



Re-evaluating the Middle Artaxiad Dynasty:  
A Study on the Later Years of Tigranes and  
those of his Successor Artavasdes.

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## Abstract

The Artaxiad Dynasty gave Armenia both its first real taste of empire and the feeling of defeat and powerlessness in the face of greater powers. Tigranes the Great filled a power vacuum to rapidly expand his borders, creating a kingdom that was for the first time touching both the Caspian and Mediterranean seas. However within a few decades he was defeated by the Romans and confined to his original hereditary kingdom. His son Artavasdes, wedged between the two major powers of Rome and Parthia failed to appease both and ended up in the hands of the Romans to be executed after years of imprisonment.

Thus began Armenia's centuries long position of being the centrepiece of most Near Eastern conflict, with major empires on either side wanting to wrest control of this strategic highland plateau from the other.

Portrayals of people outside of 'Graeco-Roman' cultural norms by those within are rarely positive, thus the way in which the history of the period is weighed down by the prejudices of those who report it. A re-examination is required to understand how these affected the ancient sources, and from them, modern scholarship. While it would be asinine to suggest all bias or prejudices can be taken out of any subject, let alone something as emotive as history, nevertheless identifying those prejudices and where they occur helps us to piece together a more factual version of events.

In this work ancient sources were critiqued by comparing the information contained in them with instances of prejudice previously identified, for example the *topos* of the duplicitous Easterner. By this comparison it may be determined where ancient sources could be allowing themselves to be blinded by their own prejudices.

## Introduction

This scope of this dissertation shall start at the surrender of Tigranes to Pompey, and conclude with the capture of his son, Artavasdes II, by Antony. It builds on my earlier research which explored ways in which prejudice against Tigranes, and indeed the Near East in general, were both evident and, in some cases, filtered down without critique into modern academia.<sup>1</sup>

The most suitable approach for this thesis is to focus on a few selected events, rather than a chronological narrative. The key events cover the period from the end of Armenian involvement in the Third Mithridatic War, up to the capture of Artavasdes by the forces of Antony in the aftermath of the failed expedition against Parthia. Chapter One shall examine Tigranes' surrender, the way it was presented and how cultural differences helped exaggerate events in a manner that was disparaging of Tigranes. In addition, the ambiguous relationship between Rome and Parthia during Pompey's time in the East and the complications that ensued will be explored, combined with how it affected Armenia. In the second chapter scrutiny will be cast over the term 'client kingdom' and its usefulness in modern attempts at understanding ancient relations, and why it is difficult to determine the precise nature of the relationship of Armenia towards Rome following Tigranes' surrender. The final chapter will analyse two major Republican expeditions into Parthia, those of Crassus and Antony, with a view to examine how the ancient sources were unfairly critical of Artavasdes' role and supposed lack of faith in his dealing with the Romans.

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This work develops a view of an earlier dissertation, 'Tigranes the Great: A Reappraisal' Which I completed as part of my Bachelor of the Arts. Orr 2016.

The sources for this period are almost entirely written after the events that transpired and, in the case of the three most heavily used sources, Plutarch, Cassius Dio and Appian, over two centuries separate them from the period. Another similarity between all sources is their Graeco-Roman origin, which Josephus describes as heavily weighted in favour of the Romans.<sup>2</sup> In addition contemporary Armenian accounts do not exist other than as semi-mythological history dating from the fifth century CE, much later than the prominent Graeco-Roman sources.<sup>3</sup> Given that these sources are all that is available the need for these to be critically evaluated is evident.

It would be amiss to not give a historiographical insight into the major sources that shall be used, namely Plutarch, Cassius Dio and Appian. Plutarch's major contribution was a series of lives, describing important figures in antiquity. While Plutarch may have differentiated biographies from histories the difference between the two when viewed from the modern day is less dissimilar.<sup>4</sup> In the biographies of Plutarch, history is made to fit the likely intentions of the subject of the biography. The world around them is changed to fit their agency; facts, such as they are, are distorted to allow the character of the subject to be prominent.<sup>5</sup> Thus it should be kept in mind when utilising Plutarch, that his lives will achieve an overarching plot, that of a particular character development as a key requirement, rather than a faithful retelling of fact.

Appian writes his history in the second century CE and, as such, must rely on older sources and second hand accounts for his understanding of events. While some,

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<sup>2</sup> Jos. *Jewish Antiquities*. 1.1.

<sup>3</sup> Hewson 1986.

<sup>4</sup> Plut. *Alexander*. 1. 'For it is not histories I am writing, but lives.'

<sup>5</sup> Pelling 2011: 143.

like McGing, consider him an objective author in his dealing with his sources, Appian has been accused of allowing too many of his own thoughts and opinions infiltrate his work without accurately relaying the information of his sources.<sup>6</sup> This is less due to a supposed lack of historical integrity and more a consequence of the genre of history in the ancient world, that is descended from that of the epics and 'constructs ... the historian as omniscient, or at least competent and authoritative narrator.'<sup>7</sup> Though this was not a particular fault of Appian, no histories written by historians past or present are devoid of the personal opinions of their authors. What is needed is that care is taken not to take a source as canon just because it is from the time period in question.

Dio professes to have taken 22 years to research and write his history, a work of incredible magnitude, ranging from the founding of the city of Rome to his day in the early third century CE.<sup>8</sup> Appian also wrote his history as a universal history, but on a smaller scale. That Dio wrote in Greek and the style with which the work is written was reminiscent of the earlier Greek writers such as Thucydides, 'Dio clearly saw himself as part of this tradition, especially in his imitation of Thucydides.'<sup>9</sup> This potentially could be done to appear as more authoritative to his peers, given that in a number of periods he is critical of Rome and by tapping into the duality of his identity, that of the Roman Senator and the Greek scholar he could align himself with both the understanding and knowledge of an insider and also seem genuine when he wrote in the manner of Polybius; that of the Greek outsider.<sup>10</sup> This conflicting identity, was he more Greek or Roman, does not alter the fact that he was still writing from a Graeco-Roman perspective with the same prejudices and biases and building his work from the sources

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<sup>6</sup> McGing 1993: 514; Rich 2015: 68.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolai 2011: 14.

<sup>8</sup> Lange & Madsen 2016: 3.

<sup>9</sup> Scott 2018: 15.

<sup>10</sup> Scott 2018: 16-7.

with the same bias.

Generally, in these three sources there is less hostility toward Artavasdes than his father, related to his capture and ill treatment by Antony, this carries over into the modern histories. With this proving the transmission of bias into the modern genre, that the modern scholarship has been more influenced by anti-Antonian propaganda in the ancient sources than the anti-Eastern propaganda, careful critique of modern scholarship is required. Rather than it being a necessity to lay out a detailed examination of the modern scholarship here, instead this shall be considered throughout the dissertation as the need arises.

Our understanding of history is in a constant state of flux, as Bloch put it '... history is neither watchmaking nor cabinet construction. It is an endeavour toward better understanding and, consequently, a thing in movement.'<sup>11</sup> The constant change in opinions regarding Roman imperialism require this updated understanding to be applied to all aspects of the Ancient world. For example now that the notion of 'defensive imperialism' is shunned, this new understanding of the aggressive and expansive nature of Roman foreign policy can be applied to the Armenians allowing a re-interpretation of the 'betrayals' of Artavasdes in terms of Roman failure based on greed and over-extension.<sup>12</sup>

This dissertation aims to further discussion of the negative portrayals of the Artaxiad dynasty of Armenia, namely Tigranes and his son Artavasdes, in the Graeco-Roman tradition. While the Artaxiad dynasty are by no means the only foreign reign to

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<sup>11</sup> Bloch 1992: 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> Lintott 1981.

receive such a treatment, Armenia's position in the geo-political landscape of the Near East, their size, power and strategic positioning geographically led to them being of major interest to the growing powers of Rome and Parthia. The relationship between Rome and Parthia shall also be examined to better understand the way in which this affected Armenia, as, sandwiched between the two, any changes in policy from either side had a direct consequence on Armenian stability.



## Chapter 1: A Complicated Relationship.

The starting point of this dissertation shall be a question of the nature of the alliance between Pompey and Phraates of Parthia: did Pompey persuade Phraates to attack Tigranes' capital of Artaxata, or was the result of Phraates own initiative.<sup>13</sup> As shall be discussed, if Pompey had convinced Phraates to invade on his behalf this would entail some sort of understanding, perhaps a formal alliance, between the two. If, as shall be argued, this was not the case it would more easily explain relations between the two powers as they moved from neutrality to enemies as opposed from allies with a formal treaty. There is some confusion regarding the relationship between Pompey and the Parthian king Phraates III, and how that relationship affected the war with Tigranes. This agreement is only covered in any real detail by Cassius Dio whom modern scholarship tend to take at face value when he states: 'But Pompey anticipated him [Mithridates] by quickly establishing friendship with Phraates on the same terms and persuading the latter to invade promptly the part of Armenia belonging to Tigranes.'<sup>14</sup> This statement is held to mean the following: that Pompey made a treaty with Phraates on the same terms as those offered by Mithridates, and that Phraates is then induced to

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Briefly, between the siege of Tigranocerta which was the ending point of my previous work, Lucullus wintered in Gordyene, in the next year (68 BCE) marching on the Armenian capital, Artaxata. After vainly trying to march to Artaxata and being unable to fight a pitched battle due to Tigranes adopting hit-and-run cavalry tactics, Lucullus was left late in the campaigning season in hostile territory with his troops in revolt. Lucullus was forced to retreat to Mesopotamia besieging and capturing the major city of Nisibis. While this was going on however (in 68BCE), Mithridates was re-occupying Pontus and in the following year (67 BCE) inflicted defeats on the Roman troops left there forcing Lucullus to march from Mesopotamia to Pontus to deal with this renewed front. He could not prevent the defeat of the legate Triarius due, once again, to the resistance of his troops who would not start marching until the spring (of 67BCE). Thus Lucullus could not arrive till later and by mid 67BCE, faced with another difficult battle against the renewed forces of Mithridates and Tigranes, his legions refused to march against them, marching instead west, away from Armenia. Early 67 BCE also brought with it the *Lex Gabinia*, relieving Lucullus of command and replacing him with Pompey, which is the starting point of this work.

14 Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.45.3.

invade Armenia by Pompey.<sup>15</sup> However this reasoning is problematic. The terms offered by Mithridates are not noted in the text, therefore an idea of what the terms were must be gathered from other sources. Where the terms have been mentioned before is in the account of Dio when Mithridates tries to convince the Parthians to join the war on his side. The conditions of the war had not changed to a large degree, while Tigranes had been beaten at Tigranocerta, he and Mithridates had defeated Triarius and his legions in Pontus and Lucullus' troops were in disarray. As such, it would be reasonable to assume that the terms offered by Mithridates to Phraates would be the same as those offered to Phraates' predecessor, Sinatruces, namely the return of disputed land between Armenia and Parthia and Parthian involvement in the war against the Romans.<sup>16</sup>

This assumption however runs into a problem which occurs in the text of Dio. Phraates became the Parthian king in 71-70 BCE, a year or more before the battle of Tigranocerta in 69 BCE. It is only after this battle that Lucullus, in response to Mithridates and Tigranes' sending of envoys, is first recorded as sending envoys to Phraates. This would mean that Sinatruces, the predecessor of Phraates had no part in these discussions for while it has been assumed that the 'king Arsaces' described as Phraates' predecessor was Sinatruces, Dio does actually only refer to this king as 'Arsaces' and after re-evaluation, this could instead be translated not to 'King Arsaces' but instead to the 'Arsacid king', possibly a simple misreading on the part of Dio of his sources.<sup>17</sup> So it may be determined that these terms were not offered to Phraates predecessor, but to Phraates himself, and that they were re-offered to him again around the time of Pompey's taking command. The renewed offer is justified by Dio when earlier he describes how Sinatruces held onto anger towards Tigranes but felt no ill will

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<sup>15</sup> Patterson 2002: 324; Chaumont 2001-2002: 228; Sherwin-White 1984: 190.

<sup>16</sup> Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.1.1.

<sup>17</sup> Manandyan 1940: 110. *Regi Arsaci* as also found in Sallust.

towards the Romans. Thus after the Sinatruces' death Mithridates hoped to be able to convince Phraates to join him due to that previous enmity, embodied in Sinatruces no longer existing.<sup>18</sup> However given that Phraates' predecessor did not reign when the initial offer was sent in, or around, 69BCE, this particular justification is questionable.

The renewed offer on the same terms from Mithridates can still be justified though, but for different reasons. When the initial offer was made after the defeat of Tigranocerta at 69BCE, this would have been within a year or two of Phraates' accession to the throne. The period before his rule was one of the frequent periods of Parthian instability and, as such, he would likely have been unable to join either side even if he had wanted to, thus his neutrality after the initial offer.<sup>19</sup> Phraates would have needed time to consolidate his power and a later offer would have seen Phraates in a stronger position internally which would have allowed him to provide support externally. A second reason, though less probable, would be the replacement of Lucullus with Pompey. Hellenistic diplomacy for the preceding centuries had a strong individual nature to it, a treaty was only to be considered valid while both parties were still alive and in power.<sup>20</sup> The shift in how treaties were perceived would not have happened in a few years, thus the notion of a treaty with an indefinite party such as the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* would not have been one easily countenanced in the east.<sup>21</sup> Indeed as Braund displays in his seminal work, '...the Hellenistic world had long regarded

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18 Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.1.1., 36. 3.2., 36.45.3.

19 Kryśkiewicz 2017: 63; Olbrycht 2009: 178-180.

20 Grainger 2017. Grainger delves into diplomacy between the Hellenistic great powers, a successor to whom was the Parthian kingdom, while predominantly Iranian in culture, the Parthian kingdom also took influence from the Hellenism that had occurred over the preceding two centuries and argued that treaties were only viable in the lifetime of the signatories. Grainger 2017: 75. Similarly an example of this was discussed earlier, in Mithridates renewed attempt at a treaty with Parthia due to the succession of the new king there.

21 Broekaert 2017, Broekaert, whose work admittedly is based on markets and traders, provides a good discussion into the difficulties of changing mental models and this difficulty is hardly lessened in interactions between empires than those of traders.

leading Romans as akin to kings'.<sup>22</sup> How Romans interacted with allies and clients is a subject area that is far from a definitive conclusion, with the Romans and the later Roman writers projecting how they perceived relationships to work onto their relationships with foreign entities.<sup>23</sup> Given the lack of understanding at this point in time as to who the Parthians were or the extent of their power it could be argued that the Romans of the time confused a Parthia seeking friendship as Parthia submitting to Roman patronage. The blurred line of the language of Roman foreign relations, between that of *amicitia* or *patrocinium*, does not aid our understanding of how the Romans really saw Parthia at this point. As Romans believed they had no equals, how could they have friends who were not their subjects to some degree?<sup>24</sup> This thesis will return to the discussion of the 'friendly kings' of Rome at a later stage.<sup>25</sup>

As I have argued, Dio was wrong to suggest that there were two different Parthian kings between Lucullus and Pompey, and his justification of the success of the envoys is not a viable solution. I have proposed an alternative justification for sending the envoys to Parthia for a second time, in the notion that with a change in command on the side of the Romans, to the Hellenistic kingdoms who dealt with individuals, new treaties would need drafting or old treaties renewed. Now the other problematic element shall be examined.

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If the terms offered by Pompey are accepted as the same terms offered by

22 Braund 1984: 84. And how Strabo records the way in which Pompey overruled Lucullus' decisions and changed up Roman diplomacy in the area with him at the centre of it all, would do little to change this image. Strabo. *Geography*. 12.3.33.

23 Sommer 2017: 89 ' -The fact that the Romans took the rationale for their interaction with local dynasts deep from the inventory of relationships that shaped Roman society is significant in itself. It reveals, unmistakably, that this relationship was understood to take shape on strictly personal terms- it was an exclusive bond of loyalty between a local ruler and one individual representing the Roman Empire: a powerful military leader of the sort of Sulla, Pompey or Caesar ... '.

24 Sommer 2017: 88; not necessarily just the Romans but all empires and their elites equate imperial domination with world domination in one way or another.

25 See Chapter Two: 22-23.

Mithridates the second time around, namely the return of disputed land and Parthia joining the side of Mithridates, then it would seem apparent that when Dio describes Pompey as establishing friendship on the same terms he would be referring to these requiring Phraates to enter the war on the side of Pompey instead. This assumption cannot be the case when it is considered that neither of these terms are recorded as being honoured. To start, Pompey is recorded by Dio as convincing Phraates to promptly invade Armenia, yet later in Dio's narrative when Phraates encounters the rebellious son of Tigranes, Tigranes the younger, he hesitates to support the younger Tigranes because of his treaty with Pompey.<sup>26</sup> As Keaveney notes, why would Phraates hesitate to invade Armenia 'in view of the treaty made with Pompey', and have to be persuaded to invade by Tigranes the Younger, given that according to Dio he should already have been invading?<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, the issue of returning of contended land from Tigranes to Phraates which was promised by Mithridates and Tigranes. Following the surrender of Tigranes, Pompey had the opportunity to adjust the territories of the Armenian kingdom. Pompey allows Tigranes only his ancestral kingdom and gives the kingdom of Sophene to Tigranes the Younger, but crucially he does not give the disputed land gained by Tigranes from his earlier Parthian conquests to Phraates, which would have been owed to him.<sup>28</sup> Later this land led to an invasion of Armenia by Phraates which was forced into arbitration by Pompey.

Given that there is no other ancient source that records the details of this

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<sup>26</sup> Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.51.1.

<sup>27</sup> Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.51.1. *contra*. 36. 45.3. Keaveney 1981: 205. Chaumont 2001-2002: 228 also asks this but does not examine further.

<sup>28</sup> Sherwin-White 1984: 194; Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.53.2; Appian. *Mithridatic Wars*. 105. For the issues surrounding what exactly Tigranes the Younger inherited see Chapter Two: 23-25.

agreement, and given the discrepancies in Dio's own account, it must be considered a possibility that the agreement did not encompass a military alliance as it is made to seem in Dio 36.45.3. An alternative position which seems more plausible is that the 'same terms' that Dio is referring to, are the same terms as he earlier records as being the agreement between Lucullus and Phraates.<sup>29</sup> Dio states that Lucullus sent envoys 'with threats, in case he should aid the foe, and promises, if he should choose the Roman side instead.'<sup>30</sup> The Parthian king initially sent envoys back to establish friendship and alliance with Lucullus but changed his mind when he believed that Lucullus' envoy, Sextilius, who was a military man was there 'to spy out the country and his power.'<sup>31</sup> Phraates takes the decision to maintain a stance of neutrality to both sides in the war which can be corroborated with Appian, who states Lucullus sent envoys to Parthia stating that they 'should either help him or remain neutral-'.<sup>32</sup> Given that no Parthian involvement for either side is recorded it is most likely the neutrality path was the one chosen. Thus, to reconcile the inconsistent account of the relationship between Pompey and Phraates found in Dio, I argue that the 'same terms' agreed by Pompey were those offered by Lucullus: threats if he joined Mithridates, benefits if he joined the Romans or otherwise to stay neutral. The only other ancient testimony of the agreement is that of the epitome of Livy, where it is recorded that Pompey 'renewed the friendship with the king of the Parthians', which would lend some credence to the idea that Pompey was simply renewing an acknowledgement of the status quo: that of Parthian neutrality.<sup>33</sup>

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29 This position is argued in Keaveney 1981: 202. However Keaveney believes there to have been an actual treaty (*foedus*) of alliance between Phraates and Lucullus then Pompey. This thesis as has been shown argues there was no ratified treaty as such. Keaveney 1981: 204, trying to disprove the neutrality theory, describes how the Romans would have considered Phraates having friendly relations with Tigranes and Mithridates as a breach of the treaty and an act of serious sacrilege. Yet on the same page argues that his later neutrality would have been seen in a positive light and Pompey could hope for a new treaty ... with the king damned by the gods for breaking his previous *foedus* with Rome?

30 Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.3.1.

31 Dio. *The Roman Histories*. 36.3.2-3. This potentially may not have been the first time Lucullus had sent an envoy for other purposes than just diplomacy. Orr 2016: 24-5, for the episode with Appius Claudius and Tigranes.

32 App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 87.

33 Livy. *Periochae*. 100. Debevoise 1938: 72, while only briefly going over the events also posits the

Phraates' hesitation about invading Armenia because it would anger Pompey given their treaty would only make sense if Phraates was not already a belligerent in the war.

Evidently this record of the Romano-Parthian relationship suffers from the same problems as other events of the time, namely inconsistent and fragmentary accounts of the period that do not fully corroborate one another. Plutarch's account of the Lucullan treaty with Parthia stands alone, in that it states Parthia were the ones who sent the envoys to both sides to gain an alliance with both parties.<sup>34</sup> Memnon of Heraclea describes how it was Tigranes, not Mithridates, who sent envoys to the Parthian king, stating that he would return all contested land to him, but does not record what this is in return for, though presumably this would be participation in the war.<sup>35</sup> Memnon goes on and states Lucullus had also sent Phraates envoys and that Phraates had secretly accepted both requests for friendship and alliance. In both cases, given the Parthian consistency in their position of neutrality, this account would only make sense if what is meant by friendship with both, was friendly relations and neutrality.

As has been argued, the relationship between Rome and Parthia was one of neutrality, which left Armenia in an uncomfortable position of being on the back foot in a war with one power, and unable to bring the other major power onto their side. With the inability to bring Parthia onside this left them open to fighting their current war while worrying about the possibility of a new front being opened to their east, as indeed occurred later with the Tigranes the Younger episode. Tigranes was left in the middle of two great powers, both hostile towards him, one currently at war with him and the other

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neutrality argument.

34 Plutarch. *Life of Lucullus*. 30.1; Keaveney 1981: 200 deals with why Plutarch has a different story to the other sources.

35 Photius. *Codices*. 223-229. 38.8.

still smarting over the loss of territories taken by Tigranes a few decades earlier. There is no wonder that within a year of the agreement of the neutral relationship between Rome and Parthia Tigranes capitulates to the side which he believes will treat him fairer, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.



## Chapter 2: Surrender and Aftermath.

This chapter will look into the state of affairs after Tigranes the Great surrenders to Pompey and ends Armenian involvement in the Mithridatic wars. Specifically, it will address the surrender of Tigranes and how fair a portrayal it is, given how frequently customs and actions by 'foreign' kings are misinterpreted in a negative light. Following this, it will be determining to what extent Armenia was a client kingdom of Rome, as we understand the term, and what this meant in practical terms.

The polarity of the different government types and cultural traditions between that of the Romans and the kingdoms of the Near East, led to a number of interpretations of Tigranes from later Roman sources that were unfavourable if not outright hostile.<sup>36</sup> As I have previously argued in the example of the four 'vassal kings' of Tigranes who supposedly followed his horse on foot and attended on him.<sup>37</sup> Due to this pernicious lack of cultural understanding it would be amiss not to re-evaluate the evidence of the rest of Rome's encounters with Tigranes .

It is again Plutarch who paints the pitiful picture of the Armenian king who had 'been crushed by Lucullus', even though when Lucullus ended his campaign and was recalled to Rome, his troops were in rebellion and was losing ground to Mithridates.<sup>38</sup> This king, Tigranes, then surrenders himself to Pompey and '-most humiliatingly of all,

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36 Garsoian 2004: 58. '... the Romans, who invariably viewed Tigran with hostility as a haughty and arrogant Oriental monarch.' Erskine 1991: 118. 'Not only were such kings seen as a threat ... They exercised an arbitrary and absolute power incompatible with the kind of constitutional government which existed in Rome.'

37 Orr 2016: 22-3.

38 Plut. *Pompey*. 33.2. See footnote 13.

would have thrown himself down and clasped his knees in supplication.<sup>39</sup> This episode is worded by Plutarch to denigrate the foreign king Tigranes and to show Pompey as a magnanimous victor who, 'caught him by the hand and drew him forward'.<sup>40</sup> That this was a respectful act by Pompey is not disputed, however this dissertation would argue this is Plutarch improperly describing the Eastern custom of *proskynesis* as an act of utter humiliation due to Graeco-Roman ideas around the practice and also that Pompey's reaction had just as much to do with these sensibilities as genuine concern for the respectability of the King.

The cultural issues between East and West around the custom of *proskynesis* had a long-standing history up till this point. From Sperthias and Bulis, in Herodotus, who when commanded to fall down and bow to the king said they would not as it was not their custom to bow to mortal men, to the controversy in the court of Alexander to his introduction of *proskynesis* to his court.<sup>41</sup> This issue was one that led to a number of misinterpretations of the Eastern custom and what its significance was. The single biggest being that as the Greeks reserved obeisance for only the gods, the Persians and their successors must then believe their kings to be as gods to do obeisance to them, in the Alexander debacle the debate into the introduction of *proskynesis* came at the same time as the discussion into the divinity of Alexander. Choksy argues there is an aspect of translation error involved, 'the Greeks associated *proskynesis* with *prospíptō* "prostrate oneself" and understood the term as "make obeisance"'.<sup>42</sup> This translation error created a entirely different idea in the Greek world of the popular understanding of this ritual and, as these things do, a negative stereotype was built regarding what was conceived as the

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39 Plut. *Pompey*. 33.3.

40 Plut. *Pompey*. 33.4.

41 Her. *The Histories*. 7.135; Ruf. *The History of Alexander*. 6.6.3.

42 Choksy 1990: 202.

'other' further fuelled by a lack of understanding from those who propagated these ideas over time, '... Greek authors used concepts which had long been applied in the Greek language but were not always exact equivalents of Persian terms.'<sup>43</sup> This misunderstanding was aided by the Achaemenids, however, given that while they were not divinities themselves, they were messengers to the gods and protectors of the realm blessed by the divine; 'They could be understood only in their intimate relationships with the divine.'<sup>44</sup> This close relationship did little to dissuade the notion that the kings were as Gods to the Eastern peoples, and when they conducted *proskynesis* they were prostrating to what they believed were Gods, therefore Greeks should not adopt this custom, not because they never prostrated themselves but because they only did so to Gods which they believed kings were not. These two issues compounded to create the misinterpretation of the process of *proskynesis*.

Plutarch has evidently, whether purposefully or not, misinterpreted this gesture in order to cast Tigranes in a more negative way than in reality was the case. Dio describes the same scene by describing the physical actions of *proskynesis* but not referring to the term, 'he [Pompey] saw him ... prostrate himself on the ground to do him obeisance'.<sup>45</sup> Dio otherwise gives a relatively sympathetic picture of Tigranes in that he supposedly attempted to dress in a 'manner midway between his former dignity and his present humbled state'.<sup>46</sup> However, Dio states that Pompey sent lictors to order him to dismount on approach to the camp, something also mentioned by Plutarch. Appian primarily says, however, that Pompey sent out 'Tribunes and Prefects of horse to meet him on the road, as an act of courtesy', following this up by saying that there are others

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<sup>43</sup> Dabrowa 2014: 158.

<sup>44</sup> Llewellyn-Jones 2014: 21.

<sup>45</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 36.52.3.

<sup>46</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 36.52.2.

'who relate that he was led up by lictors', before moving on without examining the truthfulness of either events.<sup>47</sup> Appian has a seemingly less negative way of describing Tigranes, in addition to the act of courtesy just mentioned, he also acknowledges that *proskynesis* is a foreign concept and looked down upon as 'Tigranes came forward, however, and prostrated himself before Pompey as his superior, in barbarian fashion'.<sup>48</sup> Appian while not mentioning the name of the custom, alluded to the fact that it was indeed a custom, even if one among 'barbarians', and not simply a grovelling humiliation as Plutarch would make out.<sup>49</sup>

Then comes the issue of Pompey's reaction to Tigranes' *proskynesis*, which as mentioned was respectful, but there may have other reasons for Pompey not wishing to have Tigranes prostrated at his feet. As mentioned the western world had issues with *proskynesis*, for the Greeks it was impious, but for the Romans it was a sign of tyranny, with intimations of monarchy, to which Romans were staunchly opposed.<sup>50</sup> The example of Tiberius, who fell over in his efforts to avoid a senator trying to embrace his knees, shows how carefully the heads of the Roman state, be it the *triumvirate* or the *principate*, tried to prevent an image forming of them of that of the monarchical tyrant.<sup>51</sup> Pompey in the wake of the *Lex Manilia*, had what was believed to be near complete control over the Roman state, with fears as to the tyrannical consequences of such an accumulation of power.<sup>52</sup> Pompey would have known that this power would those who believed in its potential for nefarious means, as Plutarch notes, '... they were, however,

47 App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 104.

48 App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 104.

49 Without engaging too much in *quellenforschung*, the reasons for a disparity between the three sources in their treatment of a single meeting are the difference in the source material of the writers. Dio, Appian and Plutarch are all writing in the second century CE and must use older sources for their works, Manandyan 1940: 147, citing Reinach posits the different sources of these three historians.

50 Bang 2011: 104.

51 Suet. *Tiberius*. 27.

52 Wijlick 2013: 34-36 for an overlook of the actualities of Pompey's remit under the *Lex Manilia*. The idea that Pompey conceived a scheme to gain this power in the way it happened is rightly pooh-poohed by Williams 1984: 230.

displeased at the power given to Pompey, which they regarded as establishing a tyranny ...'.<sup>53</sup> Thus when Pompey was on the receiving end of Tigranes' *proskynesis*, a self-proclaimed king of kings, ruler of the Armenian empire and the powerful backer of one of the Roman Republics greatest threats, he was well aware that revelling in his power at that moment, may be seen as or used to attack him later as the makings of him as a tyrant.<sup>54</sup> So while Pompey was indeed raising Tigranes back up to some vestige of his former self and the reasons for doing so, that of a strong independent Armenia in the East were all there, his refusal to accept *proskynesis* should also be seen through the context of the receiver.<sup>55</sup>

After the submission of Tigranes to Pompey, comes the issue of what exactly was the status of Armenia following the conclusion of peace with Pompey. In the same vein as those Greek authors who translated the language around *proskynesis* even though no equivalent was adequate in the Greek language, so to did western scholars take the language of *clientelae* and translate it into modern terminology even though there is not a proper equivalent.<sup>56</sup> The idea that even though there are not adequate parallels in terminology, this terminology should still be used is argued in Badian, though the oft-cited passage of Millar proves the impotency of this argument.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Plut. *Pompey*. 30.3.

<sup>54</sup> Similarly the *proskynesis* episode in Plutarch especially is staged by the writer, who was writing during the height of the Roman empire to be in contrast to the earlier issues with Alexander and *proskynseis*. *Aemulatio Alexandri* was a consistent explanation for the deeds of a number of Roman major figures, and Plutarch continuously raises comparisons between Alexander in his life of Pompey, Plut. *Pompey*. 2.1-2.: 34.5: 46.1. Thus the refusal of *proskynesis* by Tigranes as portrayed by Plutarch should be seen in the context of Pompey epitomizing good Roman virtue, as opposed to the orientalization of Alexander and his adoption of *proskynesis*. 'Alexander was both a positive paradigm of military success and a negative paradigm for immoral excess'. Whitmarsh 2002: 175. For the most recent coverage of the legacy of Alexander in Ancient thought see Nabel 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Sherwin-White 1984: 193 argues what seems to be the more argued view as to why Pompey raises Tigranes to his feet in that he was using it 'to make a spectacular demonstration of Roman Policy.'

<sup>56</sup> See Sands 1975 or Luttwak 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Badian 1968: 14-5; Millar 1984: 17 For a more recent deconstruction around ancient uses of the terms *patrocinium* and *clientelae* from which the idea of client kings is drawn see Wijlick 2013: 24-32.

It can even be claimed that we are entitled to apply to societies the now established common language (or sociological) use of terms like “clientage” and “patronage” without regard to the presence, or precise use, of equivalent terms in the society in question. But to say that is to say that curiosity about the exact nuances of ancient social and political relationship is superfluous.<sup>58</sup>

The intricacies of modern politics and diplomatic landscape do not allow a blanket definition of what does or does not define a client state, so it would be modern hubris to assume the ancient world had greatly simpler international relations than today.<sup>59</sup> With this unhelpful terminology discredited, how Armenia compared to other kingdoms in the Near East with regards to their treatment by Rome can be investigated.

Following Tigranes' surrender to Pompey came Pompey's division of the collapsing Armenian empire. The empire of Tigranes was one that had no real commonalities, other than Tigranes himself.<sup>60</sup> With his initial defeat by Lucullus a number of defections occurred, especially among his more recently conquered areas to the south. What was left of his empire upon his surrender was then dismembered by Pompey and he was confined to his 'hereditary domain'.<sup>61</sup> One minor issue with the sources arises here, and that is the issue of Gordyene (or Gorduene). All the sources are clear that the province of Sophene, one of the first to be taken by Tigranes was given to

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<sup>58</sup> Millar 1984: 17.

<sup>59</sup> To further prove that blanket terminology can be unhelpful in any understanding of international relations, Merriam-Webster defines a client state as 'a country that is economically, politically, or militarily dependant on another country'. By this terminology the United Kingdom has been a client state of the United State of America due to its military dependency, indeed just as all other members of NATO. However this belies the realities on the ground, how subservient members of NATO are to a supposed patron, N.B the UK's vote to condemn the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem.

Merriam-Webster. 'Client State'. [Accessed 11/07/18]

ITV. 'Britain Backs Security Council Vote Condemning Move to Recognize Jerusalem as Israel's Capital' 2017. [Accessed 11/07/18]

Wheatcroft, G. 'Britain is a US Client State and Should not Forget it, says the Neocons' Oracle'. 2007. [Accessed 11/07/18]

NATO Press release, 29/06/2017 page 5. [Accessed 11/07/18].

<sup>60</sup> Garsoian 2004: 59. Manandian 1951: 9.

<sup>61</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 53.2.

his rebellious son, Tigranes the Younger, in Pompey's reorganisation. Appian however believes that Gordyene was also given to Tigranes the Younger, and this has led to inconclusive speculation as to the claim's validity.<sup>62</sup> One argument against this is that Appian gets his geography wrong, he asserts that Gordyene is also called Armenia Minor, which was the other side of the country. Wijlick believes does not necessarily invalidate the argument though no conclusive proof has been given and points out the majority of scholarship 'uncritically followed the tradition transmitted by Plutarch and Dio'.<sup>63</sup>

Given that Gordyene is also described as containing the '70 valleys' that Tigranes traded for his ability to ascend to the throne, these would technically have been part of his hereditary domain.<sup>64</sup> Given they were later a cause of a dispute between Tigranes and Phraates, where Phraates invades to press his claim to them, they must have been under Tigranes' control. Thus, if there were some ambiguity as to the placement of these valleys for if they were both part of Gordyene, but also part of Tigranes' hereditary kingdom, he would not have been required to give them up. When Appian then says Tigranes the Younger was given both Sophene and Gordyene, he may in fact mean these valleys, without referring to the fact that they were part of Tigranes' hereditary kingdom, and so divorced from the rest of Gordyene that was given up following his surrender to Pompey. Given the speed with which Tigranes the Younger then proceeded to lose title to this land, he would have made no impact on these areas, for example having coins minted, that would provide numismatic evidence that could be used to determine this any further. Whether or not Tigranes the Younger was or was not given Gordyene in

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<sup>62</sup> App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 105.

<sup>63</sup> Wijlick 2013: 41.

<sup>64</sup> Gordyene containing the '70 valleys' see Sherwin-White 1984: 223; for Tigranes trading these see Strab. *Geography*. 11.14.15.

addition to Sophene, they were soon both held by the elder Tigranes once again.<sup>65</sup>

The settlement reached by Tigranes with Pompey was not unique, almost the exact same treaty was reached between Mithridates and Sulla at the conclusion of the First Mithridatic war.<sup>66</sup> There were obviously different circumstances between the two, even though Mithridates supposedly put to death tens of thousands of Italians in Asia Minor, peace was made with a treaty not too severe due to Sulla needing to make a hasty conclusion to be able to focus on his civil war with Marius. Whereas with Pompey and Tigranes, while the indemnity paid was considered sizeable, given the totality of Tigranes' defeat there is a definite emphasis from Pompey of the importance of friendship for the future.

It may be that there is no record of it explicitly being asked for by Tigranes, but his being given the title *rex sociusque et amicus* without him making a direct request for it is a great honour.<sup>67</sup> It is likely the honour was not that great, however, more a formality to further ensure the lasting dependence of Tigranes on Rome rather than Parthia or other regional partners. Tigranes paid as a sizeable indemnity, six thousand talents to Pompey, the same figure that Ptolemy Auletes is recorded as paying to Caesar and Pompey in return for his recognition as a 'friendly king'. That this figure is recorded as being volunteered by Tigranes rather than demanded by Pompey may be an attempt to hide that the title of *rex sociusque et amicus* was a transaction rather than a honour freely given.<sup>68</sup> Only Appian records the money being given without duress and while

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65 Appian claims they were both given to Ariobarzanes however this can be seen to be false given later Cicero says the boundary of Cappadocia was the Euphrates. App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 105; c.f. Cic. *Ad Familiares*. 15.2.; 15.3; 15.4.

66 App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 55; Phot. *Codices*. 223-229. 25. 2.

67 Braund 1984: 24. Dio. *Roman Histories*. 36.53.2.

68 Tigranes indemnity, App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 104, ; Ptolemy's payment to Caesar, Suet. *Divus Julius*. 54.3. Sullivan 1990: 282 believes the money was to ensure his receipt of the title.



both Plutarch and Dio state that Pompey demands it, only Dio states he was told by Pompey he was a friend of Rome before demanding the money.<sup>69</sup> Likely the fact there are three different accounts from our three main sources may be due to the sources of these later writers not being privy to the negotiations or the lack of importance given to the order of events. Knowing which came first however would help in better understanding of the mood of the proceedings, though does not change the outcome which may explain the lack of interest in a precise description of the proceedings. Though Tigranes kept his kingdom and became a 'friendly king' it does not indicate an amicable nature to the meeting.

Pompey would never have allowed Tigranes the Younger with a record of shifting alliances to the throne at that time and as Sherwin-White put it Pompey, '... had no intention of sacrificing the old king to the ambition of his graceless son ...'.<sup>70</sup> Tigranes the Younger was the son-in-law of the Parthian king, and a Parthian backed Armenia would be a hazard to Roman power in the region.<sup>71</sup> Pompey would have known that Rome's control over Armenia was fleeting, the best they could do at this stage is a 'soft-power' approach, Armenia was in the first century BCE logistically beyond the reach of long term Roman occupation. As shown by the farcical nature of the information available to Cicero in his tenure as pro magistrate of Cilicia in an invasion of Syria by Parthia, 'doubts emerge about who exactly has invaded Syria and then later, whether the enemy has withdrawn'.<sup>72</sup> This occurred just over a decade after Pompey's settlement in the east, with the invasion occurring, not just in the kingdom of a friendly king but in that of a Roman province. Thus Pompey would have likely been

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<sup>69</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 36.52.4; Plut. *Pompey*. 33.4-5 ... Paternus states the money was 'compelled' but does not provide a chronology to whether the money or the friendship was first, likely due to the concise nature of his work. Pat. *Roman History*. 2.37.5.

<sup>70</sup> Sherwin-White 1984: 195.

<sup>71</sup> Plut. *Life of Pompey*. 33.6.

<sup>72</sup> Mattern 1999: 68.

thinking of the best way to maintain control of an area far outside the realistic reach of Rome at the time given the rate at which Roman influence had expanded in the Near East without any real consolidation and the question of how to govern all of Asia Minor not yet decided. The initial appointment of Tigranes the Younger as king of Sophene was likely to ensure that Tigranes had some sort of threat to his throne nearby to ensure his future loyalty.<sup>73</sup> Similarly after Tigranes the Younger displeased Pompey and was taken into Roman custody the fact that he was not disposed of after Pompey's triumph was similarly designed to hold some influence over a king who was outside immediate Roman control.<sup>74</sup> Wijlick notes that the enrolling of Tigranes among the friends and allies of the Roman people was done by Pompey as he regarded Tigranes as a reliable ruler dependant on Rome and in the account of Dio who specifically mentions this act, the title of *rex sociusque et amicus* was conferred only after Tigranes the Younger's imprisonment by Pompey.<sup>75</sup>

The settlement of Pompey for Tigranes is considered a relatively good conclusion as Garsoian states 'the situation was by no means desperate'.<sup>76</sup> This newfound friendship was fleeting though as Pompey gave no aid to Tigranes when he was invaded by Phraates over their joint claim over Gordyene. Given Rome's continuous support for their 'friendly' king of Cappadocia, Ariobarzanes I, this lack of support for Tigranes would have been a shock for the king who had spent so much money and time on ensuring Rome's friendship.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Similarly much is made of the reasons for Pompey's foray into the Caucasus and the need for a better control of Armenia through their surrounding by Roman allies thus limiting their ability to re-gain their former strength, Patterson discusses this further. Patterson 2002.

<sup>74</sup> Though Appian states that the other hostages in the triumph were not executed contrary to tradition except for Tigranes the Younger and Aristobolus, this is definitely false given Tigranes the Younger's re-emergence in the Clodius Pulcher debacle. App. *Mithridatic War*. 117. For Clodius Pulcher see, Allen 2006: 117.

<sup>75</sup> Wijlick 2013: 43.

<sup>76</sup> Garsoian 2004: 59. Dabrowa 2006: 348-349, who expresses the view that the Roman had less influence in Armenia than the friendly intonations of their kings made them believe.

<sup>77</sup> Dio. *Roman History*. 36. 53.5 'From Tigranes he received plenty of everything and far more money

Nevertheless, to follow on from what was discussed in Chapter One, that of the neutrality between Phraates and the Roman commanders, there could be a reason for Pompey's inaction. The agreements between Phraates and Lucullus and Pompey were of neutrality with Rome, not one of friendship and alliance based on Phraates involving himself in the war between the Romans and Mithridates. That Phraates hesitated when induced to invade Armenia by Tigranes the Younger is some evidence for this, and when he does invade it is to support Tigranes the Younger against Tigranes, thus not involving the Romans and thus not breaking any neutrality with Rome.<sup>78</sup> When it is evident that Tigranes the Elder is holding out for longer than anticipated and will not surrender, Phraates withdraws leaving Tigranes the Younger with 'a part of the force'. Phraates would be aware that as Pompey had dealt with Mithridates and forced him to the Bosphorus, Pompey would then be turning his attention to Armenia, the only major kingdom left fighting him. Only if the part of the force Tigranes the Younger is recorded as having been given by Phraates were Armenian nobles, and their entourage then when Pompey turned his attention to Armenia, there would be no Parthian troops for Pompey to encounter.<sup>79</sup> Now this whole notion of Phraates wrangling some way of maintaining his neutrality in this convoluted way is only needed if Dio's narrative is accepted, that there is indeed an invasion by Phraates in support of Tigranes the Younger, neither Appian nor Plutarch mention such an invasion occurring. Appian states that Tigranes the Younger waged war on his father *before* fleeing to Phraates, Plutarch just mentions a rebellious son.<sup>80</sup>

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than had been agreed upon.'

78 That Phraates was trying to snatch an easy victory without having taken part in these wars is not debated but instead that he was being Machiavellian diplomatically, which could be an explanation for the derision shown to him by Pompey in their later dealings together. Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.

79 Keaveney 1981: 206.

80 App. *Mithridatic wars*. 104; Keaveney 1981: 205-6 discusses the notion that Dio merges this invasion with a later one, though he disagrees with this theory.

Given Phraates later is evidently still concerned with staying on good terms with Rome and Pompey, it would be pointless for him to have thrown any diplomatic niceties out the window by giving Tigranes the Younger Parthian troops for a half-hearted attempt at taking out his rival in Armenia. Given the potential reasons to re-analyse the Dio passage and that the other sources for the events do not mention an invasion I consider it highly likely that whatever the events, Phraates was still in a position of neutrality with Pompey after Tigranes surrenders to him.

This neutrality of Phraates is next touched on while Phraates is requesting a renewal of the treaty with Pompey. He sends his request following the success that Pompey was having and it was here that Pompey treats Phraates with derision for, if the older school of thought of 'defensive imperialism' is discounted in favour of the current discourse around Roman foreign policy.<sup>81</sup> In almost all engagements with the Parthians over the Roman period, the Romans are the aggressors. Thus when Pompey sends Afranius to take back control of the territory of Gordyene without waiting for a reply from Phraates, followed by Afranius marching 'contrary to the agreement made with the Parthian' through Mesopotamia, these actions should be seen as examples of the domineering attitude of the Romans.<sup>82</sup> This is why Phraates later rebukes Pompey about his conduct 'so that Pompey was both ashamed and alarmed'.<sup>83</sup> Though while the terms couched in this episode do refer to a treaty, this does not necessarily equate to a proper *foedus* as has been argued throughout this work. As such Pompey has been censured by Dio in the text '... indicating very clearly to those desiring to indulge their greed that everything depends on armed force, and that he who is victorious by its aid wins

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<sup>81</sup> Lintott 1981.

<sup>82</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.5.5.

<sup>83</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.5.

inevitable the right to lay down whatever laws he pleases.'<sup>84</sup> Though notably there seems to be no intonation as to Pompey's sacrilege for breaking a *foedus*, given the lengths Polybius goes to in an earlier episode with the 'Treaty of Philinus' prove no such treaty existed, it must be assumed that with only a moralistic censure on an abuse of power, Pompey had only broken an informal neutrality agreement.<sup>85</sup> Hence Phraates' increased wish after Tigranes' surrender to formalise the treaty with Pompey which brings with it the first request for the Euphrates' to be the delineation line between the two powers.<sup>86</sup> This act of Pompey' was less an act of war than of disrespect, similar to his calling Phraates 'king' instead of king of kings. Pompey was testing the boundaries of the relationship with the Parthians to see what could be taken and how far he could go.<sup>87</sup> At this point the knowledge on both sides about the other were likely slim, the thing that would be looming on either mind would be that Rome had beaten Tigranes, the same Tigranes who had repeatedly defeated the Parthians. Parthia would be wary at this new potentially superior neighbour and the Romans would see Parthia as less than that which they had already conquered. It is unlikely that Pompey had any plans to actually invade or declare war with Parthia however, not wanting to make the same mistakes as Lucullus and also characteristically maintaining a semblance of lawful legitimacy, he ruled out this war on the grounds it was not within his remit.<sup>88</sup>

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84 Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.1.

85 Eckstein 2010. For a brief summary, Philinus was a historian from Sicily whose home city was destroyed by the Romans in the Punic wars, he wrote a history which included a treaty between Roman and Carthage, the terms of which meant the Romans had broken the treaty when they helped the Mamertines. Polybius dedicates a portion of his work to disproving this treaty existed.

86 For the question of the Euphrates being the boundary of the Roman and Parthian Empire see Sherwin-White 1984: 222-3.

87 Keaveney 1981: 211-2.

88 Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.5. Wijlick argues that while some limit may have been set on Pompey's powers it is not clear what that was and uses the example that there is no complaint when Pompey interferes with Judea and Nabataea even though Wijlick believes these to be outside of Tigranes' empire. Firstly Tigranes was potentially active in the region according to the testimony of Josephus and as such Judea could be considered under his influence somewhat. Similarly 'arabs' are recorded as being apart of Tigranes' army at Tigranocerta, these may potentially have been Nabateans and any attack planned against them could be made on the same grounds as his earlier attacks against the kingdoms of the Caucasus mountains. Wijlick 2013: 35; Jos. *Jewish Antiquities*. 13.419-421; Plut. *Lucullus*. 25.5-26.4.

To return to the matter at hand, while the neutrality between Pompey and Phraates had been strained, it had not been broken. Afranius received no resistance from Parthian troops in his retaking of Gordyene and, during his march to Syria, Pompey had also likely left Armenia.<sup>89</sup> Thus when Phraates received Pompey's earlier snub brought back by his envoys, he invaded Gordyene and defeated Tigranes in battle, who had no Roman support. As there were no Roman troops, Phraates had maintained his neutrality and I believe this allowed Phraates the moral authority to chastise Pompey for Afranius breaking the truce and his overall bellicose attitude.<sup>90</sup> Thus Pompey, rather than become embroiled in a conflict he did not want, announced he would send mediators who resolved the issue and 'saved honour on both sides and which he must have known the king would accept.'<sup>91</sup> Phraates was willing to accept this mediation even though the terms were not to his advantage as he wished to exploit the downturn in relations between Tigranes and Pompey for future gain.<sup>92</sup>

Pompey's actions almost caused Rome to enter into conflict with a new foe, one who would become the only real rival to them for the next few centuries. This episode with Pompey was just the setting of the scene for later wars, and in relation to Armenia, these power-plays on either side was the beginning of their position of the middle-ground between these two powers.

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<sup>89</sup> Plut. *Pompey*. 39.3; App. *Mithridatic wars*. 106; Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.5.

<sup>90</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.6.5. Pompey was 'ashamed and alarmed' by Phraates' chastisement.

<sup>91</sup> Keaveney 1981: 212.

<sup>92</sup> Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.7.3-4.

### Chapter 3: Well-intentioned Betrayal?

With the exit of Pompey the Near East stayed relatively stable for the next decade, with nothing of note occurring in Armenia. Tigranes reigned until at least 56 BCE as Cicero's *pro Sestio* attests.<sup>93</sup> However by the next year his son, Artavasdes (Artabazes in Dio) had ascended to the throne, and it is he, and his treatment, that are the main subject of this final chapter.

Within a year of Artavasdes taking the throne, his loyalty to Rome was put to the test and, according to Plutarch, broken. Crassus was to invade Parthia in 54-53 BCE and in doing so shift the balance of power in the Roman Near East. In 54 BCE Crassus mostly occupied a relatively small area of Mesopotamia east of the Euphrates, largely the cities left over from the fall of the Seleucid Empire which may have felt more Hellenistic, and thus closer to Rome, than Parthian.<sup>94</sup> Dio criticises Crassus for not pressing on at this point and allowing the Parthians time to gather their troops, but Sherwin-White argues this was his groundwork for the next year and that Crassus' mindset was that of an infantry man fighting an infantry army. With the geography of the region, from the area of Syria eastwards and south into Babylonia all movement of large quantities of men must be done via the river valleys of the Euphrates, Tigris or their tributaries. Thus, as noted by Sherwin-White, Crassus taking the area up to Carrhae covered both the nearby tributary and gave another layer of protection to the

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<sup>93</sup> Cic. *Pro Sestio*. 27.

<sup>94</sup> For instance the allusion to the help received by Afranius in his march to Syria from Armenia mentioned above, during this march he is saved from his troubles by Macedonian settlers at Carrhae, the same Carrhae occupied by Crassus in this starting move of his campaign. Dio. *Roman Histories*. 37.5.5 & 40.13.

Euphrates, protecting Crassus' supply chain as he made his way down the Euphrates.<sup>95</sup>

This was however a plan for an infantry army like the one Crassus commanded, not a smaller and highly mobile force like the one led by Surenas against him. Likely this is what led to the first disagreement between Artavasdes and Rome.

Artavasdes came to Crassus with six thousand horsemen and promised more with the suggestion that Crassus should march through the friendly lands of Armenia which would have terrain better suited for infantry combat, which the Romans excelled in, as opposed to cavalry combat, which the Parthians excelled in. As has been mentioned previously, the question of what exactly the relationships between Rome and their 'client kings' actually constituted will never have a definitive answer.<sup>96</sup> ' Their relationship [patron-client] was not to be based on legal responsibilities, but on moral duties... a high degree of caution should be applied to the labelling of allied kings as *clientes*, since this label implies moral obligations which were mutual.'<sup>97</sup> Though as Braund notes it is in the Romans interests to intervene militarily on behalf of their allied kings this was not always the case, such as an example discussed earlier, Pompey not intervening militarily on behalf of Tigranes after Phraates' invasion.<sup>98</sup> Similarly as Wijlick posits, there is no reason to *a priori* assume that a king becoming an *amici* would necessitate an obligation on that king to support Rome militarily to any fixed degree (though most allied kings would do).<sup>99</sup> Thus Artavades committing 16,000 cavalry and 30,000 footmen, according to Plutarch's figures, would be as remarked by Prantl, almost the complete Armenian army at the time and while as just mentioned there is no reason to assume Artavasdes was expected to offer a contingent, this greatly

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<sup>95</sup> Sherwin-White 1984: 282-4.

<sup>96</sup> Chapter Two: 22-23.

<sup>97</sup> Kaizer & Facella 2010: 19-20.

<sup>98</sup> Braund 1984: 182-3.

<sup>99</sup> Wijlick 2013: 57.



exceeds even what would be considered a reasonable contribution.<sup>100</sup> As Prantl notes, this is due to his being in a buffer state situation between Rome and Parthia, and likely his way of throwing his hat in the ring on the side of the Romans.<sup>101</sup> He had previously seen them defeat his father who had been in a much stronger position, so he likely believed they would defeat the Parthians rather easily.

With the rejection of Artavasdes' advice for Crassus' original plan, Artavasdes returns to Armenia and is confronted by the main bulk of the Parthian army, invading via the Araxes valley. Sherwin-White claims that while Crassus rejected his plan for a joint march through Armenia he did acknowledge that Artavasdes should protect the Araxes valley route from the Parthians and sent him back with his troops, though Sherwin-White does not provide evidence for this.<sup>102</sup> As there is no mention of the 6,000 Armenian cavalry in Crassus' later battles it does seem likely that the troops went back with Artavasdes. At this point in Plutarch occurs the accusation of betrayal by Artavasdes that stems from a willingness to associate Eastern peoples as duplicitous and self-serving as they are barbarians without real Graeco-Roman values or culture.<sup>103</sup> Even though it is evident that the only reason Artavasdes in this episode does not support Crassus and send him the promised troops, which amounted to nigh on the full Armenian army, was due to the invasion of Armenia by the bulk of the Parthian army.<sup>104</sup> Yet Plutarch still makes Crassus curse Artavasdes' treachery and exclaim that he would be punished for this. As Artavasdes faced the choice of defend his land or allow it to be plundered completely, it is no surprise he chose to defend his kingdom. Even if he had still sent his army to Crassus it would have enabled Parthia immediate access to the

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<sup>100</sup>Plut. *Crassus*. 19.1. Prantl 2008: 94.

<sup>101</sup>Prantl 2008: 92-94.

<sup>102</sup>Sherwin-White 1984: 286.

<sup>103</sup>Orr 2016: 22-3.

<sup>104</sup>Plut. *Crassus*. 22.2-3. Dio. *Roman Histories*. 40.16.2.

route Artavasdes suggested to Crassus, cutting him off from his supply lines and Syria. So Plutarch's writing of this episode does not make sense, unless it is considered in the context of the writer and his Graeco-Roman values.

The hostile tradition towards Artavasdes is not solely Plutarch's disdain of the 'other' but it has been argued has also been compounded by his source material, namely that of Q. Dellius who accompanied Antony into Parthia and wrote a history of the expedition.<sup>105</sup>

The nature of the life of Crassus itself can help to explain the hostile nature of Crassus towards Artavasdes, as Chlup notes, the life of Crassus is a seemingly out of place and irregular part of the Roman lives of the mid-first century BCE, and he goes on to state that the reason for this was because it was an afterthought for Plutarch.<sup>106</sup> The other lives of the time, Pompey, Caesar, Antony etc. were all written first and Crassus was added at the end because the main purpose of the work was to support the other lives of the Late Republic, for example to develop how the rivalry and breakdown in relations between Caesar and Pompey occurred.<sup>107</sup> Chlup specifically believes that this life was written after Plutarch's life of Antony and that the terse nature of the coverage of first half of Crassus' life and the greater length of second containing the single narrative element of the Parthian expedition means the emphasis is meant to be on the second half. This second half ends at the point that the Parthian narrative in Antony starts, thus showing they should be viewed together.<sup>108</sup> With this in mind a reasoning of why Plutarch makes Crassus claim treachery on the part of Artavasdes can be produced,

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<sup>105</sup>Patterson 2015: 80-81. As later shall be seen, those Romans who took part in Antony's expedition believed, rightfully or wrongly, that Artavasdes had betrayed them.

<sup>106</sup>Chlup 2013.

<sup>107</sup>Chlup 2013: 111-112.

<sup>108</sup>Chlup 2013: 116-7.

Plutarch was just setting the scene for what is viewed as Artavasdes' later treachery against Antony. There is no other reference to any treachery on the part of Artavasdes with regards to Crassus in other sources, and Strabo who was a contemporary of both the Crassus and Antony expeditions only notes the supposed treachery towards Antony.<sup>109</sup> As Prantl notes it can be easy for the sources, coming from a Graeco-Roman viewpoint to see this in a critical way, as with the subsequent way in which Artavasdes made peace with the Parthians, but he hardly had any other choice in that instance.<sup>110</sup> Crassus had gone against his advice and Artavasdes had had to deal with the bulk of the Parthian force by himself, his surrender to the Parthians was in the best interests of his kingdom. Though this does allow Plutarch to further build up one of his common *topoi*, that of barbarity and perfidy towards those who are not civilised Greeks or Romans.<sup>111</sup> Even the way in which Crassus' body was treated after his defeat and death is used to further the barbarity of the enemy, 'Plutarch constructs his Parthia [and by extension Armenia] as a moral antiworld'.<sup>112</sup> As Zadorojniy notes, the way in which gold was poured into mouth of Crassus' decapitated head was likely ritualised and compares it with the earlier episode with Manius Aquilius, both instances involved avaricious men and the irony of drowning on gold.<sup>113</sup>

With the death and defeat of Crassus and his force, if Artavasdes was considered an enemy of the Roman state then there is very little mention of it. Indeed the only notable mention of Artavasdes until the expedition of Antony is from Cicero in his pro consulship of Cilicia where Cicero stations armies near Armenia's border because he was unsure of his disposition, this at a time when Parthia were raiding Syria.<sup>114</sup> If

109Strab. *Geography*. 11.14.15.

110Prantl 2008: 96-97.

111Hartmann 2008: 437

112Zadorojniy 1997: 180.

113App. *Mithridatic Wars*. 21. Zadorojniy 1997: 180.

114Cic. *Letter to Friends*. 15.2. Redgate 2000: 76 implies Artavasdes intended on invading Cappadocia in

Artavasdes had swapped sides and joined Parthia and had enmity with Rome there should have been a little less uncertainty as to his intentions. With the only other mention of him being his sending of a contingent of troops under a commander to aid Pompey, it is unlikely that Pompey thought of him as an enemy.<sup>115</sup> As Braund notes, the way in which the empires of Rome and Parthia did not have borders in the modern sense, but rather frontiers, and that the nebulous nature of these necessitate those on the frontier to have relationships with both sides would show that any relations with Parthia from Armenia would not be definitive evidence of Armenian loyalties.<sup>116</sup> Prantl makes the argument that the alliance with Parthia should not be over-rated as the tilt in dependence on Parthia is a result of Armenia's military inferiority between the two powers, not that of loyalty.<sup>117</sup> Similarly Wijlick remarks that the possibility that the later way in which Armenia did not aid Parthia in their raids on Syria helped lead to a normalisation of relations cannot be excluded.<sup>118</sup> Given that little else can be noted to help give a clearer picture of the actual state of relations between Armenia and Rome nothing can be determined with any certainty, though with the troops Artavasdes sent to Pompey and the later way in which Artavasdes takes part and, initially, aids Antony in his expedition would make it seem likely these relations were not unduly negative.

Indeed even with regards to the Roman reaction to Parthia, there is no immediate outright hostility or calls for revenge against the Parthians for their defeat of Crassus, it was more just ignored contemporarily. Morrell observes that the Parthians mostly just raided Syria and there was no outright goal of westward expansion, similarly both

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51 BCE but it is assumed that this is Redgate interpreting Cicero stationing troops near Cappadocia *in case* Artavasdes were to invade as Artavasdes wanting to invade.

<sup>115</sup> App. *Civil Wars*. 2.71.

<sup>116</sup> Braund 1984: 95. That at the same time Artavasdes' daughter married the son of the particularly pro-Roman king Deiotarus is a good example of this. Cic. *Letters to Atticus*. 5.21. Sullivan 1990: 286.

<sup>117</sup> Prantl 2008: 99.

<sup>118</sup> Wijlick 2013: 205.

Parthia and Armenia fight alongside Pompey in the Civil war.<sup>119</sup> While only a small minority decried Crassus' campaign when it set off, afterwards it was just pushed aside as an example of excessive greed and was not endorsed by the Roman people.<sup>120</sup> This is seemingly known by the Parthian king when he initially sends his envoy to Crassus and mentions 'if it was against the wishes of his country, as they were informed'.<sup>121</sup> However both Caesar and Marc Antony revived the idea of avenging Crassus, until Augustan times where Crassus becomes reviled once more.<sup>122</sup>

With this in mind it seems less and less likely Artavasdes did act dishonourably towards Crassus, indeed he enthusiastically supported his war and was only brought out of the war by the complete lack of support of Crassus to the invasion of Armenia by the bulk of the Parthian army. The comment in Plutarch's life can instead be seen as a set up for the supposed duplicity of Artavasdes in his relations with Antony during the latter's expedition to Parthia as shall now be shown.

Shortly after the expedition of Crassus and the subsequent retaliatory raids of Syria by Parthia the Roman civil wars occurred, within which the Parthians supported first Pompey, then Cassius and Brutus and finally Labienus, but other than the aforementioned minor reference to Armenian troops supporting Pompey and the remark from Cicero, nothing is heard of Artavasdes.<sup>123</sup> In 41/40 BCE the Parthian king Orodes, after being convinced by Labienus, invaded the Roman east and made rapid successes

<sup>119</sup>Morrell 2017: 183-186.

<sup>120</sup>Morrell 2017: 178-9.

<sup>121</sup>Plut. *Crassus*. 18.1. Plutarch, recounting this message, was writing over a century after the events and would be influenced by the Augustan propaganda disowning Crassus and his expedition, mentioned in the source in the footnote below. Stepanyan shows how the tragedy played in the court of Artavasdes at the end of Plutarch's life of Crassus, where a mother is 'not responsible for the evil actions of her son', is used to symbolise how Rome was not responsible for the actions of Crassus. Stepanyan 2015: 120-121.

<sup>122</sup>See Traina 2010 for a more thorough look at how the view of Carrhae changed over the century following the battle.

<sup>123</sup>Morrell 2017: 183; Wijlick 2013: 114-121; Curran 2007. App. *Civil Wars*. 2.71.

throughout the region, causing Antony to respond by sending Ventidius who drove all armies out of the Roman Near East, killing Labienus and Pacorus (the son of the Parthian King Orodes).<sup>124</sup>

It had been argued that the Parthian expedition of Antony was initially born out of a jealous desire to outshine his subordinates role in defeating the armies of Labienus and Pacorus, though it is unlikely this is main reason.<sup>125</sup> Given Parthian support for the Republicans and raids into the Roman east occurring a number of times since the battle of Carrhae, a strong campaign against the Parthians would have been needed to settle the Eastern border of the empire, which Antony had charge of. A show of force was also needed to balance the ascendant power of Parthia in the eyes of the numerous smaller kingdoms that had either swapped allegiances or were swaying towards Parthia.<sup>126</sup>

An initial minor point of confusion is whether or not Antony defeated Artavasdes and forced him into helping him with his Parthian expedition. As Plutarch records '... Canidius, who was left by Antony in Armenia, conquered that people, as well as the kings of the Iberians and Albanians ...'.<sup>127</sup> Though as has been noted a number of times, the other sources for this only mention Canidius defeating the Iberians and Albanians and not the Armenians, and given the similarities to the earlier instances of Pompey doing the same in order to secure Armenia's northern border, it is likely a fight between Canidius and Artavasdes did not take place.<sup>128</sup>

More reason to believe in the lack of conflict comes later in Plutarch when

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<sup>124</sup>Strugnell 2006.

<sup>125</sup>Patterson 2015: 81.

<sup>126</sup>Morrell 2017: 188-189.

<sup>127</sup>Plut. *Antony*. 34.6.

<sup>128</sup>Patterson 2015: 84; Prantl 2008: 100.

Antony arrives in Armenia for the muster of his and all his allies troops, among whom '-.. the greatest of them all was Artavasdes, King of Armenia...'.<sup>129</sup> Though at this point a divergence occurs amongst the sources as to what exactly was Artavasdes' role in the campaign, with different sources portraying him as having varying degrees of control over the planning and command of the campaign. Plutarch gives Artavasdes very little agency and only mentions him twice, his muster previously mentioned and his withdrawal of his troops after the first lost battle of the campaign: 'although he had been the chief cause of the war'.<sup>130</sup> Plutarch does not mention how or why Artavasdes was the chief cause of war and gives no mention of this before-hand. Dio mentions however that the cause for war was that Artavasdes had convinced Antony to invade the king of the Medes, also named Artavasdes.<sup>131</sup> If this is true it is more proof towards the earlier assertion that Canidius did not invade Armenia, as why would Armenia then be in a position to influence and make such a request if they had just been defeated. It is possible that this is a case of confusion in these two sources, mistaking Antony following the plan that Artavasdes tried to convince Crassus to take, that of making an invasion of Parthia *via* Media but not the target itself being Media. Patterson though makes the convincing point that this is likely instead a way of Antony deflecting blame for his defeat onto Artavasdes.<sup>132</sup> As can be seen in Strabo, who seems to place the whole blame for the entire operation at Artavasdes feet, 'his guide Artavasdes ... Antony rashly made his counsellor and master of decisions respecting the war'.<sup>133</sup> That Antony would not put sole command of his campaign in the hands of someone whose loyalty may still be questioned by the Romans, seems blatantly obvious.<sup>134</sup> This is more an attempt to blame a failed Roman expedition on the traitorous nature of non-Romans,

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<sup>129</sup>Plut. *Antony*. 37.3.

<sup>130</sup>Plut. *Antony*. 39.1.

<sup>131</sup>Dio. *Roman Histories*. 49.25.1.

<sup>132</sup>Patterson 2015: 86.

<sup>133</sup>Strab. *Geography*. 11. 13. 4.

<sup>134</sup>Prantl 2008: 102.

the same as Crassus' expedition, Gallus' expedition to Arabia, Varus' expedition in Germany, *ad nauseam*.<sup>135</sup>

Thus the expedition went ahead without any need to subdue the Armenians, and Artavasdes was not the lead instigator and commander but would have been an advisor, using his superior local knowledge to advise the planning of the campaign.

This leads to the actual 'betrayal' of Antony by Artavasdes as such. Without going into too much depth, Antony marched from Armenia into Parthia late in the campaigning season, leading him to march his main body of troops to the Parthian city of Phraaspa to invest it in preparation for the siege engines to follow up behind.<sup>136</sup> This meant he left his siege engines and supplies with a small guard to catch up, and thus vulnerable to a highly mobile army such as the Parthians, and predictably, the Parthians decided not to engage the Romans where they were strongest and wiped out the siege engines and their detachments.<sup>137</sup> It is here that supposedly Artavasdes betrays Antony by not taking part in this battle and then proceeding to march back to Armenia, leaving Antony to suffer the consequences.

According to the account of Dio, although Artavasdes was not at the battle around Antony's rearguard, he was still to blame for not helping or afterwards joining Antony at a later point.<sup>138</sup> As Sherwin-White puts it '... he [Artavasdes] did not change

<sup>135</sup>Strab. *Geography*. 16.3.23; Dio. *Roman Histories*. 56.19-21.

<sup>136</sup>See Patterson 2015: 85 for a discussion as to why he marched late in the season, Plutarch attributes it to a burning desire to be back with Cleopatra, another more likely explanation could be that the Roman troops from Syria could not actually march to Armenia while the passes between the two were still blocked by snow.

<sup>137</sup>Dio. *Roman Histories*. 49.25.2-4.

<sup>138</sup>Dio. *Roman Histories*. 49.25.5. While almost certainly hyperbole, Dio mentions that in the destruction of the siege engines and their guard, the king of Pontus, Polemon was notable in that the Parthians made sure to kill every other member of the detachment leaving no survivors. Polemon they ransomed but this is unlikely to have occurred immediately. In which case who does Dio attribute as the 'some people' who informed on Artavasdes' intentions, given there were no survivors who witnessed the



sides or bar the Roman retreat. He merely failed to hasten to the rescue of the Roman rearguard when he heard of the Parthian attack, and afterwards withdrew to Armenia when the Parthians were between him and the main Roman army.<sup>139</sup> Now to some extent this can come across as a betrayal, he failed to fulfil his duty towards the protection of the rearguard, though this is primarily a problem when it is being assessed through Antony's point of view, as most Roman sources would be.<sup>140</sup> A view through Artavasdes' eyes following his knowledge of the defeat of the rearguard and the siege engines, would have seen the bulk of the Parthian army between him and the relative safety of the Roman main force. The Parthians had already outmanoeuvred the Romans and taken out the siege engines so they could have easily found a way to cut off the smaller Armenian force before it made its way to the Antony.<sup>141</sup> Artavasdes, maybe with the previous experience of Crassus' expedition in mind, thought Antony would suffer the same fate given he was cut off from his supplies and had already suffered a defeat. In both these cases, Crassus and Antony, a very arrogant attitude is taken with regards the actions of Artavasdes, he should do everything he possibly could, even if it led to his and his kingdom's destruction, to aid the Romans, an attitude that Artavasdes did not reciprocate.<sup>142</sup> This attitude is what led to the accusations of treachery, which Antony jumped on to make up for his own failures in command, 'Antony's own blunders

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battle and if Antony arrived to find nothing but corpses? Likely there were some survivors but this does mark a break in consistency for Dio.

139 Sherwin-White 1984: 314.

140 Prantl 2008: 102 notes there can be no clear reason from the sources to assume Artavasdes was charged by Antony to look after this supply convoy.

141 It is unclear exactly what troops Artavasdes had at his disposal in this campaign, Plutarch earlier in his life of Antony remarks '... [Artavasdes] furnished six thousand horse and seven thousand foot'. Yet later in the narrative has him in command of sixteen thousand horsemen. Plut. *Antony*. 37.3 *contra* 50.2. It is assumed that as with the support Artavasdes was to give Crassus, a combination of horse and foot would have made up the Armenian army, thus making the army less able to catch up than a force of just cavalry.

142 Prantl 2008: 103. Prantl observes that Artavasdes did the only right thing from an Armenian point of view and wanted to find a way to appease the two, a very difficult position to be in. Similarly Dabrowa 2006: 349 points out the stakes for Artavasdes and that he was forced to take the whole blame for the multiple mistakes, which he also lays out at Dabrowa 2006: 346. Though Dabrowa believes he wanted Mark Antony to fail as victory would have meant Rome would have an even stronger grip on his kingdom.

ultimately nullified any benefit Artavasdes might have brought'.<sup>143</sup> The ability to use Artavasdes as a tool to shift the blame onto had a direct mark on Plutarch and Strabo, both of whom had likely used Delliuss as their source material as mentioned above.<sup>144</sup> This, as noted by Patterson, strongly influenced the overly negative view of Artavasdes that emanates from the ancient world and so makes its mark on the modern discourse surrounding him.<sup>145</sup>

With Antony in retreat and his army suffering from a lack of supplies and enfeebled from a long march through harsh terrain, if Artavasdes had malicious intent towards Rome and Antony he could have easily furthered their deprivations and ensured a fraction of the army made it back to Syria.<sup>146</sup> That he did not and he made provisions available to Antony's army proves he had no pro-Parthian inclinations, but rather as has been mentioned, was attempting not to unduly anger either side. If Artavasdes believed his reasons for his retreat would not be believed by Antony and he would be punished for it, when he viewed the weak state of the returning army he would not think to strengthen this army that would later do the punishing. Artavasdes must have to some extent believed his actions were justified and that Antony may view them the same way, and as Plutarch records, while Antony was in such a poor state he feigned his acknowledgement and agreement with Artavasdes' actions in order to receive his support.<sup>147</sup>

While the exact nature Artavasdes' feelings can never be fully determined, it is

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<sup>143</sup>Patteron 2015: 87.

<sup>144</sup>Footnote 105.

<sup>145</sup>Patterson 2015: 89, who cites a few modern authors who relay the hostile tradition regarding Artavasdes. To those who believe he outright betrayed him, should be added those who believe he used Antony and purposefully led him astray and abandoned him in hostile territory, such as Sullivan 1990: 289.

<sup>146</sup>Prantl 2008: 103.

<sup>147</sup>Plut. *Antony*. 50.3.

evident that from Antony's standpoint Artavasdes had to be removed, whether to save face or to repay a perceived treachery. Now there is little doubt or contention regarding the majority of the particulars surrounding this episode, the only real issue being whether the mood at the time was one of acceptance of Antony's actions or shame. Both cases were heavily influenced by the propaganda from Antony to justify his actions and from Octavian to further vilify Antony to the Roman people. Plutarch writes both in the scene mentioned above about the Roman army that made it back from Parthia clamouring for Artavasdes' punishment and in the comparison of the lives of Antony and Demetrius that the breaking of the oaths and treaties by Antony was justified by an excuse 'which men admit to being valid' which was that of the betrayal in Media Atropatene.<sup>148</sup> This is in conflict with the propaganda that Octavian was putting out at the time, that by 'deceiving, arresting, and putting in chains the Armenian king had cause much ill repute to attach to the Roman people.'<sup>149</sup> Likely these two differing opinions would have led to partisanship, if it were true that the legionaries who invaded Media were clamouring for Artavasdes' punishment it is unlikely they would be influenced by Octavian's propaganda and vice versa.

As there is little way of understanding the mood of the general populace of Rome about these issues, it is unlikely an answer to this last question of the opinions regarding Artavasdes' imprisonment can be attempted. Though as I have argued, the betrayal of Antony can be dismissed as being seen through a Romano-centric viewpoint, while this may lead to certain Romans feeling justified in their accusations it is not the whole truth of the matter. As such there must be a level of ambiguity between our

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<sup>148</sup>Plut. *Antony*. 50.3.; Plut. *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*. 5.2.

<sup>149</sup>Dio. *Roman Histories*. 50.1.5. Whether or not Octavian's regard for Artavasdes was strictly to do with Roman perceptions of fair-play, mere anti-Antonian propaganda or more had something to do with supposed secret correspondence between the two which was designed to incite Artavasdes to injure Antony does not really have enough evidence to be answered definitively. Dio. *Roman Histories*. 49.41.5.

interpretation of the sources and the viewpoints of those who are not being represented in said sources. The works of Plutarch, for example, are not going to give a fair hearing to those who are not Roman, that is now the job of modern historians.

## Conclusion

This dissertation set out to re-evaluate a period and place in history of Armenia in the mid-first century BCE. The reasons for this being needed are apparent when it is considered that the ancient sources relied upon are all coming from the same social, political and literary tradition, also when it is considered how much of the corpus of ancient knowledge has been lost.<sup>150</sup> As Manandyan notes, there were court historians of both Tigranes and Mithridates, none of whose work survive, so too are the works of the son of Tigranes, Artavasdes lost.<sup>151</sup> The sheer extent to which our understanding of the ancient world would vary if we had those works will never be known, but to assume that the narrative offered by texts that survive, all based off the same Graeco-Roman background and tradition is gospel because they often corroborate, and sometimes contradict each other is folly.

As has been discussed and remarked, the state in which Armenia found itself after Tigranes' surrender, and really relations in the wider Roman world as a whole do not fit into neat dictionary definitions and concepts of the client state. A simple definition to assume some kind of static relationship can be comforting but inaccurate.

An issue with both ancient and modern sources arises in the form of the issue of the relationship between Parthia and Rome during Pompey's sojourn throughout the East. This relationship between the two is almost entirely relating to Armenia, it reaches its zenith during Pompey's time in Armenia, before that it determines Parthian

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<sup>150</sup> Blum 1991: 8 'Of all the works of pagan Greek literature perhaps only one percent has come down to us.'

<sup>151</sup> Manandyan 1940: 2. For Artavasdes having written histories see Plut. *Crassus*. 33.2.

involvement in Armenia and the potential usurpation of Tigranes with Tigranes the Younger. Later again it leads to complications with Armenia's relationship with Parthia and disputes over land between the two are settled by Rome and Parthia's relationship, without Armenian involvement. Modern understanding of this relationship is highly problematic due to the inconsistent nature of the source material, and given the personal nature of diplomacy, likely no solid answers can be determined as to the personal feelings of individuals two millennia ago. Given this impediment an attempt must still be made at the very least to achieve a notion of the overarching feeling between the two powers of Parthia and Rome and up until Crassus' invasion this thesis has argued one of wary neutrality is the most likely.

The ancient sources had an evident lack of understanding of the cultural aspects of the Near East in general, with certain customs such as *proskynesis* being particularly maligned as has been shown, which fed into their perceptions of the Near East in general. These misunderstandings influenced the way in which they wrote their works, as discussed earlier historians, both ancient and modern, cannot help but put their own opinions and thoughts into their works. This is much more crucial in the case of ancient works as given the lack of corroboration and the scarcity of information, an understanding of what occurred at a given time it can skew modern studies of a period if cultural bias and political expediency influencing the production of the ancient texts is not recognised.

The inherent prejudices that occur from the particular zeitgeist to which we belong is an inherent problem to the information we choose to see, therefore it is not the fault of the ancient Graeco-Roman writer that they could only see Artavasdes' actions as

a betrayal. Their understanding of the world was shaped by how they saw things in relation to how they saw things as Romans, or Greeks who viewed themselves as Roman citizens for the later writers. As such, with the benefits of two millennium of hindsight it is unfair to assume the ancient historian should, in every case, be able to take a viewpoint completely at odds with their perceptions of events, when likely in two millennium we ourselves will be judged in the same manner.

It is however our privilege to have this much hindsight in order to attempt a rebalancing of events. This thesis argues points and furthers debate in an area of history that does not receive the full attention it deserves. To this end a model of identifying specific points in the chronology of the two kings in question, examining the portrayal by the ancient sources and determining if any of the typical *topoi* of the period are apparent has been implemented. This has been useful in revealing where an the narrative found in ancient texts appears skewed by problematic source material such as misunderstandings around cultural traditions such as *proskynesis* or the readiness to ascribe guilt to the actions of Artavasdes.

Further investigation into other aspects of the period, for instance a detailed study as to how the treatment of these two kings compared to other kings of the multiple kingdoms of the Near East, is needed. Armenia was an important staging ground for invasions of the two major powers and, as such, it would be useful to know if the Artaxiad and later Arsacids dynasties were treated preferentially or with more hostility than other kingdoms due to this strategically important position. This thesis would be a useful staging ground for further research into the rest of the Artaxiad dynasty and the period before the Arsacid dynasty took over. The period after the fall of the Artaxiad dynasty

and the accession of the Arsacids was hardly more stable, with different smaller kingdoms making claim to the throne, all played against each other by the Romans and Parthians for their own ends culminating in the Armenian war of the Emperor Nero against Parthia. While Artavasdes and Tigranes were the most documented, the later Artaxiads and Arsacids were the most heavily influenced by Rome and Parthia, with kings being sent to rule and replaced almost at whim between the two. Armenia, the focal point of the majority of conflict in the East over this period, needs more scholarship to better understand the entire region as a whole.



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