

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVINCE PONTUS ET BITHYNIA DURING THE IMPERIAL PERIOD

### ROMA İMPARATORLUK DÖNEMİ PONTUS ET BITHYNIA EYALETİ'NİN İDARI SİSTEMİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLER

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**Abstract:** Although the province of Pontus-Bithynia formed the northeast boundary of the Roman state, it was governed as a senatorial province for a long time. During the historical process until Trajan's reign the Roman governors appointed to the province of Pontus-Bithynia were proconsuls at the level of praetor. But after 75 A.D., from the last years of the emperor Vespasian's reign possibly until the Trajan period we see that the proconsuls to be sent to the province were more experienced. In 110 A.D. emperor Trajan, by the decree of senatus appointed Pliny the younger governor with the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore* as if this were an imperial province, instead of a governor with the title *proconsul*. We mustn't infer from Pliny's unusual assignment that *Pontus et Bithynia*, a senatorial province, was turned into an imperial one. In this context, this study discuss the following questions: For which reasons was Pliny appointed to the province? What were the main problems of the province during the governorship of Pliny and what were the aims of emperor Trajan? From 159 A.D. onward at the latest the governors from the status *ex-consul* and with the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore* were appointed to the administration of the province. After the status of imperial province was given, the governors who had previously performed the same job in various provinces and naturally had a longer career were appointed to the province. This fact clearly illustrate the strategical importance of the province. As a result we deal with the governors' fields of responsibility in the province and their relations with the inhabitants of the province.

**Keywords:** Pontus-Bithynia • *Proconsul* • Trajan • Pliny • Nicomedeia.

**Özet:** Roma devletinin kuzeydoğu sınırını oluşturmaya karşın, Pontus-Bithynia eyaleti *Senatus* eyaleti olarak uzunca bir dönem yönetilmiştir. İmparator Traianus dönemine değin geçen süreç içerisinde eyalete atanan valiler, praetor seviyesindeki *proconsul*'lardandır. Ancak M.S. 75'ten sonra yani imparator Vespasianus yönetiminin son yıllarından itibaren olasılıkla imparator Traianus'un dönemine değin eyalete gönderilecek *proconsul*'lerin daha tecrübeli oldukları görülmektedir. İmparator Traianus, M.S. 110 senesinde bu eyalete *proconsul* unvanlı bir vali yerine, sanki burası imparator eyaletiymiş gibi *legatus Augusti pro praetore* unvanıyla Genç Plinius'u *Senatus* kararıyla vali olarak atamıştır. Plinius'un özel bir biçimde atanması, senatus eyaleti olan *Pontus et Bithynia*'nın imparator eyaleti yapıldığı anlamına gelmemelidir. Bu bağlamda Plinius, hangi sebeplerden ötürü eyalete atanmıştır? Bu dönemde eyaletin başlıca problemleri ve imparatorun beklentileri nelerdir? soruları ele alınmıştır. En geç M.S. 159'dan itibaren eyaletin yönetimine *ex-consul* statüsünden *legatus Augusti pro praetore* unvanlı valiler atanmışlardır. İmparatorluk eyaleti olmasından sonra eyalete atanan valilerin daha önceden birkaç eyalette valilik görevini yaptıktan sonra nispeten daha uzun bir kariyer sahibi oldukları anlaşılmaktadır. Bu durum şüphesiz eyaletin artan stratejik önemini göstermektedir. Son olarak çalışmamızda valiler ile eyalet sakinleri arasındaki ilişkiler değinilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Pontus-Bithynia • *Proconsul* • Traianus • Plinius • Nikomedeia

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The provincialization of Bithynia shows similarities with the emergence of the province of Asia. The Bithynian King Nicomedes IV who died in 75/74 B.C., as earlier King Attalus III of Pergamum had done, bequeathed Bithynia to the Roman state before he died. But someone who was alleged to be the king's son applied to the Roman senatus, stating that he was the sole heir of the king's inheritance. After the senatus investigated the accuracy of this allegation and decreed that it was groundless, the province of Bithynia was formed in accord with the interests of Rome<sup>1</sup>. Following this move which seriously threatened the political ambitions of King Mithradates Eupator of Pontus in the region, the ongoing political struggle between Rome and Mithradates Eupator certainly became more severe. In the final stage of this tough conflict, Pompeius, adding one more to his achievements on behalf of Rome managed to remove the threat posed by Mithradates Eupator in 64/63 B.C.<sup>2</sup>. After this fight, with the enactment of the *Pompeia Law*<sup>3</sup> Pompeius established a new province called Pontus-Bithynia in the north of Anatolia through uniting the annexed Pontus kingdom with the existing province of Bithynia to its west<sup>4</sup>. Even though both the sources and modern literature in general mention the province as Pontus-Bithynia, it bore different names during this historical process: From the time of its foundation until the reign of the Emperor Nero the province was officially named Bithynia; from the reign of Nero to 195 A.D. it was *Pontus et Bithynia*; and subsequently the sources record the name as, *Bithynia et Pontus*<sup>5</sup>.

The evidence at our disposal today makes it difficult to determine the exact boundaries of the province<sup>6</sup>. Generally speaking the province covers the northern part of Anatolia stretching from Calchedon to the area east of Amisus. In the first century A.D. Cimistene and Carzene, which were in the territorium of the city of Hadrianopolis in the Paphlagonia region, were also included within the province<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, the city of Byzantion in the Thracia region took its place within the borders of the province in 74 A.D., after having been granted the status of *civitas libera* by the emperor Vespasian<sup>8</sup>. So the province covered an area of nearly 40,000 square kilometres. Without doubt the sheer size of the province must have increased the responsibilities of the governors and the rest of the administrative staff. This is most clearly understood through the continuous travels of Pliny, who was appointed governor, throughout the province, mentioned below. We learn that Pliny visited or stayed for a while in cities such as: Nicomedia, Nicaea, Amisus, Apameia and Prusa<sup>9</sup> and, of course, the same must have been true for other governors appointed to this province. But the

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<sup>1</sup> Magie 1950, 320; Kaya 2005, 15; Doğançcı 2007, 69.

<sup>2</sup> Arslan 2007, 446-483.

<sup>3</sup> With this law Pompeius systematized the formation of the city's state organization. Concerning the laws' extent regarding the organizing of the cities see Lewis 1937, 159; Magie 1950, 369-370; Marshall 1968, 103-109; Ameling 1984, 19-20; Mitchell 1984, 123; Arslan 2007, 484-493; Doğançcı 2007, 71-75; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 62; Oktan 2008, 59-68.

<sup>4</sup> Macro 1980, 665-666; Marek 2003, 36; Eck 2007, 190; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Wesch-Klein 2001, 251-256; Doğançcı 2007, 75-79; Wesch-Klein 2008, 271.

<sup>6</sup> Which lands of the king of Pontus became part of the province is a controversial issue, Wellesley 1953, 293 ff. The reason why the borders of the province cannot be defined clearly is because no landmarks recording the boundaries of the province have been discovered to date. But this is hardly surprising as apart from some exceptional situations it was not the usual practice of the Roman state to erect landmarks in order to indicate the boundaries of a province, Eck 1995, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell 1993, 92; Kaya 2005, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Wesch-Klein 2008, 272.

<sup>9</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 39, 40, 47, 92.

size of the province probably didn't constitute a problem for the Roman State in general, as the provinces of the Roman state organization varied greatly in size<sup>10</sup>.

Pontus-Bithynia was established as a senatorial province and, until the reign of emperor Antoninus Pius it was governed as a senatorial state. The senatorial provinces at Rome, the provinces of Africa and Pontus-Bithynia excepted, consisted of coastal lands or islands within the *Orbis Romanum*. These senatorial provinces were peaceful regions where a certain degree of public order was achieved and they were relatively distant from political dangers<sup>11</sup>. Although the province of Pontus-Bithynia formed the northeast boundary of the Roman state, it was governed as a senatorial province for a long time and this was because the Pontus Euxinus was protected by the Roman naval force, the *Classis Pontica*. This fleet guaranteed the safety of the Black Sea and the neighbouring areas for Rome by frequently using the ports of Trapezus, Sinope, Cyzicus and other cities within Black Sea Region<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, since the peoples living on the northern shores of Pontus Euxinus sent emissaries to form good relations with Augustus during his reign,<sup>13</sup> and there was no serious threat which might come from the north, the province of Pontus-Bithynia kept its status and was governed as a senatorial province. But it should be noted that the same did not happen to the neighbouring western province of Tracia, which was established in 46 A.D. by emperor Claudius and it became an imperial province of Rome<sup>14</sup>.

No surviving ancient literary texts provide any information concerning where exactly the capital of the province was located. In other words, ancient historians seem to have been little interested in the location of the administrative capital. Given the size of the province, just as in the province of Galatia, Ancyra, or in the province of Asia, Ephesus were chosen as capitals, one might expect that the capital was situated in the geographical centre of the province which was where the task of administration was performed more easily. But this was not the case with the province of Pontus-Bithynia as our sources indicate that Nicomedia or Nicaea was likely to have been the capital<sup>15</sup>. Haensch refrains from making a firm decision on this issue<sup>16</sup>. However, many modern researchers think that the provincial capital was Nicomedia<sup>17</sup>. For the following reasons we also support their view: Nicomedia was the centre of the Bithynian *Koinon*<sup>18</sup>, it was the oldest metropolis of the

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<sup>10</sup> Eck 1995, 20; 1998, 173-174.

<sup>11</sup> Achaia, Africa, Asia, Baetica, Creta-Cyrenae, Cyprus, Macedonia, Narbonensis and Sicilia were the Roman senatorial provinces; see Eck 1995, 23-24; 1998, 177-178.

<sup>12</sup> French 1984, 53-60.

<sup>13</sup> Aug. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Certainly there were also measures taken in the province of Thracia to secure the south part of the Danube and the straits. In addition all the newly occupied and provincialized regions during the imperial period were established as imperial provinces, see Eck 1995, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Kaya (2005, 17) says that the province consisting of two administrative regions with two capitals, Nicomedia in the west and Amastris in the east. But we have no documents indicating that Amastris was the capital.

<sup>16</sup> Haensch 1997, 286.

<sup>17</sup> For views in modern works indicating Nicomedia was the capital; see Haensch 1997, 283, fn. 108. Also see Burrell 2004, 147. On the other hand according to Wesch-Klein 2008, 272, the provincial capital was definitely Nicaea.

<sup>18</sup> Deininger 1965, 65; Haensch 1997, 283 n. 108; Burrell 2004, 147; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 83.

province<sup>19</sup>; Servilius Prudens, who was the *legatus proconsulis*, paid the newly appointed governor Pliny a visit in Nicomedia<sup>20</sup>; in the summer of 218 A.D. someone called Macrinus didn't want to go to Nicomedia because he dreaded the governor of that period<sup>21</sup>. Apart from these indications, some expressions in Pliny's letters imply that Nicomedia was the capital. On occasion Pliny writes to the emperor: "*Cum diversam partem provinciae circumirem, Nicomediae vastissimum incendium multas privatorum domos et duo publica opera, quamquam via interiacente, Gerusian et Iseon absumpsit. Est autem latius sparsum, primum violentia venti, deinde inertia hominum quos satis constat otiosos et immobiles tanti mali spectatores perstitisse...*"<sup>22</sup>. Apparently, the governor in part wanted to avoid responsibility for the fire that broke out in Nicomedia, stating that the incident happened after he had left Nicomedia for another city of the province. This expression indicates Pliny knew the inhabitants of Nicomedia very well and probably the most important expression that makes us think that Nicaea was not the capital, again comes from Pliny's letters: "*Legato Sauromatae regis; cum sua sponte Nicaeae, ubi me invenerat, biduo substitisset...*"<sup>23</sup>. If Nicaea had really been the provincial capital, the governor Pliny would have felt no need to employ such an expression in his letter to the emperor.

For the Roman central authority some criteria must have definitely played a role to a certain degree in the choice of Nicomedia as the provincial capital. First of all this city had a geopolitically very suitable position. The city lay at the far end of an arm of the Propontis and had a long, gradually narrowing gulf which must have served as a sheltered port for ships<sup>24</sup>. Since the narrowing gulf was quite long it was probably relatively easier to protect the city<sup>25</sup>. Nicomedia, having the advantage of this geographical location in Bithynia, was the largest emporium settlement<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, it was a city situated on a busy route and encircled by arable land<sup>27</sup>. Due to all these positive advantages Nicomedia first became the capital of the Bithynian kingdom<sup>28</sup> and then, under emperor Diocletian, the Roman state was administered from the imperial palace in the city<sup>29</sup>. This is why the majority of Bithynian people who held Roman citizenship certainly resided in the city of Nicomedia<sup>30</sup>.

On the other hand Nicaea, which mostly was behind Nicomedia in terms of titles<sup>31</sup>, was an economically lively settlement and the place where the taxes collected by Rome was brought<sup>32</sup>, and where the financial chiefs such as the quaestor and the procurator lived<sup>33</sup>. From this information we

<sup>19</sup> For the city being the oldest metropolis; see Dio. 38-39. As far as we understand from legends on the city coins, the city must have had this title the latest from the reign of emperor Claudius; Bosch 1935, 224; Haensch 1997, 283.

<sup>20</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Dio. LXXVIII. 39. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Wilson 1960, 109; Boyana 2006, 172.

<sup>25</sup> Boyana 2006, 172.

<sup>26</sup> See Paus. V. 12. 7; Steph. Byz. *Ethnika* s.v. Nicomedia; Wilson 1960, 107.

<sup>27</sup> Bosch 1935, 207; Wilson 1960, 109-110; Levick 1979, 130; Boyana 2006, 172; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 32-33.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson 1960, 106; Boyana 2006, 175.

<sup>29</sup> For example see Levick 1979, 130; Demandt 2004, 3; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 31,154.

<sup>30</sup> For the rates of distribution of the Roman citizens according to cities see Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 99.

<sup>31</sup> For the titles granted to both cities, see Haensch 1997, 283-284.

<sup>32</sup> Dion. XXXVIII. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Haensch 1997, 285.

can conclude that the Roman provincial administrative bodies were concentrated in the western part of the province. From this, it would seem the order designed for the administration of the province of Bithynia was still maintained following the establishment of the Pontus-Bithynia province without being changed. We do not have any evidence concerning which provincial city the legati of the governor served but it seems quite probable in such a large province that they were outside the capital, in another city(s). Likewise Servilius Prudens came to see Pliny in Nicomedia from another city of the province and it appears that Pliny had to wait for his arrival for a long time<sup>34</sup>.

An exceptional incidence concerning the provincial administration occurred during the reign of Emperor Augustus: between the years of 16 and 13 B.C. Agrippa, a close friend of the emperor was granted the authority of *imperium proconsulare maius* by Augustus and was made responsible for the administration all eastern provinces. At this time Agrippa appointed a governor named C. Marcius Censorinus to the province. In the same way, possibly during the reign of emperor Tiberius, L. Vedius Lepidus governed the province<sup>35</sup>. In another exceptional incident at the beginning of emperor Nero's reign, a certain Iunius Cilo governed the province with the title of procurator<sup>36</sup>. Until Trajan's reign the Roman governors appointed to the province of Pontus-Bithynia were proconsules at the level of praetor<sup>37</sup>. The term of office for the provincial governors was usually one-year but in some exceptional occasions the tenure of some governors such as Mundius Balbus (43-47 A.D.)<sup>38</sup> extended over more than two years. Until just before 75 A.D. relatively young *proconsules* not having had long official careers were appointed<sup>39</sup>. They were generally governors who were appointed 2-5 years after their praetorship<sup>40</sup>. For example, in 11-12 A.D. L. Licinnius C (...) became the provincial governor of Pontus-Bithynia, five years after his praetorship<sup>41</sup>. Similarly M. Plancius Varus, who was a praetor in 68 A.D., was appointed provincial governor two years later (70-72 A.D.)<sup>42</sup>.

But after 75 A.D., from the last years of the reign of Emperor Vespasian, possibly until the period of Trajan, we find the proconsules sent to the province were more experienced<sup>43</sup>. For example, the governor M. Salvidienus Asprenas (76-77 A.D.) was elected consul two years after his service as governor<sup>44</sup>, while another governor, A. Bucius Lappius Maximus (82-83 A.D.) was elected suffect consul three years after his governorship<sup>45</sup>. Another governor, L. Iulius Marinus (89-90 A.D.) was elected consul three years after he had completed his service in the provincial administration<sup>46</sup>. As it

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<sup>34</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Marek 2003, 48.

<sup>36</sup> Marek 2003, 48.

<sup>37</sup> Lewis 1937, 157; Eck 2007, 204.

<sup>38</sup> Rémy 1989, 25-26.

<sup>39</sup> Marek 2003, 47 writes that the governors appointed to the province usually administered the province for the first time.

<sup>40</sup> Levick 1979, 125.

<sup>41</sup> Rémy 1989, 22; Doğançı 2007, 169-170.

<sup>42</sup> Rémy 1989, 31-34; Doğançı 2007, 200-208.

<sup>43</sup> Levick 1979, 125.

<sup>44</sup> Rémy 1989, 35-36; Doğançı 2007, 212-213.

<sup>45</sup> Rémy 1989, 37-39; Doğançı 2007, 217-219.

<sup>46</sup> Rémy 1989, 41-42; Doğançı 2007, 220-221.

is clear from these examples, this practice began with Vespasian and was continued by his successors, emperors Titus and Domitian. This practice of Vespasian is highly suggestive of a close connection with Vespasian's Asia Minor policy. In 72 A.D. Vespasian through putting into effect some kind of practice similar to that which Nero had done earlier, brought the southern provinces of Galatia and Cappadocia under one roof, stationed legiones in the cities of Melitene and Satala, and for the administration of this joint province he mostly appointed *ex-consul* governors<sup>47</sup>.

As Nero had once appointed a governor with the title *legatus augusti pro praetore* to the senatorial province of Achaia<sup>48</sup>, in 110 A.D. emperor Trajan, through a decree of the senatus appointed Pliny the younger governor with the title *legatus Augusti pro praetor*, as though this were an imperial province, instead of appointing a governor with the title *proconsul*. Trajan selected the governor and notified the senatus<sup>49</sup>. An inscription found in Comum mentions this incident: *legat(us) pro pr(aetore) provinciae Pon[ti et Bityhniae pro]consulari potesta[te] in eam provinciam e[st] Senatus consulto ab] Imp(eratore) Caesar(e) Nerva Traiano Aug(usto) German[ico Dacico p(atre) p(atriciae) missus]*<sup>50</sup>. While another inscription discovered in Hispellum records: *ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) pro»consulari potestate legatus pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciae ponti¼ et Bithyniae et legatus »in eam ab Imp(eratore) Caes(are) Nerva Traiano Aug(usto) missus¼*<sup>51</sup>. The emperor exceptionally appointing his own governor to a senatorial province was a case we here encounter for the first time in Roman state administration. As a consequence of such appointments which were practised before and after this particular incident, the provincial administration was taken from the senatus and handed over to the emperor<sup>52</sup>. We must not infer from Pliny's unusual assignment that Pontus et Bithynia, a senatorial province, was turned into an imperial one;<sup>53</sup> as Servilius Prudens, a *legatus proconsulis* who served in the province before Pliny, continued to carry out his duties under his rule<sup>54</sup>. That's why Pliny was probably sent on a special mission and this special mission of his finds expression in one of Trajan's letters: "*Secunde carissime, litteris tuis. Provinciales, credo, prospectum sibi a me intellegent. Nam et tu dabis operam, ut manifestum sit illis electum te esse, qui ad eosdem mei loco mittereris*"<sup>55</sup>. The point which the inhabitants of the province should particularly understand, a consequence of the use of this expression was that Pliny wasn't appointed governor for just one year, but that he could retain the post as long as the emperor wished him to be governor<sup>56</sup>.

What concerns us is why Trajan chose Pliny and which of Pliny's qualifications played a decisive role in the Trajan's decision. Pliny's education was in law and rhetoric and before he was appointed as governor to the province, his official career had been: *Tribunus militum* (82 A.D.), *quaestor* (88

<sup>47</sup> Levick 2000, 608; Baz 2012, 581-582.

<sup>48</sup> Eck 1995, 324.

<sup>49</sup> Marek 2003, 49.

<sup>50</sup> For this inscription; see Alföldy 1999, 234; Eck 2010, 301-310.

<sup>51</sup> Alföldy 1999, 234.

<sup>52</sup> Alföldy 1999, 236-237; see also Garzetti 1974, 345-346.

<sup>53</sup> Alföldy 1999, 237. On the other hand Torchia 1970, 48; Kissel 1995, 27 n. 56; Kaya 2005, 24; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 65 think that the province was then converted into an imperial province. Lastly, Marek 2003, 49, avoids a final judgement on the grounds that this is a legal issue.

<sup>54</sup> Eck 2007, 203. Pliny arrived in the province of Bithynia on September 17<sup>th</sup> 110 A.D. But Servilius Prudens came to Nicomedia in order to meet him on November 24<sup>th</sup>, see Plin. *epist.* X. 10; Eck 1998, 180.

<sup>55</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 18.

<sup>56</sup> Alföldy 1999, 241.

A.D.), *tribunus* (92 A.D.), *praetor* (94 A.D.), *praefectus aerarii militaris* (95-97 A.D.), *praefectus aerarii Saturni* (98-100 A.D.), *suffect consul* (100 A.D.), *augur* (103 A.D.), *curator alvei Tiberis et cloacarum urbis* (104-107 A.D.)<sup>57</sup>. One of the most influential factors in his appointment as governor to the province was the fact that he had successfully defended some provincial governors in Rome who were accused by the Bithynian Koinon. Prior to his governorship, he appeared for Gaius Iulius Bassus and Varenus Rufus<sup>58</sup>. In this context, from this point on Pliny possibly came to know the inhabitants of Pontus-Bithynia and the workings of the provincial administration and this must have gained him a great deal of prestige in the eyes of both the emperor and the public<sup>59</sup>. As noted above, it was actually the first time Pliny had been appointed as governor to a province, so he was inexperienced<sup>60</sup>. His inexperience is clearly visible, as when he seeks the emperor's advice on some matters, but despite this disadvantage the close friendship with the emperor was an advantage. He probably felt more comfortable than other governors in frequently consulting the emperor<sup>61</sup>. But the fact that Pliny asked for the emperor's advice, even on minor matters, shows his special interest in the administration of the province of Pontus-Bithynia and in his post. As a matter of fact, some researchers' note that Pliny in particular wished to give the impression that he was someone who was intelligent, energetic, ambitious and dutiful<sup>62</sup>, and to create such an image of himself with the emperor, remembering that Pliny had to perform as efficiently as possible to obtain more special missions and a better career as a state official in the future. In this context, another point which should be underlined is that Pliny was a cautious administrator as in one of his letters to a certain friend he warns him not to trust the other provincial officials who worked under his authority<sup>63</sup>.

Certainly emperor Trajan wished to benefit from Pliny's educational and occupational experience mostly concerning the financial and judicial matters of the province and it is noteworthy that Trajan, in his correspondence with Pliny, sometimes clearly provides indications concerning his motives for appointing Pliny governor to the province: "*Rationes autem in primis tibi rerum publicarum excutiendae sunt; nam et esse eas vexatas satis constat*"<sup>64</sup>. In this context, the governor's use of these expressions in his letters to the emperor is closely related to the subject: "*Pecuniae publicae, domine, providentia tua et ministerio nostro et iam exactae sunt et exiguntur*"<sup>65</sup>. According to what is noted above, Trajan wanted to prevent the waste of the financial resources of Pontus-Bithynia's settlements, consisting of different geographical regions and due to their climate conditions possessed fertile lands and a very long history of a certain financial capacity<sup>66</sup>. In this respect, we can assume that the province wasn't experiencing economic distress; on the contrary, what was aimed at was to prevent the province from falling into dire financial straits through its

<sup>57</sup> Concerning Pliny's career; see Rémy 1989, 45-47; Alföldy 1999, 221.

<sup>58</sup> Richardson 2001, 75.

<sup>59</sup> Alföldy 1999, 242; Griffin 2000, 120-122; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 66.

<sup>60</sup> Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 66.

<sup>61</sup> Alföldy 1999, 242.

<sup>62</sup> Griffin 2000, 122; Woolf 2006, 98.

<sup>63</sup> Plin. *epist.* VI. 22. 7; see also Tenger 1997, 188.

<sup>64</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 18.

<sup>65</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 54.

<sup>66</sup> Concerning the economic situations of the Bithynian cities; see Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 70-72; Storey 1998, 58. For the riches and natural resources of Pontus-Bithynia; see Weimert 1984, 21-135; Marek 2003, 160-178.

economic level being eroded<sup>67</sup>. It appears that emperor Trajan was aware of this situation and thought that the proconsules had failed to bring the problem under control. So from the orders of Trajan, Pliny must have focused primarily on these questions: What did the cities spend their money on? Did the cities manage their own finances wisely<sup>68</sup>? In fact they were the questions the Roman central authority expected all provincial administrations to answer. The central authority considered it vital for all the provinces to reach a certain economic capacity on account of the taxes that were paid to Rome<sup>69</sup>. In addition, in a politically powerful state, public order should be guaranteed and the standard of living should be raised in the provinces. These same considerations must always have been expected of the administration of Pontus-Bithynia<sup>70</sup>.

The first thing Pliny did when he came to the province was to inspect the finances of the city of Prusa<sup>71</sup>. Again we know that he created a fund for the construction of a bath in Prusa and asked the Emperor's permission and was granted permission only on condition that it would not harm the financial resources of the city<sup>72</sup>. Apparently the governor also conducted the same kind of inspection at Nicomedia. According to the information Pliny gave the Emperor, the residents of Nicomedia had undertaken the construction of two aqueducts spending a great amount of money, but they had left them unfinished and now they were in search of new ways to bring water into the city and, in consequence, they were faced with new expenditure<sup>73</sup>. In his reply, Trajan wanted Pliny to take care of this issue and to investigate the people who had spent so much money on aqueducts, yet had left them unfinished<sup>74</sup>. On the other hand, Pliny wanted to inspect the accounts of the colonial city of Apameia, which had never been inspected by any proconsules before, and to this end he applied to the emperor and Trajan approved his request<sup>75</sup>. Although this practice was something new to the inhabitants of Apameia, it showed that from now on the province was ruled by a governor that the emperor had appointed<sup>76</sup>. In the same context, Pliny also inspected the public spending of the city of Byzantium<sup>77</sup>. Again in one of his letters Pliny asked for the emperor's opinion on a general regulation concerning what rights the provincial cities would have in order to collect their money and Trajan in his reply ordered that the money be collected in accordance with the individual city's laws<sup>78</sup>. Evidently the main duty of Pliny in the province was the inspection of the cities financial position<sup>79</sup>. Trajan's desire to financially control the cities wasn't only limited to the province of Pontus-Bithynia as from Trajan's reign onwards the supervisors called *curatores* were sent to various places for the inspection of the financial situation of the settlements under the

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<sup>67</sup> Levick 1979, 128.

<sup>68</sup> Haensch 1997, 282; Drexhage *et al.* 2002, 34.

<sup>69</sup> Concerning the wealth and monetary waste of the province; see Stevenson 1975, 174-176.

<sup>70</sup> Garzetti 1974, 347.

<sup>71</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 17 A.

<sup>72</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 23-24.

<sup>73</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 37; Magie 1950, 596-597; Richardson 2001, 77. Likewise, Pliny was also aware of some unnecessary and reckless expenses by Nicaea and Claudiopolis and he reported this to the emperor, Plin. *epist.* X. 39.

<sup>74</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 38.

<sup>75</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 47-48.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Eck 1998, 181.

<sup>77</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 43.

<sup>78</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 108-109.

<sup>79</sup> Macro 1980, 669.



imperial rule<sup>80</sup> and such supervisors are also found in the province of Pontus-Bithynia<sup>81</sup>.

Another task the governor Pliny was involved in was to organize courts in the province as other provincial governors had done. These courts were organized in provincial cities such as Nicaea and Prusa ad Olympum, as well as in the capital<sup>82</sup>. For example, when Pliny formed such a court in Prusa ad Olympum, Dio Cocceianus, who had launched a public building program was accused by Flavius Archippus. In his request to the governor, the accuser demanded that Dio Cocceianus provide an account of the expenses and that the date of the trial be changed so that he could prepare for it, and consequently Pliny ruled that this trial would be scheduled for a future date in Nicaea<sup>83</sup>. Again when Pliny assembled the judges in the city of Prusa, a judge called Flavius Archippus was accused by the other judges<sup>84</sup>. It appears that Pliny assigned the leading elite citizens of the province to perform as judges, having the title *judices delegati* in the courts that he organized, and thus he created a body of judges in the province. What is surprising is the fact that the *conventus* cities of the province were only in the west part of the province, in the Bithynian Region. Since the province covered a vast area such courts must have also been established in some cities of the Pontus region. For example in the province of Asia the number of the *conventus* cities we could find from the Flavian Dynasty was thirteen<sup>85</sup>.

But financial and legal issues weren't the only reasons for Pliny's appointment to the province, because Trajan, in his correspondence with the governor addressed him using the expressions: "*Meminerimus idcirco te in istam provinciam missum, quoniam multa in ea emendanda apparuerint. Erit autem vel hoc maxime corrigendum, quod qui damnati ad poenam erant, non modo ea sine auctore, ut scribis, liberati sunt, sed etiam in condicionem proborum ministrorum retrahuntur*"<sup>86</sup>. Here the problem that Trajan wanted Pliny to solve was that a group of previously convicted criminals were somehow discharged prior to completing their sentences and they were appointed as public officers in the cities<sup>87</sup>. The governor had to determine why these prisoners hadn't served the whole of their sentences and on what grounds they had been released. Trajan ordered Pliny to reconvict these criminals, who had somehow regained their freedom when there was no legal basis to justify their release. This case is a clear sign of the deficiency of the previous Roman proconsules that had served in this office in the province. However, we should not think that the emperor already knew about this case and encouraged the governor, as it appears that both Pliny and Trajan were taken aback by this strange problem<sup>88</sup>. And also the thought that it would be difficult to find the required

<sup>80</sup> Garzetti 1974, 346; Stevenson 1975, 178; Levick 1979, 123; Macro 1980, 670; Eck 1998, 127-132; 2000, 279-280; Levick 2000, 619. Also considering the documents collected for curators; see Thomasson 1991, 80-83; Jacques 1984, 259-300; Camodeca 1980, 490-525; MacDonald, 1996, 66-72; Guerber – Sartre 1998, 93-98.

<sup>81</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 18; see also Doğançı 2007, 88.

<sup>82</sup> As in other Roman provinces, the legal issues were undoubtedly the primary concern of the provincial administration in Pontus-Bithynia. We know that in some provinces such as Asia, Cilicia and Lycia-Pamphylia the governors held *conventus* outside the provincial capitals in order to solve legal problems in a province-wide manner, Haensch 1997, 278.

<sup>83</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 81.

<sup>84</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 58.

<sup>85</sup> Eck 1995, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 32.

<sup>87</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 31.

<sup>88</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 31-32.

number of soldiers and so the task of supervision of the people who had committed a crime in the province and who were convicted was left to the slaves in this period, as had been the case prior to this date<sup>89</sup>. This last issue when Pliny asked for the emperor's opinion wasn't one of the problems that arose in the province prior to Pliny's governorship. If Rome had found it a risky measure earlier, slaves would not have been allowed to perform this task of supervision. Pliny took care of this matter and this must also have contributed to his success in the province<sup>90</sup>.

But there was a matter that Trajan noticed that caused problems for the provincial administration and for the Roman authority prior to the appointment of Pliny and this was related to the political groupings of the provincial inhabitants in various associations separate from each other. For Rome the most dangerous of these were those which promoted anti-Roman ideas and which might form dangerous foci of anti-Roman activity. The seriousness of the situation is clearly expressed when the governor asked permission for the establishment of a fire brigade in Nicomedia and from the emperor's reply. "*Tu, domine, dispice an instituendum putes collegium fabrorum dumtaxat hominum. Ego attendam, ne quis nisi faber recipiatur neve iure concesso in aliud utantur; nec erit difficile custodire tam paucos*"<sup>91</sup>. Pliny believed that it was necessary to form a fire brigade in the provincial capital and he carefully stated that he could keep the staff of this organization under control and that he would prevent them from using their rights for any other purpose or from abusing their positions. His choice of expression clearly indicates Pliny was already aware of the risks that such organizations created for the Roman state. In regard to this matter the emperor employed the following expressions: "*Sed meminerimus provinciam istam et praecipue eas civitates eius modi factionibus esse vexatas. Quodcumque nomen ex quacumque causa dederimus iis, qui in idem contracti fuerint, hetaeriae caeque brevi fiet*"<sup>92</sup>. We can infer from the emperor's reply that whatever the purpose of their establishment in previous periods, associations in the province were regarded as troublesome for the Roman sovereignty. Trajan felt the need to control all the associations and he was suspicious of the prospect that the new associations would adopt anti-Roman ideas or would create political groups in the province<sup>93</sup>. In these texts we are face to face with these political divisions as one of the most important problems of the province<sup>94</sup>.

Without a doubt the most significant political polarization was created by Christians. In the first half of the first century of the Roman imperial period, both the Roman state and the Roman intellectuals had ignored the presence of Christians<sup>95</sup>. The number of Christians grew more and more in the period to Trajan's rule and in this period Pliny began a prosecution against the Christians of the province. Even though he was inexperienced, Pliny was the kind of governor who thought that Christians should be punished and he behaved accordingly<sup>96</sup> and it is noteworthy that while Pliny generally asked the emperor's opinion on almost everything or informed him about

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<sup>89</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 19-20.

<sup>90</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 19-20.

<sup>91</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 33.

<sup>92</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 34.

<sup>93</sup> Levick 1979, 120; Dahlheim 1989, 63.

<sup>94</sup> Garzetti 1974, 347.

<sup>95</sup> Information concerning Christianity is very scarce in Ancient Roman historiography and during this period ancient authors who wrote about Rome, the heart of the Roman State, either didn't mention Christianity at all or provided only second hand information concerning this religion; see Carcopino 1977, 199.

<sup>96</sup> Reichert 2002, 243-244.

even minor issues, he neglected to provide detailed information concerning the life style of these Christians. The Roman people would already have come to know the Christians and what kind of life style they practiced by this date. The main reason for the prosecution in the province was that the inhabitants of the province were disturbed by the Christians,<sup>97</sup> and it seems, the Christians of the province threatened public order so seriously that Pliny had to take a precautionary measure against this situation<sup>98</sup>. But when Pliny saw that more and more people were being denounced for being Christians and since he couldn't decide, as to who were the real Christians, and who were denounced as such but were not, he asked for the emperor's counsel. He took the emperor's advice not to start a prosecution against Christians but how to deal with the increasing number of people who were denounced as Christians<sup>99</sup>. While the informers wrote the names of the Christians on a stone, they preferred to stay anonymous, which was quite understandable. Some rival political groups and opposing sections must have contributed to this increase in question. In this process the method employed by the governor to test if the alleged were Christians was to ask them to curse Jesus Christ and to give offerings to the emperor Trajan and to the other Roman gods<sup>100</sup>. Possibly Christians were expected to give offerings in front of the little busts of the emperor<sup>101</sup> and the governor threatened those who refused with the death penalty. But in his correspondence with the Emperor Pliny wrote that the situation wasn't out of hand, in order to show that everything was under his control. This response shows that Pliny underestimated the power of expansion of Christianity in the province<sup>102</sup>. We do not know of anything to suggest that measures were taken against Christians by the provincial governors before Pliny, and if such preventive measures had been taken earlier within the framework of a law, it seems probable that Pliny through taking into consideration previous practice would not have written to the emperor for advice on this matter. Trajan in his reply said that no investigations must be carried out to find out which people were Christians, but when it was clear that someone held Christian belief, he must be punished and those who denied Christianity and worshipped the Roman gods must be punished in a way to be pardoned because of their penitence. Moreover, anonymous denouncements would not be taken into account<sup>103</sup>. This correspondence<sup>104</sup>, formed the basis not only of the prosecution of Christians by the Roman State in the province of Pontus-Bithynia but also of how the prosecution of Christian people within the boundaries of the Empire would be conducted<sup>105</sup>.

As is detailed below, the Bithynian Koinon accused Gaius Iulius Bassus and Varenus Rufus, the provincial governors prior to Pliny, of undeserved personal gain, and this complaint possibly influenced Trajan's decision to send his own man Pliny to the province<sup>106</sup>. Levick, in connection

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<sup>97</sup> Prollius-Tsigarida 2002, 102. The first example of this unrest occurred in Roman society during Nero's reign. Dahlheim 1989, 129. This hatred finds its most famous expression in the well-known ancient historian Tacitus's words "*odium humani generis*", Tac. *Ann.* XV. 44. 4; see also Bleicken 1981, 160; Stöver 1984, 37.

<sup>98</sup> Grant 1948, 273.

<sup>99</sup> Reichert 2002, 230.

<sup>100</sup> Liebeschuetz 2000, 988.

<sup>101</sup> Clauss 1999, 421.

<sup>102</sup> Ottmann 2002, 288.

<sup>103</sup> Benko 1980, 1074; Dahlheim 1989, 131.

<sup>104</sup> Considering this correspondence see also Benko 1980, 1068-1075.

<sup>105</sup> Dahlheim 1989, 130-131.

<sup>106</sup> Torchia 1970, 52.

with the charges against the governors, mentions that in the period before Trajan's rule the appointed governors in the province of Pontus Bithynia generally undervalued the provincial administration and that they were incompetent<sup>107</sup>. Of course, Pliny hadn't been appointed to restore the shaken authority of the Roman state in the province just because of the trials of the above-mentioned governors<sup>108</sup>. In fact, this point was something all the appointed governors to the province should have been particularly sensitive to. But these trials of proconsules briefly mentioned above must have resulted in Trajan's producing the trump card for his interference with the senatorial state, as the complaints against the governors by the inhabitants of a province, was clearly something undesirable for the emperor.

After the death of Pliny, probably within the province<sup>109</sup>, Trajan appointed Pliny's close friend Gaius Iulius Cornutus Tertullus (111-114/115 A.D.) as a *legatus augusti pro praetore* in order to take over Pliny's job<sup>110</sup>. What must be stressed is that Cornutus, unlike Pliny was sent to the province without having proconsular potestas<sup>111</sup>. Perhaps due to his close friendship with Pliny he might have become familiar with the problems of the province. But as to the identity of the governor who was appointed after Cornutus, in the last years of Trajan's period, we can't be sure due to a lack of information but, most probably he was also a *legatus Augusti*. In this period the emperor Trajan left the province of Sardinia to the administration of the senatus in exchange for the governors appointed with the title *legatus augusti pro praetore* to the province of Pontus-Bithynia<sup>112</sup>.

We should deal with the appointments of the governors with the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore* not just in terms of solving the problems in the province, but also in regard to the political activities of Trajan and the security concerns of Anatolia<sup>113</sup>. Trajan, within the context of the expedition against the Parthians for the dispatching of troops, must have wanted to rule this region through the governors of his own choice<sup>114</sup> and, in order to secure the safety of the province it was possibly very important for a governor with the title *legatus augusti pro praetore* to work in harmony with the other administrators who were close to the emperor in the province. In this sense, the praefectus orae must have been in close collaboration with Pliny and this collaboration was also reflected in Pliny's letters to the emperor<sup>115</sup>. Such close connections were probably quite important for the province of Pontus Bithynia, an area close to the Parthians, which was situated just north of the provinces of Galatia and Cappadocia and constituted the north-eastern boundary of the Roman world. As a matter of fact, Trajan separated the joint province of Galatia-Cappadocia in 112 A.D. in order to intensify the administration and more or less at the same date, before 113 A.D., the regions called Pontus Galaticus and Pontus Polemoniacus, which had previously belonged to the province

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<sup>107</sup> Levick 1979, 125; 2000, 618.

<sup>108</sup> Garzetti 1974, 346-347.

<sup>109</sup> See also Levick 1979, 119, 129; Richardson 2001, 78.

<sup>110</sup> For his being a close friend; see Alföldy 1999, 237.

<sup>111</sup> Levick 1979, 129; Alföldy 1999, 237.

<sup>112</sup> Eck 1971, 510-512; 1998, 48; 2000, 245; 2007, 203.

<sup>113</sup> Levick 1979, thinks that in 124-26 A.D. the importance of the *provincia Pontus et Bithynia* increased, especially after Dacia was made a province and with the expeditions against the Parthians. For the war against the Parthians see in particular Schmitt 1997, 58-62.

<sup>114</sup> Marek 2003, 49-50.

<sup>115</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 21, 28, 84, 86 A.

of Galatia, was incorporated into the province of Cappadocia<sup>116</sup>. All these regulations of Trajan meant the systematic intensification of state administration.

Exactly what status the governors held during Hadrian's reign is unknown<sup>117</sup>. According to some information from Dio the province of Lycia-Pamphylia instead of Bithynia was given to the senatus for assignment<sup>118</sup>. Cassius Dio records this information for the special task of C. Iulius Severus for Bithynia in 134-135<sup>119</sup> but probably this information wasn't true, as during the Hadrian and Antoninus Dynasties the *legati Augusti* in Lycia Pamphylia and the proconsules in the province of Pontus Bithynia are known<sup>120</sup>. Some researchers note that the change for both of these provinces was made temporarily around 134 but the permanent one was realized under emperor M. Aurelius' rule<sup>121</sup>, as we notice striking gaps in the list of the Pontus-Bithynia's governors during Hadrian's period, as in this emperor's reign there are only two governors who are known to have taken office, but as for the right answer as to the question when, we can't be sure about it. However it appears that emperor Hadrian didn't adopt his predecessor Trajan's policy of appointing governors to the province of Pontus-Bithynia for a while<sup>122</sup>, because an inscription discovered in Baetica clearly records that the title of Q. Cornelius Senecio Annianus, the governor of the province of Pontus-Bithynia under Hadrian's rule whose term of service isn't exactly known, was *proconsul Ponti et Bithyniae*<sup>123</sup>. After all Hadrian in a later period appointed Gaius Iulius Severus (134-135 A.D.) to the province as *legatus Augusti pro praetore*<sup>124</sup>, and this title of his is clearly mentioned on an inscription found near the city of Dorylaeum<sup>125</sup>. The only thing we know about the presence of this governor in the province is of his finding a solution to the boundary disputes between Dorylaeum and a city whose name we were unable to identify for certain. It might have been either Midaions or, more probably, Nicaea<sup>126</sup>. We think that the appointment of a governor with such status is to be closely associated with the political conditions of the period<sup>127</sup>.

In modern literature the time when Pontus Bithynia became an imperial province is until a specific period, always dated to 165 A.D., to the reign of emperor Marcus Aurelius or more generally to the middle of the second century A.D.<sup>128</sup>. This is a consequence of the fact that an inscription which was found in Amastris and belonged to the governor Lollius Avitus<sup>129</sup> which was for a long time dated to the era of Pompeius. Marek, who had a chance to see a photo of this

<sup>116</sup> Sartre 1995, 174; Strobel 1998, 745; Eck 2007, 201.

<sup>117</sup> Wesch-Klein 2008, 272 without referring to a source, write that Hadrian followed his predecessor Trajan's policy.

<sup>118</sup> Dio. LXIX. 14, 4.

<sup>119</sup> Şahin 1992, 77.

<sup>120</sup> Şahin 1992, 77.

<sup>121</sup> For the bibliography regarding this subject; see Şahin 1992, 77 n. 6.

<sup>122</sup> Kaya 2005, 24, says that in the period between Trajan and Antoninus Pius the province was governed by *legati augusti*.

<sup>123</sup> CIL II 1929; Rémy 1989: 49-50.

<sup>124</sup> Levick 1979, 129.

<sup>125</sup> MAMA V no. 60=AE 1938 no. 144=Rémy 1989, 50.

<sup>126</sup> Eck 1970, 210-211; Aichinger 1982, 197-198; Rémy 1989, 51; Marek 2003, 50; Doğançlı 2007, 250.

<sup>127</sup> These political conditions and some administrative measures of the last years of the Hadrian period form the subject of another study.

<sup>128</sup> Şahin 1984, 45; 1992, 77-91; Marek 1993, 86 n. 590.

<sup>129</sup> CIG 4152d.

inscription noticed this and it was understood that the independence era of the city of Amastris, 70 B.C. was used<sup>130</sup>. The governor in question was on duty in the province in 159 A.D. From that date onward at the latest, governors with the status ex-consul and with the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore* were appointed to the administration of the province<sup>131</sup>. According to Chr. Marek, the emperor Antoninus Pius made Pontus-Bithynia an imperial province due to the tension between Rome and Parthia to the east and Chr. Marek presents evidence for this<sup>132</sup>. In his opinion, the reorganization of the province was closely related to the Parthian War, which started in 162 A.D. Since this war intensified in the Armenian lands, in the northeast part of Anatolia, the Roman state must have wanted to quicken the passage of Roman troops and to secure the passes<sup>133</sup>. In this political context of the period another factor which affected the province of Pontus-Bithynia was a certain reduction made to its northern boundary as, with the regulation made by Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the cities of Amisus, Sinope and Abonoteichus were taken from of Pontus-Bithynia and were joined to the province of Galatia<sup>134</sup>. Through including the coastal settlements in the east of Pontus in the province of Galatia, which was for a long time effectively used against the Parthians, the ports in these settlements were given into the administration of the province of Galatia and thus probably indicating the attempt to form a stronger defensive line.

One of the changes that occurred as a result of leaving the province to the administration of the emperors was that the procuratores were responsible for collecting taxes<sup>135</sup>. The other was the administering of the province through the *Legati Augustis*, who from then on stayed in office longer and were directly assigned by the emperor. But this new situation did not result in Pontus-Bithynia becoming a property of the emperor<sup>136</sup>. Possibly the number of the military units in the province would also have increased but we lack information concerning the presence of any Roman legions stationed here during the Roman imperial age from the time the province was established. The historian Flavius Iosephus states that in the middle of the first century A.D. there were no military units in the province<sup>137</sup>. This information concerns apparently only the Roman legions<sup>138</sup>. From the beginning of the imperial period onward the presence of military units in the province can be detected from both Pliny's letters and from some military inscriptions from Pontus-Bithynia, which is mostly seen as a senatorial province in terms of time, with its number of military units second only to Cyrenae amongst senatorial provinces. While we can to date detect seven military units in Cyrenae, in Pontus-Bithynia the number is five, and in *Provincia Asia* four<sup>139</sup>. The earliest known

<sup>130</sup> Marek 1994, 83-84.

<sup>131</sup> Marek 2003, 50 ff.; Eck 2007, 203. In addition cf. Eck 2000, 225.

<sup>132</sup> Marek 1994, 86; 2003, 51; For the evidence he presents; see Hist. Aug. *Marc.* VIII. 6; ILS 1076.

<sup>133</sup> Kissel 1995, 59. After the conversion of Pontus-Bithynia into an imperial state, at the beginning of Marcus Aurelius's reign, Lycia-Pamphylia's status was changed from an imperial province to a senatorial one in exchange, Şahin 1992, 77-91; Kissel 1995, 59; Eck 1998, 48; 2007, 203. But Lycia Pamphylia's new status didn't last long, and again during Marcus Aurelius' rule it once again became an imperial province; see Eck 2007, 203. Also see Brandt – Kolb 2005, 25.

<sup>134</sup> Strobel 1998 745; Marek 2003, 46; Eck 2007, 203.

<sup>135</sup> Eck 2007, 205.

<sup>136</sup> Because in the Roman world all provinces regardless of their status, whether they were senatorial or imperial ones, formally belonged to the *senatus populusque Romanus*, Eck 1995, 23; 1998, 177.

<sup>137</sup> Ios. *bell. Iud.* II. 366.

<sup>138</sup> Eck 1998, 187-188.

<sup>139</sup> For the number of known military units in senatorial provinces; see Eck 1998, 201-202.

unit of the province was *cohors Cypria*, which was possibly stationed in Sinope at the beginning of the first century A.D. as in an epigraphic record from Sinope the name of this unit is mentioned<sup>140</sup>. During the time when Pliny was the governor several military units were stationed in the province to provide safety for the province. Eck points that in this period at least two cohorts were under the rule of the governor in the province<sup>141</sup>. One of those units was undoubtedly in the capital, Nicomedia<sup>142</sup> but, the exact locations of the other units in the province remains undetermined. The unit about which we know most is *cohors VI equestris*<sup>143</sup>. As we learn from governor Pliny's correspondence with emperor Trajan, P. Accius Aquila, *centurio* of this unit, demanded the right of Roman citizenship for his daughter<sup>144</sup>. Some inscriptions dated to the third century A.D. record this unit stayed for a long time in the province: An inscription found in the city of Dacibyza states that soldiers called M. Staius Iulius and S[...lius] Rufus honoured a certain Lucullus, who served on the personal estate of the emperor<sup>145</sup>. These soldiers were probably there to provide safety for Dacibyza, a settlement located on one of the main routes of the province<sup>146</sup>.

In addition, according to Pliny's letters there was also a coastal unit in the province as in his letter Pliny says that he had a meeting with the commander of that unit, (= *praefectus orae ponticae*) Gabius Bassus. Pliny explains the contents of the meeting: "*Cui ego notum feci praecepisse te ut ex cohortibus, quibus me praeesse voluisti, contentus esset beneficiariis decem, equitibus duobus, centurione uno. Respondit non sufficere sibi hunc numerum, idque se scripturum tibi*"<sup>147</sup>. As we understand from the expressions above Gabius Bassus needed more military personnel for his unit but the emperor was reluctant to meet his demand<sup>148</sup>. The emperor and the governor weren't indifferent to the various provincial cities' need for soldiers which emerged in parallel with the social and political developments experienced in the province. For example, since Byzantium was on one of main routes, Trajan ordered a *centurio* unit to provide safety, just as the military units stationed in the city of Dacibyza did<sup>149</sup>. We do not know from which cohorts this *centurio* unit came. Likewise, Pliny wanted a military unit to be sent to Iuliopolis, the city situated at the entrance to the Bithynian region and located on one of the main roads but Trajan refused, thinking that it wouldn't be right to station soldiers in too many cities<sup>150</sup>. Another unit in the province was the *cohors Campanorum*. The name of this unit is mentioned in a grave inscription of a soldier, L. Sempronius, today in the Amasra Museum<sup>151</sup>. Moreover, on a fragment of an architrave discovered in Pamukova, Geyve, the name Claudius Bacchius, a soldier, is in nominative form which implies he took part in a construction work, but we do not know his military unit<sup>152</sup>. Another unit which was

<sup>140</sup> Speidel – French 1985, 99-100.

<sup>141</sup> Eck thinks that in this period at least two *cohortes* were under Pliny's rule to guarantee the safety of the province, Eck 1998, 190.

<sup>142</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 74.

<sup>143</sup> Marek 2003, 59.

<sup>144</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 106-107.

<sup>145</sup> SEG II 666 = AE 1955, 266; Magie 1950, 1459 n. 21; Mitchell 1993, 129.

<sup>146</sup> For the city being on the main route; see Mitchell 1993, 129.

<sup>147</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 21.

<sup>148</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 22; see also Marek 2003, 59.

<sup>149</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 77.

<sup>150</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 78.

<sup>151</sup> Marek 1985, 140.

<sup>152</sup> Şahin 1982, no 1252.

probably active in the province was the *cohors Thracum*<sup>153</sup>. Also some soldiers from the unit *cohors II Lucensium* which served in Moesia in the first and second century A.D.; later from 196 A.D. onwards in the province of Thracia, were likely to have been sent to the province in connection with the Parthian expeditions conducted in the second and third centuries A.D.<sup>154</sup>.

After the status of imperial province was given, governors who had previously performed the same job in various provinces and naturally had a longer career were appointed to the province and, in this respect, these governors of the province were the people who were really experienced, unlike the former governors. For example, the first governor of the above mentioned imperial province Lollianus Rufus was appointed governor nearly 18 years after consulship to the province<sup>155</sup>. The governor M. Didius Severus Iulianus administered Pontus-Bithynia between the years 186/187-187/188 A.D. after having served as governor in important, strategic provinces such as: Gallia Belgica, Dalmatia and Germania. After fulfilling this task, between 189-190 A.D. he became the governor of *Provincia Africa*<sup>156</sup>. The governor L. Fabius Cilo Septiminius Catinius Acilianus Lepidus Fulcinianus is another good example in this respect, as, after service in the provinces of Gallia Narbonensis and Galatia, in 194 A.D. he was appointed governor of the province of Pontus-Bithynia and, after which he was appointed governor to strategically important provinces such as Moesia Superior and Pannonia. Since he had gained the confidence of the emperor and was a person of merit, he became *praefectus urbi* at the beginning of the third century A.D. and later for a second time consul<sup>157</sup>, and thus was he honoured by the emperor. Doğançı, who has conducted a prosopographical research of the governors of Pontus-Bithynia, justifiably relates his governorship in Pontus-Bithynia to the Parthian expeditions in 194 A.D.<sup>158</sup>.

Concerning the governors' area of responsibility in the province and their relations with the inhabitants of the province, as is described above, the governor we know most about is Pliny and it is today an accepted fact that he both supervised the financial affairs of the cities and was involved in their construction activities. In addition to Pliny, other governors also participated in cities' reconstruction activities including: L. Egnatius Victor Lollianus, who was governor during the Severan Dynasty who was honoured in Prusa as the founder of the city<sup>159</sup>. One of the factors which entitled him to such an honour was the fact that Prusa was his native city; the second reason being his contribution to construction activities in the city. From an inscription on a building which has representative features and was uncovered in Nicaea we understand that a governor whose name we do not know had the building constructed<sup>160</sup>. In 269 A.D. after the Goths had invaded the region, Velleius Macrinus, the governor who ruled during the reign of emperor Claudius Gothicus restored

<sup>153</sup> Speidel – French 1985, 100; Eck 1998, 190.

<sup>154</sup> Speidel 1986, 35-36 emphasizes this possibility, relying on an inscription discovered in Calchedon. The inscription records that someone called Lucius Menefron had a grave made for someone called Aurelius Saturninus. For some additional gravestones of Roman soldiers in Bithynia from the time of emperor Caracalla; see Speidel 1985, 89-92.

<sup>155</sup> Alföldy 1977, 147; Rémy 1989, 99-100.

<sup>156</sup> Rémy 1989, 102-104; Doğançı 2007, 268-271.

<sup>157</sup> Rémy 1989, 104-107; Doğançı 2007, 272-277.

<sup>158</sup> Doğançı 2007, 276-277.

<sup>159</sup> IGR III 33 = Corsten 1991, no. 12; Haensch 1997, 606.

<sup>160</sup> S. Şahin, thinks that this governor might have been M. Plancius Varus (70-71 A.D. or 71-72) on this see Şahin 1979, no. 42.



the walls of the city of Nicaea<sup>161</sup>. Moreover, the inscriptions of some buildings constructed by citizens in the provincial cities of Nicaea, Nicomedia and Prusias ad Hypium carry expressions indicating that they had been dedicated by the governors<sup>162</sup>. Apparently, the inhabitants of the province gave the task of opening some of the completed buildings to the governors of the province.

Another kind of activity performed by governors of the province was participating in the religious life of the province. In this sense, when the governors paid a visit to the cities, they were probably also visiting the sacred places belonging to the main gods of these cities and observing the cult activities. But the governors would have participated, particularly in the imperial cult activities in the province, which increased the prestige of the emperor<sup>163</sup> and those cult activities were organized for the special days of the emperors<sup>164</sup>. Apparently the governor Pliny, made offerings in the province under the name *vota sollemnia* for the well being of the emperor and the state<sup>165</sup> and Pliny also celebrated the anniversary of Trajan's coronation in the province<sup>166</sup>. Moreover, among Pliny's letters there are those which celebrate the emperor's birthday and his victory in Dacia in 103 A.D.<sup>167</sup>. Apparently the governor never forgot the special days of the emperor, both as his personal style and in a way which increased the loyalty of the province, and this attitude must have been adopted by all the administrative personnel under his rule.

Similarly, while Pliny was considering where to build a bath structure in the city of Prusa, he observed that neglect had turned a courtyard once constructed for the Emperor Claudius' cult and the other buildings around it, into a ruin. We know that he was thinking of having a bath built in this building complex and he asked the emperor's opinion on having the pillared courtyard pulled down and constructing a new one, dedicating it to him, if Trajan permitted<sup>168</sup>. In his reply the emperor said that he wanted to respect the cults of his predecessors and Pliny didn't mention whether there was really a temple of Claudius in the courtyard. If the temple existed, even if it was in ruins, it should be restored and the place again should be turned into a sacred area for the cult of the emperor Claudius<sup>169</sup>. Again in another letter it appears that Iulius Largus, someone from the province, willed some of his fortune to the cities of Heracleia and Teium and that from some other portion of his fortune he would like the governor to construct buildings in the province which would be dedicated to the emperor Trajan, or to organize games in honour of Trajan which would be held every five years<sup>170</sup>. Pliny asked the emperor's counsel on this matter, but the emperor left this

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<sup>161</sup> For this governor; see IGR III 32 = Şahin 1979, no. 11; IGR III 40 = Şahin 1979, no 12; Marek 2003, 51.

<sup>162</sup> For the dedication activities in Nicaea and Nicomedia belonging to the governor M. Plancius Varus (70-71 A.D. or 71-72) see Şahin 1979, nos. 25-28; IGR III 4. For the deed of dedication in Prusias, by M. Salvidienus Asprenas (76-77 A.D.), see Ameling 1985, no. 42=AE 1987, 918.

<sup>163</sup> Under the rule of Emperor Tiberius when a praetor in Bithynia had his own statue erected on a higher place than that of the emperor's statute, it was interpreted as being an insult to the understanding of the emperor's superiority, see Tac. *Ann.* I. 74.

<sup>164</sup> For this subject; see Eck 1998, 203-217.

<sup>165</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 35.

<sup>166</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 52.

<sup>167</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 88-89; 10, 14.

<sup>168</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 70.

<sup>169</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 71.

<sup>170</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 75.

decision up to Pliny<sup>171</sup>.

The most striking information concerning the relations between the governors and the members of the province was the occasion when the Bithynian Koinon accused some of the governors on the grounds that they had illegally profited from their positions. The governors Cadius Rufus (47-48 A.D.)<sup>172</sup> and M. Tarquinius Priscus (59-60? A.D.)<sup>173</sup> stood trial in Rome on charges of taking bribes, when the accusations were proven true, they were expelled from the senatus. Similarly, C. Iulius Bassus (101-102? A.D.) and Varenus Rufus (105-106 A.D.), who took office in the province, were accused by the Bithynian Koinon of malpractice and undeserved personal gain<sup>174</sup>. But in both of these cases Pliny was the defender<sup>175</sup>. Pliny pleaded for Iulius Bassus and he was discharged<sup>176</sup>; but while the trial of Varenus Rufus was going on, the Bithynian Koinon sent a new emissary to Rome and they surprisingly dropped their case against Varenus Rufus<sup>177</sup>. After this unusual turn of events it seems that Varenus Rufus wasn't sentenced and the case was just dropped without it having been completed<sup>178</sup>. Consequently, all this information indicates that the Bithynian Koinon were really sensitive about seeking justice<sup>179</sup> and that the Roman State was fed up with this attitude of the koinon.

But the surviving provincial epigraphic documents indicate that some governors did very useful things in various spheres of life in some cities of the province and it was for this reason that they were honoured in these cities. Most of these epigraphic documents do not mention clearly why, and for what kind of an activity, the governors were honoured<sup>180</sup>. The most outstanding were those governors who were honoured with the title *patronus*, but the use of this title, *patronus*, seems to be limited to the cities of the Bithynian region, there is no evidence to date to indicate its use in the Pontus cities, constituting the eastern part of the province. Concerning honouring governors with the title *patronus*, the most spectacular example is of course a governor<sup>181</sup> who took office between the second half of the first century B.C. and the first half of the first century A.D. and whose name we couldn't exactly identify. He was honoured at Rome both as a *patronus* and *euergetes* by various cities such as Apameia, Nicomedia, Prusa ad Olympon, Prusias ad Hypium, Prusias ad Mare and Teium<sup>182</sup>. Although we owe what we know about this honouring to the various inscriptions on an honorary monument, the part where the governor's name was written is fragmentary. On this inscription all we can make out is the expression, the governor Rufus, the son of Lucius. He must have been dearly loved and have performed good deeds in the cities mentioned, since he was honoured by more than one city of the province. In addition to the governor Rufus, son of Lucius,

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<sup>171</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 76.

<sup>172</sup> Tac. *Ann.* XII. 22; see also Deininger 1965, 62; Rémy 1989, 27; Marek 2003, 48; Doğançı 2007, 187.

<sup>173</sup> Tac. *Ann.* XII. 59; XIV. 46; see also Deininger 1965, 62; Rémy, 1989, 29; Marek 2003, 48; Doğançı 2007, 196.

<sup>174</sup> Tenger 1997, 185, 192.

<sup>175</sup> Storey 1998, 69-71.

<sup>176</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 4. 9; see also Deininger 1965, 62; Doğançı 2007, 226.

<sup>177</sup> Plin. *epist.* X. 7. 6.

<sup>178</sup> Deininger 1965, 62-63; Rémy 1989, 44; Doğançı 2007, 229.

<sup>179</sup> Deininger 1965, 62. About the charges against governors in the Roman State; see Brunt 1961, 189-227; Tenger 1997, 183-190.

<sup>180</sup> For a list of the governors honoured in the province; see Erkelenz 2003, 260.

<sup>181</sup> cf. Rémy 1989, 57; Haensch 1997, 606; Eilers 2002, 254-256.

<sup>182</sup> CIL VI 1508 = IG XIV 1077 = IGR I 139 = IGUR 71 = SEG XXXIV 1012.

the governors L. Mindius Pollio (after 42 A.D.)<sup>183</sup> and P. Pasidienus Firmus (48-49 A.D. or 49-50)<sup>184</sup>, were honoured as *patronus* on the coinage of both Nicomedia and Nicaea. In addition, in the city of Nicaea M. Plancius Varus (70-71 A.D. or 71-72)<sup>185</sup> and M. Tarquinius Priscus (59-60?A.D.)<sup>186</sup> and in the city of Nicomedia C. Cadius Rufus (47-48 A.D.)<sup>187</sup> were honoured as *patronus* of the city. Likewise, the fact that C. Marcius Censorinus (14-13 B.C.) was honoured as a protector in Sinope implies his good deeds in that city<sup>188</sup>. Apart from being honoured in Nicaea, a structure was also dedicated to governor C. Iulius Bassus (101-102?A.D.)<sup>189</sup>. Without doubt the cities' honouring some *patronus* is closely associated with the competition between cities (especially between Nicaea and Nicomedia)<sup>190</sup>. Through this, the cities tried to demonstrate their privileged status in their relations with Rome. As a matter of fact Dion of Prusa strove to make the inhabitants of the province aware of the fact that corrupt governors used this competition and they abused this situation<sup>191</sup>.

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<sup>183</sup> For coins see RPC I, 2031 (Nicaea); RPC I 2070 (Nicomedia). Also see Rémy 1989, 28; Nicols 1990a, 95; Nicols 1990b, 102-106; Haensch 1997, 606-608; Eilers 2002, 256-257, 259.

<sup>184</sup> RPC I, 2047; (Nicaea) RPC I 2080-2081 (Nicomedia) Rémy 1989, 27-28; Nicols 1990a, 95; Nicols 1990b, 102-106; Haensch 1997, 606-608; Eilers 2002, 257, 259.

<sup>185</sup> Şahin 1978, nos 2-3; SEG XXVIII 1024-1025; Rémy 1989, 31-33; Nicols 1990a, 95; 1990b, 102-106; Haensch 1997, 606-608; Eilers 2002, 257.

<sup>186</sup> RPC I, 2057-2059; Rémy 1989, 29; Nicols 1990a, 95; 1990b, 102-106; Haensch 1997, 606-608; Eilers 2002, 258.

<sup>187</sup> RPC I 2073-2075; Nicols 1990a, 95; 1990b, 102-106; Haensch 1997, 606-608; Eilers 2002, 258-259.

<sup>188</sup> AE 1906, 1 = Rémy 1989, 20.

<sup>189</sup> AE 1939, 294 = Şahin 1979, nos. 53-54; Rémy 1989, 43; Haensch 1997, 606.

<sup>190</sup> Marek 2003, 48.

<sup>191</sup> Dion. XXXVI. 38; see also Marek 2003, 48; Doğançı 2007, 14; Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 64, 86.

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