest on solid grounds. As to the form, it is not certain that this work was in verse: although at least two fragments contain verses<sup>26</sup>, others show features typical of a work in prose<sup>27</sup>. As to the content, there is just some mythical information, while most passages deal with geographical and historical topics. On this ground, even admitting that Demosthenes wrote a poem, it presumably was not an epic, but a historical poem, similar to the works of Cherilus of Samos and Rhianus of Crete<sup>28</sup>. If so, Demosthenes' *Bithyniaka* may have been rich in geographical information and digressions on places and events far from the main focus of the work. Fragment 17 too suggests that Demosthenes' work was a historical essay: Polybius criticises Demosthenes, and, as commonly known, Polybius directs his criticisms to historians, not to epic authors.

Another detail seems to indicate that Demosthenes and not Timosthenes is quoted in Fragment 17. As already noted, Stephanus' quotation comes from Alexander *Polyhistor*, who wrote a work on Bithynia, like Demosthenes. The common interest in Bithynia suggests that Alexander drew from Demosthenes, or that, at least, he knew his work. On these grounds, we may assume that Alexander is referring to the Bithynian author.

1.3. Under Nicander's name, Athenaeus preserves two fragments<sup>29</sup>. The first says that the cup *prusiades*:

was named after Prusias (II), who was king of Bithynia and who became famous for luxury and weakness as Nicander of Chalcedon recounts in Book 6 of his *Symptomata Prousiou* ("*Misadventures of Prusias*")<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Some editors of Polybius accept the reading Τιμοσθένης (Pédech 1961; Walbank - Habicht 2011).

<sup>25</sup> On Timosthenes of Rhodes, see Jacoby, *FGrHist* 354 (with commentary); Gisinger 1937; Lasserre 1979; Gärtner 2002; Ottone 2002 (with further bibliography at p. 153 n. 1); Timosthenes *BNJ* 354 (with commentary).

<sup>26</sup> Demosthenes *BNJ* 699 FF 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Trachsel, Demosthenes *BNJ* 699, *Biographical Essay*.

<sup>28</sup> On historical epic poetry, see Fantuzzi 1998. On Choerilus of Samos, see Huxley 1969; Fantuzzi 1997. On Rhianus of Crete, see Aly 1914; Castelli 1994; Latacz 2001.

<sup>29</sup> For an edition of these fragments, see Müller, *FHG* IV, p. 462; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 700; Nikandros *BNJ* 700.

<sup>30</sup> Nikandros *BNJ* 700 F 1 = Athen. 11.94.496 d-e: καὶ ὅτι τὴν προσηγορίαν ἔσχεν ἀπὸ Προυσίου τοῦ Βιθυνίας βασιλεύσαντος καὶ ἐπὶ τρυφῇ καὶ μαλακίαι διαβοήτου γενομένου, ἰστορεῖ Νικάνδρος ὁ Καλχηδόνιος ἐν τετάρτῳ Προυσίου συμπτωμάτων. The king here mentioned is identified with Prusias II because many sources preserve a similar condemnation of his behaviour (Polyb. 30.18; 36.16; Diod. 37.19; on the identification, see Canfora 2001, p. 1227 n. 2; Trachsel, Nikandros *BNJ* 700 F 1, *Commentary*).

In the second fragment, Athenaeus tells the curious story of a cock, which fell in love with Secundus, a member of the household of a king Nicomedes, commonly identified with Nicomedes II (149-127 BC), son of Prusias II (182-149 BC)<sup>31</sup>. The author adds that he found this episode in Book 6 of Nicander's *Peripeteis* ("Adventures")<sup>32</sup>.

The fragments refer to Nicander's work with a slightly different title: the first one calls it *Symptomata Prousiou*, the second one just *Peripeteis*. In addition, the second fragment does not quote Nicander's birthplace. Nevertheless, they are unanimously supposed to refer to the same author and the same work. Accordingly, Nicander's work presumably consisted of at least six books and dealt with the reign of Prusias II in view of the title. Thus, the end of Prusias II's reign is a *terminus post quem* for Nicander's activity. It is impossible to date more closely this author<sup>33</sup>.

However, the information we have raises a suggestive hypothesis. Both the title and Fragment 1 suggest that his work portrayed Prusias II negatively. We know that Nicomedes II seized the throne of Bithynia with a military coup in detriment of his father Prusias II<sup>34</sup>. In the light of this, we could wonder if Nicomedes II was the patron of Nicander. It would not be surprising, indeed, that an author of his court had composed a work demolishing the reputation of his predecessor. It would have presented Nicomedes II's *golpe* as the only solution for the benefit of the kingdom.

1.4. We have more information about Asclepiades. He was born in Myrlea and was active in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC. He lived in Rome in the time of Pompeius and may have visited Alexandria in Egypt and Spain<sup>35</sup>. Most of his pro-

<sup>31</sup> Canfora 2001, pp. 1561-1562 n. 6; Trachsel, Nikandros *BNJ* 700 F 2, *Commentary*. The identification with Nicomedes II is supported by the Latin name of the servant protagonist of this episode. Nicomedes II, indeed, was ambassador in Rome when he was crown prince (App. *Mithr.* 1.4; Iust. 34.4) and he may have brought Secundus to Bithynia when he returned.

<sup>32</sup> Nikandros *BNJ* 700 F 2 = Athen. 13.85.606 b.

<sup>33</sup> According to many scholars (Müller, *FHG* IV, p. 462; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 700; Trachsel, *BNJ* 700 *Biographical Essay*), Nicander lived before Philo (1<sup>st</sup> century BC-1<sup>st</sup> century AD) on the basis of Aelian (*De nat. anim.* 12.37), who says that he read the story of Secundus in Philo. This does constitute in itself a *terminus ante quem*: Nicander may not have been the only author dealing with this anecdote, and so Philo may have read about Secundus in another work. Stadter 1980, p. 154 claims without any argument that Nicander was contemporaneous to Arrian. As Zecchini 1989, pp. 194-196 highlights, Athenaeus drew from fourth- and third-century-BC local historiographers mostly, but not exclusively. If Prusias II's reign is the *terminus post quem* for Nicander, it may confirm that Athenaeus read also later local historians.

<sup>34</sup> Diod. 32.21; App. *Mithr.* 1.4-7; Liv. *Per.* 50; Iust. 34.4; Zon. 9.28.1.

<sup>35</sup> Wentzel 1896, coll. 1628-1629; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 697; Forbes – Sacks 1996; Montanari 1997; Fernoux 2004, pp. 127-128; Pagani 2007, p. 12; Pagani 2009; Trachsel, Asclepiades *BNJ* 697, *Biographical Essay*. The main source for the biography of Asclepiades is *Suda's* entry Ἀσκληπιάδης (= Asclepiades *BNJ* 697 T 1). It has to be used very carefully as it seems to mix information about two homonymous figures (Müller, *FHG* III, pp. 298-299; Wentzel 1896, coll. 1629-1630; Pagani 2007, pp. 12-16; Pagani 2009; Trachsel, Asclepiades *BNJ* 697 T 1, *Commentary*). Stephanus of Byzantium (s.v. Μύρλεια = Asclepiades *BNJ* 697 T 2a) confirms that Asclepiades was born in Myrlea. Strabo (3.4.3) alludes to the journey in Spain.

duction focuses on literature and grammar<sup>36</sup>, but he nourished some interest in geography and history. He wrote a work on Turdetania, a region in the south of Spain<sup>37</sup>, and a work on Bithynia entitled *Bithyniaka* in at least ten books. Only three fragments are certainly related to the latter<sup>38</sup>. Two of them are preserved in Parthenius' *Narrationes amatoriae*<sup>39</sup> and the third one is handed down by a *scholion* on Apollonius Rhodius<sup>40</sup>. These fragments concern mythical episodes. Nevertheless, in view of the title, Asclepiades' work is supposed to have been a local history and accordingly to have also contained geographical and historical information<sup>41</sup>.

1.5. The biography of the grammarian and scholar Alexander of Miletus is well known to us<sup>42</sup>. He was captured during the Third Mithridatic War and led as a slave to Rome where Cornelius Lentulus bought him as pedagogue of his sons<sup>43</sup>. In 81 or 82 BC Alexander obtained his freedom thanks to an order of Sulla<sup>44</sup>. After his liberation, Alexander gained the *nomen* Cornelius, received the Roman citizenship<sup>45</sup> and then was the teacher of Iulius Hyginus, the famous *libertus* of Augustus<sup>46</sup>.

Alexander gained the nickname *Polyhistor* for his wide-ranging production counting twenty titles and one hundred and forty-five surviving fragments<sup>47</sup>. Two of these fragments were certainly part of a work entitled *Peri Bithynias* and both of them contain folkloric and geographical information. The first is handed down by the Byzantine lexicon *Etymologicum Magnum*, composed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>48</sup>, the second is handed down by Stephanus of Byzan-

<sup>36</sup> Asclepiades wrote a commentary on Homer, Pindar, Theocritus and perhaps Aratus; he was the author of two works entitled *On Grammar* and *On Grammarians* and of an essay on orthography. On his production, see Wentzel 1896; Slater 1972; Forbes – Sacks 1996; Montanari 1997; Pagani 2007, pp. 24-41; Pagani 2009; Trachsel, Asclepiades *BNJ* 697, *Biographical Essay*.

<sup>37</sup> Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 FF 7-8.

<sup>38</sup> Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 FF 1-3. Three other fragments (Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 FF 4-6) may be added for their content.

<sup>39</sup> Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 F 1 = Parthen. *Narr. am.* 35; Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 F 2 = Parthen. *Narr. am.* 36.

<sup>40</sup> Asklepiades *BNJ* 697 F 3 = *Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod.* II, ll. 789-791a.

<sup>41</sup> Montanari 1997 defines Asclepiades' *Bithyniaka* a "lokale Geschichte". Fernoux 2004, p. 127 assumes that Asclepiades wrote the *Bithyniaka* in Rome to "faire connaître à ses nouveaux maîtres les traditions locales de sa patrie".

<sup>42</sup> On Alexander's biography and works, see Schwartz 1894; Müller, *FHG* III, pp. 206-244; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 273, *Commentary*, pp. 248-262; Troiani 1988, pp. 9-10 n. 1; Montanari 1996; Pelling 1996; De Breucker 2012; Blakely, Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273, *Biographical Essay*.

<sup>43</sup> *FGrHist* 273 T 1.

<sup>44</sup> App. *Emph.* I, 100.

<sup>45</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 T 2.

<sup>46</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 T 3.

<sup>47</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 TT 1-3, 6-8. For an edition of these fragments, see Müller, *FHG* III, pp. 206-244; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 273; Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273.

<sup>48</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 F 12 = *Et. M.* 542, 54.



tium<sup>49</sup>. A third fragment may be confidently added to them even though it does not explicitly mention the *Peri Bithynias*. It is preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium and reports a remark on the Bithynian town of Libyssa<sup>50</sup>.

We have no evidence about the character of Alexander Polyhistor's *Peri Bithynias*. However, in view of the character of Alexander's production, we may assume that it was a geographical work with a particular attention to *mirabilia*, typical of paradoxographical works<sup>51</sup>.

Many scholars brand Alexander Polyhistor as a mere compiler<sup>52</sup> and they would define his *Peri Bithynias*, like the other works, as a collection of *excerpta* without originality. On the basis of Jacoby's observations<sup>53</sup>, Troiani proposes a re-evaluation of this author within the cultural environment of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. After the Roman expansion in the East, a new trend emerged in literary production to describe the regions recently annexed to the *imperium populi Romani* to a Roman audience. According to Troiani, Alexander was a relevant exponent of this trend with his works on Paphlagonia, Syria, Pontus and Bithynia. In addition, he assumes that these works also aimed to update Roman knowledge and so they drew from "recent" works<sup>54</sup>. As to Bithynia, Alexander drew obviously from other works on this region, among which there were probably Demosthenes' *Bithyniaka*<sup>55</sup>.

1.6. Stephanus of Byzantium mentions the *aliter ignotus* Artemidorus among the famous men from the town of Ascalon in Palestina:

... many from there stood out ... historians (were) Apollonius and Artemidorus, who wrote a *Peri Bithynias*, and others<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 F 13 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Καλλιπόλις.

<sup>50</sup> Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273 F 125 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Λιβύσσα.

<sup>51</sup> Troiani 1988, pp. 20-32; cf. De Breucker 2012, p. 58. In general, on the works describing *mirabilia*, see Ziegler 1949; Sassi 1993.

<sup>52</sup> Among those who diminish Alexander *Polyhistor's* work, Pelling 1996; see also the opinions reported by Blakely, Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273, *Biographical Essay*.

<sup>53</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 273, *Commentary*, pp. 257-260; cf. Rawson 1985, pp. 61-62.

<sup>54</sup> Troiani 1988, pp. 34-35 claims: "Jacoby inquadra l'opera del Polistore nel generale clima di attenzione all'oriente ed alle sue tradizioni che influenzerrebbe la letteratura e l'antiquaria all'inizio dell'impero ... La sua opera – allora – sarebbe in larga parte un tentativo di aggiornamento e di informazione, per ambienti colti, di quelle aree geografiche che, soprattutto a partire dalle conquiste di Pompeo, erano entrate a far parte o a gravitare nell'orbita dello stato romano"; he also stresses that Alexander *Polyhistor* focused on "la compilazione di eserti di autori che, secondo Jacoby, sarebbero «moderni», vale a dire rifletterebero lo stato della ricerca agli inizi del I secolo a.C.". Also Blakely, Alexandros Polyhistor *BNJ* 273, *Biographical Essay* rejects the *communis opinio*, claiming that the negative evaluation of *Polyhistor's* work is "in direct contrast to the ancient evidence: *Polyhistor* was an exceptionally successful writer in the context of Late Republican Rome, as the evidence for his life's history demonstrates".

<sup>55</sup> See above.

<sup>56</sup> Artemidoros *BNJ* 698 T 1 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀσκάλων: ... πολλοὶ δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς κεχρηματικάσι ... ἰστορικοὶ Ἀπολλώνιος καὶ Ἀρτεμίδωρος ὁ τὰ περὶ Βιθυνίας γεγραφώς καὶ ἄλλοι.

The lack of further information prevents us from determining when this author lived. Yet, Stephanus' list possibly suggests that he lived after his compatriot Apollonius.

However, Artemidorus is commonly dated after Herennius Philo, an author from Byblos in Phoenicia, active in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD. He is supposed to be Stephanus' main source about this region and so a *terminus post quem* for the other authors he quotes<sup>57</sup>. The argument in itself is weak: Stephanus mentions Apollonius and Artemidorus just by name, adding the title of the latter's work. This does not prove that he used them as secondary sources. We cannot rule out that they were quoted by Herennius Philo and so they lived either before him or during his lifetime.

1.7. Arrian is the best known of the authors writing *Bithyniaka*. He was born in Nicomedia in Bithynia from a wealthy family, had a noteworthy political career and was the author of many works<sup>58</sup>. His production reveals wide-ranging interests: he wrote philosophical, biographical, geographical and historical works. The latter include his most famous work, the *Anabasis*, and the *Bithyniaka*. It was a work in 8 books, which Photius describes with these words:

It was read by the same author the *Bithynika* in eight books, in which he recounts in details the myths of Bithynia and all the other events involving it. (With this work) he gave his own country a patriotic offering. ... From the time when he first took to a literary career, he began this history and he wanted to complete it, but he needed some time for the composition for the lack of material: this is the reason he himself gives for the slowness of his work. He begins, as I said, from the account of the myths and goes down to the death of the last Nicomedes, who at his death left his kingdom in legacy to the Romans, who had not been ruled by a king since the expulsion of Tarquinius<sup>59</sup>.

According to Photius, Arrian's *Bithyniaka* was a history of Bithynia from its mythical origins to the end of the kingdom in 74 BC. Among the fragments attributed to Arrian, sixteen mention the title *Bithyniaka*<sup>60</sup>. Most of them are

<sup>57</sup> Schwartz 1895; Schwartz 1895 a; Gudeman 1912, col. 651; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 698; Trachsel, *Artemidoros BNJ* 698, *Biographical Essay*. On Herennius Philo, see Gudeman 1912: Müller, *FHG* IV, pp. 312-314; Fornaro 1998, with further bibliography.

<sup>58</sup> On Arrian, see Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156, *Commentary*, pp. 551-553; Eck 1974; Stadter 1980; Tonnet 1988; Meister 1994, pp. 124-130; Badian 1997; Popov-Reynolds 2013; Hostein - Lalanne 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* F 14 = Phot. 93, 73 a-b: Ἀνεγνώσθη τοῦ αὐτοῦ τὰ Βιθυνιακὰ ἐν βιβλίοις ὀκτώ, ἐν οἷς τὰ τε μυθικὰ τὰ περὶ Βιθυνίας καὶ τὰλλα ὅσα συνέστη περὶ αὐτὴν εἰς λεπτόν ἀναγράφει, τῇ πατρίδι δῶρον ἀναφέρον τὰ πάτρια ... ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν, ἀφ' οὗ γράφειν ἴσχυσε, αὐτὴν ἐνστήσασθαι καὶ συντάξει τὴν ὑπόθεσιν βουλευθέντι, τῆς δὲ παρασκευῆς τῷ ἐνδεῶς αὐτὸν ἔχειν παρατεινάσης τὸν χρόνον· ταύτην γὰρ αὐτὸς τῆς ἐπὶ τούτῳ βραδυτήτος ἀποδίδωσιν αἰτίαν. Ἀρχεται μὲν οὖν, ὡσπερ εἰρηται, ἀπὸ τῶν μυθικῶν τῆς ἱστορίας, κάτεισι δὲ μέχρι τῆς τελευτῆς τοῦ ἐσχάτου Νικομήδους, ὃς τελευτῶν τὴν βασιλείαν Ῥωμαίοις κατὰ διαθήκας ἀπέλιπεν, οὐπω βασιλευμένους μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Ταρκυνίου ἐξέλασιν.

<sup>60</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156, FF 14-29.

preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium and Eustathius and almost all of them deal with mythical episodes or convey geographic, ethnographical or folkloristic information.

Only two fragments describe events concerning the kings of Bithynia. The first is preserved by a *scholion* on Tzetzes and alludes to the death of Hannibal in Libyssa when he was Prusias I's guest<sup>61</sup>. The second, handed down by Tzetzes, describes a partially anecdotal episode: the tragic death of Nicomedes I's wife, who was torn to pieces by the king's dog<sup>62</sup>. To illustrate the identity of the king involved in the accident, i.e. Nicomedes (280-c. 250 BC), the author provides some information, in part incorrect<sup>63</sup>, on the members of the Bithynian royal family.

Several other fragments concern myths and ethnographical information about Bithynia and the peoples who inhabited that region and bordering areas and are therefore supposed to be part of the *Bithyniaka*<sup>64</sup>. In these fragments too the historical information is particularly scanty<sup>65</sup>, but a short passage quoting the king of Bithynia Ziaelas (c. 250-229 BC) is noteworthy. It is a *scholion* on the *Iliad* by Eustathius apparently proposing a parallel between Heracles and Ziaelas as *exempla* of bravery<sup>66</sup>. It seems an example of *imitatio Heraclis*, a propagandistic theme widespread in the Hellenistic monarchies<sup>67</sup>.

The *Bithyniaka* mirrors Arrian's interest in his homeland and in Northern Asia Minor, also emerging from other works such as the *Periplus Ponti Euxini*<sup>68</sup> and *Parthika*. In the light of the extant fragments and Photius' passage, Arrian's *Bithyniaka* was a local history, which surely dealt with the entire history of the kingdom of Bithynia. As usual for local histories, this work contained mythical episodes, geographic information and ethnographical remarks as well as historical accounts<sup>69</sup>. Furthermore, the allusion to an *imitatio Heraclis* by Ziaelas suggests that Arrian drew also from works elaborated at the Bithynian court for a propagandistic purpose.

<sup>61</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 F 28 = *Schol. ad Tzetzes Chil.* I, l. 799.

<sup>62</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 F 29 = Tzetzes *Chil.* III, 115, ll. 950-953, 963-975, 984-987.

<sup>63</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 F 29, *Commentary*, p. 566; Habicht 1957, col. 1127; Corsten 2006, pp. 121-122.

<sup>64</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 FF 57-109.

<sup>65</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 FF 79-80 deal with an episode concerning Chalcedon in the Classical age, examined by Bosworth 1997.

<sup>66</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 F 89 b: οὐ μὴν καὶ λεοντῆν προσφυῶς πᾶν λεχθεῖ ἐνάπτεισθαι ὁ ἀνδρείος κατὰ τὸν πάλαι Ἡρακλῆν ἢ κατὰ τὸν ὕστερον Ζιήλαν τὸν παρὰ τῷ Ἀρριανῶι ("and not, as properly, it was read, the brave man clads the *leontis*, as Heracles in the ancient time, and Ziaelas afterwards, according to Arrian").

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 FF 89 b, 106, *Commentary*, pp. 584-585; Habicht 1972, col. 393. On Heracles in the propaganda of Alexander and the Hellenistic kings, see e.g. Stewart 1993, pp. 57-58, 78-69, 158-161, 235-236; Chaniotis 2003, pp. 434-435; Scheer 2003, pp. 218, 223; Trofimova 2012, pp. 59-80.

<sup>68</sup> On this work, see the recent monograph by Belfiore 2009.

<sup>69</sup> The view of Dana - Dana 2014, p. 29, who describe the *Bithyniaka* as "une description de son (i.e. of Arrian) pays, sans doute centrée sur le passé mythique et légendaire", seems reductive.

Arrian's *Bithyniaka* was a turning point for the tradition about Bithynia. According to Jacoby, Arrian gathered the previous works on Bithynia and bordering areas: "das ganze gewiß hauptsächlich schreibttischarbeit: es hatte über Bithynien speziell Asklepiades von Myrlea und Alexander Polyhistor gehandelt, sowie aus unbestimmter Zeit der epiker Demosthenes und Nikandros von Chalkedon. Dazu tritt die Masse der allgemeinen Literatur und nahestehende Lokalgeschichten, wie die von Herakleia"<sup>70</sup>.

In this view, Arrian was the collector of the earlier local tradition about this region and a benchmark for later authors. However, the few, and not very significant extant fragments show that Arrian's *Bithyniaka* too suffered the fate of the rest of the Greek local historiography.

## 2. Loss and survival

This reappraisal sheds light on the local tradition on Bithynia. Most of the authors are little more than ghosts. However, this scanty information allows us to draw some conclusions about this tradition and its connection with the cultural policies of the Hellenistic kings. Although it is difficult to establish when some of these authors lived, their activity covered a wide time span from the Hellenistic era to the Imperial time. All these authors were natives of Anatolia. For most of them, the choice to devote a work to Bithynia is to be explained with their origin: Nicander came from Chalcedon, Asclepiades from Myrlea, Arrian from Nicomedia; we do not know the birthplace of Demosthenes, but he too came with certainty from Bithynia. The *Peri Bithynias* proves the wide-ranging interests of Alexander *Polyhistor* of Miletus. We have too little information on Menecrates and Artemidorus of Ascalon to speculate about the reason, why they wrote on Bithynia.

As for the extant fragments of these seven works on Bithynia, just a few deal with historical events, while most of them recount mythical episodes or contain geographical or ethnographical notes. This is the result of the selection made by the authors handing down the fragments<sup>71</sup>. They excerpted passages responding to their own interest. For example, the erotic poet Parthenius found in Asclepiades of Myrlea two stories for his *Narrationes amatoriae*. The scholiasts used Asclepiades' and Arrian's works to annotate Apollonius Rhodius and Pindar. Stephanus of Byzantium drew fully from Demosthenes, Alexander *Polyhistor*, Artemidorus and Arrian. The Byzantine lexicographer proves that most of the works on Bithynia were still available at his times. Impressively, the *Etymologicum Magnum* and Eusthatus show that knowledge of Alexander *Polyhistor's* *Peri Bithynias* and Arrian's *Bithyniaka* survived until the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Stadter<sup>72</sup> argues that the twelfth-century authors drew from them directly. And yet, a comparison with authors, close to Alexander *Polyhistor* and Arrian

<sup>70</sup> Jacoby, *FGrHist* 156 F 14, *Commentary*, p. 564.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Dana - Dana 2014, p. 28.

<sup>72</sup> Stadter 1980, p. 156.

for origin, chronology and topic, suggests that this is unlikely. Apollonius of Aphrodisias lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and wrote several local histories<sup>73</sup>. The extant fragments are handed down by Stephanus of Byzantium, except for one. It is handed down by the *Etymologicum Magnum*, but is depending on Stephanus<sup>74</sup>. Stephanus seems to have been the *Mittlequelle* for Teucrus of Cyzicus too, who was the author of some geographical works and local histories in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC<sup>75</sup>. Only three fragments are surviving and all of them are from the *Mithridatika*. Two fragments are preserved in the *Etymologicum Magnum* and the third one is clearly a quotation from Stephanus of Byzantium. Demetrius of Scespiis was active in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and one of his fragment is quoted both by the *scholia* on Apollonius Rhodius and by the *Etymologicum Magnum*<sup>76</sup>. In view of these cases, it is more probable that Alexander *Polyhistor's Peri Bithynias* and Arrian's *Bithyniaka* came to the medieval time thanks to a *Mittlequelle*, i.e. thanks to *scholia* or collections of *excerpta*.

The fragmentary preservation of the local tradition prevents us from pinpointing the original features of the works devoted to Bithynia. Nevertheless, the surviving information indicates that they dealt with the history of Bithynia extensively: some fragments contain historical information and Photius states that Arrian's *Bithyniaka* finished with the end of the kingdom of Bithynia. In view of the character of these works, they presumably described the events involving the kingdom of Bithynia with a local approach. Consequently, they focused on domestic events and interactions between Bithynia and bordering kingdoms and *poleis*. In other words, these works dealt with the events the surviving tradition, focusing on the relation between the kingdom and Rome, neglects. We may have an idea about what have been lost by looking at Memnon's *Peri Herakleias*, of which only the summary by Photius is extant<sup>77</sup>. Memnon is a fundamental source to investigate the Hellenistic history of northern Anatolia and most of his information is otherwise unknown.

This raises regret for the lost works on Bithynia. And it is not only a matter of "quantity" of information but also of its "quality", i.e. of the stamp or tendency of information. As some of these authors lived in the Hellenistic age, they may have worked at the Bithynian court. The court literature was not a mere expression of the kings' interest in the arts. It was also a mean to broadcast the propagandistic messages of the kings of Bithynia. It is noteworthy that many works had a historical content: they might have preserved the "Bithynian" version of events, which celebrated the deeds of Bithynian kings. A court

<sup>73</sup> Apollonios *BNJ* 740.

<sup>74</sup> Apollonios *BNJ* 740 F 11a.

<sup>75</sup> Teukros of Cyzucus *BNJ* 274.

<sup>76</sup> Biraschi, *FGrHistCont* 2013 F 70.

<sup>77</sup> Memnon *BNJ* 434. On Memnon and his work, see Laqueur 1926, coll. 1098-1105; Desideri 1967; Desideri 1970-1971; McDonald - Sacks 1996; Meister 1999; Yarrow 2006, *passim*; Muccioli 2013; Gallotta 2014; Paganoni 2015. A historical commentary on Memnon's work is provided by Janke 1963; Heinemann 2010; Davaze 2013; Keaveney - Madden, Memnon *BNJ* 434, *Commentary*. Recently, scholars have focused on Memnon's representation of Rome: cf. Santangelo 2004; Dueck 2006; Desideri 2007.

work may have also been a tool of *damnatio memoriae*, as the case of Nicander suggests. He may have composed a work to demolish the reputation of the predecessor of his patron Nicomedes II.

There might be an echo of the Bithynian court literature in Appian too, who records forty-nine kings of Bithynia before Prusias II<sup>78</sup>. This contrasts with what is known to us. The first king was Zipoites (328-280 BC), who probably acquired the royal title in 297 BC. After him, Nicomedes I (280-c. 250 BC), Ziaelas (c. 250-229 BC), Prusias I (229-182 BC) ruled, and then Prusias II ascended the throne. Thus, scholars consider this a piece of pseudo-historical information<sup>79</sup>. Appian is reporting tradition, which makes the kingdom of Bithynia date back to the mythic times, with the “invention” of a list of kings. A tradition of this kind may be defined “Bithynian”: it was probably created at the court of Bithynia, and possibly by one of the authors of *Bithyniaka* we know by name.

It is unanimously accepted that cultural policies of the Bithynian kings had a philhellenic mark. This was consistent with the model of *basileia* accepted by the Hellenistic monarchies<sup>80</sup>: to follow such a model meant to be recognised as kings. In the light of the remarks about the court literature, we may conclude that the “Greek” mark was not the only one. It is most conspicuous for the extant evidence. However, if surviving, the court tradition would show the “Bithynian” mark, which may also be defined the “national” mark. Both these marks were part of the propagandistic policies aiming to legitimate the kingdom of Bithynia and the deeds of its kings. The cultural politics of the Bithynian kings had, therefore, a “national” component emerging from local tradition, which was, in part, court literature.

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<sup>78</sup> App. *Mithr.* 2.

<sup>79</sup> Vitucci 1953, pp. 12-13 n. 3; Davaze 2013, p. 371

<sup>80</sup> Michels 2009 *passim*.

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## Abstract

Recent studies investigate the cultural policies of the kings of Bithynia. They focus on donations to Greek sanctuaries, coinage and foundation of *poleis* and neglect the patronage of arts, in particular, the support to poets, historians and scholars, whose works constituted the Bithynian court literature. This paper aims to detect traces of this literature in the local tradition on Bithynia and to highlight the contribution of this evidence to the understanding of the cultural policies of the kings of Bithynia.

**Key-words:** Local history - Bithynia - court tradition - cultural policies.

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