

## The Origins of the Ariobarzanid Dynasty

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*In memory of Federicomaria Muccioli*

### I. The coming of the Ariobarzanids to power

The Ariobarzanid dynasty of Cappadocia only had four kings, who combined ruled for some sixty years, between ca. 95 and 36 B.C., with several interruptions due to the Mithridatic Wars. However, and despite having information from contemporary sources like Cicero, little is actually known about the origins of this family and why the Roman Republic decided to install one of their members on the Cappadocian throne.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the first century B.C., the problematic situation in the kingdom of Cappadocia turned even worse. The young Ariarathes VII Philometor had become an orphan ca. 110 B.C., after his father was murdered by a noble called Gordius under the instigation of Mithridates Eupator, king of Pontus. Laodice, the widowed queen, was the sister of the Pontic ruler and acted as her son's regent. Ca. 99 B.C., the young Ariarathes reached manhood and decided to undertake a war against his uncle Mithridates. The latter assassinated his nephew by way of a ruse, and Cappadocia fell under Pontic control. Mithridates placed on the throne his young son Ariarathes (IX) Eusebes Philopator, who was supervised by Gordius and dignitaries sent from Pontus. A civil war burst when the younger brother of Ariarathes VII, also named Ariarathes (VIII), claimed the realm of his ancestors. But this suitor died soon, and Mithridates' son ended up as the only ruler. A part of the Cappadocian nobility complained before the Roman Senate, who in turn decreed the freedom of the country, namely the absence of a king. Nevertheless, the Cappadocian nobles requested a monarch, and Rome designated one of them, called Ariobarzanes, who upon his rise to power adopted the epithet Philorhomaïos. This king could not stay on the throne by his own means, and was soon expelled. Not long after, ca. 95 B.C., an army led by Sulla restored Ariobarzanes as king of Cappadocia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Until now, there is no specific study on the Ariobarzanids. In general, on the dynasty, see Reinach 1888, 56-66; Sullivan 1980, 1127-1149; Idem 1990, 54-57, 174-182; Simonetta 2007, 85-106 and *passim*; Michels 2009, 235-237, 141-142 and *passim*. According to Strabo, 12.2.11, Ariobarzanes I had been appointed king by the Cappadocians themselves, although in all likelihood the Roman Senate had the last word, as expressed by Appian, *Mith.* 13, and Justin 38.2.8: see Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 194-195.

<sup>2</sup> On these vicissitudes and their chronology, see Iust.38.1-2; Memn. *BNJ* 434, 22.2; Strab. 12.2.11; Plut., *Sull.* 5.3; Frontin., *Strat.* 1.5.18; Liv., *Per.* 70.6; Glew 1977; McGing 1986a, 72-77; Sullivan 1990, 32-34; Kallet-Marx 1995, 355-361; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, 60-65, 71-78; Idem 2013b, 87-93, 171-196 (with further bibliography); Idem 2020; De Callatay 1997, 267-273; Mastrocinque 1999b, 11-18, 29-34; Brennan 1992; Idem 2000, v.II, 358, 765-766 fn. 9; Dmitriev 2006; Erciyas 2006, 21-22, 133; Panichi 2018, 43-57. On the possible mention of these events in Sallust's *Histories*, see Katz 1981, 338-340. As we have seen,

The figure of Ariobarzanes I emerges from nowhere at the beginning of the first century B.C. Until now, this mysterious monarch was only supposed to have some vague relationship with the house of the Ariarathids, who had been ruling Cappadocia since the fall of the Seleucid troops at the hands of Ariarathes II ca. 281 B.C. up until the murder of Ariarathes VII.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, this kinship of Ariobarzanes I with the previous rulers of Cappadocia does not appear openly in the ancient sources, as it has been inferred from a single phrase by Appian according to which Ariobarzanes had more right to the Cappadocian throne than Mithridates Eupator.<sup>4</sup> This implies that both of them had some kind of relationship with the Ariarathid dynasty. The question that arises here is who Ariobarzanes really was, and why did the Romans designate him as the king of Cappadocia. In this paper, we will try to answer this inquiry, proposing that this monarch belonged to a junior branch of the Ariarathids and the Mithridatids, fruit of a union between both royal houses. This marriage would have taken place in a distant past, certainly prior to the reign of Ariarathes V Eusebes (ca. 163-130 B.C.).

## II. The name Ariobarzanes and its relationship with the Pontic royal house

Ariobarzanes is a Persian name, which possibly means “exalting the Aryans”.<sup>5</sup> As we will see in this paper, the entirety of the historical figures we know under the name Ariobarzanes had some degree of kinship. At first, all of them belonged to the family of Artabazus I, the Persian noble appointed by Xerxes to rule the “Satrapy of the Sea”, commonly called “Satrapy of Dascylium”, since its capital was in this place of Hellespontine Phrygia.<sup>6</sup> In a later stage, the kings of Pontus would derive from that lineage and also, as we will see, some kings of Cappadocia.<sup>7</sup> Because of the ties to the Mithridatic house, this bloodline reached up to the dynasties of Armenia, Com-magene, Atropatene and Judea.<sup>8</sup> However, the satraps of Dascylium and their relatives named Ariobarzanes are sometimes difficult to identify, because there are a series of contradictions among the ancient authors who dealt with them, mainly Xenophon and Diodorus Siculus.

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Ariobarzanes I possibly ruled for a brief time, ca. 97/96 B.C., before being restored on the throne by Sulla in 95 B.C., when the effective beginning of his reign is commonly placed.

<sup>3</sup> On the Ariarathid dynasty, see Reinach 1888, 12-55; Simonetta 2007, 38-85; Gabelko 2009; Michels 2009, 122-141, 220-235; Panichi 2018. Sullivan 1980, 1130, affirms that Ariobarzanes I had no link with the Ariarathids. On the defeat of Amyntas, Seleucus’ general, see Diod. 31.19.5; Ballesteros Pastor 2013a, 185, 195 fn. 17 (with bibliography).

<sup>4</sup> App., *Mithr.* 10; Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 196.

<sup>5</sup> Dandamayev 2011.

<sup>6</sup> On this noble, see Klein 2015, 117-123 (with bibliography). On the genealogy of the satraps of Dascylium, see above all Briant 1996, 350-351; Debord 1999, 91-104; Klinkott 2005, 48; Klein 2015, *passim*; Weiskopf 2011. On the name of the satrapy, see Schmitt 1972; Debord 1999, 70-72; Ballesteros Pastor 2012, 368-370.

<sup>7</sup> On the kinship of the Pontic dynasty with Artabazus I, the satrap appointed by Xerxes after the battle of Plataea, see Sall., *hist.* fr.2.73M (*apud* Ampel. 30.5); Flor., *Epit.* 1.40.1; Panitschek 1987/1988, 79-80; Debord 1999, 96-103; Ballesteros Pastor 2012, 368-370; Klein 2015, 303-308.

<sup>8</sup> Ballesteros Pastor 2018a, 273, 276.

Henceforth, we will try to mention these personages, with the precautions derived from the problems of the sources.<sup>9</sup>

The first Ariobarzanes that we know of was a sort of vice-governor of the satrapy of Dascylium, whom Xenophon describes acting in 407 B.C. under the orders of the satrap Pharnabazus I. About this Ariobarzanes' genealogy we know nothing, despite being in general no doubt that he belonged to the family who ruled this satrapy.<sup>10</sup> It is commonly considered that he is the same noble who thereafter joined Datames in the so-called "Great Satraps Revolt", even though there is no unanimity about it.<sup>11</sup> In effect, we know that an Ariobarzanes was in charge of the aforementioned district of the Persian Empire in 387 B.C., when the satrap Pharnabazus II marched to the court of Artaxerxes II in order to marry the king's daughter and prepare the campaign of Egypt.<sup>12</sup> This Ariobarzanes, who had tight relationships with the Greeks, ruled in Dascylium between 388 and 363 B.C., and as already mentioned he would later be one of the leaders of the rebellion against Artaxerxes II. This satrap would end up betrayed by his son Mithridates, and subsequently put to death in 360 B.C.<sup>13</sup>

Thereupon, we find another Iranian noble called Ariobarzanes linked to this same satrapy: he was the son of Artabazus II, who in turn was the son of the referred satrap Pharnabazus II and Apama, daughter of Artaxerxes II.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in the time of Alexander the Great, we know of an Ariobarzanes, son of Darius III and a wife previous to Stateira whose name is unknown to us. Presumably, this wife had a brother called Pharnaces, who lived in Hellespontine Phrygia and died in the battle of Granicus, in which a Mithridates also lost his life, possibly a son of this Pharnaces.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there is an Ariobarzanes who was a satrap of Persis and died fighting against the Macedonians by the river Araxes. Seemingly, this noble also belonged to the family that ruled the "Satrapy of the Sea".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Walton 1957, 203 fn. 44, *ad* Diod. 15.90.3.

<sup>10</sup> Xen., *Hell.* 1.4.7. Debord 1999, 102, suggests that this Ariobarzanes was a son of the satrap Pharnaces I, as had been proposed by Beloch 1923, 150-151, but he would be a different person from the Ariobarzanes who took part in the Satraps Revolt (see below fn. 13). Klein 2015, 154, considers that he was a son of the abovementioned Pharnabazus I. However, it is not clear to Briant 1996, 662, that he was a relative of Pharnabazus. Dandamayev 2011, does not mention the protagonist of Xenophon's passage.

<sup>11</sup> In favour of this identity, see Judeich 1895, 832; Dandamayev 2011; Kuhrt – Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1996; Klein 2015, 194. Cf. *contra*, Debord 1999, 102, and apparently Weiskopf 2011. On the genealogy of the Satraps of Dascylium, see above fn. 6. Pharnabazus I may have been the satrap of Dascylium between Artabazus I and Pharnaces II (approximately between 450 and 430 B.C.): Klein 2015, 133.

<sup>12</sup> Xen., *Hell.* 5.1.28; Briant 1996, 351; Debord 1999, 98; Klein 2015, 147.

<sup>13</sup> On this revolt, see Weiskopf 1989; Briant 1996, 675-694; Debord 1999, 44-45, 302-366 and *passim* (with earlier bibliography). On Ariobarzanes' role, see further Klein 2015, 162-167. Klinkott 2005, 119, 465 fn. 92, 476, 486, 516, differentiates the Ariobarzanes mentioned by Nepos, *Dat.* 2.6, from the leader of the Revolt, but this proposal lacks any basis: cf. Debord 1999, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Shahbazi 2011; Heckel 2005, 45, *s.v.* Ariobarzanes [3]; Bosworth - Wheatley 1998, 160. Cf. McGing 1986b, 249-253, who denies that Mithridates II of Cius can be identified with Mithridates I of Pontus.

<sup>15</sup> Heckel 2005, 44-45, *s.v.* Ariobarzanes [1].

<sup>16</sup> Heckel 2005, 45, *s.v.* Ariobarzanes [2] (with further bibliography).

From these cases, we can deduce that the name Ariobarzanes was well represented in the Persian family that governed in Dascylium. As it is known, the Pontic kings derived from a collateral branch of this satrapal dynasty. This lineage, which also descended from the prestigious Artabazus I, had its domains in Cius, a city on the Propontis.<sup>17</sup> In this so-called “Dynasty of Cius”, we can also perceive the alternation between the names Mithridates and Ariobarzanes.<sup>18</sup> Mithridates I, named Ctistes (“the Founder”), who started the Pontic royal house, was the son, or more probably nephew, of one of the last dynasts of Cius called Ariobarzanes. This Mithridates fled from Antigonus the One-eyed at the beginning of the third century B.C., and established an independent domain in the slopes of mount Olgassys, in Paphlagonia, which constituted the original nucleus of the kingdom of Pontus.<sup>19</sup> The son and successor of this first Mithridatid king was named Ariobarzanes. Of him we only know that, perhaps still during his father’s lifetime, he acquired Amastris, who became the first coastal possession of the new kingdom. Mithridates and Ariobarzanes also fought against Ptolemy II with the help of Galatian mercenaries.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we can conclude that the name Ariobarzanes was traditional among both the satraps of Dascylium and the lords of Cius, who belonged to the same family, and thereafter it passed over to the royal Pontic house, scion of this Persian bloodline. As Bosworth and Wheatley claimed: “The names of the latter members of the house (*i.e.* of Cius) tend to alternate between Ariobarzanes and Mithridates”.<sup>21</sup>

### III. The union between the dynasties of Cappadocia and Pontus: formation of the Ariobarzanid lineage

As already mentioned, the Ariobarzanids of Cappadocia were the result of a union between the Mithridatids and the Ariarathids which, as we believe, could have happened in the time of Ari-

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<sup>17</sup> On the so-called “Dynasty of Cius”, see specifically Olshausen 1978, 398-402; McGing 1986a, 13-15; Idem 1986b, 248-253; Bosworth – Wheatley 1998; Debord 1999, 92-104; Erciyas 2006, 13. The Ariobarzanes mentioned by Xenophon *Hell.* 1.4.7 (see above fn. 10-11) was active in Cius, what has led to relate him with this branch of the satrapal family; Debord 1999, 102; cf. both Meyer 1879, 35; and Judeich 1895, 832, who mistakenly identify this Ariobarzanes with the satrap who succeeded Pharnabazus I (Xen., *Hell.* 5.1.28), wrongly mentioned by Diodorus 15.90.3 as the son of Mithridates (see above fn. 11; cf. Debord 1999, 99; Klein 2015, 48 n.159). On Artabazus I as an ancestor of the Mithridatids, see above fn. 7. It has been proposed that the Pontic lineage had its origin in Cappadocia, governed by certain Mithridates in Xenophon’s time (*Anab.* 2.5.35) and was independent from the family ruling at Dascylium: Sekunda 1988, 180-181; Saprykin 1996, 30-34; cf. Meyer 1879, 34 n.1, and the remarks by Gabelko 2009, 97. This reconstruction, however, confronts with other testimonies (see above fn. 7). Diodorus’ allusion to the sovereignty of Mithridates I over Cappadocia and Paphlagonia (20.111.4), is an anachronism derived from the later rule of the Mithridatids over Pontic Cappadocia: Ballesteros Pastor 2013a, 196 fn. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Diod. 16.90.2; 19.40.2; 20.111.4; Plut., *Demet.* 4.1. See above fn. 17.

<sup>19</sup> App., *Mithr.* 9, 112; Strab. 12.3.41; cf. Plut., *Demet.* 4 (who wrongly mentions Cappadocia); Olshausen 1978, 402; Bosworth – Wheatley 1998, 160; Debord 1999, 102; Ballesteros Pastor 2013a, 185; Klein 2015, 307 fn. 1032; cf. McGing 1986a, 15; Idem 1986b, 248-253. For an alternative view, cf. Rostovtzeff – Ormerod 1933, 216-218.

<sup>20</sup> Memn. *BNJ* 434 F1, 9.4, 16.1; Apoll. Aphr. *BNJ* 740, F14; Von Gutschmid 1892, 549s.; Olshausen 1978, 404; McGing 1986a, 18-19; Ballesteros Pastor 2013a, 196 fn. 23.

<sup>21</sup> Bosworth – Wheatley 1998, 159.

ariathes III, or perhaps earlier. Diodorus Siculus reports that this king was married by his father Ariaramnes to a daughter of Antiochus Theos.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, we know nothing about Ariaramnes' wife, neither about the marriages of this king's predecessors nor about the union of other princes and princesses of Cappadocia apart from the heirs to the throne. Consequently, there is nothing to prevent the existence of some wedlock between an Ariarathid princess and a member of the Pontic house called Ariobarzanes. It is not daring to presume that this name had been traditional among the second sons of the first Mithridatid kings.<sup>23</sup>

Once again, we find ourselves before a deplorable lack of evidence to confirm our hypothesis. Notwithstanding, there is a pair of passages from Appian's Mithridatic book that could sustain what we are trying to demonstrate. The most compelling, though not less vague, affirms that the royal houses of Pontus and Cappadocia were united even though they reigned over different territories: "As the kings of Cappadocia and Pontus belonged to this family (*i.e.* the dynasty founded by Mithridates I Ctistes), I have the impression that in certain occasions they divided the kingdom, and some ruled the Pontic region, and others the one of Cappadocia."<sup>24</sup> Appian is summarising his source without further detail. As we have pointed out in other papers, this connection between both royal houses would be determined by the fact that Mithridates Eupator was the son of a Cappadocian princess, commonly named Laodice, daughter of Ariarthes V Eusebes. Such parentage is clearly described by Justin, when he states that Ariarthes IX, Eupator's son, was a descendant of the prestigious Ariarthes V, who died fighting on Rome's side in

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<sup>22</sup> Diod. 31.19.6-7; Porph. *BNJ* 260 F32.6. On these dynastic ties between Seleucids and Ariarathids, see in general Reinach 1890, 53, 90; Seibert 1967, 114-115; De Callatay 1997, 188 fn. 21; Michels 2009, 32, 312; Gandini 2016, 169; Panichi 2018, 9, 15-16, 64; Ballesteros Pastor 2018a, 276; Idem 2018b, 942.

<sup>23</sup> Leaving aside the sons of Mithridates Eupator, we only know of two Pontic princes: Mithridates Philopator, brother of Pharnaces I (who would later rule after the latter's death), and Mithridates Chrestus, Eupator's brother: Olshausen 1978, 415-416, 419; McGing 1986a, 34-36, 44; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, 30, 39; Idem 2005, 129. Appian (*Mithr.* 79) mentions an uncle of Eupator called Phoenix, but we cannot be sure that he was a prince.

<sup>24</sup> App., *Mithr.* 9: Τούτου δὲ τοῦ γένους ὄντες οἱ Καππαδοκίας τε καὶ Πόντου βασιλεῖς ἔσθ' ὅτε μοι δοκοῦσι διελεῖν τὴν ἀρχήν, καὶ οἱ μὲν τοῦ Πόντου κατασχεῖν οἱ δὲ Καππαδοκίας. We have basically followed the translation of Sancho Royo 1980, 487: "Dado que los reyes de Capadocia y del Ponto pertenecían a este linaje, me parece que en algunas ocasiones dividieron el reino y unos gobernaron la zona del Ponto, y otros, Capadocia". These other versions are more literal: "Erano di questa stirpe ire di Cappadocia e del Ponto fino all'epoca in qui, como a me pare, divisero l'impero e gli uni tenero il Ponto, gli altri la Cappadocia" (Mastrocinque 1999a, 13); "Da die Könige sowohl von Kappadokien wie auch Pontos dem genannten Geschlechte angehörten, so scheint es mir, das sie zu einem Zeitpunkt die Herrschaft teilten und die einen Pontos, die anderen Kappadokien in Besitz nahmen" (Veh 1987, 336); "Comme les rois de Cappadoce et du Pont appartiennent à cette famille, j'ai l'impression qu'un partage eut lieu à un certain moment et que les uns entrèrent en possession du Pont, les autres de la Cappadoce" (Goukowsky 2001, 9-10). The Loeb translation seems to be more vague: "Since there were kings of this house of both Cappadocia and Pontus, I judge that they divided the government, some ruling one country and some the other" (White 1912, 257-259). This passage has been hard to interpret: Goukowsky 2001, 133 fn. 70, affirms that it is a mistake by Appian, because the Ariarathids were of Achaemenid descent (Diod. 31.19.1-2).

the War of Aristonicus.<sup>25</sup> In fact, we have seen that the Pontic king alleged to have hereditary rights over the neighbouring kingdom.<sup>26</sup> The union of Cappadocians and Pontics would once again take place with the aforementioned marriage between Laodice, princess of Pontus and sister of Mithridates Eupator, and Ariarathes VI Epiphanes Philopator. Many decades later, Ariobarzanes II would marry Athenais, daughter of this Pontic ruler.<sup>27</sup>

But next to these testimonies, there is another quotation by Appian which would reveal a previous connection between Mithridatids and Ariarathids. The author from Alexandria states that according to Pelopidas, ambassador of Mithridates Eupator, Cappadocia “had always belonged to his ancestors (*i.e.* of Mithridates) and had been regained by his own father.”<sup>28</sup> This sentence would imply that the Pontic royal house had possessions in Cappadocia prior to the reign of Eupator, and probably that of his father, Mithridates Evergetes.<sup>29</sup> These quotations from Appian were subject of debate by several scholars. Meyer and Gelzer doubted their credibility, because an independent kingdom of Cappadocia was attested at least since 245 B.C. To Desideri, however, this would not prevent that for fifty years both kingdoms could have been united under a single crown. In any case, Desideri proceeds, it would be a philo-Mithridatic tradition, as McGing would acknowledge as well.<sup>30</sup>

On our part, we consider that these passages by Appian should be admitted as valid, and would have echoed a reality whose details slip away from us. The alluded Pontic domains in Cappadocia could be lands obtained long ago by the Mithridatids by virtue of pacts or alliances with the

<sup>25</sup> Iust. 38.2.5: *ex eo Ariarathe genitum, qui bello Aristonici auxilia Romanis ferens cecidisset*; Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 191-192; Idem 2014; Idem 2020.

<sup>26</sup> App., *Mithr.* 10, 12; see above fn. 4.

<sup>27</sup> On the marriage between Laodice and Ariarathes VI, see Iust. 38.1.1, 38.1.4-5, 38.2.4; Memn. *BNJ* 434, F1 22.1; *OGIS* 345; Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 171. On Ariobarzanes II and Athenais Philostorgus of Pontus, see *OGIS* 356, 3; Clinton 2005, I, part I, 202-203, n° 272 with pl.135; and App., *Mithr.* 66, who seems to mistakenly refer to Ariobarzanes I: Reinach 1888, 459-450; Sullivan 1980, 1133-1139.

<sup>28</sup> App., *Mithr.* 12: Ἀνθ' ὧν αὐτὸν ὁ Πελοπίδας ἔφη Φρυγίαν ἀφηρῆσθαι καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, τὴν μὲν ἀεὶ τῶν προγόνων αὐτοῦ γενομένην καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀναληφθεῖσαν. The translation of this passage is disputed, because it is commonly understood in the sense we are defending, namely that Cappadocia had been recovered by Mithridates Evergetes: “Zum Lohn dafür, erklärte Pelopidas, seien ihm (*i.e.* Mithridates) Phrygien und Kappadokien weggenommen worden, wovon letzteres jeder zeit Besitz seiner Vorfahren gewesen und ihm von seinem Vater zuruckgewonnen worden sei” (Veh 1987, 337); “«In cambio di tutto ciò», disse Pelopida, «egli aveva stato privato della Frigia e della Cappadocia, che sempre era stata dei suoi antenati ed era stata recuperata da suo padre»” (Mastrocinque 1999a, 17); “En échange de quoi, disait Pelopidas, on lui a enlevé la Phrygie et la Cappadoce, alors que cette dernière, que ses ancêtres avaient possédée tour à tour, avait été recouvrée par son père” (Goukowsky 2001, 12). Meanwhile, the Loeb edition (White 1912, 259-261) interprets that Cappadocia had been just left to Eupator by Mithridates Evergetes: “Pelopidas said that Phrygia and Cappadocia had been wrested from him, of which Cappadocia had always belonged to his ancestors and had been left to him by his own father”. Desideri 1973, 3 fn. 3, trying to explain Appian’s text, proposed that the Pontics would have ruled Cappadocia until ca. 245 B.C. McGing 1986a, 15-16 fn. 18, considered that this passage is mere propaganda.

<sup>29</sup> We could deduce from Appian that these territories in Cappadocia had been lost by any king prior to Mithridates V Evergetes, although we cannot precise his identity.

<sup>30</sup> Meyer 1879, 37-38; Geyer 1932, 2159; Desideri 1973, 3-4 fn. 3; McGing 1986a, 15-16 fn. 18.

Ariarathids, but these territories may have been lost as the generations passed by. It is also possible that the Cappadocian rulers gave lands as dowry for the marriage of a princess of their dynasty with any Pontic prince whose name could well have been Ariobarzanes, generating this collateral lineage we are dealing with.

These old family ties between the dynasties of Pontus and Cappadocia could have been confirmed also by the fact that, according to Diodorus, Ariarathes V Eusebes bore at first the name Mithridates.<sup>31</sup> As we have maintained elsewhere, the situation of the Pontic house at the end of the third century B.C. may have been problematic, and it is then when we have news of several princes in Anatolia named Mithridates.<sup>32</sup> It is therefore possible that, in face of dynastic turmoil in Pontus, the dynasty of Cappadocia would have vindicated its kinship with the Mithridatid bloodline and the legitimacy to claim the Pontic throne: hence the name originally given to the prestigious Ariarathes V. Moreover, it is also plausible that, as Diodorus also claims, this king was younger than his brother (or stepbrother) Orophernes, who alleged to have more right to rule Cappadocia than Ariarathes, as Justin suggests.<sup>33</sup>

The political situation in Hellenistic Cappadocia was very peculiar: the nobility enjoyed a half-autonomous status, with its own lands and troops, and even the capacity of intervening in the foreign affairs of the kingdom.<sup>34</sup> In this quasi-feudal context, the Ariarathid dynasty would have sought to consolidate itself in the international sphere and find support from outside. Towards the end of the third century B.C., these kings had few options in the states neighbouring Cappadocia: Armenia seemed to have no interest in expanding its domains beyond the Euphrates, besides it later being affected by the expansion of the Parthians.<sup>35</sup> The Galatians were rivals of the Cappadocians and held several border conflicts with them.<sup>36</sup> Lastly, the Seleucids possessed territories in Cappadocia, possibly situated in Cataonia, which constituted the so-called “Seleucid Cappadocia”. Presumably, this circumstance raised rivalry between the two kingdoms prior to the agreement between Ariaramnes and Antiochus Theos, when these lands were probably

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<sup>31</sup> Diod. 31.19.7. On the changes in the name of Hellenistic kings and princes, see Berzon – Gabelko 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Towards the end of the third century B.C., we know of four princes bearing the name Mithridates: the youngest son of Ariarathes IV Eusebes (Diod. 31.19.7), the nephew of Antiochus III, to whom his uncle promised the government of Armenia (Pol. 8.23.3-4); Antiochus’ own son, who later ruled as Antiochus IV (Wörrle 1988; Coşkun 2016), and the brother of Pharnaces I, who would rule in Pontus with the surnames Philopator Philadelphus (*IDélos* 1555; *OGIS* 375; Pol. 25.2.3; 33.12.1); see Ballesteros Pastor, forthcoming.

<sup>33</sup> Iust.35.1.2: *Orophernen per iniuriam regno pulsu*.

<sup>34</sup> Pol. 24.14.9; 31.7; Strab. 12.2.11; Iust. 37.1.5, 4.4; 38.1.1, 2.7-8, 5.9; Diod. 31.21; Cic., *Fam.* 15.2.4-7, 4.6. See among others Magie 1950, v. II, 1096 fn. 6; Breglia Pulci Doria 1978, 124; Mitchell 1993, 83; Ballesteros Pastor 2008, 46; Idem 2013b, 162, 174, 193, 245; Gabelko 2017, 333 fn. 38; Panichi 2018, 62.

<sup>35</sup> For a general overview, see Chaumont 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Both Ariarathes IV and his son Ariarathes V had border disputes with the Galatians: Pol. 31.2.13; 31.3.1; 31.8; Walbank 1979, 468-472.

ceded to the Cappadocians.<sup>37</sup> Wherefore the Pontics represented the best option: an Iranian dynasty, as the Ariarathid, who had possessions by the Black Sea, and who was also aiming to strengthen itself at that moment.

#### IV. Arcobarzanes, grandson of Syphax: a Numidian noble of Cappadocian descent

A single sentence from Livy's *Periochae* addresses a noble called Arcobarzanes, who collaborated with Carthage against Massinissa at the head of a large Numidian army in 154 B.C. The concern raised by this armed force among the Romans would end up being one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Third Punic War.<sup>38</sup> About Arcobarzanes we only know that he was a grandson of Syphax, the Numidian king who had ruled over the people of the Masaesyli, and who decades earlier had supported Hannibal against Scipio Africanus.<sup>39</sup> The name Arcobarzanes is clearly a corruption of the Persian Ariobarzanes. Since, as we have seen, it was a traditional name among the dynasty of Pontus, it would not be daring to venture that we are before a noble whose lineage was the outcome of this union between Mithridatids and Ariarathids we are dealing with. Nothing prevents an Anatolian Ariobarzanes from getting married with one of Syphax's daughters and Arcobarzanes being born from that marriage.

In the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, Von Gutschmid had already stated that a parentage between the royal Pontic house and the family of the notorious king of the Masaesyli would have existed.<sup>40</sup> However, this proposal has been nuanced or even rejected by later authors, who do not accept such a link. Thereupon, Ritter, not excluding a possible marriage with an Anatolian prince, proposed an ideological relationship, connecting it with Sallust's references to the arrival of peoples from Armenia to the shores of North Africa: somehow the Numidians would have assumed a conception of power similar to the Achaemenid one.<sup>41</sup> Huss and Morstein-Marx, on their part, believed that Arcobarzanes could have been a Numidian name that would simply appear corrupted in the manuscripts.<sup>42</sup> Paul held that Sallust would have mentioned those eastern peoples as colonizers of Numidia for being equestrian, and therefore analogous to the Numidians.<sup>43</sup> Finally, Gruen considered Sallust's reference to these Armenians in North Africa as the consequence of Phoenician traditions which would have been spread throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> This Seleucid Cappadocia is only mentioned by Appian, *Syr.* 55. On its history and possible location, see Sofou 2005, 747 fn. 43; Capdetrey 2007, 39-40, 50 fn. 153; Ballesteros Pastor 2013a, 195 fn. 18; Kosmin 2014, 311 fn. 86; Panichi 2018, 6-9.

<sup>38</sup> Liv., *Per.* 48.4: *Cum in finibus Carthaginiensium ingens Numidarum exercitus duce Arcobarzane, Syphacis nepote, diceretur esse, M. Porcius Cato suasit ut Carthaginiensibus, qui exercitum specie contra Masinissam, re contra Romanos accitum in finibus haberent, bellum indiceretur.*

<sup>39</sup> On Syphax, see among others: Ghazi-ben Maïssa 2009; Aragón Gómez 2015; Gozalbes Cravioto 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Von Gutschmid 1892, 539-540 fn. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Sall., *Iug.* 18.4; Ritter 1978. On this presence of Iranians in Numidia, see further Mela 3.103; Plin., *NH* 5.46; Ptol. 4.3.6. Strabo 17.3.7, tells about Indians who have arrived with Heracles.

<sup>42</sup> Huss 1985, 433 with fn. 67; Morstein-Marx 2001, 197. For further bibliography, see Mariotta 2000, 254 fn. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Paul 1994, 76.

<sup>44</sup> Gruen 2011, 274-276.



On our part, we assume, following Von Gutschmid, that this mysterious Arcobarzanes would have been the result of a direct contact between Syphax's royal house and the Anatolic lineage formed by the union of Mithridatids and Ariarathids. At first glance, it is difficult to believe in this link between peoples so far away from each other. Nonetheless, we have to keep in mind that there were important and well-recorded relationships between Northwest Africa and Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period. In what concerns the royal house of Numidia, we find a great amount of testimonies. We should recall how Massinissa sent his son Misagenes with troops and supplies to help the Romans in the war against Perseus.<sup>45</sup> This Numidian ruler had contacts with Nicomedes II of Bithynia, who devoted a statue to him in Delos.<sup>46</sup> Equally, a Rhodian erected an equestrian statue to Massinissa on the island, where the monarch's sons also appeared in a monument.<sup>47</sup> Hiempsal II, Massinissa's great-grandson, would later be honoured in Rhodes as well.<sup>48</sup> Lastly, it is not less important to mention the presence of Armenian soldiers in Africa, sent by Tigranes I to support Rome during the Third Punic War.<sup>49</sup> Also, the Pontic king Mithridates V Evergetes, who ruled over Maritime Cappadocia and Armenia Minor, intervened in this conflict sending ships to Africa in aid of the Republic.<sup>50</sup>

Next to the cited passage from Sallust about the legendary arrival to the shores of Numidia of people from Armenia who had belonged to Hercules' army, we should bring to mind Ptolemy's reference to Achaemenids in the inland of this African region. This has been linked to the allusion of Pliny the Elder to the presence of the Persians in Mauritania, and can be likewise related to passages from Strabo and Mela.<sup>51</sup> If we admit that these legends may have some historical basis, they could help explain the belonging of Arcobarzanes to Syphax's family.

As we have held elsewhere, the special attention given to Massinissa and Jugurtha in the harangue of Mithridates Eupator recorded by Justin (where Syphax is also mentioned), could portray a close relationship between the Pontic house and these Numidian dynasties. It is surprising, and gratuitous to some extent, that a king from the Black Sea had such an interest in exalting the fidelity to Rome of an African monarch, and in denouncing the treatment given by the Republic to his grandson Jugurtha, who was one of the most tenacious enemies of the Roman power at the end of the second century B.C.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, the intuition of Von Gutschmid could be true, and Arcobarzanes would have come from the Pontic royal house.

If Arcobarzanes was an adult in 154 B.C., this could mean that the union between a member of the Pontic-Cappadocian nobility and a Syphax's daughter would have taken place at the latest

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<sup>45</sup> Liv. 42.29.8-10, 42.62.2, 42.65.12-14, 42.67.8, 43.6.13, 44.4.11; Iust. 33.1.2; Eutr. 4.6.2; Oros. 4.20.36.

<sup>46</sup> Hintzen-Bohlen 1992, 233 n° 56; Mattingly 1997, 140.

<sup>47</sup> Hintzen-Bohlen 1992, 232 n° 47 and 51, respectively.

<sup>48</sup> Lipiński 2004, 168-169.

<sup>49</sup> Ampel. 32.1.

<sup>50</sup> App., *Mithr.* 10.

<sup>51</sup> See above, fn. 41; Desanges 1986. We should bear in mind that the Mithridatids ruled over the old Satrapy of Western Armenia (later called Armenia Minor by the Romans). Themiscyra, the town of the Amazons where Heracles arrived to obtain Hyppolite's girdle, was allegedly placed in this realm: see Ballesteros Pastor 2016; cf. Idem 2009b.

<sup>52</sup> Ballesteros Pastor 2006; Idem 2009a, and above all Idem 2013b, 40, 258-263.

during the reigns of both Ariarathes IV and Pharnaces I. The fact that Arcobarzanes lead a numerous detachment would indicate that his position among the Masaesyli was relevant enough.

Syphax was taken as a prisoner to Rome by Scipio Africanus and died in Tibur.<sup>53</sup> We know that he was succeeded in the throne by his son Vermina, who had likewise participated in the Hannibalic war. Vermina kept a small independent kingdom around the modern Oran, and sought the friendship of Rome.<sup>54</sup> In short, with regard to what concerns us here, these contacts of the Republic with Syphax's family should lead us to the conclusion that when Ariobarzanes I was chosen by the Senate as the king of Cappadocia, the Romans were leaning towards a lineage which was not unknown to them. The Republic was aware that this candidate to the Cappadocian throne had royal blood from the Ararathid stock, and thus he had enough legitimacy to be settled on the throne of his ancestors.

## V. Further arguments about the Pontic-Cappadocian descent of the Ariobarzanids

The fact that the Ariobarzanids belonged to the lineage of the ancient kings of Cappadocia may be also endorsed by other aspects in addition to the ones already presented. The fact that Archelaus I, established as sovereign of that kingdom by Mark Antony, took the epithet Ctistes ("Founder") could mean that the new monarch came from a family who had nothing to do with the Ariarathids and the Ariobarzanids, two dynasties that shared a common bloodline.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, it is worth noting that the king prior to Archelaus was Ariarathes X, the younger brother of Ariobarzanes III. According to our proposal, the fact that this last Ariobarzanid monarch bore the traditional name among the Cappadocian kings could have rendered a vindication of the existing ties between this royal house and the Ariarathids, the ancestral dynasty which had ruled that kingdom up to the beginning of the first century B.C.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, it is remarkable to examine the terms in which Strabo, writing under the protection of Pythodoris, the widow of king Archelaus, refers to the extinction of the Cappadocian royal lineage. The author from Amasya makes a list of the kingdoms that came under the power of the Roman state because of the extinction of their respective dynasties.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Strabo enumerates the royal houses of Pergamum, Syria, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia and Egypt. If we take into ac-

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<sup>53</sup> Ghazi-ben Maïssa 2009, 18-19; Gozalbes Cravioto 2015, 94-96.

<sup>54</sup> On Vermina's friendship with Rome and his kingdom in Western Algeria, see above all Liv. 31.11.13, 15-18; App., *Pun.* 33; Zonar. 9.13; Braund 1984, 31 fn. 11, 33 fn. 29; Ghazi-Ben Maïssa 1996, 1407-1412. This kingdom may have survived until the fall of Carthage. It was even thought that Ariobarzanes I of Cappadocia may have been Syphax's grandson (Badi' 1991, 135), but this proposal is hardly admissible from a chronological point of view and has been found no echo in the scholarly world.

<sup>55</sup> On Archelaus and his epithet Ctistes, see Muccioli 2013, 201.

<sup>56</sup> On Ariarathes X, see Sullivan 1980, 1147-1149; Idem 1990, 182-183.

<sup>57</sup> Strab. 6.4.2: "At the outset it (*i.e.* Asia) was administered through the agency of kings who were subject to the Romans, but from that time on, when their line failed, as was the case with the Attalic, Syrian, Paphlagonian, Cappadocian, and Egyptian kings, or when they would revolt and afterwards be deposed (...), all parts of it this side the Phasis and the Euphrates, except certain parts of Arabia, have been subject to the Romans and the rulers appointed by them" (Loeb translation, L. H. Jones 1928, 145). On the time when Strabo wrote his Geography (probably between 18 and 24 A.D.), see for instance Dueck 2002, 171.

count that this list starts with the Attalids, who became extinct officially in 133 B.C., and concludes with the Ptolemies, whose rule ended in 30 B.C. after the battle of Actium, we could think that Strabo would have followed a chronological order. Thus, as far as we understand, this reference to the end of the Cappadocian dynasty, mentioned before the Egyptian one, might refer to the death of Ariarathes X, who was overthrown by Antony in 36 B.C. The death of Ariarathes VIII, the younger son of Ariarathes VI, took place ca. 98 B.C. and hence it was previous to the extinction of the Seleucid house, which expired officially when Pompeius deposed Antiochus XIII Asiaticus in 64 B.C. In respect to Paphlagonia, the dynasty of the Pylaemenids ended ca. 40 B.C.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, Strabo's passage would indicate a continuity in the house ruling Cappadocia throughout almost the totality of the Hellenistic period, until Archelaus' enthronement.<sup>59</sup>

## VI. Conclusive remarks

To sum up, the Ariobarzanid dynasty which ruled Cappadocia for six decades in the first century B.C., could have been the result of a union between the royal houses of the Mithridatids of Pontus and the Cappadocian Ariarathids. The connection between these lineages, indirectly attested by Appian, added to further evidence, could have served to justify the enthronement of Ariobarzanes I as king after the expulsion of Ariarathes IX at the hands of Sulla. The name Ariobarzanes would have been traditional among the satraps of Dascylium, from whom the kings of Pontus descended, and from them the name passed on to the Cappadocian dynasty, by virtue of some marriage arrangements between both royal houses.

The fact that the notorious chronicle of Diodorus Siculus concerning the history of the Cappadocian dynasty up to Ariarathes V does not mention this union with the Pontic house should not surprise us.<sup>60</sup> The Diodorean passage omits any allusion to the Mithridatids, and only makes reference to the familiar bonds of the Ariarathids with the Seleucid dynasty, which does not come out well either.<sup>61</sup> We are facing a point of view that can be considered "nationalist", emerged from the court of Ariarathes V, who is depicted as a philhellene king, initiator of a stage of glory for the ancient Cappadocian lineage that allegedly traced back to an uncle of Cyrus the Great.<sup>62</sup>

The Ariobarzanids have gone down in history as slightly energetic monarchs, who unfailingly needed the protection of Rome. In contrast with the prestige of Ariarathes V Eusebes, who died

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<sup>58</sup> On the death of Ariarathes VIII, see Iust. 38.2.2; De Callatay 1997, 271-272; Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 189-191; Panichi 2018, 47-48; cf. the discussion by Simonetta 2007, 75-78, 85. On Antiochus XIII, see Sullivan 1990, 64-68, 198; Grainger 1997, 35, 661. The Seleucid house officially ends with the death of this king: Sullivan 1990, 203-205; cf. Grainger 1997, 52-53. On the (probable) death of Attalus I of Paphlagonia, see Dion, 48.33.5; Magie 1950, v. II, 1234-1235 fn. 35; Sullivan 1990, 160.

<sup>59</sup> On the deposition of Ariarathes X and the enthronement of Archelaus, see Sullivan 1980, 1149-1150; Idem 1990, 181-182. Valerius Maximus 9.15 ext.2, suggests that he was murdered, although without specifying by whom.

<sup>60</sup> Diod. 31.19.

<sup>61</sup> Antiochis, the mother of Ariarathes V, is described by Diodorus, 31.19.7, as a dissolute woman who gave birth to two illegitimate sons: Ballesteros Pastor 2018b, 942.

<sup>62</sup> On this passage, see above all Panitschek 1987/1988, 79-81 and *passim*; Gandini 2016, 162-171; Panichi 2018, 3-40 and *passim*. On the philhellenism of Ariarathes V, see particularly Panichi 2005 (with further bibliography).

fighting against Aristonicus, Ariobarzanes I would be a weak ruler, overthrown six times by Mithridates Eupator and Tigranes II of Armenia.<sup>63</sup> Remarkably, Memnon does not call Ariobarzanes *basileus* (“king”), but only *eparchos* (“governor”). Besides, Justin describes this monarch as indolent (*segnis*).<sup>64</sup> Despite the Pontic power in Anatolia being subdued by Rome in 66 B.C., Cappadocia will languish for three more decades under the rule of the Ariobarzanids.

The last kings who bore the name Ariobarzanes were two rulers of Media Atropatene: the first one reigned in mid-first century B.C., and the second one was the former’s grandson and the son of Artavasdes I. Both Ariobarzanes appear mentioned in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (33), and the younger would be established by Rome as king of Armenia. Even though the succession of the monarchs of Atropatene in the first century is very confusing, we could consider that Ariobarzanes I was of Pontic descent. Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates Eupator, had married Tigranes II of Armenia. Their daughter married Mithridates I, king of Atropatene, who could have been the grandfather (or father) of Ariobarzanes I.<sup>65</sup> We may presume that this was the last vindication of a genealogy which was rooted in the family of the satraps of Dascylium in the remote fifth century B.C.

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<sup>63</sup> On the expulsions of Ariobarzanes I, see Ballesteros Pastor 2013b, 207. Cf. Gabelko 2017, 326.

<sup>64</sup> Memnon *BNJ* 434, F1, 38.2; Justin 38.3.2. See also Licinianus’ contemptuous words (35 p.27 Flemisch) to describe Ariobarzanes’ situation after the peace of Dardanus between Sulla and Mithridates.

<sup>65</sup> The genealogy of the kings of Atropatene in the first century B.C. is complicated because of the presence of a “King of Media” called Darius, who allegedly fought against Pompey the Great (Diod. 40.4; App. *Mith.* 106, 117), but is not called ruler of Atropatene: see Sullivan 1990, 295-297; Schippmann 2014; cf. Chaumont 2011. On the diffusion of the Pontic lineage among Eastern dynasties, see Sullivan 1990, 62, 101, 299-300; Ballesteros Pastor 2018a, 276.

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### **Ariobarzanes Hanedanlığı'nın Kökenleri**

#### **Öz**

Kappadokia'nın Ariobarzanid kralları, V. Ariarathes Dönemi'nden önce bilinmeyen bir dönemde akrabalık bağları kuran Pontos Mithridates Hanedanlığı'nın ve Kappadokia Ariarathes Hanedanlığı'nın bir parçasıydılar. Bu nedenle, bu aileler kökenlerini Daskyleion'un antik satraplarından, özellikle Pontos Hanedanlığı'nın yükselmesini sağlayan ve Kios'a yerleştirilmiş olan bir ailenin kolundan almaktaydılar. Bu akrabalık Appianos'un yorumlaması zor bazı pasajlarını açıklamaktadır. Böylelikle, Romalılar Ariobarzanes'i tahta getirdiklerinde, Cumhuriyet tarafından zaten iyi bilinen bir aileyi desteklemiş oluyorlardı. Bu suretle Numidia kralı Syphaks'ın torunu olan Ariarathes X. Arkobarzanes'in görevden azliyle sona erene kadar, Kappadokia'nın kraliyet hanesinin devamı olarak görünen Arobarzanidler aynı zamanda Pontos-Kappadokia soyunun da bir üyesi olmaktadır.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* Ariobarzanes, Daskyleion, Kappadokia, Ariarathidler, Pontos, Mithridates, Arkobarzanes.

### **The Origins of the Ariobarzanid Dynasty**

#### **Abstract**

The Ariobarzanid kings of Cappadocia belonged to a cadet branch of the Mithridatids of Pontus and the Ariarathids of Cappadocia, who merged their bloodlines in an undetermined moment previous to the reign of Ariarathes V. Therefore, these families descended from the ancient satraps of Dascylium, and in particular from a branch of this family installed in Cius which gave rise to the Pontic dynasty. This kinship explains some passages of Appian difficult to interpret. Henceforth, when the Romans settled Ariobarzanes I on the throne, they were supporting a family which was already well known to the Republic. Thus, the Ariobarzanids represented a continuity in the royal house of Cappadocia until it became extinct by the deposition of Ariarathes X. Arcobarzanes, grandson of the Numidian king Syphax, would have also been a member of this Pontic-Cappadocian lineage.

*Keywords:* Ariobarzanes, Dascylium, Cappadocia, Ariarathids, Pontos, Mithridates, Arcobarzanes.