

Valerius Maximus on the fate of Ariarathes X

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Abstract: Tiberian author Valerius Maximus concludes his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* with the only extant account of an impostor who pretended to be Ariarathes X, former king of Cappadocia. Valerius is also the sole author to report the real Ariarathes' murder at the hands of M. Antonius. Although Valerius does not supply any reason for Antonius' alleged murder of Ariarathes, other sources report that he had elevated another man, Archelaus/Sisines, descendant of Mithridates VI Eupator's general Archelaus, to the throne of Cappadocia, a decision that necessitated disposing of the last of the Ariobarzanids, the dynasty that had ruled Cappadocia for half a century. By inference, one might conclude that Antonius killed Ariarathes so the latter would not undermine Archelaus' hold on Cappadocia, but the uniqueness of Valerius' account raises doubts about the purported facts in his report. This article proposes that Valerius did not report Antonius' execution of the real Ariarathes as a fact he culled from another source but as his own deduction. It further argues that Valerius rewrote the death of Ariarathes to bolster the position that it is the emperor's rightful role, not the senate's or a kingdom's elites', to assign satellite monarchs, protect them, and endue them with legitimacy. Finally, this article also speculates on the actual death of Ariarathes and the possibility that Parthia used him, or his impostor, as leverage in its negotiations with Rome as it would in future appearances of impostor Neros.

Keywords: Cappadocia, client kings, Valerius Maximus, impostors, Parthia, Augustus, M. Antonius

Tiberian author Valerius Maximus concludes his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* with the only extant account of an impostor who pretended to be Ariarathes X, former king of Cappadocia.¹ Valerius is also the sole author to report that the triumvir Marcus Antonius had killed the real Ariarathes prior to the impostor's death. Although Valerius does not supply any reason for Antonius' alleged murder of Ariarathes, other sources report that he had elevated another man,

* Acknowledgements: I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for invaluable guidance that transformed a kernel of an idea into a more fully formed piece. I would also like to thank Dr. Mathias Nicolleau (Université Jean Molin Lyon 3) for generously sharing his dissertation with me. Finally, I thank the Department of Classics at Florida State University for the opportunity to present an early version of the paper in a friendly forum where I could receive valuable feedback. All errors herein are mine.

¹ Stern (2016) discusses most of Valerius Maximus' impostors but not Ariarathes, while Nicolleau does discuss Ariarathes in his 2022 dissertation. Murray's 2016 dissertation on vice in Valerius Maximus only goes up to V. Max. 9.11; Matravers' 2016 dissertation stops at 9.10. Thus, both dissertations do not cover the impostors. Römer (1990, 106) suggests that Maximus originally intended to end the work at 9.11 *ext.* 4, which refers to Sejanus. The subsequent anecdotes depart from the straightforward catalogue of vices in Book 9. See also Lawrence (2015) 136-37.

Archelaus/Sisines, descendant of Mithridates VI Eupator's general Archelaus, to the throne of Cappadocia, a decision that necessitated disposing of the last of the Ariobarzanids, the dynasty that had ruled Cappadocia for half a century.² By inference, one might conclude that Antonius killed Ariarathes so he would not undermine Archelaus' hold on Cappadocia, but the uniqueness of Valerius' account raises doubts about the purported facts in his report.³ Indeed, this article proposes that Valerius did not report Antonius' execution of the real Ariarathes as a fact he culled from another source but as his own deduction. It further argues that Valerius rewrote the death of Ariarathes to bolster the position that it is the emperor's rightful role, not the senate's or a kingdom's elites', to assign satellite monarchs, protect them, and endue them with legitimacy.⁴

The latter aim, legitimacy, was partly achieved by emphasizing or even conjuring the suppression of impostors, and Valerius' account of the impostor Ariarathes serves that purpose. Recognizing Valerius' ideological goal, one is induced to explore historical possibilities regarding the fate of Ariarathes. Here, two hypothetical scenarios are investigated: in the first, Antonius did not kill Ariarathes, but it was instead Augustus who brought about the former king's death; in the second, the real Ariarathes died between 36 and 20, and the Ariarathes killed under Augustus was an impostor who was supported by the Parthians until they turned him over to the Romans in 20. The second scenario, if true, represents the first known instance of Parthian use of impostors in its political negotiations with the Roman Empire, the better-known examples being the second and third false Neros of the late first century CE. Regardless of the facts surrounding the death of Ariarathes, Valerius crafted his narrative of the false Ariarathes to illustrate how the Julio-Claudians had upheld and would continue to protect Rome's gift of the status and legitimacy of satellite monarchy in the East against the challenge of imposture, as Augustus also did in the case of the false Herodian Alexander ca. 4 BCE.⁵

Cappadocia: From Persian to Roman Hegemony

Located east of the Halys river in Asia Minor, the region of Cappadocia fell under Achaemenid control when Cyrus II stopped Croesus of Lydia's attempt to extend his kingdom across the Halys and then invaded Lydia to defeat Croesus at the Battle of Thymbra in 547 BCE.⁶ For the next two

² Antonius chooses Archelaus over Ariarathes as king of Cappadocia: App. BC 5.7.31. He drives Ariarathes out of Cappadocia: D.C. 49.32.3-4.

³ Roth (2022) demonstrates the unreliability of Valerius on points of historical fact on account of his exploitation of rumor when it suits his purposes.

⁴ For Rome's installation of Ariobarzanes I Philorhomaioi as king of Cappadocia, see Str. 12.2.11; Just. 38.2.8; Pastor (2020) 61.

⁵ Josephus' accounts of the false Herodian Alexander (*BJ* 2.7.1-2; *AJ* 17.12.1-2) serve as a later illustration of the same ideological message. The impostor comes to Rome and is enthusiastically received by the city's Jewish community, but his meeting with Augustus results in the emperor detecting his imposture and sending him to row in the imperial fleet.

⁶ The political situation in Central Anatolia before Cyrus II is murky. Herodotus assumed that Median control reached as far west as the Halys River, but this belief, as well as the existence of a Median Empire, has been called into question. See Rollinger (2003). The inhabitants of Central Anatolia, which the Hittites called *Sūra*, were

centuries, Persian culture made a deep and enduring impact on Cappadocia, and the empire's satrapal organization encouraged the continued development of Cappadocian feudalism.⁷ Over time, the local nobility came to hold great sway in the affairs of the emerging kingdom, even in its foreign affairs.⁸ Alexander the Great may have bypassed Cappadocia, so it was not until 322 that Macedonian power directly impacted it, when Perdiccas defeated the satrap Ariarathes. Perdiccas replaced Ariarathes with Eumenes, and thus brought Cappadocia within the orbit of Alexander's quickly fragmenting empire.⁹

The first royal dynasty of Cappadocia, the Ariarathids, was firmly established in the mid third century, when Ariarathes III, son of Ariamnes, married the daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus Theos and became the first ruler of Cappadocia to take up the title of *basileus*.¹⁰ Although Cappadocia now had a king, the sway of the Cappadocian nobility remained strong, a characteristic that is partly borne out by its integral role in struggles for the throne into the first century BCE. Strabo reports that Rome recognized as friends and allies both Cappadocia's king and the "tribe" (probably referring to the nobility) jointly.¹¹ This political arrangement must inform one's reckoning of the achievements and vicissitudes of Cappadocia's royal dynasties until the reign of Augustus. Also to be factored into the reconstruction of events is the fact that the dynasties of Pontus and Cappadocia were intermingled via marriage, with the Mithridatids claiming a stake in Cappadocia by ancestry shared with the Ariarathids.¹²

Luwian speakers. After the fall of the Hittite Empire, the region was home to numerous Neo-Hittite states. Here, the largest of these states, Tabal, will be used to illustrate trends in the region. By the late 9th century, the Kingdom of Tabal (Tabal meaning "bank" or "shore" in Akkadian) had arisen in the region of Central Anatolia reaching north to the Halys River. This kingdom fell under the sway of greater hegemony such as the Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian empires and was contested by the kingdoms of Phrygia and Urartu, but the Cimmerians, who had invaded Central Anatolia in the late 8th century, ended Neo-Assyrian dominance in the region. The last recorded king of Tabal, [M]jussi, submitted to the Cimmerians in 645, and this may have preserved the kingdom in some form, but for how long is unknown. See Fuchs (2017) 254-7. Conditions in Central Anatolia between Tabal's submission and the Battle of Pteria (between Cyrus II and Croesus) are poorly attested in written sources.

⁷ The precise date of the satrapy's first organization is uncertain. Cappadocia under Persian rule: Str. 12.1.4; Speidel (2019) 119; Michels (2017); Feudalism: Engels (2011).

⁸ Ballesteros Pastor (2020) 67; (2008) 46.

⁹ Perdiccas: D.S. 18.16.1; 22.1; Pompeius Trogus *Prologi* 13; App. *Mith.* 2.8; Eumenes: D.S. 18.16.3; Plu. *Eum.* 3.14; App. *Mith.* 2.8. Pianchi (2018) has argued to the contrary that Alexander did pass through Cappadocia and bring Ariarathes under his hegemony, but historians serving the interests of Successor kings wrote him out of the story. Pianchi relies on Diodorus Siculus' (18.16.1) statement that "[Ariarathes'] failure to take orders from the Macedonians had been overlooked by Alexander, owing to the struggle with Darius and its distractions" (trans. H. White) to conclude (p. 74): "There is no doubt that Ariarathes had ruled Cappadocia on behalf of Alexander." In this author's opinion, Diodorus' statement about Ariarathes' refusal could mean either that the satrap was brought into Alexander's empire and then ignored subsequent orders or that he never cooperated in the first place, but Alexander was too busy to bring him to heel.

¹⁰ D.S. 31.19.14-15; Str. 12.1.2; Justin 27.3.7-8. On Macedonian Cappadocia, see also Str.12.1.4; Bickerman (1938).

¹¹ Str. 12.2.11.

¹² App. *Mith.* 9, 10, 12; Ballesteros Pastor (2020) 65-67. Pastor (65-66) argues that Justin's (38.2.5: *puerum, cui Cappadociae regnum tradiderat, ex eo Ariarathe genitum, qui bello Aristonici auxilia Romanis ferens cecidisset*) account of Gordius' argument on behalf of Ariarathes IX's Cappadocian claim is predicated on Mithridates' own mother's

Roman hegemony over Asia Minor began with the Treaty of Apamea in 188 BCE. From that time, Cappadocia was off limits to the Seleucids.¹³ Roman involvement in Cappadocian affairs is attested in Ariarathes V's support for Rome against the Attalid pretender, Aristonicus. After Rome's victory over Aristonicus, which also involved the death of Ariarathes V, the Romans assigned Lycaonia and Cilicia to the sons of their fallen Cappadocian ally.¹⁴ How long these areas stayed in Ariarathid control is uncertain, but that control was clearly lost by the time the Romans started to assign their own pro-magistrates tasks therein.¹⁵ The province of Asia, which was the empire's anchor in the region and the vantage point from which it observed affairs in the East, was organized shortly thereafter.¹⁶ Pontic aggression in the region must have made Rome nervous. Although officially recognized as a friend of the Roman People, Mithridates V sought to control Cappadocia, first by invasion and then by marrying off his daughter to Ariarathes VI of Cappadocia.¹⁷ After Mithridates' death, his son, Mithridates VI, continued the same expansionist program, which ultimately led to the end of the Ariarathid dynasty.

The Ariarathid dynasty came to an end through the conflict between Mithridates VI Eupator and Nicomedes III of Bithynia over control of Cappadocia. Both Mithridates and Nicomedes sought to use familial ties via marriage to control Cappadocia. Mithridates used his sister Laodice's marriage to Ariarathes VI of Cappadocia to gain access to the dynasty, which he proceeded to cull by murder, starting with his sister's husband.¹⁸ Upon Ariarathes VI's death, his son Ariarathes VII ascended to the throne, but Nicomedes III, who was already married to Ariarathes VI's daughter Nysa, occupied Cappadocia after Ariarathes' murder, and then married the widow Laodice, mother of his previous wife Nysa.¹⁹ Although no source reports the following, it is possible that Nicomedes came to Cappadocia at Laodice's request because she understood the likelihood of her brother's acquisition of her kingdom if she had no powerful ally to stop him. Pretending to be the champion of the Ariarathid dynasty, Mithridates ejected Nicomedes from Cappadocia and restored Ariarathes VII to the throne.²⁰

After his restoration, Ariarathes VII refused to cooperate with his uncle Mithridates in accepting Mithridates' puppet, the Cappadocian noble Gordius, into his court on the grounds that the man had murdered Ariarathes' father, so Mithridates assassinated Ariarathes and then

identity as the daughter of Ariarathes V of Cappadocia. This claim would make Ariarathes IX the great-grandson of Ariarathes V.

¹³ Diodorus Siculus (29.24) reports that Seleucus IV was tempted to cross the Taurus in support of Pharnaces I of Pontus but then thought better of it. See also Dumitru (2021) 46. This event may have occurred in 183 BCE. See McGing (1986) 28.

¹⁴ Justin 37.1.2-3. Cilicia's inclusion has been questioned by Sherwin-White (1976, 3 n.7), but Lycaonia and Cilicia were often linked together as a unit in Roman decisions regarding the region. See Syme (1986) 159; Mitchell (1999) 20.

¹⁵ M. Antonius was assigned the suppression of piracy in Cilicia in 102, whereas the *lex praetoria provincialis* of 100 attached Lycaonia to the governor of Asia. Antonius: Liv. *Per.* 68.1; *lex*: Blümel (1992) no. 31.

¹⁶ The first governor was M' Aquillius (129-126). On the province, see Mitchell (1999).

¹⁷ App. *Mith.* 10; Justin 38.11.

¹⁸ Justin 38.1.1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 38.1.2.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 38.1.5.

installed as king of Cappadocia his own son Ariarathes IX, making Gordius his son's guardian.²¹ Concerned about a negative reaction in Rome, Mithridates then sent an embassy bearing plentiful money with which to bribe senators into accepting the installation of Ariarathes IX as king. The firebrand tribunician ally of Marius, Saturninus, waged a propaganda war against the embassy, which then proceeded to arrange for Saturninus' prosecution.²² Although Saturninus was successful at whipping up mob support to secure dismissal of the charges against him, Mithridates' bribery seems to have worked. It led to Marius' *proconsular* assignment in 99 to confirm Ariarathes in his kingdom in a meeting with Mithridates.²³ Having no illusions about Mithridates' ultimate intentions, however, Marius still issued a threat to Mithridates to "be stronger than Rome" or accept its dictates. Powerful members of the Cappadocian nobility had other ideas. After Marius' departure, they drove the boy king from the throne and recalled Ariarathes VII's brother, Ariarathes VIII, from the Roman province of Asia, where he was being educated.²⁴ Ariarathes' presence in Asia suggests his recall to Cappadocia by the Cappadocian nobility was undertaken with Roman approval. Surprisingly, this development did not prevent Mithridates from forcing Ariarathes VIII out and reinstalling his son, Ariarathes IX, as king of Cappadocia. Despite Rome's stake in Cappadocian affairs, the senate was not provoked to the point of seeking to retaliate against Mithridates at that time. The exiled king, Ariarathes VIII, died of illness, and the nobility of Cappadocia sought permission to select a new king, even though Mithridates' son, Ariarathes IX, and his Wormtongue Gordius, remained ensconced in power.²⁵

Justin's epitome of Trogus is unique among the extant ancient sources in its inclusion of an otherwise unattested story of imposture between the death of Ariarathes VIII and the installation of Ariobarzanes I as king.²⁶ According to Justin, Nicomedes sought to distract Mithridates from designs on Bithynia by finding a comely youth to pose as the heretofore nonexistent third son of Ariarathes VI and Laodice and to seek the throne of Cappadocia from the Roman senate on the grounds that it had belonged to his father (Ariarathes VI).²⁷ Nicomedes

²¹ Memnon 22.1; Justin 38.1.10; App. *Mith.* 2.10; Sullivan (1990) 39; Roller (2020) 123.

²² D.S. 36.15. See also Dmitriev (2006) 288-89.

²³ Plu. *Mar.* 31; Ballesteros Pastor (1996) 69; (2014) 230. Plutarch's record of Marius' statement to Mithridates, advising him to be stronger than Rome or bend to its will, shows that Marius came as a representative of the Republic, not of his own future ambitions. See Brennan (1992) 145-46. It may be, as Ballesteros Pastor (2014, 227-31) suggests, that Mithridates, himself the child of a royal Cappadocian mother and the grandson of Ariarathes V, considered seizing the kingdom, but Marius limited him instead to placing his son on the throne. Marius as legate in 99: Passerini (1939); Sordi (1973) 375; Brennan (1992) 145-47; Ballesteros Pastor (2014) 228.

²⁴ Justin 38.2.1. The prince likely studied in Pergamum under scholars working in the royal library, which remained a major center of learning after the Attalid kingdom became a Roman province.

²⁵ Justin 38.2.2.

²⁶ Justin 38.2.3-6. The story probably originated in Posidonius, whose extant narratives of the late second century BCE (e.g., Eunus in the Second Servile War) have a similar sensational quality. Pompeius Trogus, whom Justin is summarizing, often relied on Posidonius. See Santi Amantini (1972); Yardley and Heckel (1997) 30.

²⁷ Justin 38.2.3: *Post huius mortem Nicomedes timens ne Mithridates accessione Cappadociae etiam Bithyniam finitam invaderet, subornat puerum eximiae pulchritudinis, quasi Ariarathes tres, non duos filios genuisset, qui a senatu Romano paternum regnum peteret.* This passage is eerily reminiscent of the opening of Valerius Maximus' account of the false Ariarathes: *Idem barbarum quendam ob eximiam similitudinem Cappadociae regnum adfectantem, tamquam Ari-ar-athes esset.* It may be the case that Justin had read Valerius and alluded to Valerius' account of the false

also sent Laodice to Rome to back up the youth's story by attesting that she had a third son by Ariarathes. Mithridates countered by sending Gordius to Rome to make the case that Mithridates' son Ariarathes IX, as the great-grandson of Ariarathes V, who had perished while fighting alongside the Romans in the war against Aristonicus, had a right to the kingship of Cappadocia.²⁸ The question of the boy king's Cappadocian ancestry depended on the identity of Mithridates' mother, Laodice, being the daughter of Ariarathes V, which Justin's account certainly allows.²⁹ The Roman senate acceded to neither request and in fact took Cappadocia from Mithridates and Paphlagonia from Nicomedes, an outcome so transparently flattering of Roman authority as to make the story doubly suspicious. If anything like the reported events occurred, it probably involved two embassies from Cappadocia appearing at the senate, one to argue for the Cappadocian kingship of Ariarathes VIII or Ariobarzanes I, the other for Ariarathes IX. Beyond that, the evidence is too sparse to speak confidently.

The precise series of events that brings Ariobarzanes to the throne of Cappadocia and marks the beginning of the Ariobarzanid dynasty is, therefore, uncertain. Strabo reports that the Cappadocians sent an embassy to Rome requesting the right to choose a king.³⁰ The senate granted this request, allowing the Cappadocians to choose a king from among their own number according to their traditional procedures. They chose Ariobarzanes, whose family claimed descent from both the Ariarathrids of Cappadocia and the Mithridatids of Pontus.³¹ As soon became apparent, however, Ariobarzanes' hold on the throne required protection by external helpers because Mithridates was still pushing Ariarathes IX on the kingdom and even went so far as to chase Ariobarzanes out by force with the assistance of Gordius, Tigranes II of Armenia, and perhaps Mithridates' general Archelaus.³² This is where L. Cornelius Sulla, fresh from his praetorship (97), enters the picture. Sulla was assigned the *provincia* of Cilicia to suppress piracy.³³ The senate, aware of Mithridates' latest meddling in Cappadocian affairs, gave Sulla the

Ariarathes X in his translation of Trogus' account of the false son of Ariarathes VI. It would make sense for Justin to consult earlier authors who had used Trogus' work. On Valerius' use of Trogus, see Crohn (1882) 6-19.

²⁸ Justin 38.2.5.

²⁹ Ballesteros Pastor (2013) 191-92; (2014); (2020) 71-72. Justin describes the *puer* as *ex eo Ariarathe genitus*, which might be read to suggest the boy was Ariarathes V's son but more likely his descendant, as the pubescent child was far too young to have been born before or shortly after the death of Ariarathes V ca. 130 BCE. Brennan (1992, 147) believes that Ariarathes IX was presented as the child of Ariarathes V, and Justin's description of the negative reaction of the senate to both Laodice's and Gordius' proposals would seem to support that view. The likely reason, however, for the senate's rejection of these proposals was not the proposals' absurdity but Rome's prior commitment to allow the Cappadocians to choose their own king.

³⁰ Str. 12.2.11.

³¹ Str. 12.2.11; Sullivan (1990) 54-55; Roller (2020) 159-60. Justin (38.2.8) claims that the Cappadocians, declining the liberty Rome offered them, requested the Roman senate appoint a king for them. The Roman senate then chose Ariobarzanes I. Strabo's (12.2.11) account depicts a different scenario. In his version, Rome allows Cappadocia to choose a king according to its usual procedures. Strabo's account, which derives from a superior knowledge of the region and is not shaped by Roman ideas to the same degree as Justin's, is to be preferred.

³² Justin 38.3.1-3. According to Brennan (1992, 148 n. 128), Frontinus (*Str.* 1.5.18) places Archelaus in Cappadocia in 95. Both Plutarch (*Sull.* 5.3) and Livy's epitomator (*Per.* 70.6) report that Sulla *restored* Ariobarzanes to his throne, something that could only have been the case if he had been chased out. The most likely party to eject him was Mithridates.

³³ App. *Mith.* 57; *vir. ill.* 67; Vell. 2.24.3; Badian (1959) 284-86. Cagniard (1991, 291) also places Sulla's praetorship in 97 but incorrectly assumes that his primary mission was to restore Ariobarzanes to the throne

extra assignment of restoring Ariobarzanes to his throne, which he handily accomplished, relying mostly on allied forces.³⁴ The timing of this restoration is not certain. Given the fact that Sulla was originally sent to Cilicia to suppress piracy, not to Cappadocia to restore Ariobarzanes, the Cappadocian assignment may have come at the end of the first task, thus prolonging Sulla's stay into 93, if not longer.³⁵ Soon thereafter, Ariobarzanes was ejected from his kingdom yet again, requiring M. Aquillius to restore him to the throne in 90.³⁶ The First Mithridatic War brought Cappadocia fully under Pontic control.³⁷

As part of his negotiations to end the First Mithridatic War in 85, Sulla brought about the third restoration of Ariobarzanes to his throne, and he punished the Cappadocians both for their slaughter of Italians and Romans in the so-called Asian Vespers and also for their harsh treatment of Roman sacred offerings.³⁸ Despite Sulla's restoration of Ariobarzanes, one item related by Plutarch suggests Sulla might have been cooking up alternative plans for Cappadocia's future. When he met with Mithridates' general Archelaus to negotiate the end of the war, Sulla addressed Archelaus as a Cappadocian and chided him for being the slave, or friend, of a barbarian king (Mithridates).³⁹ Perhaps Sulla was seeking to drive a wedge between the two men with an eye to installing Archelaus as king of Cappadocia when he returned to the East.⁴⁰ After the negotiations, Sulla gave Archelaus the Cappadocian 2000 acres of land in Boeotia and recognized him as a "friend and ally of the Romans."⁴¹

instead of suppressing piracy in Cilicia. Cagniard also believes that Sulla must have been back in Rome by 95 because of his indictment by Censorinus on the charge of having "illegally raised large sums of money from a friendly king and kingdom" (Plu. *Sull.* 5.6), but Gruen (1966, 51-52), upon whom he is relying, is not confident on the indictment's date.

³⁴ Plu. *Sull.* 5.3; Sherwin-White (1977) 174. Although Sherwin-White's argument in favor of Sulla restoring Ariobarzanes to the throne instead of installing him there for the first time is sound, his chronological disagreement with Badian is poorly founded. S-W argues, for example, that Tigranes II of Armenia could have only sent Armenian assistance against Sulla after he acquired control of Sophene, which borders on Cappadocia. Strabo (11.14.15) reports that Tigranes' move against Sophene was one of the first acts of his kingship, which started about 95 BCE. See also Marciak (2017, 129), who, despite acknowledging Tigranes early involvement in Cappadocia, still thinks that Sulla's mission "should perhaps be dated to between 94 and 93 BCE." In this, Marciak relies on Olbrycht (2009, 173), who seems to be unaware that Sulla was not sent from Rome in response to Tigranes' action in Cappadocia but to continue the suppression of pirates in Cilicia.

³⁵ Brennan (1992) 144. Plutarch (*Sull.* 5.4) characterizes Sulla's behavior leading up to the restoration of Ariobarzanes as "wasting time" (διατρίβοντι δὲ αὐτῷ) on the Euphrates. Such a description does not indicate Sulla's quick return to Rome. Any perceived problem posed by the involvement of Tigranes II (see n. 34), who was not placed on the throne of Armenia until 96, is moot, since the assumption that Sulla had to be back in Rome in 95 is incorrect. See Brennan's (1992, 143-44) persuasive argument that Sulla's assignment need not have been limited to a year, since "Cilicia . . . was first and foremost a military *provincia*" and "annual succession was neither necessary . . . nor . . . convenient."

³⁶ Liv. *Per.* 74.6; Justin 38.3.4; App. *Mith.* 11.

³⁷ Plu. *Sull.* 11.2; App. *Mith.* 58.

³⁸ Restoration of Ariobarzanes to the throne: Plu. *Sull.* 22.5; Sulla's punishment of Cappadocians: App. *Mith.* 61-63.

³⁹ Plu. *Sull.* 22.4.

⁴⁰ Mithridates was suspicious: App. *Mith.* 64.

⁴¹ Plu. *Sull.* 23.2. Sulla's quasi-royal treatment of Archelaus is the basis for this article's schema for the numeration of his line. Here, Mithridates' general is Archelaus I, his son, whom Pompey assigned ruler of Pontic

These gifts and honors constituted the groundwork for that plan. Certainly, in a capable friend like Archelaus, Sulla would have had a much stronger ally on the throne of Cappadocia than the lackluster Ariobarzanes, who had been repeatedly ejected from his kingdom. Archelaus continued to support the Roman cause through the Second and Third Mithridatic Wars, but the death of Sulla in 79 and the eclipse of Lucullus by Pompey may have ended Archelaus' hopes of becoming king of Pontus.⁴² Pompey did not forget the Archelaus, however; he installed Archelaus' son as priest-ruler of Pontic Comana, perhaps as a sop in consideration of his father's royal aspirations and faithful service to Rome.⁴³ Pontic Comana was re-organized by Pompey to be more than the usual temple state. He instead made it a political unit that included a new tract of two *schoeni* of land and that land's inhabitants, a fact that speaks to Pompey's intention to provide Archelaus' son political authority in addition to his priesthood.⁴⁴

After Sulla's departure for Italy, his legate L. Licinius Murena, apparently acting without Sulla's approval, used Cappadocia as a staging ground to launch an attack on Comana, which was under Mithradates' control.⁴⁵ The war continued despite Sulla's opposition to it, but Mithridates got the upper hand and managed to drive Roman garrisons out of Cappadocia.⁴⁶ Sulla sent Gabinius to Murena, ordering him to hold a conference in which he was to reconcile Mithridates and Ariobarzanes.⁴⁷ Murena followed orders, and Ariobarzanes was betrothed to Mithridates' four-year-old daughter. In return, the Cappadocian king ceded territory to Mithridates. Not long thereafter, Ariobarzanes complained to Rome about Mithridates' vast holdings in Cappadocia, and Sulla made Mithridates return land to Ariobarzanes.⁴⁸ At Sulla's death in 79, however, Mithridates induced Tigranes II of Armenia, another son-in-law, to invade Cappadocia, thus initiating the chain of events that provoked the Third Mithridatic War.⁴⁹ During that war, the Roman commander, Lucullus, drew food supplies from Cappadocia.⁵⁰ After Lucullus lost his

Comana, is Archelaus II, and his grandson, whom Caesar replaced as priest-ruler of Pontic Comana with Lycomedes, is Archelaus III. The great-grandson, whom Antonius appointed king of Cappadocia, is Archelaus IV.

⁴² Role in the Second Mithridatic War: App. *Mith.* 64; fighting alongside Lucullus in the Third Mithridatic War: Plu. *Luc.* 6.3, 9.5.

⁴³ App. *Mith.* 114.

⁴⁴ Str. 12.3.34: παραλαβὼν δὲ Πομπήϊος τὴν ἐξουσίαν Ἀρχέλαον ἐπέστησεν ἱερέα καὶ προσώρισεν αὐτῷ χώραν δίσχοινον κύκλω (τοῦτο δ' ἔστιν ἐξήκοντα στάδιοι) πρὸς τῇ ἱερᾷ, προστάξας τοῖς ἐνοικοῦσι πειθαρχεῖν αὐτῷ: τούτων μὲν οὖν ἡγεμῶν ἦν καὶ τῶν τὴν πόλιν οἰκούντων ἱεροδούλων κύριος πλὴν τοῦ πιπράσκειν. "When Pompey took over authority, he appointed Archelaus priest and included within his boundaries, in addition to the sacred land, a territory of two *schoeni* in circuit, that is, sixty stades, and ordered the inhabitants to obey his rule. Now he [Archelaus] was governor of these, and also master of the temple servants who lived in the city, except that he was not empowered to sell them" [my emphasis]. Trans. Gotter, lightly modified by author. On the unusual nature of Pompey's arrangement for Archelaus, see Gotter (2008) 164-66.

⁴⁵ App. *Mith.* 64.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 65-66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 66.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 67.

⁴⁹ App. *Mith.* 67; Plu. *Luc.* 22.4.

⁵⁰ App. *Mith.* 80.

command to Pompey, Mithridates invaded Cappadocia, but Pompey subsequently chased the Pontic king out of his possessions in Asia Minor.⁵¹

Pompey's subsequent victories in the East prompted Phraates of Parthia and Tigranes of Armenia to seek his friendship.⁵² Pompey returned Ariobarzanes to the throne of Cappadocia and added to his kingdom Sophene and Gordyene, which the son of Tigranes had lost through treachery.⁵³ Valerius Maximus first mentions Cappadocia and the Ariobarzanid dynasty in his report of Ariobarzanes I's voluntary abdication of the throne for his own son, Ariobarzanes II, in the presence of Pompey, who played a key role in heading off potential conflict between an unwilling successor and his insistent predecessor.⁵⁴ This younger Ariobarzanes (II) was the father of Ariobarzanes III and Ariarathes X, the last two Ariobarzanid kings of Cappadocia. His wife, the boys' mother, was Athenais, daughter of Mithridates VI.⁵⁵ A letter from Cicero to the magistrates and senate of Cybistra in late September 51 serves as a *terminus antequem* for the murder of Ariobarzanes II therein described as *casum illum interitus paterni*.⁵⁶

Cicero spoke in favor of Ariobarzanes III's successful bid for official recognition as king of Cappadocia at Rome.⁵⁷ Fraternal tensions, however, encouraged Ariobarzanes III's brother, Ariarathes X, to aim at royal authority; Cicero mentions his protection, as governor of Cilicia in 51, of Ariobarzanes III from a plot to place Ariarathes X on the throne in his place, a scheme Ariarathes, perhaps disingenuously, denied participation in.⁵⁸ Writing to Cato in January of 50, Cicero also mentions his restoration to the court of Ariobarzanes III of two men whom the queen mother Athenais opposed, and his banishment of a priest who had ample resources for violent action.⁵⁹ Syme speculates that this priest was none other than Ariarathes, though he may instead have been Archelaus III, priest-ruler of Pontic Comana.⁶⁰

If so, Archelaus' flagrant aggression might explain why in 47 Caesar replaced Archelaus III as priest of Pontic Comana with Lycomedes, a Bithynian man who claimed descent from Cappadocian royalty, and granted the latter an additional 400 schoeni of land.⁶¹ Syme speculates that Lycomedes was the grandson of Caesar's old friend Nicomedes III, whose daughter he once represented in the senate, making his grandmother, Nysa, the daughter of Ariarathes VI.⁶² In the

⁵¹ Lucullus and Mithridates: *Ibid.* 91; D.C. 36.17.1; Pompey and Mithridates: *Plu. Pomp.* 32; *App. Mith.* 99.

⁵² *App. Mith.* 104.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 105, 115.

⁵⁴ *V. Max.* 5.7 *ext.* 2. See also *App. Mith.* 105.

⁵⁵ *App. Mith.* 66.

⁵⁶ *Cic. Fam.* 15.2.5; Sullivan (1990) 176-77.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 2.17.7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 15.2.6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 15.4.6.

⁶⁰ Syme (1995) 146. Gotter (2008, 161) identifies the priest as an unnamed one from Cappadocian Comana.

⁶¹ *Caes. Bell. Alex.* 66; *Str.* 12.3.35; Syme (1995) 166-74. Archelaus III is not mentioned when the installation of Lycomedes as priest-ruler of Pontic Comana is reported. This omission raises the question of what happened to Archelaus. Was he dead? Did Caesar kill him? Syme (1995, 168) notes that Strabo's report (12.3.34) implies Archelaus was deposed. Caesar's land grant is an expansion of the realm Pompey conferred on Archelaus II.

⁶² Syme (1995) 173. Assistance of Nicomedes' daughter: *Suet. Jul.* 49.3.

interest of the Ariobarzanids, Caesar handed over part of Lesser Armenia to Ariobarzanes III.⁶³ In this Armenian possession, Caesar installed Ariarathes X as a vassal of his brother.⁶⁴ It would seem that Caesar was not holding a grudge against Ariobarzanes for his support of Pompey.⁶⁵ Cicero joked in a letter to Atticus written in May 45 that Ariarathes was seeking to buy a kingdom from Caesar because he had no place to set his foot—a possible indication that the assignment over Lesser Armenia did not take.⁶⁶ Ariarathes' whereabouts between 45 and 42, the year Ariobarzanes III was murdered on the orders of one of Caesar's assassins, Cassius Longinus, are unknown.⁶⁷

Before proceeding to an examination of the brief and unstable reign of Ariarathes X and his deposition by Antonius in favor of Archelaus IV, it will be useful to pause and offer some observations on Cappadocia, its monarchy and nobility, and its relationship with Rome that emerge from the preceding reconstruction of events. First, Rome was involved in Cappadocian affairs with some regularity after the revolt of Aristonicus was suppressed, intervening in matters regarding the kingdom's territorial extent, its monarchy, nobility, and foreign policy. Second, intermarriage of the royal family of Cappadocia with neighboring dynasties produced numerous competing claims for the throne from the ruling houses of Bithynia and Pontus. That confusion contributed to a higher probability of imposture, and Justin's account of Nicomedes III's plot regarding the "third son of Ariarathes VI" must be taken seriously for that reason alone. The same story shows that Cappadocian imposture, real or imaginary, had entered Greco-Roman historiography by the first century BCE. This means that Valerius Maximus' false Ariarathes X was not the first Cappadocian impostor in the historical record, and the author's reliance on Pompeius Trogus as a source may even point to the Trogan origin of Valerius' account of the Augustan-era impostor.⁶⁸

Finally, the Cappadocian nobility's relative independence from its king, and its factionalism, must always be factored into any reconstruction of events involving the kingdom. Taken together, these characteristics of Cappadocia as a socio-political entity point to its instability as a nexus in a shifting network of alliances and competing interests that always reached in both directions across its borders over which Rome had limited control. In other words, the socio-political and economic organization of Cappadocia remained very feudal in nature, despite the

⁶³ D.C. 41.62.3.

⁶⁴ *Caes. Bell. Alex.* 66.4. A sizeable lacuna in the text makes the precise political arrangement uncertain. Dio (41.63.3, 42.48.3) claims that Caesar assigned part of Armenia Minor to Ariobarzanes. Nipperdey used this information to restore the lacuna in 66 to indicate that Ariarathes had been given this portion of Armenia Minor, where he was under the *imperium* and *dicio* of Ariobarzanes. It is a reasonable inference. See https://ldlt.digitallatin.org/editions/bellum_alexandrinum/66.html. Krivolapov (2023) also argues in favor of restoring the lacuna of *Bell. Alex.* 66.4 to indicate that Caesar gave Ariarathes a portion of Armenia Minor.

⁶⁵ Ariobarzanes' support of Pompey in the war against Caesar: *Flor. Epit.* 2.13.5.

⁶⁶ Ariarathes at Rome in 45: *Cic. Att.* 13.2a. Cicero's account of Ariarathes seeking to buy "some kingdom" (*regnum aliquod*) from Caesar is snide, but it may also not be far from the truth. Perhaps Ariarathes sought to get out from under his brother's *imperium* and *dicio*.

⁶⁷ *App. BC* 4.63.272; D.C. 47.33.4.

⁶⁸ It is important to note that Justin's epitome does not contain the false Ariarathes X in his report of Augustus' dealings with the Parthians. See Justin 42.5.6-12. This lack could reflect the story's absence from Pompeius Trogus, whose *Philippic History* extended perhaps as far as 9 CE. See also n. 27.

modern historiographical tendency to treat it as a straightforward unity. The arrival of Augustan rule over the East could not have changed that situation overnight, had there been a design to do so.

The Brief Reign of Ariarathes X and Its End

Precisely when Ariarathes X obtained the monarchy of Cappadocia, whether he ever fully secured the kingdom or not, is unknown.⁶⁹ He may have been elevated by Cassius Longinus in 42 after Cassius killed Ariobarzanes III for failing to join the assassins' army.⁷⁰ The reverse of Ariarathes' drachms bears the legend *Philadelphos* even after his brother was dead, which makes them useless as a dating mechanism in this regard.⁷¹ Ariarathes did not participate in the Battle of Philippi in October 42, but his absence can be explained by his brother's recent assassination and the more pressing need to secure his kingdom.⁷² When the Parthians invaded Syria in late 41 or early 40, and Labienus proceeded against Anatolia while Pacorus advanced to Palestine, Cappadocia remained unharmed.⁷³ Ariarathes' good fortune in avoiding a Parthian invasion may have raised suspicions that he had struck some kind of deal with Parthia, but the king seems not to have alienated Rome. Antonius' lieutenant Ventidius wintered in Cappadocia in 38, perhaps judging it a place not only safe for his army but also serviceable as a conduit for feeding false information to the Parthians and their allies.⁷⁴ Such a misinformation campaign might have bought Ventidius sufficient time to prevail over Pacorus and the Parthians near Gindarus.⁷⁵

Whatever Ariarathes' record of cooperation with Rome or collusion with Parthia was up to that point, he was deposed in 36 by M. Antonius, triumvir and grandson of a pro-magistrate over Cilicia.⁷⁶ Antonius replaced Ariarathes with Sisines, local dynast of Nora and Cadena and son of

⁶⁹ His coinage ends after regnal year 6, which suggests that he at least claimed to be in the sixth year of his reign when he was last able to mint coinage.

⁷⁰ D.C. 47.33.1, 4.

⁷¹ Callataj and Lorber (2011) 437, 451; Taner (1972) 87, 95.

⁷² The window of time between the murder of Ariarathes' brother and October of 42 was brief to the point of making Ariarathes' participation in Philippi impracticable. Ariobarzanes' death provided an opening for Sisines to begin his bid for Cappadocia. As a result of Sisines' success, Ariarathes found it impossible to secure his entire kingdom. Many eastern kings fought on the side of Caesar's assassins, as Dio's account of the weeks leading up to Philippi makes clear. Specific kings allied with assassins named by Dio: Dieotarus (47.24.3); Tarcondimotus (47.26.2); Alchaudonius (47.27.3: A. was brought over to the anti-Caesarian camp by Q. Caecilius Bassus); Rhascyporis of Thrace (47.48.2). On Sisines, see n. 77.

⁷³ Pacorus: D.C. 48.25.1-26.2; Labienus: D.C. 48.26.3-4. Tarn and Charlesworth (1965, 59) claim that Ariarathes was pro-Parthian, but they rely on Antonius' apparent failure to organize the client kings to supply the reason. No evidence of his pro-Parthian position is adduced, unfortunately.

⁷⁴ Bihar (1968) 58. On Ventidius' successful campaign and its commemoration as revenge for the defeat and death of Crassus, see Schlude (2020) 84-85, 94-95.

⁷⁵ Victory at Gindarus: Str. 16.2.8; Florus *Epit.* 2.19.5-7; D.C. 49.19; Wylie (1993) 137-8.

⁷⁶ Roller (2018, 49-50) suspects that the reasons for removing Ariarathes included his own incompetence and the incompetence of other rulers named Ariarathes going back to Ariarathes V and his failed dam. A parallel case of the removal of a king in this region by Antonius is Artavasdes II, who betrayed Antonius during the campaign against Media Atropatene. After the failed campaign, Antonius returned to Armenia, arrested Artavasdes, and took

Glaphyra and Archelaus III, the latter of whom had been the priest-ruler of the temple state of Pontic Comana before Julius Caesar replaced him.⁷⁷ Sisines was thus a descendant of Archelaus the general of Mithridates, who was, if the testimony of Sulla's *commentarii* is trustworthy on this point, a Cappadocian.⁷⁸ Later familial claims of origins in the hoariest Persian and Macedonian ancestry probably date back earlier than Sisines.⁷⁹ Before Antonius got involved, Sisines, ensconced in a lofty Cappadocian stronghold near Mt. Taurus called Nora, had already commenced his violent attempt to seize the kingdom.⁸⁰ When he launched that effort, he may have assumed the name Sisines, since it had a venerable Persian and Cappadocian past.⁸¹

him back to Alexandria to display in his so-called Alexandrian triumph. For the capture of Artavasdes, see Plu. *Ant.* 50.4; D.C. 49.39-40. The Armenians put Artavasdes' son Artaxias on the throne, but Antonius chased Artaxias out of Armenia, and the latter fled to Parthia (D.C. 49.40.1). See Patterson (2015) 88-92. Antonius allotted his son by Cleopatra, Alexander Helios, Armenia, Media, and Parthia in the so-called Donations of Alexandria. See Plu. *Ant.* 54.4; D.C. 49.41.3.

⁷⁷ Sisines over Nora and Cadena: Str. 12.2.6; Syme (1995) 149. The timing of Antonius' replacement of Ariarathes with Sisines is debated. Two dates are proposed: 41 and 36. Antonius may have sought to stabilize Cappadocia after the Battle of Philippi, and his solution to that problem was to place Sisines in the kingship. Plutarch (*Ant.* 24.1) describes Antonius, after departing Greece post-Philippi, in Asia receiving kings and wives of kings competing in gifts and beauty for Antonius' attention. This description is consistent with the evidence in the triumvir Octavian's poem preserved by Martial (*Ep.* 11.20) in which Antonius is depicted as sleeping with Glaphyra, also the name of the mother of Sisines, while Fulvia is still alive. This poem, of course, may not be authentic, and its Glaphyra may not be the same as the mother of Archelaus/Sisines. All the poem reveals about this Glaphyra is that Antonius is sleeping with her, and that she is a contemporary of Fulvia. That said, Appian (*BC* 5.7) places the arbitration between Sisines and Ariarathes before Antonius' meeting with Cleopatra in Cilicia in 41. Tatum (2024, 249) wisely identifies the poem as one that is "attributed" to Octavian. See also Roller (2018, 51-52), who accepts the identity of the Glaphyra of poetry and the one of historiography but does not insist that Sisines' promotion depended on Antonius' affection for his mother. Antonius may also have placed Sisines on the throne of Cappadocia to stabilize the kingdom before his campaign against Media Atropatene in 36. If Sisines was first installed in 41, then Ariarathes and Sisines both claimed to be king of Cappadocia from 41 to 36, but only Ariarathes was able to mint coins backing that claim.

⁷⁸ App. *BC* 5.7; D.C. 49.32.3. Archelaus's Cappadocian identity: Plu. *Sull.* 22.4. Plutarch (*ibid.* 23.2) claims that Sulla defended his actions with regard to Archelaus in his *commentarii*.

⁷⁹ Archelaus' (IV) granddaughter claimed descent from Temenos, founder of the Argead dynasty, and Darius. See J. *BJ* 1.476-477.

⁸⁰ Str. 12.2.6.

⁸¹ Syme (1995) 149 n. 50. Such a decision would explain why he appears under two different names: Archelaus and Sisines. Ballesteros Pastor (2014, 227-28 with n. 14) points out that the name Sisines was "quite common among the Cappadocian nobility." He further cites a passage in Strabo (12.3.6) that mentions one Antipater, the son of Sisis, who ceded lands in Lesser Armenia to Mithridates VI Eupator. For the present argument, it is noteworthy that Sisis, a name Ballesteros Pastor sees as a misreading of Sisines, had a son with a Greek name. The Sisines whom Antonius made king of Cappadocia had a father with the Greek name Archelaus. It should further be noted that, regionally, the changing of a name to one having dynastic cachet was not unknown. Nicomedes III allegedly changed the name of one of his sons to the Paphlagonian dynastic moniker "Pylaemenes," as a means of holding onto his lands in Paphlagonia. See Justin 37.4.8. We have also seen how Mithridates redubbed one of his sons Ariarathes IX when he placed the boy on the throne of Cappadocia. Syme (1995, 148-50) argues unconvincingly that Sisines and Archelaus were two different children of Glaphyra. Admittedly, Josephus (*BJ* 1.507) refers in a speech placed in the mouth of Archelaus IV to a brother that plotted against Archelaus, but he is not named. An unnamed brother is not a slot into which one can confidently place Sisines.

Antonius had to decide between the ambitious and daring Sisines, who had been proving his skills by capturing and holding Nora and Cadena (a polis with palace), and the relatively untried Ariarathes, who had thus far shown his inability to secure decisively any kingdom.⁸² Ariarathes may have argued that his membership in the Ariobarzanid dynasty should settle the matter, whereas Sisines could point to his family's heritage as priest-rulers of Pontic Comana, (fictive) descent from Mithridates VI Eupator, and the family's long, faithful service to Rome. Antonius had to contend with the realities at hand: Ariarathes was unreliable, and Sisines had nowhere else to aim his ambitions, since control of Pontic Comana was currently in the hands of Lycomedes, another powerful noble who claimed familial ties to the Mithridatids and Ariarathids. Antonius was not simply unprepared to eject Lycomedes; to the contrary, he had even increased Lycomedes' power, perhaps even making him a king.⁸³ Antonius therefore chose Sisines as his new king of Cappadocia, but his decision had to be finalized by force. He drove Ariarathes out of Cappadocia.⁸⁴ Valerius Maximus is the sole source to report Antonius' murder of Ariarathes X.⁸⁵

Antonius' focus on his upcoming campaign against Media Atropatene may also have worked in Sisines' favor. Antonius' lieutenant Ventidius, whose stay in Cappadocia had put him in an excellent position to gauge the Ariarathes' value and reliability, may have formed a negative impression of Ariarathes.⁸⁶ Ariarathes' inability to dislodge Sisines from his kingdom, if such was even attempted, also reflected poorly on Ariarathes' military capability. As he looked forward to departing on a campaign across the Euphrates, Antonius likely saw in Ariarathes an unsuitable ally to accompany him or even leave behind in Cappadocia.⁸⁷ These plans may have been hatched as early as the autumn of 37 or winter of 36 at Antioch with the knowledge and encouragement of Cleopatra VII, who was ever looking to advance her own interests, sometimes by shrewdly rearranging affairs in other eastern kingdoms.⁸⁸ Her preference would likely have been for her grandnephew Archelaus/Sisines, from the priestly line of Pontic Comana, to replace Ariarathes. Cleopatra's older sister, Berenice IV, had married Archelaus IV's grandfather, Archelaus II.⁸⁹

⁸² Appian (*BC* 5.7) calls Antonius an "arbiter between kings and cities," when he reports the decision to replace Ariarathes with Sisines.

⁸³ Str. 12.3.38; Syme (1995) 168 with n. 24; Tatum (2024) 273.

⁸⁴ Dio (49.32.3) reports Antonius' ejection of Ariarathes.

⁸⁵ V. Max. 9.15 *ext.* 2.

⁸⁶ Although there is no direct evidence of Ariarathes' disloyalty, both Antonius' fellow triumvir Octavian and Parthia were active in stirring up trouble for Antonius in the eastern kingdoms. Dio (D.C. 49.41.5) reports that Artavasdes II, who was removed from the throne of Armenia, was in communication with Octavian. In the same era, the Parthians were interfering with the rulers of Palestine (J. AJ 15.92; D.C. 49.32.5). Antonius' removal of Ariarathes in the same period may point to suspicion or knowledge of the king's collusion with parties hostile to him. Ventidius, who spent time in Cappadocia, was well placed to obtain such intelligence.

⁸⁷ Antonius' campaign against Media Atropatene: Str. 11.13.3; Plu. *Ant.* 37-39; D.C. 49.25-31; Jones (2017). Justin (42.5.3) and Strabo (11.13.3) mistakenly identify the war as having been against Parthia.

⁸⁸ Plu. *Ant.* 36.1; Roller (2010) 90-1.

⁸⁹ Str. 17.11; Ricketts (1990, 56) argues that Archelaus was not co-regent with Berenice IV, as Strabo reports. Dio (39.57-58), however, also reports Berenice's marriage to Archelaus, the son of Mithridates' general of the same name, his capture, release, and eventual murder by Gabinius, who turned the throne of Egypt over to Ptolemy XII.

Antonius therefore chose Sisines to rule Cappadocia in Ariarathes' place, and Sisines reverted to the name Archelaus.

The story that Antonius' choice of Sisines over Ariarathes was motivated solely by the beauty of his mother, Glaphyra, is absurd.⁹⁰ While a sexual affair between Antonius and Glaphyra is asserted in Octavian's scurrilous poetry, Antonius would not have decided such an important matter, carrying with it the potential to threaten his organization of affairs in the East and his campaign against Media Atropatene, on the basis of lust alone.⁹¹ As argued above, Sisines had already proven his ability to hold parts of the kingdom of Cappadocia. Antonius had also known and honored with a royal burial Sisines' grandfather Archelaus, who claimed, likely falsely, to be the son of Mithridates VI Eupator.⁹² The recommendation of his greatest and most influential ally, Cleopatra, would also have contributed to the decision. Finally, returning Sisines to Pontic Comana was not an option, since Lycomedes, whose realm had been increased by Antonius, still possessed it. The wisdom of Antonius' decisions was borne out by Archelaus' long reign as king of Cappadocia. Lycomedes, too, remained an ally of Antonius until Antonius' defeat at the Battle of Actium. Octavian then deprived him of a portion of his lands and later handed Lycomedes' realm over to a local ally named Medeios.⁹³ Archelaus, on the other hand, was confirmed in his kingdom by Octavian and ruled Cappadocia until his death early in the reign of Augustus' successor Tiberius (17 CE).

The Fate of Ariarathes X: Sources

Ariarathes X's fate after Antonius selected Sisines to replace him is an open question. Valerius (9.15. ext. 2) reports that Antonius killed Ariarathes, which would have been a sensible move, since leaving him alive might have afforded Ariarathes the opportunity to try to regain his kingdom or at least cause Archelaus and Rome much trouble. No extant source aside from Valerius reports Antonius' murder of Ariarathes, but one must also take into account the possibility that Valerius may have inherited this claim from a text that no longer survives. In writing his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, Valerius relied mostly on Latin sources: Cicero, Livy, and perhaps Varro, Pomponius Rufus, Sallust, and Hyginus.⁹⁴ For his external *exempla*, he probably relied on Pompeius Trogus. Briscoe argues, reasonably, that for recent events Valerius relied on oral instead of written sources.⁹⁵

Since the anecdote about Antonius' murder of Ariarathes belongs in the final external section in Valerius' work, one might argue that his source for the murder of Ariarathes was

⁹⁰ Neither Sullivan (1990, 180-5) nor Roller (2010, 91) find the story credible.

⁹¹ Martial (11.20) preserves Octavian's lines of poetry accusing Antonius of sleeping with Glaphyra. On these verses, see Scott (1933) 25. Dellius may have told a similar story. Josephus (*AJ* 15.2.6) and Plutarch (*Ant.* 25.2-3) attest to Dellius' preoccupation with Antonius' sexual appetites.

⁹² *Plu. Ant.* 3. See also Sullivan (1990) 241, 424 n. 93. On the claim to be Mithridates' son, see *Str.* 12.3.34. Antonius' treatment of Archelaus' body suggests that he, at least, chose to believe the claim.

⁹³ *D.C.* 51.2.2.-3.

⁹⁴ See Briscoe (2019, 6-9) for a recent discussion of Valerius' sources.

⁹⁵ Briscoe (2019) 7.

either Trogus or an oral source. Justin's account of the impostor put forward by Nicomedes III shows that Trogus did include material about an earlier impostor seeking the throne of Cappadocia, but that fact bears on arguments regarding the false Ariarathes in Valerius, not Antonius' execution of the real Ariarathes. The execution of Ariarathes might have been reported in other sources but is conspicuously missing from Dio, who reports Antonius' murders of other satellite rulers.⁹⁶ Ariarathes' murder is also absent from Appian. Justin (42), Trogus' epitomator, mentions Antonius a handful of times in his section on Parthian history, but Cappadocia and its kings are unmentioned in the same section. Of course, it is still possible that Valerius took the story of Antonius' murder of Ariarathes from Trogus, but there is no direct evidence he did. Another favorite source of Valerius, Cicero, was of course killed in the Triumviral proscriptions and therefore could not have written about events in Cappadocia after that time.

Sallust's *Histories* did not extend beyond the early sixties BCE. Another possible source for the murder is Livy. Unfortunately, the relevant books are missing. The *Periochae* make no mention of Ariarathes, Archelaus, or Antonius' murder of the former, but the work's characterization of Antonius from the beginning of the civil war between Caesar and Pompeius to the Second Triumvirate suggests Antonius was a brutal and murderous man, in other words, the kind of person whom one might expect to murder Ariarathes X.⁹⁷ Florus' portrait of Antonius is similarly damning.⁹⁸ All of this points to a Livian portrait of Antonius that might easily have contained an account of Antonius' murder of Ariarathes X.⁹⁹ Neither source has anything to say about Antonius' activities in Cappadocia, however, so one is unable to tell whether Livy discussed them. It may also be the case that Valerius heard the story of the murder from one of his oral sources.

The earliest notice about the end of the Ariobarzanid dynasty comes from Strabo, who writes: "When the dynasty had advanced to the third generation, it failed; and Archelaus was appointed king, though not related to the people, being appointed by Antonius."¹⁰⁰ The Greek verb ἐξέλιπε, here translated "failed," is rendered "died out" by Roller, but, in either case, does not indicate that someone murdered Ariarathes X, except perhaps by inference, let alone that it was Antonius who killed him.¹⁰¹ Strabo's source for the appointment of Archelaus may have been Q. Dellius, but the only other author who both relied on Dellius and also reported Antonius' connection to Archelaus, Plutarch, does not mention the death of Ariarathes or the installation of Archelaus as king.¹⁰² Plutarch only mentions the participation of Archelaus in Antonius' war

⁹⁶ Dio on murders of client kings: 49.39.1-3, 50.13.7; Dio on suspicion of Amyntas of Galatia's disloyalty: 50.13.7.

⁹⁷ Liv. *Per.* 113.5, 117.3-4, 120.2.

⁹⁸ 2.14-21. Phrases such as *fax et turbo* (2.14), *Antonii pessimum ingenium* (2.16) and *furor Antonii* (2.21) are representative. See Berge (2019) 427.

⁹⁹ De Hoyos (2019, 228) on Livy's negative portrayal of Antonius: "If Livy did accord these two leaders [Octavian and Antonius] eminent virtues to balance the flaws, his epitomator ignored them."

¹⁰⁰ Str. 12.2.11: εἰς τριγονίαν δὲ προελθόντος τοῦ γένους ἐξέλιπε, κατεστάθη δ' ὁ Ἀρχέλαος οὐδὲν προσήκων αὐτοῖς Ἀντωνίου καταστήσαντος. Roller (2014, 519) translates the first clause as follows: "but during the third generation his family died out."

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² See Str. 11.13.3 on Dellius as the author of a history of Antonius' Median campaign.

with Octavian, an event that postdates the failed campaign against Media Atropatene.¹⁰³ Plutarch, however, does mention Dellius acting as Antonius' messenger to Cleopatra, inviting her to meet Antonius in Cilicia.¹⁰⁴ If this episode belongs to his *Commentary on the Parthian War*, and not his ribald *Epistulae ad Cleopatram Lasciviae*, then the chronological scope of Dellius' history could accommodate the inclusion of both the enthronement of Archelaus and murder of Ariarathes.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Antonius regularly employed Dellius as an emissary to eastern rulers.¹⁰⁶ Still, no proposed fragment of Dellius contains such information.

This leaves Valerius Maximus as the lone source to report the existence of the false Ariarathes and to claim that Antonius killed the real Ariarathes X. The entire passage warrants closer examination:

Idem barbarum quendam ob eximiam similitudinem Cappadociae regnum adfectantem, tamquam Ariarathes esset, quem a M. Antonio interemptum luce clarius erat, quamquam paene totius orientis ciuitatum et gentium credula suffragatione fultum caput imperio dementer inminens iusto inpendere supplicio coegit.

The same man [Caesar] punished a certain barbarian who was aiming at the kingdom of Cappadocia on account of his exceedingly close resemblance to Ariarathes, who was obviously [*luce clarius*] killed by Antonius. Though this man, madly threatening the empire, was supported as their head by the credulous vote of the cities and peoples of almost the entire East, [Caesar] made him pay the just punishment.

The bulk of this passage concerns Augustus' punishment of the "barbarian" who was using his uncannily close resemblance (*ob eximiam similitudinem*) to the real Ariarathes to attempt to become king of Cappadocia. Augustus had him executed, even though many in the East were supporting him. One of the interesting details of this account is the reference to the *suffragatio* of the cities and peoples of the East. Most translations of Valerius Maximus render this word as "support" or "favor," but it may also suggest some kind of formal process for the selection of a king as had occurred earlier in the century, albeit one in which Roman permission had not been

¹⁰³ Mention of Archelaus in connection with the war with Octavian: Plu. *Ant.* 61.1. Plutarch (*Ant.* 25.2-3, 59.4) mentions Dellius by name only in connection with Cleopatra. This fact may point to the biographer's reliance on Dellius' fictional letters in verse about Cleopatra for this material. Plutarch (*Ant.* 59.40) does call Dellius "the historian," and thus he may have relied on Dellius' *Commentary on the Parthian War* for his own account of the same. See Westall (2019) 76; Pelling (1988) 28, 185, 263.

¹⁰⁴ Plu. *Ant.* 25.2-3.

¹⁰⁵ On Dellius, see Westall (2019) 75-79; Tatum (2011) 183-84.

¹⁰⁶ Josephus (*AJ* 15.2.6), apparently relying on Dellius, recounts how Dellius visited Aristobulus in Judea and was so taken with the beauty of Alexandra's children that he induced her to have drawings of them made for the purpose of sending them to Antonius. Once again, the underlying subject seems to be Antonius' sexual appetite, for Josephus claims that Dellius' purpose had been to entice Antonius to send for the children so Antonius could take his pleasure with them. Other missions of Dellius: Dio (49.39.1-3) reports Dellius' role as Antonius' emissary to the king of Armenia in 34. For a recent discussion of Dellius as Antonius' messenger to Cleopatra (Plu. *Ant.* 25; see Fear [2020]); Dellius' last mission for Antonius was the gathering of mercenaries from Macedonia and Thrace to Antonius' cause shortly before Actium. See D.C. 50.13.7.

sought.¹⁰⁷ According to Valerius, Cappadocia's independent choice was in actuality an impostor, and Augustus executed him.

Included in this account of the barbarian impostor is the claim that Antonius killed the real Ariarathes: *quem a M. Antonio interemptum luce clarius erat*. Often left unremarked upon is the curious phrase *luce clarius*, which can be translated literally as “clearer than light.”¹⁰⁸ This Ciceronian expression is otherwise unattested in Valerius Maximus and carries a strong air of special pleading.¹⁰⁹ Cicero uses it to indicate something that should, in the view of the speaker or writer, be manifest to those who reason clearly (or agree with him, at any rate).¹¹⁰ Valerius' use of this Ciceronian expression suggests not that Antonius' murder of Ariarathes was an established fact but that Valerius (or others he relies on) believes it to be the only logical conclusion to reach about the king's fate. As discussed above, no other known, extant source for this period reports Antonius' murder of Ariarathes, including ones that rely on the same sources Valerius used. The silence of other sources coupled with Valerius' use of this expression points to the non-factual nature of Valerius' reasonable surmise. Antonius *may have* killed Ariarathes, but Valerius is sharing a rational speculation, not reporting a documented fact.

Valerius' educated guess does fit a pattern of killings attributed to Antonius and Cleopatra in the years surrounding Antonius' ill-fated Parthian campaign.¹¹¹ Josephus reports that Cleopatra pushed Antonius to kill Lysanias, tetrarch of Iturea, in 33 BCE on the grounds that Lysanias was seeking to betray the region to the Parthians.¹¹² In his *Jewish War* (1.248), Josephus provides details of Lysanias' plan to bribe the satrap Barzapharnes to return Antigonos II, the final Hasmonean ruler, to the throne and depose Hyrcanus, which did indeed happen, although in the *Antiquities* it is Antigonos who is depicted as the briber.¹¹³ Confusion is added by a Greek inscription referring to a freedman of Lysanias who built a road and a temple in the time of the

¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere Valerius Maximus often uses forms of *suffragium* to indicate a literal vote of some kind: 2.7.15, 9.6; 3.8.3; 4.5.3, 7 *init*; 6.5 *ext.* 1; 7.3 *ext.* 6, 5.1, 6; 8.1.2, 3, 7; 8.1 *d.*3; 8.5.3, 15.4; 9.3.6, 10.1. In a couple of passages, the word is used metaphorically: 4.7.6 and perhaps 8.15 *ext.* 1. The same word is used of divine favor at 4.7 *init*: *utpote cum divina subfragatione foveantur*. Local credulity, especially in the Greek East, is a stock theme in Roman stories of imposture, as Nicolleau (2022, 114-20) explores in some detail. The theme is used to criticize existing popular support; it does not necessarily fabricate non-existent support.

¹⁰⁸ Nicolleau (2022, 438) quotes this phrase but does not comment on it.

¹⁰⁹ Cic. *Catil.* 1.3.6; *Tusc.* 2.37.90. On Valerius Maximus' use of and interaction with Cicero, see Langlands (2011), (2022); Lawrence (2015); Wardle (2018); Welch (2013) 67-8, 71; Bloomer (1992) 82-84, 88-99, 105-7, 127-38, 236.

¹¹⁰ At *Catil.* 1.3.6, Cicero uses the expression (*luce sunt clariora nobis*) to indicate that Catiline's plans are known, which is the very thing he is seeking to persuade Catiline and his fellow senators. At *Tusc.* 1.37.90, Cicero has his speaker assert that the rational deduction about death, which the living cannot know by experience, is that it is non-existence. This conclusion is something the speaker seeks to persuade the listener is true. For Valerius Maximus' engagement with *Tusculan Disputations* in particular, see Langlands (2022); Lawrence (2015). Lawrence (2015) discusses Valerius' engagement with Book 4 of *Tusculan Disputations* in Book 9 of *Facta et dicta memorabilia*.

¹¹¹ Octavian, too, killed satellite rulers and their family members. He executed Adiatorix, son of the Galatian tetrarch Domnecleius, after leading the man in triumph. See Str. 12.3.6. Octavian also executed Alexander of Emesa, king of an Arabian tribe, after leading him in triumph. See D.C. 51.2.2. Noteworthy is Octavian's executions of satellite rulers within the context of the triumph, a traditional setting for such punishments at Rome.

¹¹² J. AJ 15.92. See also D.C. 49.32.5.

¹¹³ J. AJ 14.13.3.

kyrioi Sebastoi, language that potentially places Lysanias in the time of Tiberius' principate, before the death of Livia.¹¹⁴ The deposed ruler whom Lysanias allegedly supported, the Hasmonean Antigonos, was beheaded (or crucified; see D.C. 49.22) by Antonius after being taken to Antioch in 37 BCE.¹¹⁵ Plutarch later remarked that no other king before Antigonos had been punished by Roman authorities in this way, a fact that does allow the possibility of Antonius' murder of Ariarathes after 37.¹¹⁶

Indeed, Antonius' slaying of Antigonos is the best attested of these ruler murders, all of which may have been motivated by various considerations including Parthian intervention or the interests of Cleopatra. As the Triumviral endgame came into view, Antonius and Cleopatra still made time for using executions to rearrange the landscape of kingdoms in the East. Shortly before Actium, Antonius killed Iamblichus, king of one of the Arabian tribes.¹¹⁷ After Actium, Cleopatra executed Artavasdes II of Armenia and sent his head to Artavasdes I of Media.¹¹⁸ The fact that authors such as Josephus and Dio do not fail to report Antonius' killings of other client kings in the Triumviral period, in the midst of all kinds of circumstances, makes the near universal silence regarding Antonius' killing of the occupant of one of Rome's oldest satellite dynasties in the East especially puzzling. This fact, combined with Valerius' Ciceronian rhetoric concerning Antonius' alleged murder of Ariarathes, points to the tentative conclusion that knowledge of the actual fate of Ariarathes had been lost by Valerius' day.

The Fate of Ariarathes X: Speculation

If Antonius did not, after all, kill Ariarathes X, then what happened to him? Dio (49.32.3) reports that Antonius awarded Archelaus Cappadocia and drove Ariarathes out of his former kingdom: "and, having handed over to [Amyntas] Lycaonia and part of Pamphylia, he gave Cappadocia to Archelaus, driving out Ariarathes."¹¹⁹ At that time, the most hospitable and safest refuge for an ethnically/culturally Persian royal who had run afoul of the powerful Romans was the Parthian Empire, the vastness of which would have allowed men such as Ariarathes to evade capture by Roman forces.¹²⁰ Moreover, if Ariarathes had struck a deal with the Parthians during the campaign of Labienus and then subsequently funneled to them intelligence about Ventidius'

¹¹⁴ CIG 4521. See also Cronin (1917) 147 n. 1.

¹¹⁵ J. AJ 15.1.29.

¹¹⁶ Plu. Ant. 36.2.

¹¹⁷ D.C. 50.13.7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 51.5.5.

¹¹⁹ ἔδωκε, καὶ Λυκαονίας Παμφυλίας τέ τινα αὐτῷ προσθείς, Ἀρχελάω δὲ Καππαδοκίας, ἐκβαλὼν τὸν Ἀριαράθην. Dio's account may rely on Cremutius Cordus as it does for other events in this period. See Westall (2016) 51-75; Millar (1964) 84-5. He may also have relied on Bithynian sources.

¹²⁰ For the Persian cultural identity of the Cappadocian nobility, see Michels (2017) 44; Ballesteros Pastor (2006) 385. The theme of escape to Parthia is prevalent and probably reflects its attractiveness as a practical option. Pheroras, the brother of Herod, was said to have planned to run away to Parthia with his mistress. See J. BJ 1.486. Of course, notable Romans also sought eastern aid. Labienus went to Parthia to seek help for Brutus and Cassius (D.C. 48.24.5-8). Appian (BC 5.14.144) reports that Sextus Pompeius was in the process of fleeing to Artaxiad Armenia when he was apprehended and killed by Titius.

plans, then the Parthians may have willingly provided Ariarathes a safe haven.¹²¹ Antonius would soon invade Media Atropatene, but his invasion subsequently failed, and Antonius and his army were forced to retreat. The triumvir would never again cross the Euphrates, and Augustus, instead of invading Parthia, as his adoptive father Caesar had planned to do, settled the Parthian question through a mixture of favors, threats, diplomacy, and military pressure that succeeded in recovering the lost Roman standards.¹²² This Roman settlement with Parthia occurred sixteen years after Antonius had ejected Ariarathes X from his kingdom, and it is conceivable that Ariarathes was still alive and residing in Parthia at the time the deal was struck.¹²³

Although one cannot be certain about the survival of Ariarathes X into the Augustan era, it is also the case, as shown in the previous section, that Valerius' guess regarding Antonius' killing of the same king is not an established fact. The present discussion will continue with plausible speculation contingent on the hypothetical survival of Ariarathes after the death of Antonius.¹²⁴ Despite Archelaus' allegiance to Antonius, Augustus confirmed him in his kingdom.¹²⁵ From Parthia, Ariarathes continued to be Damoclean sword hanging over Archelaus' head. Ariarathes' continued existence beyond Rome's reach was possibly a factor contributing to the king's trouble in 27/26 BCE, when his subjects laid accusations against him, and he was put on trial before Augustus.¹²⁶

Bowersock questioned Gelzer's early timing of Archelaus' trial, preferring a date between 19 and 16, but there are problems with his argument.¹²⁷ His view that Augustus' *cognitio* ca. 27/26 involving a satellite king is "constitutionally disquieting" does not exclude the possibility,

¹²¹ Pacorus' failure may not have been necessarily fatal to Ariarathes in the near term, but it could have cost him his life in 20 BCE. Ariarathes may have also, like Artavasdes, been in communication with Octavian. On the latter, see D.C. 49.41.5.

¹²² Campbell (1993) 222-23; Eilers (2003) 99.

¹²³ Athenais, the mother of Ariobarzanes III and Ariarathes X, married Ariobarzanes II after he became king in 63/62. This would make earliest possible date for the birth of Ariarathes X 61/60 BCE. If he was alive in 20, he was no older than 41 years of age and likely younger than that.

¹²⁴ Having stipulated that Ariarathes' survival long after 36 is a reasonable speculation, every instance of further speculation will not be explicitly marked as such but must be taken as part of a tentative hypothesis by the reader. Otherwise, the readability of the text would suffer.

¹²⁵ Archelaus fighting for Antonius against Octavian: Plu. *Ant.* 61.1; Octavian confirming him in his kingdom: D.C. 51.2.1-2.

¹²⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 8.1; D.C. 57.17.3. For a detailed argument in support of dating Archelaus' trial before Augustus in Spain in 26, see Levick (1971). Levick (483) also argues that there was an already established patron-client relationship between the family of Archelaus and the Claudii Nerones that explains why it is Archelaus would have sought out the young Tiberius to be his advocate before the emperor.

¹²⁷ Bowersock (1965, 157-61) argues that Archelaus approached Tiberius, 21 years of age, to gain his assistance when the latter was in the East to place Tigranes III on the throne of Armenia. The trial before Augustus then took place in Rome between 19 and 16. For arguments against Bowersock's position, see Levick (1971); Romer (1985) 77-79. Mallan (2015, 314) prefers Bowersock's argument, drawing special attention to Archelaus' groveling to a teenage Tiberius to ask his assistance (D.C. 57.17.3), which he later repeats as he pays court to Gaius in Asia (67.17.4). It is not clear to this reader why Archelaus, in desperate circumstances, would *not* grovel before the teenage stepson of the world's most powerful man. Tiberius' familial relationship with Augustus was far more valuable to Archelaus than his youth was worrisome.

especially if the trial took place in Rome before Augustus left for Gaul in late 27.¹²⁸ Moreover, Suetonius' placement of the trial first among Tiberius' *civilium officiorum rudimentis* (early civil duties) suggests it happened at an earlier date than Bowersock argues, perhaps even before Tiberius was serving as a military tribune in Spain and put on games in the camp as though he were an aedile in 25.¹²⁹

The timing of this accusation (27/26) is roughly one decade after Antonius ejected Ariarathes and replaced him with Archelaus (ca. 36). Noble Cappadocian supporters of the Ariobarzanid dynasty, whose relative independence as a political force in the kingdom is discussed above, may have been behind Archelaus' problems in 27/26, and they may have even specifically hoped for Ariarathes' reinstatement, or at least the undermining of Archelaus in the hopes of seeing the man who had replaced their former king removed.¹³⁰ Tiberius successfully pled Archelaus' defense, and Augustus judged in favor of Archelaus. Tiberius' role as Archelaus' advocate was the beginning of an important relationship that would be strengthened during Tiberius' eastern mission to place Tigranes III on the throne of Armenia in 20 but was strained when Archelaus failed to pay his respects to Tiberius after the latter took up residence on Rhodes in 6 BCE.¹³¹

Ariarathes, Augustus in the East, and Parthia

Further possibilities may be teased out of Valerius Maximus' account of the impostor who aimed for the throne of Cappadocia (*Cappadociae regnum adfectantem*), a monarchy whose realms had in

¹²⁸ The precise timing of Augustus' departure from Rome for Gaul to reorganize the area is unclear, but Dio (53.22.5) seems to indicate that it occurred before the end of 27.

¹²⁹ Early civil duties: Suet. *Tib.* 8.1. Tiberius could have been as young as 15 when he defended Archelaus. At 16 he was a military tribune and staged *ludi castrenses* with Marcellus "as though the two were aediles" in 25. On his duties in Spain, see Suet. *Tib.* 9.1; D.C. 53.26.1; Vervaeke (2020) 124. Worth considering is Nero's representation of the Rhodians before Claudius in 53 CE, when he was but 15 years of age. Nero's speech was probably written by Seneca. The fact that Claudius was a traditionalist weighs in favor of him having followed an Augustan precedent in allowing Nero to perform such a service so soon after he had assumed the *toga virilis*. On the latter, see Tac. *Ann.* 12.58.2; Suet. *Cl.* 25.9; *Nero* 7.7; *IG XII I*, 2. Tiberius assumed the *toga virilis* at the age of 14. See *Inscr. Ital.* 13.2, p. 131.

¹³⁰ Romer (1985, 78) argues that the cause of his subjects' accusation was Augustus' expansion of Archelaus' realm to include Cilicia Tracheia, after the death of Amyntas in 26/25 (D.C. 53.26.3). On the latter, see Syme (1986) 161. Syme sees the grant of Cilicia Tracheia on the death of Amyntas as distinct from the further grant of places on the Cilician coast and Armenia in 20 (54.9.2). Josephus (*BJ* 1.507) alludes to the machinations of Archelaus' brother against him, but the timing, the scope, and the context of this fraternal conflict is unknown. See Nichollet (2022, 655-56) on Cappadocian opposition to Archelaus. He (655) shrewdly speculates that Archelaus' strength and effectiveness would have been a source of discontent among the Cappadocian nobility and also points to burdensome tribute as a source of local discontent: "Il est probable que les nobles de Cappadoce n'appréciaient guère ce souverain étranger et énergique, alors qu'ils avaient bénéficié d'une grande autonomie sous ses prédécesseurs plus faibles, et les populations du royaume lui reprochaient sans doute le poids écrasant des impôts qu'il avait institués pour asseoir son autorité. Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.56.4) does mention the lightening of royal tributes after Cappadocia became a province. Nichollet's suggestion that the king would have been resented as a foreigner is open to doubt, if Archelaus was at all successful in presenting himself as an ethnic Cappadocian like his ancestor Archelaus I.

¹³¹ Tac. *Ann.* 2.42.3.

times past included parts of Cilicia and Lesser Armenia.¹³² Valerius dismisses the possibility that this person could have been the real Ariarathes because he believed Antonius had already killed Ariarathes, but, as has been demonstrated above, no other source backs Valerius on this point, and the existence of another king of Cappadocia who had already been backed by Rome over Ariarathes, i.e., Archelaus, made the alleged survival of Ariarathes potentially embarrassing if not positively destabilizing of Rome's eastern security. For some Cappadocian elites, any potential king who was not seen acting as Rome's puppet would have been preferable over one who was (Archelaus).

The real Ariarathes may have become a bargaining chip for Phraates IV in his negotiations with Augustus in 20/19. Just as Augustus was harboring in the province of Syria Tiridates II, pretender to the throne of Parthia, Phraates might have held Ariarathes in reserve as someone who could prove very troublesome to Roman peace in Archelaus' Cappadocia or elsewhere in the region.¹³³ It is important to recall that, although the Ariobarzanid dynasty had been elected by the Cappadocian people with Rome's blessing, Augustus would have viewed an Ariarathes who had lived among the Parthians for over a decade as a threat to the stability of Cappadocia under the rule of Rome's current satellite monarch, Archelaus. Furthermore, one should not assume that the Cappadocian nobility was perfectly united in support of any king.

It is the support for this Ariarathes within and outside of Cappadocia proper that Valerius describes when he writes: "and yet he was supported by the gullible favor of the cities and peoples of almost the entire East."¹³⁴ Since Cappadocian royals had controlled parts of Cilicia and Lesser Armenia at different times in Cappadocia's history, these extra-Cappadocian realms need to be included in the list of possible cities and peoples supporting Ariarathes. In addition to being consistent with Valerius' view of the moral peril associated with Asia, his description of the behavior of these cities and peoples may align with Dio's account of stasis in eastern cities such as Cyzicus, Tyre, and Sidon Augustus quashed when he was in the East in 21-19 BCE.¹³⁵ Cyzicus

¹³² Archelaus acquired a lot of new territory as a result of the reorganization of the East at this time, and such an expanded kingdom of Cappadocia, which had existed earlier, could have been on the horizon already. See Str. 12.1.4, 2.11, 3.29, 15.5.6; D.C. 54.9.2. The fact that Roman dynasts of the first century BCE were known to shuffle royals and nobles around to different domains of varying size leaves open the possibility that this Ariarathes, whoever he was, might have accepted a kingdom other than Cappadocia. Examples include Caesar's assignment of Pontic Comana to Lycomedes, Pompey's assignment of Cilicia to Tarcondimotus (Str. 14.4.18; Flor. *Epit.* 2.13.5; D.C. 41.63.3), and Antonius' assignment of Cappadocia to Archelaus. The practice was sufficiently common to be unremarkable.

¹³³ Campbell (1993) 222; Rose (2005) 22.

¹³⁴ *quamquam paene totius orientis civitatum et gentium credula suffragatione fultum*. On the theme of local credulity in impostor narratives, see Nicolleau (2022), 114-20.

¹³⁵ D.C. 54.7.6. Valerius' denigration of Asia: 2.6.1; Lawrence (2022) 48-49.

had gone so far as to flog Roman citizens to death.¹³⁶ Augustus deprived the cities of Tyre and Sidon of their liberty because of their internal dissension.¹³⁷

Evidence of unrest in disparate regions of the Roman East suggests a wider phenomenon to which support of Ariarathes could have belonged. The degree to which Parthia was a factor in each instance is uncertain (or unlikely in the case of Cyzicus), but, in those places where Parthian interests were otherwise a perpetual concern, support for Ariarathes might have been present too.¹³⁸ Factional strife might involve groups that supported Parthia, Ariarathes, or both. At this very juncture, Augustus had started to cast Parthia in the role of great imperial “other.” Those eastern events in which concerns about Parthia figured may have contributed to this ideological inflection point.¹³⁹ More evidence is needed. In any case, the existence of support of Ariarathes in eastern cities is consistent with unstable conditions in certain parts of Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine at the time of Augustus’ visit.

Ariarathes’ bid for power, if the present hypothesis is correct, started after Agrippa left Lesbos to meet Augustus on Sicily in late 22 and was aggravated by Augustus’ hesitance to turn the Parthian pretender Tiridates II over to the Parthians.¹⁴⁰ The contemporary anti-Roman demonstrations are reminiscent of the infamous Asian Vespers of Mithradates VI Eupator and may represent one extreme expression of a movement to support “Ariarathes” with the backing of Parthia. At the very least, continuing unrest in eastern communities recommended the wisdom of removing the further complications that a living Ariarathes X might cause. For his part, Ariarathes perhaps vainly hoped that through the negotiations between Rome and Parthia he might recover his kingdom or at least part of the Ariobarzanid dynasty’s former realms (possibly Cilicia or Lesser Armenia).¹⁴¹ He was likely aware of Sulla’s negotiations with Parthia at the Euphrates with the recently enthroned Ariobarzanes I, Ariarathes’ grandfather, at Sulla’s

¹³⁶ Cyzicus had a proud tradition of resisting Mithridates VI Eupator with divine assistance in 73 BCE. See Plu. *Luc.* 10; *Obsequens* 60. When Sextus Pompeius made his attempt on Cyzicus in 35, he was repelled by forces loyal to Antonius, including gladiators. Although one cannot exclude the possibility of holdout Antonian loyalists in 20, Antonius himself was dead, making such a motivation far less likely. Cyzicus’ inconsistent and sometimes adversarial posture towards Rome may have instead been due to its status as a *libera civitas*, which it subsequently lost in 25 CE after it stood accused of both disrespecting the cult of Divus Augustus and also incidents of violence against Roman citizens. See Tac. *Ann.* 4.36; Suet. *Tib.* 37.3; Seager (2008) 121.

¹³⁷ D.C. 54.7.6.

¹³⁸ In the time of Augustus, the security of Palestine, including the coastal cities of ancient Phoenicia, was viewed as vulnerable to possible Parthian incursions. Pacorus overran Hasmonean Judea in 40 BCE. See Nabel (2019) 330.

¹³⁹ Nabel (2019) 342-43. Nabel points specifically to the depiction of Ventidius’ victories on the *Fasti Triumphales* as *ex Tauro . . . monte et Partheis* as contemporary evidence of the shift.

¹⁴⁰ Departure of Agrippa: D.C. 53.32.1; Augustus refused to hand over Tiridates II, but he did return to Phraates the king’s son: D.C. 53.33.1-2. Schlude (2020, 90) argues that Tiridates vanished after his attempt on Parthia in 26-25, but that timeline does not track with Dio’s chronology, which places Tiridates in Rome appearing before the senate in 23. Augustus had sent Agrippa to Syria in 23 after the former’s recovery from illness. Agrippa tarried on Lesbos while his lieutenants went on to Syria. See D.C. 53.32.1. Velleius (2.93.2) places the departure of Agrippa after the death of Marcellus, but that is due to his insistence on explaining Agrippa’s actions in reference to his feelings about Marcellus, even though it was completely illogical for Agrippa to leave Rome because he was jealous of Marcellus after the latter’s death.

¹⁴¹ One recalls that Augustus’ adoptive father Caesar had previously appointed Ariarathes as a vassal ruler of Lesser Armenia under the authority of his brother Ariobarzanes III.

side.¹⁴² He had also no doubt heard how Pompey had managed the transfer of power from Ariobarzanes I to his son, Ariarathes' father.¹⁴³ Yet his dream of a kingship was not to be realized. When Tiberius approached his meeting with the Parthians to negotiate on behalf of Augustus, Archelaus, Ariarathes' old nemesis, was in the company of the emperor's stepson.¹⁴⁴ Archelaus' presence at the negotiations killed any hope Ariarathes may have had of acquiring a kingdom. Instead, Ariarathes was turned over to the Romans for execution as part of the deal that was struck for Phraates IV to recover his son.

Velleius (2.94) and Suetonius (*Aug.* 21.3) mention that in 20 the Parthians offered Augustus hostages in addition to Armenia and the Roman standards.¹⁴⁵ Velleius identifies these hostages as Phraates' children, but Phraates did not send his children (*suos liberos*) to Rome until 13 or later.¹⁴⁶ Ariarathes would not have been a suitable hostage, but he may have been turned over with captives and Roman standards in 20.¹⁴⁷ The handing over of prisoners in 20 could have later been conflated with Phraates' surrender of his own children as hostages to the Syrian prefect Titius in 13.¹⁴⁸ In any case, Phraates may have turned Ariarathes over to Tiberius, leading to his execution at the hands of Tiberius' soldiers, while Archelaus looked on with a great sense of relief.¹⁴⁹ He would not lose his kingdom, and Parthia could not continue to hold the threat of this Ariarathes over his head. With the question of the Armenian throne settled, the standards

¹⁴² Plu. *Sull.* 5.4.

¹⁴³ See n. 54.

¹⁴⁴ Tiberius' role in the negotiations is indicated by Suetonius' (*Tib.* 9.1) report that Tiberius recovered the legionary standards from the Parthians. See J. *AJ* 15.105 on Archelaus' role in assisting Tiberius in the ejection of Artaxias from Armenia. Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.3) reports that internal treachery brought about the end of Artaxias before Tiberius arrived, but this account may only indicate that most of the heavy lifting was done before Tiberius got personally involved.

¹⁴⁵ Vell. 2.94: *rex quoque Parthorum tanti nominis fama territus liberos suos ad Caesarem misit obsides*. Suet. *Aug.* 21.3: *Parthi quoque et Armeniam vindicanti facile cesserunt et signa militaria, quae M. Crasso et M. Antonio ademerant, reposcenti reddiderunt obsidesque insuper optulerunt*.

¹⁴⁶ Wardle (2014, 180) agrees with Braund (1984, 12) in regarding Velleius' account as mistaken in his reference to Phraates' children being handed over in 20. Wardle also sees Suetonius as being unclear on the timing of the handing over of hostages. As noted above, the omission of their royal identity is also unusual and may point to two groups of hostages handed over seven years apart. Syme (1979, 192) argued that the royal children were sent as hostages in 13-12, while Dabrowa (1987, 64) argued for the year 10. Wardle agrees with Braund in the latter's argument that Augustus would have bragged about compelling the surrender of hostages in 20, if they had been taken at that time. Most accounts, including Augustus' *RG* (32.2), only seem to be interested in the later handover of Phraates' children. See also Str. 6.4.2, 16.1.28; J. *AJ* 18.2.4; Tac. *Ann.* 2.1.2; Justin 45.5.12; Oros. *Hist.* 6.21.29; Eutr. 7.9.

¹⁴⁷ D.C. (54.8.1) reports that Phraates handed over captives along with the Roman legionary standards.

¹⁴⁸ Str. 16.1.28. Josephus (*AJ* 15.342-3) reports that Herod sent his sons Alexander and Aristobulus to Rome in 20 BCE. This, too, could be the source of the confusion.

¹⁴⁹ Valerius Maximus' failure to mention Tiberius' involvement explicitly may be taken as evidence that Tiberius was *not* involved in the execution of Ariarathes, since elsewhere the author is so effusive in his praise of his emperor. The trouble with his argument is that Tiberius is the explicit focus of only one *exemplum* (5.5.3), his swift journey to Germany to see his brother Drusus. Valerius' choice reflects Tiberius' own priorities in commemoration. Tiberius only appears in one other section of Book 9 (11 *ext.* 4), where he is identified only by the phrase *auctor ac tutela nostrae incolumitatis*. Noteworthy in this instance is the identity of the threat: Sejanus. As a traitor to the emperor who had conducted an affair with the sister of Germanicus, Sejanus posed a threat to the *verus sanguis* of the Domus Augusta just as much as the false Marcellus of 9.15.2.

recovered, and Ariarathes dead, Augustus greatly expanded Archelaus' domain to include regions the Ariobarzanids had controlled outside of Cappadocia proper.¹⁵⁰ Support of Ariarathes in these regions recommended the wisdom of placing a strong ruler over the whole.

Wardle has persuasively argued that the final three impostors in Book 9 of Valerius Maximus were checked during the reign of Augustus.¹⁵¹ This dates Valerius' false Ariarathes after the death of Antonius.¹⁵² With that chronology in mind, one notes there is no known event in the East between 30 and 19 BCE that better fits the events described in Valerius Maximus 9.15 *ext.* 2 than the eastern missions of Augustus and Tiberius ca. 20. If this impostor was in fact the real Ariarathes, then that raises the question of why Valerius or his source disguised the death of Ariarathes X as the execution of an impostor and blamed Antonius for Ariarathes' murder. Regardless of the fact that Antonius, Augustus, Ariarathes, and Archelaus were all dead when Valerius wrote his account, the execution of an otherwise blameless member of a dynasty that had enjoyed Rome's support for decades was not flattering to Rome's image as a reliable supporter of satellite monarchies, much less consistent with Valerius' flattering depictions of Augustus and Tiberius.¹⁵³ It was convenient for Valerius, as a supporter of the Julio-Claudian regime, to pin the blame on Antonius, who had acquired a reputation for violence toward eastern rulers based on his shocking execution of Antigonus II Mattathias in 37 BCE and other royals.¹⁵⁴ This blame is consistent with the author's general treatment of Antonius, which is overwhelmingly negative.¹⁵⁵ Valerius, loyal to the Julio-Claudians, supported the dynasty's version of the story, which was that the Ariarathes executed on their watch was not the real Ariarathes but instead an impostor.

Ariarathes as Impostor and his Propagandistic Value

Although the present argument has to this point made a case for the alleged impostor being the real Ariarathes, that case remains hypothetical because, after 36 BCE, there is no trace in the primary sources of an Ariarathes X who was accepted as genuine by ancient authors. An impostor Ariarathes would have been equally useful to the Parthians at a time when they were trying to secure leverage against Rome with the emperor, his representatives, and a Roman army gathered threateningly close in the East. On the Roman side, Tiberius and Archelaus were the ideal candidates to serve as Augustus' fixers, who could execute the impostor held in

¹⁵⁰ D.C. 54.9.2; Rich (1990) 184.

¹⁵¹ Wardle (1997) 325-6.

¹⁵² Syme (1995, 150), offering no argument in support of his view, dates the emergence of the impostor "about the time of the War of Actium," but Wardle's careful dissection of V. Max. 9.15 makes a date after the death of Antonius preferable. See n. 151.

¹⁵³ The decision to disguise the murder of Ariarathes as the execution of an impostor to protect Archelaus' position is consistent with Ish-Shalom's (2021) argument that Augustus sought to systematize client kings as "provincial monarchs" in that the resolution of the situation had to look straightforward and orderly.

¹⁵⁴ J. AJ 15.1.2.8-9; D.C. 49.22.6. For Cleopatra's murder of Artavasdes, see D.C. 51.5.5.

¹⁵⁵ Periti (2022) shows that there is only a single positive reference to Antonius (5.1.11) in the entire work.

Parthian custody, ready to be handed over with other captives as part of Parthia's negotiations with Rome.

If the impostor was in Parthian custody, and his existence as the “legitimate” king of Cappadocia was broadcast to neighboring cities and peoples as a way of causing chaos, or as a defensive/delaying tactic against the Roman army, then it may be that in Valerius' story one sees the first instance of Parthian use of an impostor as a tactic for blackmailing Rome. The same tactic was used during the reigns of the Flavian emperors Titus and Domitian.¹⁵⁶ Under Titus, a Nero impostor named Terentius Maximus marched with his supporters across the Euphrates into the Parthian Empire where he found support for a short time.¹⁵⁷ Less than a decade later, the Parthians held in their custody another Nero impostor, whom they vigorously supported and were reluctant to turn over to Roman authorities.¹⁵⁸ Roman biographer Suetonius was a contemporary witness of news of this event. These Parthian Nero impostures used affection for a preceding dynasty against the current ruling dynasty of Parthia's imperial foe. A false Ariarathes hosted by Parthia would fit this model. Furthermore, the use of imposture in Persian propaganda goes back to the Behistun inscription, where Darius claims to have killed a false Bardiya.¹⁵⁹ This ancient precedent shows that Parthian use of impostors as tools in the international politics of the first centuries BCE and CE was not a novel phenomenon in the East.

In fact, impostor suppression was an important feature of the ideological claims of those dynasties of the East that traced their ancestry to the fabled “seven aristocrats” who defeated the impostor Bardiya (false Smerdis in Herodotus), thus becoming the font of seven noble families of special status in Achaemenid Persia.¹⁶⁰ This ideological construct helps us understand the purpose of these stories in the first century BCE. It does not particularly matter whether the investment of eastern dynasties in the seven families myth was a phenomenon of Hellenistic “Persianism” (echoes of the impact of Achaemenid culture and institutions on the post-Achaemenid period) or directly linked to ancient Persian beliefs, practices, and priorities.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.2) was aware of multiple Nero impostors, but his extant corpus only reports the first. Dabrowa (2017, 185) argues that the Parthians mentioned in 1.2 are those of 69 CE, meaning that Vologaeses was the first Parthian king to entertain the support of a Nero impostor. Damon (2003, 87) reads this as a reference to a later Nero impostor. Gallivan (1973, 365) identifies Tacitus' Nero impostor who received Parthian support as the impostor of 88. For the most recent and complete study of all the false Neros of the first century CE, see Nicolleau (2023). See also Tuplin (1989).

¹⁵⁷ D.C. 66.19.3; Zonaras XI.18; John of Antioch fr. 104; Pappano (1937) 390-1.

¹⁵⁸ Suet. *Nero* 57.2; Pappano (1937) 391-2. Jones (1983), like Gallivan (1973, 365), dates this third Nero impostor to 88, and he sees the removal of the proconsular governor C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis as related to the impostor's brief career.

¹⁵⁹ See sections 1.11-13 of the Behistun inscription, where Darius reports his suppression of Bardiya (aka Smerdis) as the inaugural act of his bid for the Persian throne. Herodotus (3.62-73) also reports the imposture as the false Smerdis. Shayegan (2006, 65) discusses the two schools of scholarly thought on the false Bardiya in the Behistun inscription. Some scholars believe that there was an impostor, while others maintain that the imposture was fabricated for propaganda purposes. Müller (2015, 5) identifies the false Bardiya as belonging to a widespread eastern phenomenon of identity borrowing whereby, “rebels meant to revive or complete the political program their ‘borrowed’ figure was identified with.”

¹⁶⁰ Plb. 5.43.1-2. Polybius writes of the Mithridatic claim specifically. On the significance of the seven aristocrats and their relationship to tribal designations in Achaemenid culture, see Bahadori (2017), (2019).

¹⁶¹ On Persianism, see Dabrowa (2017) 265.

Hellenistic-era royals of the Mithridatid dynasty of Pontus, the Ariarathid dynasty of Cappadocia, and the Orontid dynasty of Armenia all anchored their ancestral prestige and royal legitimacy in this myth.¹⁶²

Implicit in the claim of descent from one of these seven noble families is the guarantee of legitimacy deriving from vigorous and successful opposition to imposture. With such a founding myth, one should expect periodic reaffirmation of the cooperation of noble families establishing a legitimate monarch against an impostor. Rome's intervention in the East, however, heralded change. Justin's account of a false Ariarathes, purported son of Ariarathes VI of the late 90s BCE, casts the *Roman senate* in the role of the arbiter of authentic royal identity in lieu of the noble families or dynasties themselves when Laodice is sent to Rome to petition for the impostor's occupation of the throne and the senate declines to make the impostor king. The story of the execution of the new false Ariarathes in Valerius constitutes a reaffirmation of Rome's role as guarantor of royal legitimacy among these eastern dynasties against imposture. Valerius casts the regional supporters of the impostor as incapable of executing the role noble Cappadocian families had once filled. Now it is the emperor Augustus who protects Cappadocian kingship against imposture, not the noble families.

Suggestive also is the author's use of *idem* at the opening of the final impostor episode in Book 9. Lawrence has shown how Valerius uses *idem* to connect Rome with a chain of external peoples who exhibit virtues in Book 2.6.¹⁶³ For example, Valerius (2.6.1) writes of how the Spartans "felt the same thing [as the Romans]" (*idem sensit*) about the danger the spectacle of bad *exempla* in Asia posed to its people, and so they chose to separate their people from that spectacle. As Valerius closes his work, focusing on the vice of external peoples in Asia that poses a danger to the empire (*imminens imperio*), he uses the same device in an inverted way. *Idem* ("the same man"), here used to refer to Augustus, who has just been depicted in his role as suppresser of imposture in Mediolanum (see 9.15 *ext.* 1), checks an impostor supported by the credulous cities and peoples of the East. *Idem* is thus used here to an effect opposite to its use in Book 2. Instead of joining Rome to the external peoples of the passage, it separates the emperor, as moral enforcer, from the external peoples who have allowed themselves to be overcome by vice. In this final external section of Valerius, *idem* shows the emperor performing the same role of moral enforcer in two different regions of the empire (west and east). Although Valerius' accounts of virtue among external peoples in Book 2 shows his awareness of their ability to possess the same virtues as Romans, his ending affirms the moral necessity of empire where local virtue fails. The empire's moral value is affirmed in its role of suppressing vices that manifest among external peoples.

This ending reiterates and confirms Valerius' opening ideological promise in the preface to this work, wherein the gods chose Tiberius to rule and to maintain Roman peace as successor to the gods Caesar and Augustus.¹⁶⁴ At 9.15.2, Valerius elucidates the efficacy of the *numen Augusti*

¹⁶² Lerouge-Cohen (2017) 224 with n. 8. On the Mithridatic claim, see also Bosworth and Wheatley (1998) 155 with n. 1. The Greek sources for the Mithridatic claim to descent from the Seven Families are Plb. 5.43.2; D.S. 19.43.2. Hornblower (1981, 236 n. 5, 244) argues that these Greek sources were dependent on Hieronymus of Cardia.

¹⁶³ (2022) 48-49, 51-52, 62.

¹⁶⁴ *penes quem hominum deorumque consensus maris ac terrae regimen esse uoluit, certissima salus patriae, Caesar, inuoco, cuius caelesti prouidentia uirtutes, de quibus dicturus sum, benignissime fouentur, uitia seuerissime uindicantur. . . . quo cetera diuinitas opinione colligitur, tua praesenti fide paterno auitoque sideri par uidetur*: "Both gods and men are united

in suppressing an imposture threatening the *Domus Augusta* itself when a false son of Octavia appeared.¹⁶⁵ The details of that suppression are not provided, but the strongly implied connection between the emperor's divinity and the checking of imposture is clear. If, as hypothesized here, Tiberius participated in the execution of the false Ariarathes, his suppression of the impostor as Augustus' agent evinced his ability to carry on the emperor's responsibility in this regard as Augustus' successor. The suppression of the false Ariarathes would therefore serve as a hinge joining Augustus' guardianship of satellite rulers and Tiberius'.

Conclusion

This article has shown that Valerius Maximus was either making or transmitting a logical deduction when he wrote about Antonius' murder of Ariarathes. Later authors (Appian, Dio) did not follow, and in one case (Dio) arguably contradicted, Valerius' view. Placing the blame on Antonius, however, affirmed the outcome of Rome's civil war, and it was consistent with the balance of Valerius' portrait of Antonius. All has turned out as it should, as Valerius illustrates through a striking contrast between Antonius and Augustus. According to his narrative, Antonius unjustly killed a king recognized by Rome, while Augustus killed an impostor who tried to steal a kingdom. At the same time, the author followed in the tradition of Pompeius Trogus' Ariarathid impostor narrative, with which he was undoubtedly familiar, when he cast Augustus as the guarantor and protector of the legitimacy of Cappadocian rulers against the threat of imposture. In Trogus, the Roman senate was cast as the arbiter of the legitimacy of the Cappadocian monarchy. Valerius casts Augustus in the same role, and Josephus later followed suit in the case of the false Herodian Alexander.¹⁶⁶ By ending his work in this way, Valerius assures his reader that, moving forward, the regime will continue to protect the status and legitimacy of the empire's propertied inhabitants and satellite monarchs, and the empire will continue to be a positive moral force among external peoples.

Other elements of this argument are more speculative but in line with established facts. The Parthians did hand captives over to the Romans in 20, and Archelaus did benefit from his attendance on Tiberius during negotiations with Parthia by the expansion of his realms, something that could not have happened so long as a man claiming to be Ariarathes was alive and agitating to be returned to his rightful place as king of Cappadocia. We cannot know for certain that the Parthians were holding an Ariarathes (real or impostor) in captivity, but there is no more elegant solution for how Augustus put an end to this Ariarathes' imposture than the execution of Ariarathes in 20/19. In the 16 years between Archelaus receiving Cappadocia and Augustus' negotiations with the Parthians, many things could have happened to Ariarathes. It is

in their wish that every sea and land be under your control. With heavenly foresight, you kindly nourish the virtues that I shall speak of, and you severely punish every vice. . . . Our faith in the heavenly gods derives from popular belief, but our faith in your divinity comes from your living presence and is as sound as our faith in your father and your grandfather." Trans. Walker.

¹⁶⁵ On the false Marcellus, see also Stern (2016) 63.

¹⁶⁶ On the false Herodian Alexander, see n. 5.

possible that ancient writers had inadequate information and were themselves left to speculate, just as Valerius did.

If, on the other hand, the Ariarathes of 20 was an impostor, then his claim and the unrest it caused would have been seen as beneficial by the Parthians in their negotiations with the Romans. Indeed, as later instances of eastern imposture show, Parthian kings and pretenders considered impostor Neros to be useful in their political maneuvering vis-à-vis the Flavians in 80/81 and 88. The Behistun inscription attests to the political value of imposture deep in the Persian past, and the Parthians, if they did not simply re-invent the ruse themselves, may have adapted this Persian device to their own use. Although the Parthians appear not to have placed a lot of effort into recording their own history, their adoption of Achaemenid royal culture as a model for their own regime is well attested.¹⁶⁷ The false Ariarathes of 20 may have been Parthia's first foray into exploiting an imposture to gain leverage in their relationship with Rome. He would not be the last.

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¹⁶⁷ Curtis (2007) 14-15.

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