

The Date of the Alliance between Chersonesos and Pharnakes (*IOSPE I²*, 402) and its Implications

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INTRODUCTION

IOSPE I², 402 serves as an excellent example of the difficulties involved in establishing links between different chronologies. In this case not only linking the era in the inscription – termed the year-count of king Pharnakes of Pontos – to our Gregorian calendar, but also to other ancient calendar systems and to the relative chronologies of amphora stamps.

As one of the very few pieces of evidence in the Black Sea area with the potential of providing an absolute date before the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator, the inscription has entered discussions on a wide range of topics, some of which have wider chronological implications, such as the chronology of Chersonesos in the first half of the second century BC, not least the sequence of stamped amphoras; the date of the first Roman involvement in the Black Sea area and its extent, and the accession dates of the kings of Pontos, only to mention the most important ones.

Dated to 179 BC in its first publication,¹ in the belief that it formed part of the peace treaties described by Polybios in the aftermath of the Pontic War (Polyb. 25.2.3-15), and further substantiated by a constructed, otherwise unattested calendar system starting at the accession of Mithridates II of Kios (336-302 BC), this was long accepted as the correct date – and still is by many. In the early 1980s, however, two scholars, Burstein and McGing, separately reached the conclusion that the inscription was dated far too early, and that it was more likely the Seleucid calendar was in use in Pontos at the time of Pharnakes.² According to the Seleucid calendar the inscription dates to 155 BC.

Given the importance attached to the date of the inscription, I think it is worth examining the sources and the arguments for and against each of the proposed dates once again, and in addition reflecting on their implications on the chronology of the Black Sea area.

THE INSCRIPTION

The inscription under discussion, found in Chersonesos in 1908 near the North-Eastern Basilica and published four years later by Leper, had been reused in the construction of a well. Its original context can therefore not be determined. It is a stele of which the bottom part has been fully preserved, whereas the top is broken. The remaining part, forty-seven cm. in height, contains thirty-two lines of text, the first seven of which are only partly preserved.

The drawing of the inscription in *IOSPE* (Fig. 1) shows the sides of the stele as slanting only slightly inwards, suggesting that it may have had a considerable height. This has given some scholars the impression that only a small part of the inscription has been preserved.³ In reality, the sides are somewhat more slanted (Fig. 2) and the stone cannot have contained many more lines than the ones we can reconstruct with reasonable certainty.

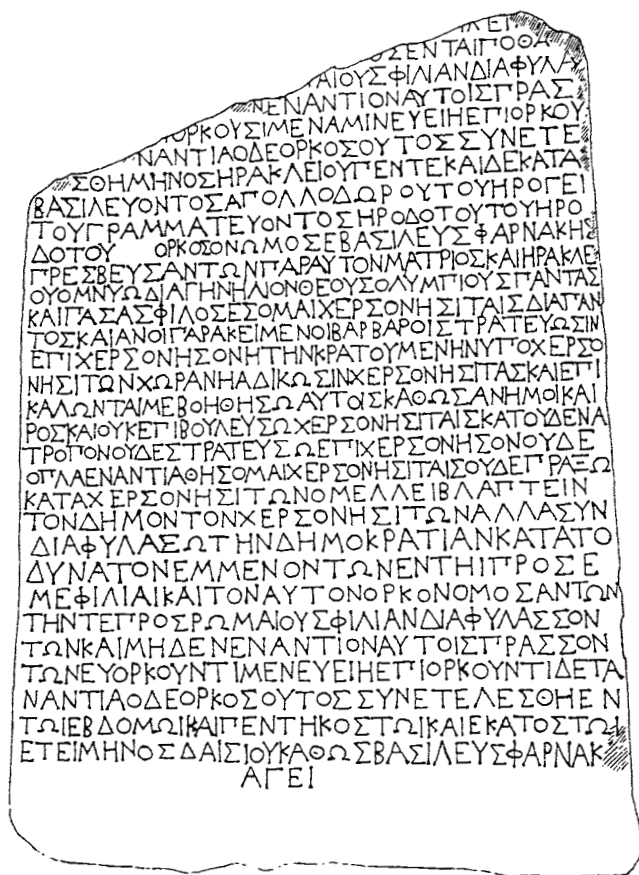


Fig. 1. Line drawing of *IOSPE* I², 402.

Fig. 2. Photo of IOSPE I², 402 in Chersonesos Museum (author's photo).



The inscription contains two seemingly rather similar oaths sworn by the city of Chersonesos and Pharnakes I, the king of Pontos, respectively, to ratify a defensive alliance (see appendix 1 for the text and translation). Lines 1-6 states that the Chersonesites will preserve the kingdom (of Pharnakes) to the best of their ability as long as Pharnakes retains friendly relations with the city *and* with the Romans and does nothing to harm them. Lines 6-10 dates the oath according to the local calendar using eponymous magistrates and Herakleios, the name of a month. This is unfortunately of no help in dating the inscription, since we have very little knowledge about the sequence of Chersonesean magistrates.⁴ Lines 10-29 give the complete oath sworn by Pharnakes to two ambassadors sent from Chersonesos. Pharnakes promises eternal friendship with Chersonesos, and if the neighbouring barbarians march against the city or the city's *chora*, and they apply to him for help, he will come to their aid if he can. Furthermore, he will not take any action which might harm the Chersonesites, but will preserve their democracy to the best of his ability. Again, Roman *philia* must also be observed by Chersonesos. Finally, in lines 29-32 the oath is dated to the year 157 in the month of Daisios according to the year-count of Pharnakes. The number is spelled out, and an error on the part of the stone cutter can therefore be ruled out.

The question is what calendar system the year-count of Pharnakes refers to. The only well-attested era in Pontos appears continuously on coins of Mithridates VI Eupator only from 96/95 BC. This calendar can with great certainty be proven to be identical to the Bithynian calendar, the so-called "king's era", starting in October 297 BC.⁵ But this era can be ruled out in the case of *IOSPE I*², 402, since Pharnakes certainly was long dead by the 157th year, which equals our 141/140 BC. With 179 BC in mind as its likely date, Leper, followed by Rostovtzeff, looked back into the history of the kings of Pontos to find an event suitable as the starting point of an era.

THE DYNASTS OF KIOS AND THE QUESTION OF THE IDENTITY OF MITHRIDATES I KTISTES

The kings of Pontos were descendants of Persian dynasts in the city of Kios, of whom Mithridates I is the first known.⁶ He is only mentioned by Diodoros Sikulos (15.90.3) and although we do not know the time of his death, he was certainly succeeded by an Ariobarzanes. One possibility is that it was the Ariobarzanes who later became satrap of Phrygia and was executed for his role in the revolt against the Great King from 368/367 BC. He was later betrayed by his son Mithridates and put to death (Diod. 15.90.3). The successor was then his oldest son, another Ariobarzanes.⁷ However, Diodoros could have erroneously fused together two different dynastic lines with homonymous rulers – the satraps at Daskyleion and the dynasts of Kios, in which case there need not have been more than one Ariobarzanes, the son of Mithridates I, who ruled from 362 BC.⁸ During the year 337/336 BC, dated by the Athenian archon Phrynichos, Diodoros relates that Ariobarzanes died after reigning for twenty-six years and that Mithridates II succeeded him and reigned for thirty-five years (Diod. 16.90.2) – that is, until 302/301 BC. In that year Mithridates II came under suspicion of conspiring against Antigonos and was executed near Kios. Another Mithridates (III) inherits the dominion but is warned by his friend Demetrios Poliorketes, the son of Antigonos, that he too is under suspicion, and so he flees to Paphlagonia, where he ruled for thirty-six years.⁹ Diodoros calls him the son of Mithridates (Diod. 22.111.4), while Plutarch says that he was the son of Ariobarzanes (Plut., *Vit. Demetr.* 4.1). This small problem aside, the larger problem of which of the two last Mithridates was reckoned as the founder of the kingdom of Pontos relates directly to the discussion of the date of *IOSPE I*², 402. Adherents of the date 179 BC¹⁰ have argued that Mithridates II was regarded as the founder of the dynasty. This would account for the information in Appian (App., *Mith.* 9 & 12) and Plutarch (Plut., *Vit. Demetr.* 4.4) that Mithridates VI Eupator was the eighth king of Pontos and the sixth to be called Mithridates. Furthermore, this reconstruction would account for the five royal tombs in Amaseia, one of which was left unfinished, presumably when Pharnakes moved the capital to Sinope after its capture in 183 BC.

What looms in the background, however, is the desire to provide the necessary event by which *IOSPE I², 402* could be dated to 179 BC.

Serious objections against this scheme have been raised. Firstly, since the Macedonian month *Daisios*, roughly corresponding to the month of May, appears in *IOSPE I², 402*, we should expect that as in the Macedonian calendar the new year started with the autumn equinox. Diodoros, on the other hand, uses the Athenian calendar, which began in midsummer, and there is thus no overlapping between the year of the accession of Mithridates II of Kios and the 157th year if we count backwards from a supposed date of the inscription in May 179 BC.¹¹ Dating *IOSPE I², 402* correctly according to the information given by Diodoros would result in May 180 BC, a complete impossibility, since fighting between Pharnakes and Eumenes backed by the Romans was still going on at that time. Secondly, we would have to disregard the evidence of Plutarch (*Plut., Vit. Demetr.* 4.1), who specifically says that the founder of the dynasty was the younger Mithridates, a contemporary of Demetrios. Thirdly, we would have a calendar system that absolutely no other evidence supports – a possibility, of course, but dubious at best.

On the other hand, counting Mithridates the younger of Kios as the founder of the dynasty necessitates the insertion of an otherwise unattested Mithridates in order to make Mithridates Eupator the sixth and last king of Pontos to bear that name as Appianos inform us. The lack of evidence for a king of Pontos is not entirely surprising considering the fact that we have no literary references to the kings in the thirty-seven years between the two attacks on Sinope in 220 and 183 BC, which in itself is interesting testimony to the hellenocentric nature of our sources. This interval of more than a generation could easily accommodate one further king.

THE REIGN OF PHARNAKES

The next complex of arguments concerns the termini of the reign of Pharnakes. We know for certain that Pharnakes was king in 179 BC, but was he still alive in 155 BC? If it can be shown that Pharnakes no longer reigned in May 155 BC, the Seleucid era will be ruled out for determining the date of the alliance with Chersonesos.

The first reference to Pharnakes in the literary sources dates to the winter or spring of 182 BC (*Polyb.* 23.9.1-3; *Livy* 40.2.6), when he sent ambassadors to the Roman Senate to present his case after accusations raised by Eumenes of Pergamon and the Rhodians. The Rhodians complained about the recent capture of Sinope by Pharnakes. The nature of the dispute between Pharnakes and Eumenes is not specified, but probably concerns Pharnakes' ambitions in Galatia. The Pontic War to which this is the prelude and conclusion, and to which we shall return later, is on the whole fairly well attested in Polybios, Livius and Diodoros.

After the Pontic War, Pharnakes disappears from the literary sources only to reappear one last time in Polybios' statement concerning the year 170 BC that "Pharnakes surpassed all previous kings in his contempt for laws" (Polyb. 27.17). Some scholars have interpreted this as an obituary notice, but as pointed out by Walbank in his commentary, we are dealing with a fragment, the meaning of which cannot be reconstructed.¹² It could feasibly be an introduction to something else – an instance of Pharnakes violating the peace treaty of 179 BC, for example. Therefore this piece of evidence should not be overemphasized. Apart from this we have no definite information regarding the date of the death of Pharnakes. The earliest reference to the successor to Pharnakes occurs in the winter of 155/154 BC, when Mithridates IV acts as an ally of Attalos II against Prusias (Polyb. 33.12.1). Consequently, Pharnakes could feasibly have entered the alliance with Chersonesos in May 155 BC during the last year of his reign.

A very important document concerning the life of Pharnakes, an honorary decree erected on Delos by the Athenians (*IG XI, 1056*),¹³ has ironically been used in support of both an early accession and a late death. It records Pharnakes' reception of Athenian ambassadors and his promise to make payments according to a previous agreement despite his present difficulties. It further records his recent marriage to Nysa, the daughter of Antiochos and Laodike.¹⁴

Based on a restoration in line 2 of the archon's name as Tychandros because of the appearance of a secretary from Marathon, the decree has been assigned the date 160/159 BC,¹⁵ and it has been used as the primary argument against the theory of the obituary notice in Polybios. However, in 1992 (after Burstein and McGing and after the completion of the thorough work by Leschhorn, *Antike Ären*), Stephen Tracy rejected this date and instead proposed the much earlier date of 196/195 BC.¹⁶ He identifies the stone cutter of the inscription with a known Athenian stone cutter who was active in the period from 226/225 to about 190 BC, and further supports the date with a prosopographical study of the persons mentioned, which also points to a date in the 190s BC. The specific date 196/195 BC is the only available slot in the Athenian list of archons during this period for a secretary from Marathon. Nysa then becomes the daughter of Antiochos III, whose intention, Tracy argues, was to prepare the way for the re-conquest of Asia Minor. If Tracy's observation is correct, the manoeuvre, for all we know, did not prove successful in involving Pharnakes actively in the war. Inter-marriage between the Seleucid and Pontic dynasties was not a new phenomenon either: Mithridates II had married Laodike, the sister of Seleukos II, and the daughter of Mithridates II had married Achaïos the brother-in-law of Seleukos II. It need not have had direct strategic implications.

Tracy does have a point in saying that the inscription must belong early in his reign. The fact that Athens sent ambassadors and the nature of their errand imply that Pharnakes had recently come to power, and the financial



Fig. 3. Fragment of the base on the Capitol in Rome (CIL I² 2, 730 = CIL VI, 30922) with a dedication by Mithridates Philopator Philadelphos, who can probably be identified as Mithridates IV (author's photo).

obligations he promises to take on reasonably belong to an earlier agreement between Athens and the father of Pharnakes. Furthermore, an interdynastic marriage would make far more sense early in the reign than towards its end in 159 BC. The new date removes the only definite evidence for Pharnakes after Polybios' so-called obituary, but as stated above the meaning of this passage cannot be determined with certainty.

A base found on the Capitol in Rome (Fig. 3) with dedications by kings and cities of Asia Minor, including one by a king Mithridates with the epithets Philopator and Philadelphos, has been the subject of much controversy.¹⁷ It needs to be mentioned here because it has been part of the argument in favour of 170 BC as the year of the death of Pharnakes. Judging from the dedication of the Lycian *koinon*, which for historical reasons must date shortly after 168 BC, when Roman intervention secured Lycian independence from Rhodos, it would seem that Mithridates was the brother and successor of Pharnakes, and that he ruled shortly after 170 BC. However, some of the other dedications on the base seemed impossible to reconcile with a date around 168 BC, and Mommsen and Degraasi for paleographical and typological reasons favoured a Sullan date for the inscriptions, proposing that Mithridates was an otherwise unknown son of Mithridates VI.¹⁸ Mellor, I think, offers the most convincing explanation for these contradictions,¹⁹ arguing that the base is indeed Sullan and that the dedications had been re-inscribed from different monuments on a

collective base after the devastating fire of 83 BC. The date of each individual dedication has therefore no relation to the others, and the base thus bears no witness to the accession date of Mithridates IV.²⁰

After the publications of Burstein and McGing, different adherents of the traditional date have of course responded, but the only new argument has been forwarded by Vinogradov.²¹ It concerns the consequences for the length of the reign of Mithridates IV. We know that Mithridates V was in power at the outbreak of the third Punic War (App., *Mithr.* 10) because he offers the Romans his assistance. Furthermore, if we accept the Seleucid date for *IOSPE* I², 402, it follows that the same calendar should apply to the stele from Inebolu in honour of the strategos Alkimos and dated to the year 161, i.e. 152/151 BC.²² It has otherwise been dated to 137/136 BC according to the Bithynian king's era starting in 297 BC. Using the calendar starting with the accession of Mithridates II of Kios would result in much too early a date for the inscription. This would restrict the reign of Mithridates IV to a mere three years, which is much too short, according to Vinogradov, for the diverse types found on this king's coinage and the number of specimens preserved.²³ He compares with the reign of Mithridates V, who reigned for about 30 years, but of whose coinage only one or possibly two specimens are known.²⁴ This discrepancy will of course prevail no matter how long we consider the reign of Mithridates IV to be, and it only proves that the length of reign is far from the only factor in determining the volume of coinage produced. To my mind this should not deter us from constraining the reign of Mithridates IV to only three years.

If we accept both Tracy's early date of the accession and Burstein and McGing's late date for his death, Pharnakes' reign stretches from c. 197 to 155 BC. Forty-two years is a long reign, but not conspicuously long when compared to the reign of his grandson Mithridates VI, who ruled for more than half a century. If we stick to the traditional date and a foundation of the dynasty by Mithridates II in 336 BC, we are still faced with the problem of a long reign for Mithridates, the father of Pharnakes, from about 250 and into the second century BC.

THE SITUATION DESCRIBED IN THE INSCRIPTION

The last set of arguments concerns the relationship between the situation described in *IOSPE* I², 402 and our knowledge of the historical situation in 179 BC.

We learn from the inscription, that the city of Chersonesos is threatened by its neighbouring barbarians. The directness of the statement indicates that barbarian incursions had already taken place, or there was an immediate threat of attack. Although we cannot determine the conditions of the oath sworn by the city of Chersonesos, it seems beyond doubt that this indeed was the

primary reason for entering the defensive alliance. That the initiative comes from Chersonesos is further shown by the fact that they were the ones who sent ambassadors. In line 25 we learn that the alliance only comes into effect if the Chersonesites swear the same oath. We must imagine that the ambassadors have proposed an alliance on behalf of the people of Chersonesos. It would be awkward for the Chersonesites to swear an oath of alliance before knowing whether the counterpart would agree to it. Pharnakes agrees to an alliance under the terms specified and on the condition that the Chersonesites swear the same oath.

The oath taken by Pharnakes may suggest that previous relations between Chersonesos and Pharnakes had not been altogether happy. When Pharnakes promises to preserve the democracy and not to plot against or harm the Chersonesites, it may indicate that there had been previous incidents of the contrary. Furthermore, the insertion of "if he is summoned" in lines 16-17 could be interpreted as a clause against Pharnakes using barbarian incursions as a pretext for entering into affairs in the north Pontic without the consent of Chersonesos.

How does this correspond with our knowledge of the peace treaty at the end of the Pontic War? Polybios describes in full the conclusion of the war and the terms of peace (Polyb. 25.2.3-15): "there is to be peace between Eumenes, Prusias and Ariarathes on the one hand and Pharnakes and Mithridates of Armenia on the other for all time." Then follows the precise terms – all relating to affairs in Asia Minor – and finally a list of *adscripti* to the treaty, which among others include the cities of Herakleia, Mesembria, Chersonesos and Kyzikos. Polybios does not specify which side the *adscripti* had joined during the war. Some have argued that they had opposed Pharnakes, others have taken the opposite standpoint. There are indeed arguments in favour of both.²⁵ One way or the other the treaty in *IOSPE* I², 402 seems awkward in the context of 179 BC. If they had been adversaries, Pontos would certainly be a strange place for Chersonesos to seek aid against barbarian attacks immediately after the conclusion of the war. If they had joined forces, would there have been a need to renew the alliance under these conditions? And why the safeguarding against Pharnakes plotting against or harming the Chersonesites? This makes much more sense if the treaty is from 155 BC. At that time the Chersonesites could, somewhat against their will, have been forced to seek help from their former adversary Pharnakes, possibly because the kings of Pergamon and Bithynia, their previous allies, were busy waging war against each other.

Other curiosities of *IOSPE* I², 402, if viewed in the context of 179 BC, are the complete absence of the other signers of the peace treaty and the absence of its general terms, and perhaps most importantly the strong emphasis on good relations with Rome, which is to be observed by both parties. This has always been at odds with our knowledge of Roman policy in Asia Minor at the time. Rome certainly had acted as intermediary on several occasions during the war, and had sent no fewer than three commissions to inquire into the

conduct of the different players,²⁶ but in the end the war was concluded by the decisive action taken by Eumenes attacking Pharnakes with full force. Faced with defeat, Pharnakes, we hear in Polybios (25.2), sent envoys to Eumenes and Ariarathes to sue for peace. Rome is mentioned neither in the negotiations for peace nor in the treaty itself. Yet in *IOSPE* I², 402 Rome seems to exert substantial influence in the Black Sea area, and in their mutual relations Chersonesos and Pharnakes act as if they were Roman clients. This is not compatible with the situation prior to the defeat of Perseus of Macedon in 168 BC, after which Rome extended its hegemony eastwards and northwards into the Black Sea. Throughout the 180s and 170s BC Rome supported Eumenes steadily and only reluctantly entered the affairs of Asia Minor themselves. It would therefore be curious to find an enemy of Eumenes during the Pontic War promising to uphold *philia* with Rome as early as 179 BC.²⁷

Rather than being part of the peace treaty described by Polybios, *IOSPE* I², 402 appears to be an appeal by the Chersonesites for assistance against barbarian attacks at a date somewhat later than 179 BC.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHERSONESEAN STAMPED AMPHORAS

One of the areas where changing the date of *IOSPE* I², 402 will have the deepest implications is the chronology of the excavations carried out in Chersonesos and its *chora*. When it comes to the first half of the second century BC this is to a large extent built up around the date of the inscription.

In "Ceramic Stamps of Tauric Chersonesus" from 1994, Kac divides the amphora stamps into three main groups, each with three or four subgroups.²⁸ Kac dates the third group to the period between 230 and 185 BC. This group includes forty different *astynomoi* and is the one which mainly concerns us hereto. He admits that there are no good closed contexts by which to date the lower chronological limit, but advances two arguments: the first concerns the synchronicity of the latest stamps of group three with the latest stamps of Sinope supposed to date shortly before the capture of the town by Pharnakes in 183 BC, and the second the crises reflected in *IOSPE* I², 402 with barbarians overrunning the city's territory rendering farming unprofitable and thus causing the production of amphoras, primarily intended for export of wine, to cease. However, the destruction of the Chersonesean *chora* connected with barbarian incursions in the second century BC is primarily dated on the basis of the amphora stamps,²⁹ which are in turn dated on the assumption that the alliance with Pharnakes took place in 179 BC. Regarding the synchronicity with Sinopean amphora stamps, their chronology is not beyond dispute.³⁰ We must at any rate calculate with the possibility of a certain time lag between their production and their deposit on the farms in Chersonesos.

If we accept the Seleucid calendar date for *IOSPE* I², 402, then Chersonesos

still held a functioning *chora* in 155 BC, which indeed seems to be confirmed by finds of Rhodian stamped amphoras in the *chora*, now dated by Finkiel-sztejn to shortly before the middle of the second century BC.³¹ In this light it would seem probable that the Chersonesean stamped amphoras continued further into the second century BC than supposed by Kac. This does not necessarily mean that the *chora* functioned continuously during the first half of the second century BC. There may have been times during this period when barbarian incursions caused destruction. Placing the terminus of the Chersonesean amphora production before the date of the alliance, as Kac does, must at any rate be false, since *IOSPE I², 402* specifically states that a *chora* worth defending still existed.

CONCLUSION

Currently no definite proof exists for either of the proposed dates for *IOSPE I², 402*. It is possible that this may turn up in the future, most likely in the form of proof that either Pharnakes or Mithridates IV was king in the period between 170 and 155 BC. Until then, the Seleucid calendar seems most the probable for determining the date of the inscription, and, consequently, the history of Chersonesos in the first half of the second century BC needs to be reconsidered. Most importantly the date of the termination of the production of stamped amphoras needs to be determined more precisely, as this is paramount for understanding the chronology of the city's *chora*. *IOSPE I², 402* does not support the proposed date of about 180 BC and other criteria should be sought.

Appendix 1. Text and translation

IOSPE I², 402:

[- - - - - ἀλλά]
 [συνδιαφυλαξοῦμεν τὰν αὐτοῦ βασ]ιλεί[αν]
 [κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, ἐμμένοντ]ος ἐν τῷ ποθ' ἀ[μὲς]
 [φιλίας, τὰν τε ποτὶ Ῥωμ]αίους φιλίαν διαφυλά[σ]-
 [σοντος καὶ μηδὲ]ν ἐναντίον αὐτοῖς πρᾶσ-
 [σοντος. εὐ]ορκούσι μὲν ἀμῖν εὐ εἴη, ἐπιορκού-
 [σι δὲ τὰ]ναντία. ὁ δὲ ὄρκος οὗτος συνετε-
 [λέ]σθη μηνὸς Ἑρακλείου πεντεκαίδεκάτα[ι],
 βασιλεύοντος Ἀπολλοδώρου τοῦ Ἡρογεί-
 του, γραμματεύοντος Ἡροδότου τοῦ Ἡρο-
 δότου. ὄρκος, ὃν ὤμοσε βασιλεὺς Φαρνάκης
 πρεσβευσάντων παρ' αὐτὸν Μάτριος καὶ Ἑρακλε[ί]-
 ου. ὁμνύω Δία, Γῆν, Ἥλιον, θεοὺς Ὀλυμπίους πάντας
 καὶ πάσας. φίλος ἔσομαι Χερσονησίταις διὰ παν-
 τός, καὶ ἂν οἱ παρακείμενοι βάρβαροι στρατεύωσιν
 ἐπὶ Χερσόνησον ἢ τὴν κρατουμένην ὑπὸ Χερσο-
 νησιτῶν χώραν ἢ ἀδικῶσιν Χερσονησίτας, καὶ ἐπι-
 καλῶνται με, βοηθήσω αὐτοῖς, καθὼς ἂν ἦ μοι και-
 ρός, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιβουλεύσω Χερσονησίταις κατ' οὐδένα
 τρόπον, οὐδὲ στρατεύσω ἐπὶ Χερσόνησον, οὐδὲ
 ὄπλα ἐναντία θήσομαι Χερσονησίταις, οὐδὲ πράξω
 κατὰ Χερσονησιτῶν ὃ μέλλει βλάπτειν
 τὸν δῆμον τὸν Χερσονησιτῶν, ἀλλὰ συν-
 διαφυλάξω τὴν δημοκρατίαν κατὰ τὸ
 δυνατόν, ἐμμενόντων ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἐ-
 μὲ φιλίας καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὄρκον ὁμοσάντων,
 τὴν τε πρὸς Ῥωμαίους φιλίαν διαφυλασσόν-
 των καὶ μηδὲν ἐναντίον αὐτοῖς πρᾶσσόν-
 των. εὐορκοῦντι μὲν εὐ εἴη, ἐπιορκοῦντι δὲ τὰ-
 ναντία. ὁ δὲ ὄρκος οὗτος συνετελέσθη ἐν
 τῷ ἐβδόμῳ καὶ πενηκοστῷ καὶ ἑκατοστῷ
 ἔτει, μηνὸς Δαισίου, καθὼς βασιλεὺς Φαρνάκ[ης]
 ἄγει.

Translation by Burstein (1980, 4):

[... but we shall attempt to preserve his ki]ngd[om to the best of our ability so long as he remains in friendship] with us and preserves friendship [with the Rom]ans and does [nothin]g against them. May all be well with us if we do not violate our oath and the opposite if we do. This oath was sworn on the fifteenth day of the month Herakleios when Apollodorus son of Herogeiton was king and Herodotus son of Herodotus secretary.

The oath which king Pharnaces swore when Matris and Heracleius went on embassy to him. I swear by Zeus, Ge, Helius and all the Olympian gods and goddesses. I will be a friend to the Chersonesites for all time. If the neighboring barbarians march against Chersonesus or the territory ruled by Chersonesus or injure the Chersonesites and they summon me, I will come to their aid if I can, and I will not plot against the Chersonesites nor will I do anything against the Chersonesites which might harm the Chersonesites, but I will attempt to preserve the democracy to the best of my ability so long as they remain in friendship with me and swear the same oath and preserve friendship with the Romans and do nothing against them. May all be well with me if I do not violate my oath and the opposite if I do. This oath was sworn in the one hundred fifty-seventh year, in the month Daisios, on king Pharnaces' year-count.

Appendix 2. Chronological table

It should be noted that only dates that are relevant to the present discussion are included in the table, and in several instances different propositions for dates are listed.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 5th-4th cent. | Mithridatid dynasts in Kios and possibly in Mysia and among the Mariandynians |
| 363/362 | Death of Ariobarzanes or Mithridates? Accession of Ariobarzanes |
| 337/336 | Death of Ariobarzanes; accession of Mithridates II = I Ktistes of Pontos? |
| 302/301 | Execution of Mithridates II; accession of Mithridates III = Mithridates I Ktistes of Pontos?, who flees (or had already fled) to Paphlagonia |
| 281? | Mithridates I Ktistes assumes the title of <i>basileus</i> |
| 266 | Death of Mithridates I; accession of Ariobarzanes |
| c. 250 | Death of Ariobarzanes; accession of Mithridates II |
| 220 | Attack on Sinope by Mithridates II (or possibly Mithridates III) |
| ? | Death of Mithridates II; accession of Mithridates III |
| ? | Death of Mithridates III; accession of Pharnakes |
| 195 | Date proposed by Tracy for <i>IG XI</i> , 1056 mentioning the marriage between Pharnakes and Nysa |
| 183 | Pharnakes conquers Sinope |
| 183-179 | Pontic War between Pharnakes and Mithridates of Armenia on the one side and Eumenes, Prusias and Ariarathes on the other |
| 182 | Earliest literary reference to Pharnakes |
| 179 | Traditional date of <i>IOSPE I</i> ² , 402 according to calendar starting with the accession of Mithridates II of Kios |
| 170 | Polybios (27.17): "Pharnakes surpassed all previous kings in his contempt for the laws". Obituary? |
| 160 | Previously accepted date for <i>IG XI</i> , 1056 mentioning the marriage between Pharnakes and Nysa |
| 155 | Proposed date of <i>IOSPE I</i> ² , 402 according to the Seleucid calendar |
| 155 | Death of Pharnakes? |
| 155/154 | Earliest literary reference to Mithridates IV |
| 152 | Date according to the Seleucid era of the Inebolu inscription mentioning Mithridates V |
| 149 | Earliest literary reference to Mithridates V |

Notes

- 1 Leper 1912. For later literature see, Perl 1968, 301-302, n. 10 and Leschhorn 1993, 78.
- 2 Burstein 1980; McGing 1986b, 253-254.
- 3 For example Magie 1950, 1090, n. 45.
- 4 For the calendar of Chersonesos, see Solomonik 1976, 139 and Leschhorn 1993, 64-71.
- 5 Perl 1968.
- 6 For the latest discussion of the origin of the Mithridatids see Bosworth & Wheatly (1998, 155-64), who argue that their possessions were much larger than just the city of Kios, and may have comprised much of Mysia and the territory of Mariandynia south of Herakleia. In this case the claim of descent from Dareios could be true since Gobreas, a son of Dareios, ruled Mariandynia at the time of Xerxes' invasion of Greece. For the traditional view of petty fiefs in Kios, see Corsten 1985, 24-30 and McGing 1986b with earlier literature. Reinach (1895, 4) argued that the dynasty in Kios as the origin of the kings of Pontos was altogether a later construction.
- 7 For this view, see McGing 1986b, McGing 1986a, 13-15 and Corsten 1985, 28. The crucifixion is only found in Harpokration, Ariobarzanes. Reinach (1895, 4) was of the opinion, that Ariobarzanes the satrap survived the revolt and continued to rule in Kios.
- 8 Bosworth & Wheatly 1998, 160.
- 9 Bosworth & Wheatly (1998, 161-164) argues that Mithridates had fled several years earlier. For one thing, Demetrios could hardly have been present in Kios in 302 BC, where Plutarch lets his story take place. For another, Demetrios, who was born in 336 BC, could no longer be called a youth in 302/01 BC as Plutarch does.
- 10 Leper 1912; Rostovtzeff in *CAH* vol. IX, 217.
- 11 Burstein 1980, 6.
- 12 Walbank 1979, 318.
- 13 Dürrbach & Jardé 1905.
- 14 The identity of Nysa is disputed. She could be the daughter of either Antiochos III Megas (Tracy 1992, 309), an Antiochos, son of Antiochos III, who died before his father (*CAH* vol. VIII2, 520-521 stemma), or Antiochos IV Epiphanes (Mørkholm 1966, 54, 60; *CAH* vol. VIII2, 357 & 536).
- 15 Meritt 1977, 183.
- 16 Tracy 1992; 1990.
- 17 Reusser 1993, 138-158 with earlier literature.
- 18 Mommsen 1887 and Degrassi 1951/52.
- 19 Mellor 1978.
- 20 Recently Canali De Rossi (1999, 37-46) has proposed that the Mithridates of the inscription could indeed be Mithridates VI, who supposedly should have employed the epithets Philopator and Philadelphos early in his reign before taking the more well-known Eupator. The arguments in favour of this are however rather far fetched.
- 21 Vinogradov 1990; Saprykin 1990, 207.
- 22 Reinach 1905, 113-119.

- 23 Waddington, Babelon & Reinach 1925, 12-13. Recently Mattingly (1998, 255-257) has even attempted to re-date the coins normally attributed to Mithridates III to the reign of Mithridates IV, thus enlarging the corpus further.
- 24 Robert 1978, 151-163.
- 25 The traditional view, which McGing (1986b, 29) also favours, is that the Greek cities were opposed to Pharnakes, whereas Burstein (1980, 5, n. 25) claims that at least Herakleia and Chersonesos were sympathetic towards him.
- 26 The three Roman commissions: Polyb. 23.9.3, 24.1.3, 24.15.1-12.
- 27 Sherwin-White 1984, 28-29, 42-43; Gruen 1984, 553-554; McShane 1964, 155-158.
- 28 Kac 1994. Groups on p. 79, table 5. Specification of absolute chronology on p. 161-164. See also Kac 1985. For further discussion of the dating scheme of Kac, see the paper by V. Stolba in this volume.
- 29 Kac 1994, 72-74.
- 30 Latest Fedoseev 1999, 27-48.
- 31 Zolorarev & Turovskij 1990, 80 mention a stamp of the fourth group of Rhodian stamps in farmhouse 26, but this is questioned by Kac 1994, 73. For the date of this group, see now Finkielsztejn 2001, 172-174 & tab. 20. Saprykin (1994, 20) gives an even later date for the destruction of the farmhouses on the *chora*.