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### **MITHRIDATES THE JUNIOR – WAS HE ROME’S ALLY?**

Mithridatic Wars are of special concern for the Georgian historians – thus Colchis and Iberia had been involved in the full-scale European war for the first time.

Eupator selected different patterns for those countries – that of satrapy for Colchis, and *symmachia* – for Iberia.

In 85 BC being in a great despair, with his armies and fleet totally destroyed by the Romans, Mithridates had to satisfy demand of the Colchian rebels – they needed their own kingdom to be restored with Eupator’s son as a king. His name was Mithridates Philopator Philadelphos (App. Mithr. 64).

We do not know much about him: he was left in a charge of Bosphorus, Colchis and Pontus itself as his father marched Westwards to face the Romans. Then he fought Fimbria bravely, but unsuccessfully. As king of Colchis, Philopator issued the coins, both silver and copper, with Pontic dynastic eight-pointed star on reverse, and rather strange for his new country lotus – on obverse. Even more strange it seems the way he manifested his regalia – that is in no way, the coins are unepigraphic. Was he afraid of his father? Then why? For conspiring against him, having Colchians as friends?! We shall never know. Yet, Mithridates was to be feared much. Indeed, with Rome obsessed with heavy civil war, and the Greeks having had no final choice to whom they could entrust the Greek affair, Colchis felt itself hopelessly isolated. Eupator’s reaction was quick and brutal, as usually. First capture, then golden chains and death was bad epilogue for Philopator (84 BC).<sup>1</sup> But he is not to be blamed. Junior, per-

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<sup>1</sup> Dundua T., Mithridates the Junior and the Colchian Rebellion, Proceedings of Tbilisi State University, Series (History...) (in Georgian, with English summary), Tbilisi 1988, 18-28; Dundua T., Colchis, Iberia and the Kingdom of Pontus according to the Nu-

haps, did the best he could to gain efficient support of the Republic; but in vain.

Epigraphics can provide some information for Philopator looking for strong ally. N375 from OGIS could be about him:<sup>2</sup> [Βασιλεὺς Μιθραδάτης Φιλ]οπάτωρ καὶ Φιλάδελφος/[υἱὸς βασιλέως Μιθραδάτου, τὸν δῆμον τὸν/[Ρωμαίων, τὸν φίλον καὶ] σύμμαχον αὐτοῦ, [εὐνοίας καὶ εὐεργεσίας] ἔνεκεν τῆς εἰς αὐτόν.// // [πρεσβευσάντων Ναϊμ]άνους τοῦ Ναϊμάνους/[καὶ Μάου τοῦ Μάου].

There are two Mithridates with the same cognomen – Philopator and Philadelphos. One of them ruled Pontus after war-like Pharnakes I and was actually his brother, son of Mithridates III, who bore no cognomens, like those Mithridates in the inscription. The length of the reign is well shown on the Attic tetradrachms having the legend as follows – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ; very naturalistic head is getting elder.<sup>3</sup> Then it is him mentioned in the inscription, because next Philopator and Philadelphos has Eupator, as father. But there could be no βασιλεὺς at all. Nobody knows for sure. Now it is much easier to discuss the Junior's case. Ruling over totally new kingdom and not the ancestral one, he could label himself as 'son of Mithridates', and not – 'of king Mithridates'. Besides, some scholars made an attempt to identify those ambassadors with Eupator's contemporary political figures (App. Mitr. 19).

One can really feel sorry for Junior. He could even had become Rome's formal ally in order to secure the safety of the country, much more depended on his Pontic garrisons. Indeed, he needed his copper issues just to pay them since the Colchians totally ignored the small change. But that was pocket-money. With, perhaps, no banking-system in West Georgia, those soldiers were thought to keep most of their salaries at home – in trapezas of Sinope, or Amisus. Then lotus-type silver issues used to be transferred there. Thus they could be brought upon Eupator's suspicious eyes. Philadelphos did his best for his coins to look like old Pontic satrapal issues. He did his best to secure his headquarters; as the lotus-type copper

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mismatic Material (in Georgian with Russian and English summaries), Tbilisi 1994, 50-68.

<sup>2</sup> *Orientis Graeci inscriptiones selectae: supplementum sylloges inscriptionum Graecorum*, edidit W. Dittenberger, Volumen Prius, Lipsiae MDCCCCIII, 580-582.

<sup>3</sup> Waddington W. H., Babelon E., Reinach Th., *Recueil général les monnaies Grecques d'Asie Mineure*, Tome Premier, Premier fascicule (2<sup>e</sup> édition), Paris 1925, New York 1976, 12.

is mostly grouped in the hinterland town of Surion/Vani, it is thought to be his capital.

Alas, Philopator was granted no time. Appian narrates about his punishment – he had been brought by forth. And archaeology reveals the traces of heavy clashes and fire in the early 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC layers of Eshera, suburb site of Dioscurias at the coastal strip, and Vani itself.<sup>4</sup>

70 BC saw a great treachery performed by Makhares, Philopator’s brother. He generously sent all supplies to the Roman general Lucullus, besieging Sinope, the capital. And a ground for his high-treason was again Colchis, Makhares was there. We know for sure that he had other province too – that of Bosphorus. If it could happen as follows: leading a sea-borne expedition to Colchis in 84 BC, he was the person, who captured Philopator. Thus Makhares had been allotted with a satrapy – namely Colchis, having in abundance every supply for naval power. Then he could march victoriously against also mutinous Bosphorus, thus unifying the two provinces.

Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysios was fortunate in children, but – not their behavior. And Colchis seems to be a certain kind of stimulus for their political misbehavior.

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<sup>4</sup> Dundua T., Colchis, Iberia ..., 49-50.