

Memnon of Herakleia on Rome and the Romans

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Local Authors on Rome – a Phenomenon in Context

Roman control over the regions around the Black Sea (excluding the north-eastern coasts) and the incorporation of these areas into the system of Roman provinces, made this part of the world into an integral part of the Roman Empire.¹ This new political and administrative situation was a complex one, particularly for the local upper classes. For them, there was a potential triple political and cultural identity: as people born in the region with a natural adherence to their geographical and physical origins; as intellectuals who had acquired a traditional Hellenistic education and lived in accordance with Hellenistic customs; and as inhabitants of the Roman Empire who in the course of time were often granted Roman citizenship. The elites, including kings and rulers, here as elsewhere in the Greek world, deliberately tended towards the adoption of Greek culture, expressing their local connections in a sentimental attachment to their *patria* rather than in an adherence to vestiges of local culture. Thus, the cultural and political identity of such individuals oscillated between two poles – Greek and Roman. This identity, as also the attitude towards Rome, converged with a range of possible viewpoints stretching between the two poles. Pride in Hellenic traditions, bordering on a kind of Greek snobbery, generally prevailed, existing side by side with recognition of the advantages of Roman rule and Roman political superiority.² One of the social manifestations of this situation was personal friendship between members of the elites and Roman governors and even emperors in periods when the Greek cities in the region experienced prosperity and peace.³

Conscious aspirations for Hellenistic identity became prominent particularly in the regions bordering on the Black Sea, where feelings of marginality in relation to the cultural centres demanded to be compensated by attempts to adhere to the mainstream of cultural activity.⁴ The striving for a classical education resulted in the formation of flourishing communities of men of letters, above all in Asia Minor. This development is apparent in Strabon, who enumerated scholars according to their geographical origins.⁵ Among Asian authors who spoke of Rome and the Romans were writers living beside the Black Sea and active since the first encounter of the region with Rome in the

first century BC. Noteworthy among them are Strabon of Amaseia, Dion of Prusa, Cassius Dion of Nikaia and Arrian of Nikomedeia.⁶

The fact that local authors referred in some way or another to political developments connected with Rome is not in itself surprising and is indeed quite natural in the case of any person of political and social awareness. However, when one tries to reach a better understanding of the phenomenon of provincial “multi-culturalism”, it is useful to examine the attitudes of specific authors toward Roman conquest and political dominance. Modern studies of this sort tend to concentrate on particular individuals. Considerations of the encounter between Hellenism and Roman rule focus, naturally enough, on the writings and character of intellectuals whose works have survived to a reasonable extent. Studies therefore usually deal with well-known authors whose fame rests largely on relatively well-preserved works.⁷ At the same time, lesser-known writers of whose production only fragments have remained are generally neglected. It is probably due more to the methodological complexities of dealing with scraps of texts, often inaccurately and misleadingly preserved, than to a lack of interest, that fragmentary works tend to be ignored. But one may find meaningful information in such texts despite their fractured condition. Accordingly, it is my intention here to look at a local Black Sea author’s view of Rome and the Romans through the incomplete and epitomised work of Memnon of Herakleia.

Memnon of Herakleia – the Man and his Work

We possess only an abridged version of the original *History of Herakleia Pontike* (περὶ Ἡρακλεία) written by Memnon. Photios, a ninth century patriarch of Constantinople, summarised Memnon’s work as part of a major project in which he composed a continuous summary of the collection of historiographical and theological works in his possession. Encompassing a wide range – from Herodotos to the ninth century ecclesiastical historian Sergios – the project was addressed to Photios’ brother Tarasios, and was originally intended as a private correspondence between the brothers with no apparent aspiration to publish the results for a wider readership. It thus presents the form, the style and the purpose of an unofficial literary memoir, so to speak, which depended on the patriarch’s memory and on the industry of his secretary. Each of the 386 original works in Photios’ collection reached it simply by having been available. The arrangement of the material – both pagan and Christian – was not systematic, and the style clearly reflects the circumstance that some parts were composed from memory when Photios no longer had the texts before him. Also, certain details occurring in the *Bibliotheca*, as the work was later called, perhaps better suggest the interests of the epitomizer than the intentions or tendencies of the original author of the complete work.⁸ For Photios, the historian Memnon probably presented an account of political developments in Asia Minor beyond local Herakleian affairs, and his own

summary treats the Roman conquest of the East as a precursor of later Byzantine dominance.⁹

In presenting Memnon, Photios says that he is describing only books 9-16 because “we have not found a copy to read of the first eight books, or of anything after the sixteenth book” (*FGrH* 434 T 1).¹⁰ Photios saw a fragmentary work as worth epitomising and this makes our acquaintance with the original even more remote: not all of it is reflected in the *Bibliotheca* and what is presented has gone through the filter of Photios’ interests and other considerations. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to accept some of the information in the fragments as based on the actual and original ideas of Memnon himself. At the same time, only limited attention may be given to linguistic forms and matters of style while the focus should rather be on texts of historiographic character as echoes of the original work by Memnon.¹¹ Accordingly, references to “Memnon” throughout this paper should be read with these considerations in mind.

Whatever these reservations are, the epitome seems to offer enough information that may be safely ascribed to Memnon. Who was Memnon? We do not know.¹² There are no significant details in the epitome to compensate for this ignorance. He wrote a *History* of his city, Herakleia, in at least 16 books, and lived probably sometime during the first century of our era.¹³ He wrote in Greek, with the stylistic and cultural tendencies current in the Hellenistic age: for instance, he uses the term “barbarians” (βάρβαροι) several times in referring to the Gauls, the forces of Mithridates and his generals, and also the people of Kabeira.¹⁴

The Photian summary of Memnon’s *History* covers the period between the ascendance of the Herakleian tyrant Klearchos (364 BC) and the friendship between Julius Caesar and the Herakleians (47 BC).¹⁵ The first eight books probably started with the foundation of Herakleia in about 560 BC by Megara and Boiotia.¹⁶ Thus, the economy of the work seems to have been fairly even: eight books for the first two centuries, perhaps including a lengthy description of the foundation, and eight for the next 317 years. If Memnon conformed to most ancient historians’ tendency to treat long periods and within them to employ more detailed descriptions for more recent times, it is possible that the portion following the 16th book dealt with Memnon’s immediate past on a broader scale.

Both at the beginning and the end of the Memnonian excerpt, Photios offers some general remarks regarding the style and the purpose of Memnon’s work. He says “it lists the tyrants of Herakleia, their deeds and character, the lives of others, the manner of their death, and the sayings which were associated with them” (*FGrH* 434 T 1). Photios thus characterises Memnon’s historiography in terms of scope, purpose and thematic orientation: it is a local history of Herakleia and it has a strong biographical orientation apparent in the emphasis put on deeds, manner of death, sayings and specifically *bioi* of famous persons.¹⁷

Apart from several digressions for the sake of clarity (see below), Memnon concentrates on Herakleian affairs. Composing the history of one's native city became a widespread phenomenon in the Hellenistic age and gave rise to a genre of local histories.¹⁸ Memnon's focus presents all historical events in the perspective of their relevance to Herakleia and its political and social stature, so that the value of historical events in Memnon "varies in inverse proportion to the distance of the events from Herakleia".¹⁹ This patriotism is apparent also in the presentation of the Herakleians. Memnon emphasizes the heroic behaviour of the people of Herakleia in various situations and repeatedly demonstrates their courage and their wisdom. Describing the wars of the Diadochi following the death of Alexander and the involvement of the Herakleian forces in these clashes, he praises the exceptional bravery of his compatriots. (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 8.6; also 14.2) In the local war that immediately followed between the peoples of Herakleia and Bithynia, the brave Herakleians were defeated but demonstrated piety and morality in the treatment of their dead (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 9.5). When the Herakleians sent two triremes to assist the Romans in their wars in North Africa they also won "much praise for their bravery" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 21). Later, their physical endurance during the long Roman siege is emphasized (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 34.1-9).

Another tendency in Memnon, noted by Photios, is his interest in the character of historical persons. He thus attaches to his reference to the Herakleian ruler Timotheos a short excursus on character and personal traits:

He was a strict but humane judge and in other respects he had a good and trustworthy nature.... He also showed a brave spirit in matters of war. He was generous and noble in body and in mind, and he was fair and gracious in the settlement of wars. He was skilful at grasping an opportunity and vigorous in achieving what he contemplated. He was merciful and just in character and relentless in his boldness. He was moderate, kind and compassionate (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 3.1-2).

This biographic orientation is combined with Memnon's moralistic approach to history. The description of Timotheos' character seems therefore to correspond to Memnon's idea of a good ruler, using a set of personal traits to construct the image.²⁰ In describing early tyrants in Herakleia, Memnon emphasizes their attitude to intellectual activities and judges them accordingly. Klearchos was a tyrant but also a well educated man (he was a pupil of Plato and Isocrates) who founded a library (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 1.1-2). On the contrary, Satyros, his successor to the tyranny, was bad and crude because he did not care at all for intellectual activities:

He [Satyros] was completely uninterested in learning philosophy and all the other liberal arts. His only passion was for murder,

and he did not want to learn about or practice anything which was humane or civilised (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 2.2).

Memnon criticizes tendencies to luxurious living, for instance in describing the manners of Dionysios, another Herakleian tyrant:

He gave himself up to a life of continual luxury, so that he grew fat and unnaturally bloated. As a result, not only did he pay less attention to governing the state, but also when he went to sleep he was only with difficulty roused from his sleepy state by being pierced with large needles, which was the only remaining way of reviving him from his unconscious inaction (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 4.7).

Memnon's moralistic tendency is apparent in what seem to be implicit references to the notion of crime and punishment even if this is not expressly spelled out. The same intellectual Klearchos called himself the son of Zeus and tried to change his appearance to frighten the people: he painted his face and dressed up to appear fearsome. The last comment of Memnon on this man seems to suggest a punishment for this sin of *hybris* and cruelty: the ghosts of the people he murdered pursued him (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 1.4). Memnon's concept of crime and punishment is apparent also in his terminology:

Like Klearchos, Satyros gave to those who saw him when he was dying the impression that he was paying the penalty for his savage and lawless abuse of the citizens... he finally paid his due (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 2.5).

These ethical allusions could have been relevant to the political atmosphere in which Memnon was active, naturally dependent on the time and place of writing and on his intended audience, all of which are undefined. There are implications in his treatment of the malpractice of Herakleian tyranny both for Roman governors (if writing early) and emperors (if writing later), as well as for other non-Roman men in leading positions.

Lamachos of Herakleia was an old friend of Mithridates, and Memnon relates his scheme to enable the king of Pontos to control Herakleia: Lamachos "prepared a magnificent feast for the citizens outside the city, and plied the people with drink, after instructing that the city gates should be left open during the feast". Then Mithridates came up secretly and "gained control of the city before the Herakleians even realized that he had arrived" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 29.3). The special Memnonian (or Photian) emphasis, beyond the factual occurrence, is the indication that later, when Herakleia was suffering a long and painful siege which included a lethal plague, Lamachos "endured a particularly slow and painful death" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 34.9). Again, the feeling is that there is no crime without retribution.²¹

The worst crime (μιαρῶτατον ἔργον), Memnon thinks, is the murder of one's mother: Klearchos and his brother drowned their mother.²² Retribution is justified here: Lysimachos king of Macedonia avenged the murder, thus "making them pay the penalty" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 5.3). Ptolemy murdered the sons of his sister-wife and was killed in a way that suited his cruelty – ἄξιως τῆς ὀμότητος (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 8.8). Mithridates also murdered his mother and brother but then he was a "barbarian" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.2).

Memnon's moral views are also reflected in his comments on ill-planned endeavours on the battlefield. He twice criticizes a lack of planning leading to defeat. Both cases involve people defined as "barbarians": "The Galatians are accustomed to waging war with passion rather than by making the necessary preparations" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 20.2). And, referring to the forces of Mithridates: "the royal troops suffered from a lack of supplies, because they used up what they held recklessly and did not know how to preserve what they had acquired" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.12).

Beside Memnon's biographical and moralistic approach to history he had some political awareness. He defines Timotheos the Herakleian monarch as δημοκρατικώτερος (more democratic) than his two predecessors, cruel tyrants who acted violently against their people (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 3.1). He also differentiates between a king and a tyrant (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 4.6).

What about Memnon's style of presentation? In his concluding remarks Photios indicates some stylistic tendencies in the History:

This history is intelligent and written in a plain style, with attention to clarity. It avoids digressions, except if its purpose necessitates the inclusion of some external events; and even then, the digression does not last for long, but concentrating on what is essential it returns neatly to the main course of the narrative. It uses a conventional vocabulary, though there are a few unusual words. (*FGrH* 434 T 1).

This evaluation depends on Photios' point of view and there is no direct way to sense and assess Memnon's style and approach (did he include speeches in his narrative? incorporate ethnographic digressions? use dramatic technique?) Nevertheless, there are some hints of his literary manner. I shall present them briefly, only inasmuch as they contribute to the main theme of the present discussion.

Memnon generally maintains a chronological order in his survey with awareness for the sequence of events. Sometimes he makes use of chronological expressions such as "shortly before this" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 33.1) or uses a relative system of dating, for instance saying that the Herakleians returned home after assisting the Romans in North Africa "in the eleventh year after they had left" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 21). Occasionally he synchronizes Herakleian developments (his main theme) with events in other political entities, noting

that “at that time Artaxerxes was king of Persia and after him his son Ochos” (FGrH 434 F 1, 1.4); “...while Archidamos was king of Sparta” (FGrH 434 F 1, 2.5); “...when Doidalsos was the ruler of the Bithynians” (FGrH 434 F 1, 12.3). At least once (in what we have from the work) the historian uses Olympiads as a dating system, saying that “Astaces was founded by settlers from Megara at the beginning of the 17th Olympiad” (FGrH 434 F 1, 12.1). Memnon (or Photios) is also aware of the content of his work as a whole, once noting that some matter “has been said previously” (FGrH 434 F1, 33.1).

The epitome contains some sections in which the description is detailed and others narrated in a more abridged and hasty way.²³ For instance, “many years had passed and the government of the Romans had come under the control of a single man, Gaius Julius Caesar” (FGrH 434 F 1, 40.3). Besides his chronological progression, Memnon includes in his *History* also several digressions. These vary in extent but their purpose is always to supply the reader with some information necessary for the understanding of the main line of the story. All the digressions are indeed deviations from the main narrative line, since they do not contain any Herakleian involvement whatsoever. They include information of various kinds. This may be historical, as on the Mithridatic War (no mention of Herakleian involvement, FGrH 434 F 1, 22-25); genealogical, as on the dynasty of the Bithynian kings (FGrH 434 F 1, 12.4-6); or mythological, connected with foundation myths (FGrH 434 F 1, 28.9-11).

Regarding Memnon’s narrative technique we may note that he included in his work direct speeches and quotations of original documents. Speaking of Chamaileon, the Herakleian envoy to Seleukos, Memnon describes how Chamaileon was not shaken by the king’s threats and said: “Herakles is *karron*, Seleukos!” and then Memnon (or Photios?) comments that “*karron* means ‘stronger’ in the Doric dialect” (FGrH 434 F 1, 7.1). In another context we hear how Tigranes the Armenian king looked at the small Roman camp and said: “If they have come as ambassadors, there are too many of them; if they have come to fight, there are too few” (FGrH 434 F 1, 38.4). Both examples demonstrate Memnon’s inclusion of direct speech that is almost proverbial in its brevity and wit.

As for legal documents, in the description of the treaty between Nikomedes king of Bithynia and the Galatians, not only do we hear of the exact terms of the pact, but we have an echo of its formulaic style, for instance: “they should be allies of his allies and enemies of his enemies” (FGrH 434 F1, 11.2). These examples may offer us enough ground to suppose that the original and complete work included more of the same kind of citations. Another conspicuous component in Memnon’s *History* is the frequent inclusion of definite numbers of forces – soldiers, ships, prisoners – in his descriptions of battles, which Photios does not omit.²⁴

What were Memnon’s sources? There were probably different sources for Herakleian history and for pieces of information regarding broader Asian and Roman history (below). Memnon himself mentions specifically Nymphis of

Herakleia as a Herakleian envoy (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 7.3; 16.3) and alludes to his being a historian. Nymphis, who lived in the middle of the third century BC, composed a local chronicle of Herakleian history (*FGrH* 432) and a history of Alexander and his successors, both of which were probably used by Memnon. As for later Herakleian history and events related to developments outside Herakleia – we cannot identify Memnon’s informants. Modern scholars have made several suggestions, which include Theopompos, Kallistratos, Ps.-Kallisthenes, the *Alexander-Roman* and others,²⁵ but no definite conclusion has been reached.

Memnon on Roman Affairs

Keeping Memnon’s historiographic approach in mind, let us examine what he knew about the Romans and how he saw them. First, let me define my approach to these questions: my purpose is to examine what can be said about Memnon’s knowledge of Rome and how he chose to deliver this information. I do not intend to study the extent of truth in details pertaining to Roman tactics and strategic endeavours. On the contrary, it is non-factual references and judgemental and personal allusions to events and persons which are of interest in the present case. Such statements most probably reflect the personal opinion of the author regarding political developments which influenced not only the entire position of local politics and socio-economic circumstances but also the personal stature of numerous individuals. Thus, a good starting point would be to imagine that Memnon is our sole source of information on Rome. While the danger of making conclusive assertions regarding Memnon’s choice or avoidance of themes cannot be ignored, particularly in view of the filtering by Photios, it is still valuable to assess Memnon’s approach.

Memnon first mentions Rome in Book 13 of the work, introducing the subject through a historical digression leading to the time of Roman involvement in Asia Minor, which then connects with the main line of local Herakleian history:

Having brought his account down to this point, the author makes a digression about the Romans’ rise to power: what race they came from, how they settled in Italy, what happened before and during the foundation of Rome (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 18.1)

According to Photios, Memnon starts with a digression on the ascendance of Rome from its beginnings, noting events in its history. Clearly the purpose of the digression was to supply readers with some background before connecting the historiographical survey with the chronological sequence of the main line of events and with the geographical focus of the local Asian history of Herakleia. Therefore Memnon’s expository excursus ends with Antiochos III’s defeat in Magnesia (189 BC), for shortly after that, in 188, Roman history connected

up with that of Herakleia, when Herakleian envoys addressed the Roman generals who came to Asia, thus turning Herakleia into a Roman ally.

Memnon's excursus calls to mind another historical digression on Roman history. In his geographical survey of the inhabited world, Strabon attaches to his account of Italy "a summary account also of the Romans who took possession of it and equipped it as a base of operations for the universal hegemony" (6.4.2).²⁶ Strabon's purpose in his excursus was, like Memnon's, to supply some missing information. In addition to this, there seems to be in Strabon some contemporary political allusion in the reference to developments in his own time and particularly to the benefits of the Augustan *principate*.²⁷ This dimension evidently does not exist in Memnon, since its purpose was also to explain the chronological scope of the digression, which concludes in the early first century AD, Strabon's own period. Despite the differences in scope and purpose, both Strabon and Memnon intended to present Roman history in a capsule, so to speak. Therefore it is interesting to see which events they dwelt on in constructing this brief history of Rome. Let us not forget that in the case of Memnon we have an epitomized version of the original excursus. The following table compares the chronological scope of both digressions and the themes included in them:

	Memnon <i>FGrH</i> 434 F 1, 18.1-5	Strabon 6.4.2
Time span of excursus	c. 1200-190 BC	753 BC – c. 14 AD
Events and themes in Roman history	Racial origin of Romans (Troy) c. 1200 BC	-
	Roman settlement in Italy	-
	Foundation of Rome 753 BC	+
	Change from monarchy to Republic 509 BC	+
	Gallic invasion of Rome 390 BC	+
	Contact with Alexander c. 330 BC	-
	War with Pyrrhos 280-275 BC	+
	Punic Wars 264-146 BC	+
	Macedonian Wars 214-167 BC	+
	War with Antiochos III 192-189 BC	+

On the whole, apart from early history before the foundation of Rome,²⁸ and the Alexander episode (see below), both authors present an almost identical set of events. The feature common to most of these is expansion and conquest, that is Roman contact with political and social entities outside Rome. Strabon particularly emphasizes the geographical and ethnographic scope of Roman conquests. Neither he nor Memnon refer in their digressions to significant inner events in the history of Rome, for instance the social clashes of the sixth to fourth centuries BC or the Gracchan reforms (which are outside Memnon's chronological frame). This similarity in itself is not enough to prove Memnon's direct acquaintance with Strabon (or vice versa). But it does show something of the knowledge of Roman history by non-Romans who did not focus on Roman history.²⁹

Memnon's digression includes an allusion to a supposed contact between Alexander and the Romans which was in fact the first Roman contact with the East:

Alexander wrote to them, when he crossed over to Asia, that they should either conquer others, if they were capable of ruling over them, or yield to those who were stronger than them; and the Romans sent him a crown, containing many talents of gold (FGrH 434 F 1, 18.2).

According to this story, Alexander initiated an epistolary exchange with the Romans. His message included an implied threat although it held also a suggestion or opportunity. The reaction of the Romans shows them as fully acknowledging Alexander's superiority. Although as far as we know there was no direct confrontation between Rome and Alexander, there are allusions to the theoretical superiority of Alexander over the Romans.³⁰ Livy, for instance, scorns the "silliest of the Greeks who exalt the reputation even of the Parthians against the Romans..." and "are fond of alleging that the Roman people would have been unable to withstand the majesty of Alexander's name" (9.18.6) and so they deprecate the power and glory of the Romans. Such challenges to the exclusiveness of Roman power and world-rule appear also in Strabon and Pompeius Trogus.³¹ Thus, the fact that Memnon incorporated such an anecdote in his work is significant, as is also the fact that Photios did not drop it in the process of epitomising.

Arrian in his *Anabasis Alexandri* also refers to a connection between Alexander and the Romans in a way which recalls Memnon's anecdote:

Alexander appeared to be lord of all the earth and sea. Aristos indeed and Asklepiades from among the historians of Alexander assert that even Romans sent envoys, and that Alexander when he met their envoys prognosticated something of their future power

when he noticed their orderliness and diligence and freedom, and when he also had learnt something of their constitution.

But then Arrian adds his own critique, concluding that such a connection is historically implausible:

This I have recorded neither as true nor as untrue; except that no Roman ever made mention of this embassy sent to Alexander, nor even the historians of Alexander whom I most follow, Ptolemaios son of Lagos and Aristobulos; nor was it suitable for the Roman republic, which was then entirely free, to send to a foreign king, especially so far from their own home, when no scare compelled them, nor with any expectation of help, and being as they were a people particularly given to dislike of kings and of the very name of kings (7.15.4-6).

While Arrian thought the anecdote was highly unlikely (but nevertheless chose to present it), we do not know what Memnon could have thought of his own version of the story. The fact that he did incorporate it in his historical survey is significant for the assessment of his attitude towards Rome, which in this section is not entirely flattering. Another benefit for us here may be a hint of Memnon's possible source for Roman history. As Arrian notes, no Roman author or any of Alexander's historians mentioned any early Roman contact with Alexander. The only allusion to such an anecdote may be ascribed to Aristos or Asklepiades. To this we may add the following comment by Pliny the Elder:

Theophrastos [was] the first foreigner to write with special care about the Romans... Theopompos... merely states that Rome was taken by the Gauls, and Kleitarchos, the next after him, only that an embassy was sent to Alexander... (NH 3.57).

There is of course the possibly separate tradition of Alexander's letter to the Romans, but regarding the Roman diplomatic initiative we may assume that Memnon used a Greek source for Roman history.³²

The widespread literary *topos* of foreign peoples addressing Alexander figures again in Memnon's indication that the Herakleians too addressed the king, asking him to help them establish democracy instead of tyranny (FGrH 434 F 1, 4.1). This detail not only contributes to the fame and eminence of Alexander, but also to the reputation of the people of Herakleia, who may be counted among the leading powers of the world at the time.

Throughout his *History*, Memnon does not lose his Herakleian focus. He consistently presents Rome through the prism, so to speak, of Herakleian af-

fairs. There were three phases in the historical relations between Rome and Herakleia: official friendship (188 BC) (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 18-21); hostility deriving from local politics in Asia Minor and mainly from the fact that Herakleia was forced to join Mithridates VI in 74 BC in his war against Rome (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 22-38); and renewed friendship with Julius Caesar (47 BC) (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 39-40). We also hear first-hand primary details regarding the Roman formation of treaties with local cities in Asia Minor, including a formulaic direct quotation from the letter addressed to the Herakleian leadership:

Cornelius wrote back to the Herakleians, beginning as follows: “Scipio, general and proconsul of the Romans, to the senate and people of the Herakleians, greetings”. In the letter he confirmed the goodwill of the Romans towards the Herakleians, and that they were willing to put an end to the war with Antiochos (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 18.8).

Later, Rome and Pontos, that is Murena and Mithridates, tried to win over the Herakleians by sending envoys with offers of alliance. It is illuminating to look at Memnon’s presentation of the debates: “The Herakleians considered the power of the Romans to be formidable, but were afraid of Mithridates because he was their neighbour” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 26.5). Their final response was that they were so weak and insignificant that they could “scarcely protect their own territory, let alone come to the assistance of others”. And thus they chose a temporary state of neutrality. What is presently of importance is the fact that the reputation of the Romans at that stage already rested on their power.

Although the Romans were conquerors and in some cases caused distress to the Herakleians, there seems to be a certain apologetic tone in Memnon’s presentation of the Herakleian reaction to Roman exploits. He tells how Roman tax collectors disregarded local law and aroused among the people of Herakleia a feeling of enslavement. The Herakleians intended to send an embassy to the senate in Rome to ask for an exemption from taxes, “but they were persuaded by one of the most audacious (θρασύτατος) men in the city to make away with the money collectors in secret in such a way that no one was sure how they died” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 27.6). The entire course of events as Memnon describes it gives the impression that the Herakleians were somehow tricked into opposing the Romans.

The joint scheme of Mithridates and Lamachos of Herakleia (above p. 47), together with distributions of Mithridatic money “especially to those in positions of authority”, with the counsel “to maintain their goodwill towards him [i.e. Mithridates]”, and to tolerate his 4000 men strong garrison in the city, intended “to defend the city and save the inhabitants” if the Romans attacked it – all seem to show that the Herakleians were forced to choose sides (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 29.2-4) in spite of themselves.³³

Memnon again emphasizes his local Herakleian orientation by alluding to certain public agents of the city who, according to his account, were on close and friendly terms with Caesar, although we do not hear of Brithagoras and his son Propylos in any other ancient source and the allusion to twelve years of service may cause some chronological discomfort since that service is said to have begun with Caesar's sole rule:

Brithagoras set out on an embassy to Caesar, and developed a friendship with him, but he was not able immediately to win freedom for his city, because Gaius did not stay in Rome, but left on expeditions to other places. However Brithagoras did not give up, but he and Propylos accompanied Caesar all over the world, and were seen in his presence, as if the dictator (αὐτοκράτωρ) was indicating that he approved of their petition. After he had been in attendance on Caesar for 12 years, and just as Caesar was planning to return to Rome, Brithagoras died, worn out by old age and by his continual exertions. His death caused great sadness in his homeland (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 40.3-4).

Memnon mentioned various Roman personages of whom the following entered Photios' excerption: M. Furius Camillus cos. 349 (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 18.1), L. Aemilius Paullus cos. 168 (18.4), P. Aemilius (18.6), L. Cornelius Scipio and P. Cornelius Scipio (18.3; 18.7; 18.8), Sulla, Marius and M'. Aquillius cos. 101 (22.6-7), L. Hortensius (22.13), L. Valerius Flaccus and C. Flavius Fimbria (24.1), L. Licinius Murena (26.1), M. Aurelius Cotta cos. 74 and L. Lucullus (27.1), Barba and C. Valerius Triarius (28.5), M. Pompeius (30.2), Appius Claudius Pulcher (31.2), Censorinus (37.2), C. Papirius Carbo (39.3), and Julius Caesar (40.3). Not all the persons named are identifiable and some are recorded only by Memnon.³⁴ This may suggest that his source of information was probably rather close to Asian occurrences at the time.³⁵

The concept of the significant role of individuals in history is apparent in Memnon's treatment of Roman notables. He seems to assess each person without any pre-conceived negative or positive notion regarding Romans as a group. Good examples are the depictions of M. Aurelius Cotta and L. Licinius Lucullus.

Cotta is presented as a cruel, greedy and impious person:³⁶

Cotta seized the men who had surrendered to him and the prisoners of war, and he treated them all with the utmost cruelty. In his search for treasure he did not even spare the contents of the temples, but removed from them many fine statues and images. He removed the statue of Herakles from the market-place... Lastly he ordered the soldiers to set fire to the city, and burnt down many parts of it (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 35.7-8).

But he was harsh also towards his own men. When the first attempts to capture Herakleia failed, “he burnt the machine and beheaded the men who had made it” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 34.2).

Lucullus, on the contrary, is depicted as generous and humane. He fulfils his role as a good tactician and a responsible commander and leader, for he “drew up his army for battle carefully and skillfully, and he addressed his men with encouraging words” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 38.5). At the same time he did not add cruelty to necessary warlike actions. In two situations, not connected directly to Herakleia, but to Amisos and Sinope respectively, Memnon shows Lucullus’ pious and generous behaviour:

Many of the citizens of Amisos were slaughtered immediately, but then Lucullus put an end to the killing. He restored the city and its territory to the remaining citizens, and treated them considerately (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 30.4).

And in Sinope:

The soldiers mounted the walls, and to begin with there was a considerable slaughter [of the citizens]; but Lucullus took pity on them, and put an end to the killing (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 37.8).

It seems, then, that according to Memnon the nature of the Romans depends on the individuals concerned. There may be “good” Romans such as Lucullus and “bad” ones such as Cotta. This notion has to do with the tendency, both in Greek and Roman writings of the age, to denounce the behaviour of individual Romans and thus to present them as the exception to emphasize the rule i.e. the overall beneficent effect of Roman imperialism.³⁷ Memnon goes on to say that after the capture of Herakleia, Cotta received from the senate the title of “Imperator Ponticus” (Ποντικός ἀντοκράτωρ). But envy of the wealth he had amassed in the war and the complaint of the Herakleians before the Roman assembly, aroused hatred towards him. Memnon describes in detail how Thrasymedes, the spokesman of the Herakleians moved the Romans with his speech describing Cotta’s outrageous deeds against the Herakleians. Thrasymedes delivered this speech “with wailing and tears, while a crowd of captives stood nearby, both men and women with their children, dressed in mourning clothes and sorrowfully holding forth olive branches in supplication”. Cotta replied “in his mother tongue” (πατρίος γλώττη),³⁸ and then came the exclamation of Carbo, cited by Memnon as direct speech: “Cotta, we instructed you to capture the city, not to destroy it”. After similar comments by others, the Roman people decided to impose a punishment milder than exile on Cotta: he was expelled from the senate, and the Herakleians gained some relief (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 39.1-3).

Two points are noteworthy. First, the Herakleian supplication is performed

before the Roman assembly (ἐκκλησία), while we would expect such matters to be treated by the senate.³⁹ Second, the presentation of Roman policy as one designed “to capture and not to destroy” is reminiscent of the Vergilian “*parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*” (*Aen.* 6.853).

As mentioned above, in his digression on earlier Roman history Memnon referred mainly to events inasmuch as they pertained to world history and to Roman involvement with non-Roman groups. Returning to his main historiographical purpose, from then on he alluded to Roman affairs in his primary context of Herakleian history. We find a reference to only one internal Roman development, but this serves merely as a temporal indicator or as a faint background for Sulla’s involvement with Mithridates. Thus Memnon writes: “later, when Sulla and Marius were engaged in fighting for control of the Roman state... (ἀναρριπισάντες τὴν στάσιν)” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 22.6) and “after Marius, one of the opposite faction (ἀντιστασιώτης), had been restored to Rome from his exile, Sulla was afraid that he might be forced into a similar exile because of his harsh treatment of Marius... so Sulla returned in glory to Italy and Marius again withdrew from Rome” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 25.1; 25.3).⁴⁰

Typically, and as seen in other authors, including Roman, Memnon does not display a clear and coherent idea of Rome as an abstract political entity, but rather alludes to Roman political institutions – the senate, the assembly, the people – or, more commonly, to the actions of Roman individuals. Therefore, judgmental intonations as well are reserved for particular Romans and less Rome as an abstract entity. Nevertheless, the Herakleian author seems to criticize Roman behaviour in general, accusing the Romans of cruelty, arrogance, theft of works of art and violation of local laws and customs. The extreme and impious cruelty of the Romans is apparent in their conduct at Herakleia after the defeat during Cotta’s campaign: “They [the Romans] did not even spare those who had fled into the temples, but cut them down by the altars and the images of the gods” (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 35.5). The Romans are depicted also as unreliable people who do not respect agreements and laws:

When their attendants had withdrawn, they came to an agreement, that Mithridates would surrender Asia to the Romans, that the Bithynians and Cappadocia would be ruled by their native kings, that Mithridates would be confirmed as king of all of Pontos, as long as he provided 80 triremes and 3,000 talents to Sulla personally for his return to Rome, and that the Romans would not punish the cities for their support of Mithridates. In fact the Romans did not abide by this last part of the treaty, and they afterwards forced many of the cities into slavery (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 25.2).

Again, upon the surrender of Herakleia in the course of the war with Mithridates, the Romans are presented as behaving unjustly and immorally:

When the money-collectors arrived in the city, they disregarded the laws of the state, and their demands for money distressed the citizens, who regarded this as the beginning of slavery (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 27.6).

The circumstance that many Roman ships carrying treasures looted from the temples of Herakleia sank shortly after leaving port (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 35.5; 35.7-8; 36) is explained simply by overloading, but may also be interpreted on the basis of Memnon's idea of crime and punishment: the Romans, and particularly Cotta, had violated sacred precincts, and thus were punished "so that much of their cargo was lost" (*FGrH* 434 F 1, 36).

Conclusion

Memnon's historiographical orientation was moralistic and included a pronounced biographical approach. In his attitude to events the point of departure was Herakleian patriotism, but also on occasion referred to world history in temporal conjunctions with his local chronicle. He showed Herakleia as a dominant city of the region that persistently strove against alliances with foreign political entities – whether Pontos or Rome – and aspired to retain its independence and freedom. Memnon does not express an explicitly hostile attitude towards Rome and Roman rule but also does not refrain from showing the Romans as cruel and arrogant. He is not enthusiastic about Roman conquests but can see positive traits as in the character of Lucullus and in certain Roman military achievements. The complete work seems to have comprised more than 16 books and this may indicate that Memnon continued his survey and spoke of Roman activities in the region after Julius Caesar. From what we have, we may conclude that, like other local authors, Memnon combined local patriotism, Hellenistic intellect and political awareness.

The Memnonian story of Herakleia is thus a story of focus, periphery and their interchangeable relationships: for Memnon Herakleia was the focus, both politically and geographically, and the rest of the world was the periphery. From a Roman point of view, Herakleia was marginal. Memnon's decision to write on Herakleia derived from the city's importance and centrality in his eyes.⁴¹ At the same time, his treatise put the Asian city "on the map" in the context of world history. These emphases reflect and depend on Memnon's intended audience and his residence at the time of writing, two unfortunately obscure facts. Whatever the unknown truth is, it seems that in this work there is no significant conflict between patriotism and Roman loyalty. Even with specific criticisms, Greek and Roman identities could cohabit peacefully.⁴²

Notes

- * I am grateful to David Braund and Joseph Geiger for their helpful and important comments on earlier versions of this paper.

- 1 For a brief historical survey of these developments, see *CAH* 9 (1994) 137-164; 229-255; *CAH* 10 (1996) 151-154; 545-585; 641-675; *CAH* 11 (2000) 109-113.
- 2 For this complex situation, see discussions on the phenomenon as a whole and on individuals in Millar 1964, 7-10; 174-192; Jones 1978, 125-131; Macro 1980, 659-695; Anderson 1993, 1-10; 69-85; 101-132; Swain 1996; Braund 1997, 131-135; Veyne 1999, 510-567; Goldhill 2001, 8-18; Fernoux 2004.
- 3 For example Theophanes of Mytilene and Pompey; Hypsikrates of Amisos and Theopompos of Knidos and Julius Caesar; Strabon of Amaseia and Aelius Gallus; Athenodoros of Tarsos and Areios Didymos and Augustus. See Dueck 2000a, 142-143.
- 4 Braund 1997, 121-135.
- 5 See Dueck 2000a, 79-81; Engels 2005. Specifically for Herakleia, Strabon mentions Herakleides the Platonic philosopher (12.3.1).
- 6 Add to these the poet Parthenios of Nikaia who does not mention Rome in the extant poems. For other, less known, intellectuals, see Millar 1964, 177 and n. 3. See also the extensive and thorough study of the attitude of Greek intellectuals to Rome, including discussions of particular authors, in Swain 1996.
- 7 Cassius Dion: Millar 1964; Dion of Prusa: Jones 1978; Swain 2002; Arrian: Stadter 1980; Dionysios: Gabba 1991; Strabon: Dueck 2000a; broader discussion: Swain 1996.
- 8 Information and evaluation of Photios' project based on Treadgold 1980, esp. 1-14; 95-114.
- 9 Mendels 1986, esp. 201-204.
- 10 References throughout are to the text of Memnon by Jacoby in *FGrH* 434. The translation of Memnon is based – with some adaptation – on the one by Andrew Smith in <http://www.attalus.org/translate/memnon1.html>. Other available translations of Memnon are: in French, by René Henry, in Henry 1965, 48-99; in German, by Angela Bittner, in Bittner 1998, 162-213.
- 11 On problems related to epitomes, see Brunt 1980.
- 12 Modern scholarship on Memnon includes Jacoby in *FGrH* 3 (1955), p. 267-283; Janke 1963; Desideri 1967; Bittner 1998.
- 13 The latest event noted in the epitome is Julius Caesar's arrival in Asia Minor in 47 BC. The original work probably did not end there and with some necessary chronological distance between events and time of writing it probably came up to the first century AD. Based on stylistic grounds it has been suggested that Memnon lived in the second century AD and certainly at the time of the High Roman Empire, see R. Laqueur, "Lokalchronik", *RE* 13.1099; *OCD*³ (1996) s.v. Memnon (3); K. Meister, "Memnon aus Herakleia", *DnP* 7.1205-1206; Henry 1965, 177. Because the stylistic explanation is equivocal, I prefer to follow some chronological markers in the text, and to assume with other scholars that Memnon was active in the first century AD, see Jacoby *FGrH* 3 ad no. 434, p. 267-283; Janke 1963, 7-8; 11; Bittner 1998, 4.
- 14 See *FGrH* 434 F 1, 11.2; 24.4; 29.9; 30.2 respectively.
- 15 Modern surveys of Herakleian history include Desideri 1967; Desideri 1970-1971; Burstein 1974; Bittner 1998.
- 16 The first eight books were not in Photios' possession and he summarised the next eight. One may assume that the work was available in codex form, each volume, except perhaps the last, comprising eight books. Desideri 1967, 374 and n. 38 suggests that the work was composed of units of eight books, perhaps in separate volumes, and thus the complete work had 18 or 24 books.

- 17 Photios may have found these remarks in Memnon's own introductory comments to his second octoplet.
- 18 Such were the histories of Egypt by Manethon, of Babylon by Berossos and Josephos' *AJ*. Other histories of Herakleia Pontike were written by Promathidas (*FGrH* 430); Amphiteos (*FGrH* 431); and Nymphis (*FGrH* 432) – all from Herakleia themselves, and also by Domitios Kallistratos (*FGrH* 433) and Timogenes of Miletos (*FGrH* 435). This of course reflects the political and economic importance of Herakleia. On local histories of Herakleia, see R. Laqueur, "Lokalchronik", *RE* 13.1089-1102.
- 19 *CAH* 9 (1962), 890. For other expressions of civic pride and patriotism in Asia Minor under Rome, see Macro 1980, 682-684.
- 20 Note the emphasis on courage, kindness and moderation, which are constant elements in contemporary ideas of the virtues pertaining to leadership. See Fears 1981, esp. 875-889; Wallace-Hadrill 1981.
- 21 Cf. Janke 1963, 115.
- 22 Janke 1963, 7 points out the similarity to Nero's act as described in Tac. *Ann.* 14.3-5, but cannot conclude for a definite influence, which might also have had some bearing on the question of Memnon's date.
- 23 Janke 1963, 11 n.1 shows how different Memnonian books gained Photian summaries of different lengths.
- 24 Cf. Janke 1963, 139-144 who presents a list of strategic numbers in Memnon as compared with other historians.
- 25 Jacoby *FGrH* 3, p. 269-270; Janke 1963, 12-14; Desideri 1967, 381-392; Desideri 1970-1971, 494-496.
- 26 Translations of ancient texts other than Memnon are those of the *LCL*.
- 27 On which see Dueck 2000a, 101.
- 28 Photios merely lists the themes Memnon dealt with. We cannot but guess Memnon's specific emphases regarding Rome's beginnings, particularly taken that it was rooted in Asia Minor even if Herakleia did not exist at the time.
- 29 Compare Tacitus' thumbnail history of Rome in *Ann.* 1.1 with its emphasis on constitutional developments: kingship, consulship, dictatorships, decemvirate, Cinna, Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, Lepidus, Antony and Augustus.
- 30 Alexander became a model for Roman generals and particularly for Roman emperors who aspired to an *imitatio Alexandri*. See Weippert 1972.
- 31 Cf. Dueck 2000a, 113-115.
- 32 See detailed discussion in Janke 1963, 16-20.
- 33 See similar notions emphasizing the need to choose between Rome and Mithridates and the immoral behaviour of the latter in Paus. 1.20.5; 3.23.3-5; Ath. 5.212A-213C; 12.543A.
- 34 See attempts at identification in Janke 1963, ad loc.
- 35 For various choices of Roman historical persons, see Dueck 2000b.
- 36 Note again the traits of the ideal ruler – and their opposites – in Fears 1981; Wallace-Hadrill 1981 and above pp. 46-48.
- 37 Cf. Braund 1998, esp. 22-23.
- 38 The Herakleians no doubt spoke Greek.
- 39 In other contexts Memnon seems to ascribe significance and dominance to the Roman senate (σύγκλητος). He tends to introduce each significant Roman character with the phrase that he "was sent by the senate". Cf. Janke 1963, 78.
- 40 See discussion in Janke 1963, 45-46.

- 41 Herakleia was an important and prosperous city and sent out several colonies, see Bittner 1998.
- 42 Cf. Braund 1998, 10-24; Braund 2000, esp. 14-22.

