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**ARTICLES**



**ON THE QUESTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES, REASONS AND  
DATE OF TIGRANES THE GREAT EXTRADITION AS HOSTAGE  
TO THE PARTHIANS. A REVISED ARMENIAN CHRONOLOGY  
OF THE PERIOD 215-96 BC\***

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**Abstract**

This article re-examines the circumstances, reasons and date of taking Tigranes II the Great into hostage by the Parthians from a new perspective. In the light of information from late Babylonian cuneiform, Greco-Roman, ancient Armenian and ancient Georgian sources, the prevailing scholarly opinion that the surrender of Prince Tigranes as a hostage was due to the demands of the Parthian side following the Armenian military defeat by Parthian King Mithridates II is challenged and refuted. A new interpretation of events logically connects the accounts of Justin [25:322] and Strabo [42:336-340] regarding taking Tigranes II the Great hostage, which is confirmed by the late Babylonian cuneiform tablet, with information from Strabo [43:224-225] of successful Armenian resistance against repeated Parthian aggression.

**Keywords:** Chronology, Artaxiad dynasty, Orontes (Ervand) IV, Artaxias I, Artavazdes I, Tigranes I, Vagharshak I, Arshak (Arsac) I, Tigranes II the Great, Mithridates I, Mithridates II the Great.

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\*\* To the blessed memory of my father, Samvel Arakelyan, I dedicate.

In the beginning of 96 BC, the king of Great Armenia died. This was a rather significant event, which was reflected in a late Babylonian cuneiform inscription (BM 45712) dated to the first month of the year 216 according to the Seleucid calendar (SEB), which corresponds to 26/27 March - 23/24 April 96 BC [38:418-419]. To our great regret, the name of the deceased king of Great Armenia is not mentioned in this document.

The heir to the Armenian throne, crown prince Tigranes, was at that time in Parthia, to whom, judging by the data of Justin [25:322] and Strabo [34:398-401;42:336-340], he had been taken hostage long before the events described. The above-mentioned sources are confirmed by the information of another late Babylonian cuneiform record (BM 45712), which is dated to the second month of the year 216 of the Seleucid Era, which corresponds to 24/25. 4. - 23/24. 5. 96 BC [3:43-44;38:422-423].

The circumstances, reasons and date of Tigranes' extradition as hostage to the Parthians are not reported additionally by either Strabo or Justin. Nor do we know who gave Tigranes away.

In the scientific literature, a hypothesis was expressed, according to which, in the second half of the II century BC, Great Armenia was attacked by the Parthian king Mithridates II, who demanded the extradition of hostages as a sign of submission [21:26; 9:192;1:81;18:48;4:58].

It is not known who and when first expressed it, but at least since the publication of N.C.Debevoise's work "Political History of Parthia" in 1938, it already existed. In it, the author suggested that during the time of Artavazdes I, Armenia was attacked by the Parthian king Mithridates II, as a result of which the king's eldest son Tigranes was given as a hostage [4:58]. In making this point of view, Debevoise failed to take into account a number of factors: 1) there is no source that says that Tigranes II is the son of Artavazdes I; 2) the available sources explicitly call Tigranes II the son of Tigranes I [2:195-197].

Movses Khorenatsi, referring to the genealogy of the Artaxiads, clearly says that the successor of Artaxias (Artashes) I was Artavazdes I, who had no male offspring and kept his brother Tiranés as his successor [27:110]. Sebeos [11:29] and Leonti Mroveli [17:34] do not know of King Tiranés, while Artavazdes I is always mentioned with his brother Tigranes I\*. Mentioning the deeds of the latter, Movses Khorenatsi in particular says that he ruled for 21 years and died on the road under a snowfall, and during his reign he faithfully served the Romans [27:111]. This is confirmed by a Roman source [20:102-103, 120-121], the author of which calls Tigranes I† a particularly distinguished ally of the Romans during the Third Punic War, which lasted from 149 to 146 BC. Artavazdes I ruled only three years, a fact which we learn by simple mathematical calculation, taking away from the total 24-year reign of Artavazdes I and Tigranes I according to Sebeos [11:29], and 21 years of reign of Tigranes I according to Movses Khorenatsi [27:111]. The accuracy of the reign of each of them is established due to ignored information by Movses Khorenatsi about Artaxias (Artashes) I. The Father of Armenian historiography writes that Artashes I reigned on his father's throne thanks to the support of Darius the Last, the Persian king of

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\* It should be noted that this king should be the second king in the history of Armenia bearing the name Tigranes, since according to sources (Xenophon, Movses Khorenatsi, Thomas Artsruni and others), king Tigranes I Ervandyan (Ervanduni), a contemporary of the Median king Astyages and the Persian king Cyrus II the Great, is also known.

† A.I. Nemirovskiy, in his comments on the translation of the book of Lucius Ampelius into Russian, believed that the mentioned Tigranes was the king of Lesser Armenia [20:203-204]. This point of view cannot be accepted, since it directly contradicts the information of Paulus Orosius [30:322;31:147], according to which Mithridates V Euergetes (150-121/120 BC) was the king of Lesser Armenia during this period. From 120 BC the ruler of Lesser Armenia was king Antipater, son of Sisis [42:422-425]. He then transferred Lesser Armenia to the administration of Mithridates VI Eupatoros. The exact date of his accession to the throne of Lesser Armenia is unknown. Suggested dates range from 114-112 BC to 105-90 BC. See more about this [40:160-166].

kings, who provided Artashes I with a part of the army of Assyria and the whole army of Atrpatakan (Atropatene) to overthrow King Ervand [27:95]. The information given by Movses Khorenatsi that the army of Assyria and Atropatene was subordinated to the Persian king of kings allows us to see him as only one ruler of that epoch, Antiochus III the Great, taking into account that in 221/220 BC, the latter went on a campaign against the ruler of Atropatene Artabazana and subordinated him to his will [46:407-408]. Before this, from the time of Atropates, a contemporary of Alexander the Great and before Artabazana, Atropatene had been an independent state for a hundred years. According to synchronous chronology, Artaxias reigned on the Armenian throne in the 29<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of the Persian king of kings Darius the Last [27:98], that is, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC). Consequently, the year of Artaxias's accession to the throne will be 194 BC. Before that, all researchers, following E. Meyer, leaving aside the data of the sources, considered that the accession of Artashes I in Armenia was inseparably connected with the establishment of Zareh in Sophene in 202/201 BC [26:50-51]. And if for Zareh, it is undoubtedly 202/201 BC, which is confirmed by the information of John of Antioch (Fr. 53) [16:557], in the case of Artashes I, the picture is different. Strabo also confirms this, saying that on the eve of Armenia becoming a Seleucid strategy, its ruler was Orontes (Ervand, Eruand), a descendant of Hydarnes, one of the seven Persians [42:396-340]. Orontes/Ervand came to the throne in the eighth year of Darius the Last/Antiochus III the Great (215 BC) [27:91-92] and ruled for 20 years [27:96-98] (i.e. until 195 BC). Here it should be remembered that according to Strabo, Artashes and Zareh were originally only *strategos* of Antiochus in Armenia and Sophene, and during the latter's battle with the Romans at Magnesia in 190/189 BC, they defected to the side of the Romans and proclaimed themselves independent kings [42:336-340]. Artaxias I ruled for 41 years, of which he was a *strategos* for 5-6 years, and king for

35 years. Years of their reign are as follows: Artaxias's I (194/189-153 BC), Artavazdes I (153/152-150 BC), and Tigranes I (150-129 BC).

According to Lucian (Ps. Lucian) [19:234-235], Tigran lived for 85 years and died of illness (between 56 and 54 BC) [24:123;32:535-539]. Therefore, Tigran II the Great was born between 141 and 139 BC. This means that it is logical to see Tigranes I, a participant in the Third Punic War, in the person of his father, and not Artavazdes I as Debevoise believed, if only because at the time of Artavazdes I's death in 150 BC, Tigranes II the Great had not yet been born.

A few years after the publication of Debevoise's work, Hakop Manandyan's monograph "Tigran the Second and Rome" was published (Yerevan, 1943). In his work, the author, relying on the information of Movses Khorenatsi, although correctly indicated the sequence of reign of the first three Artaxiads [27:98,108-111], but missing the data of the Father of Armenian historiography concerning the number of years of reign of each of these kings [27:98,108-111], as well as the information of Lucius Ampe-lius [20:102-103,120-121] about Tigranes I, incorrectly indicated that the immediate successor of Tigranes I was Tigranes II. The combined information of L. Ampelius [20:102-103,120-121], Movses Khorenatsi [27:16-18, 59-69], Sebeos [11:26-29], Leonti Mroveli [17:27] and "Mok'c'evay K'art'lisay" ("The Conversion of Kartli")<sup>‡</sup> [35:90;47:33] allows us to state that after the death of Tigranes I (129 BC), Vagharsakes (Arsaces) I (129-108 BC) became the king of Great Armenia. This king was a representative of the side line of the Parthian Arsacids, who reigned in the year of the death of Antiochus VII Sidetes in the battle with Phraates II (129 BC). This happened precisely in 129 BC, since the next year (128 BC) Phraates II died in

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a battle with the Scythians [25:354]. After Vagharsakes I, his son Arshak I (108-96 BC) became king. There is a high probability that Vagasis, mentioned by Justin [25:353], appointed by Mithridates I as governor of Media, as well as Bagasis (Bagayasa), mentioned in late Babylonian cuneiform texts [3:3, 7-8, 18, 20-23], and Vagharsakes I, mentioned by Movses Khorenatsi, are one and the same person. The fact that Tigranes II the Great could not be the immediate successor of his father was clear even from a simple mathematic calculation: Artaxias I ruled for 41 years, Artavazdes I ruled for 3 years, and Tigranes I ruled for 21 years, which totals to 65 years. To whatever reference points we would not apply this number of years (to the beginning of the reign of Tigranes II the Great (96 BC) or Artaxias I (189 BC)), there will be a gap of 35 years. During this period, according to Movses Khorenatsi, Vagharsakes and his son Arsakes ruled. Vagarsakes I (129-108 BC) ruled for 22 years, and Arsakes I (108-96 BC) ruled for 13 years. Manandyan did not attach any importance to this, although the answer lay in the source known to him.

The erroneous provisions stated above by Debevoise and Manandyan were accepted by other researchers with excessive haste [23:27-30;1:81;40:196;18:48; 50:230;14:198], and the thesis of Great Armenia's dependence on the Arshacids from the time of Mithridates II began to acquire a well-established meaning, which was more and more often cited in works devoted to the Artaxiads, and judging by the references, again, solely on the basis of the information of Justin and Strabo. Other sources (prologues to the books of Pompeius Trogus, information provided by Movses Khorenatsi, Leonti Mroveli and others) were not considered as an alternative, which in general not only presented the historical picture one-sidedly, but also distorted historical realities. R. L. Manaseryan [23:30], in particular, believed that the hostage-taking of Tigranes should have taken place between 115-110 BC. As before, Debevoise, referring to the information of

Justin and completely ignoring the information of Movses Khorenatsi about the sequence of rulers in the house of Artaxiads, believed that Tigranes was given hostage by Artavazdes I, the successor of Tigranes I. However, taking into account all sources at our disposal makes it possible not only to take a different look at the circumstances of Tigranes's surrender as a hostage, but also at the dating of this event.

So, let us analyze the information from the sources.

In the “Epitome of Pompeius Trogus's work ‘Philippic History’”, preserved thanks to the efforts of Marcus Justinus, there is a mention that the Parthian king Mithridates (judging by the context, one may conclude that it is Mithridates II (121-91 BC)), started a war with the Armenian king Artavazdes [25:355]. At this point Justinian's narrative breaks off. The course of the war, as well as its outcome, is unknown to us. On the basis of the available information about Tigranes being given as hostage to the Parthians [25:322;42:336-340], a reconstructed and postulated conclusion is made that Great Armenia lost the war to Parthia, and Tigranes, given as hostage to the Parthians, was a guarantor of the fulfilment of the Armenian king's obligations dictated by the Parthian side. As the most probable date of the beginning of this conflict, 115-111 BC is indicated. This dating is also hypothetical, based on the first references to the Parthian king Mithridates II the Great with the title “king of kings” in epigraphic and numismatic sources:

1) mention of “Arsaces, King of Kings”, in a dedicatory inscription from the temple of Asclepius on the island of Delos, which was left by some Greeks, priests of Dioscurus-Kabir, “friends of the king”. The inscription dates from about 110 BC [28;36:349-353;39:372-375;4:58]. This date roughly coincides with another Greek inscription from Babylon, which is dated to 109/108 BC. It mentions Mithridates II under the title “king of kings” [37:40];

2) Akkadian documents from Babylon dated simultaneously to the Seleucid and Arsacid eras, in which this title is mentioned [13:353;50:232-234];

3) the title “king of kings” also appears on the coins of Mithridates II the Great. The inscription on them reads “to the king of kings of the great Arsaces Epiphanes”. The time of this issue is dated to 109/108-96 BC [50:231-236].

However, a question arises whether Justinian's mention of Mithridates II the Great's war with the Armenian king Artavazdes, Mithridates II's assumption of the title of “king of kings” and crown prince Tigranes' being given as hostage to the Parthians have any connection with each other, if there are no specific references in the sources that could link them together, especially in the light of Strabo's data (XVI, 1, 19) [43:224-225] on the successful resistance of Armenians to Parthian aggression and the presence of contradictory information from the prologue to Book XLII of Pompeius Trogus [25:394-395].

In 1996, the third volume of Late Babylonian Cuneiform Astronomical Texts, edited by Sachs and Hunger, published a poorly preserved Late Babylonian cuneiform document that dates from the fifth month of 201 Seleucid Era (SEB), which corresponds to (7/8. 8.-5/6. 9. 111 BC). It says “...the city of Habigalbat (Hanigalbat of Assyrian texts, Mitanni of Hittite texts, and Nahrainah (Upper Mesopotamia) of Egyptian texts), which is called the country of Armenia (in the text Ar-mi-il?)...” But as G.F. Assar correctly pointed out, there is not a single word in this text that could confirm the connection of this document with the military operation in Armenia [3:42].

As for the circumstances of the Parthian king's adoption of the imperial title of “king of kings”, they have been omitted by the extant sources. However, Appian of Alexandria preserved the mechanism of the adoption of this

title by the Armenian king Tigranes II the Great. He writes: “And King Tigranes, son of Tigranes, conquered many neighboring tribes, who had their own dynasts, began to be called the king of kings” [2:195-197]. It would seem that if we follow Appian of Alexandria's explanation, any king who conquered several small kingdoms could automatically confer this title. Consequently, Mithridates VI Eupator, and Tigranes II the Great and the Parthian kings of their contemporaries could all bear this title simultaneously and independently of each other. However, as the facts show, they held this title alternately, not simultaneously. Moreover, Artavazdes of Atropatene, after 34 BC, also carried this title for some time, which is confirmed by the inscriptions on his copper coins [49:117-123, table 12]. It is, however, well known that this king did not conquer any neighboring tribes or kingdoms. Dio Cassius only notes that after Mark Antony's arrival in Armenia and his meeting with the Atropatene king, under the terms of the treaty, some parts of Armenia conquered by the Romans were transferred to the Median [6:43-433]. To Tigranes II the Great, the title of “king of kings” passed after the victory over the Parthians. From this we would assume that the indispensable detail concerning the possession of this title is the victory of one king over another king bearing this title. But even here we face confusion, because Mithridates VI Eupator also bore this title in the interval between 89/88-85 BC which is confirmed by the inscription on the pedestal of his statue, found during the excavations of Nymphaeum [50:244], although it is known that he did not fight either with Tigranes II, or with the Parthian king, and, therefore, he could not have victory over them. This suggests that the mechanism of assigning this title is much more complex than it seems. It is clear that within the same state, which absorbed and included a number of other kingdoms, there were persons bearing the titles “king” and “king of kings”, which was a manifestation of the hierarchical system within the state [32:535-539], but beyond the borders of this state, until the middle of the I

century BC, two or more persons bearing the title of “king of kings” at the same time, for reasons that are still unclear, were not present. Only from 54 BC, was this title simultaneously borne by Pharnaces, king of Bosphorus (from 54 to 51 BC) and Orodes II (57-38 BC), king of Parthia, and after Pharnaces, simultaneously Artavazdes II, king of Great Armenia (49-48, 39-37 BC) and Orodes II, king of Parthia [22:21;49:26-47; 50:241].

It should be emphasised that the researchers who claim the dependence of Great Armenia on Parthia in the time of Mithridates II the Great on the basis of information from Justinian's Epitome leave out of sight the well-known fact that from the work of Pompeius Trogus, in addition to Justinian's epitome, the so-called prologues or titles to the books have also been preserved. A comparative analysis of the prologues and the abridged text of Justin reveals discrepancies in many details, one of which is the identification of the Parthian king Mithridates, who started a war with the Armenian king Artavazdes. According to Justin, it is Mithridates II who succeeded Artavazdes, and according to the prologue, it is Mithridates who succeeded Phraates. It can be only Mithridates I, who inherited Phraates I [10:12-13].

The Parthian king Mithridates I (165-132 BC) turned into a “Great” king from an ordinary king only after he won the battle over the Seleucid king and became the owner of Great Media (without Atropatene) and Babylonia. But Mithridates I could not be called “king of kings” for the very reason that Media and Babylonia conquered by him were not kingdoms recognizing the supreme power of the Seleucids, but only satrapies, which were governed by trustees appointed by the Seleucids, who did not have the royal title. The royal title belonged to the Seleucids, and even after losing a battle to the king of the Parthians, they did not recognise his supremacy over them, and did not submit to him.

Describing the activities of the Parthian king Mithridates I, Justine writes that by the time of his death, having subjugated many peoples to his

authority, he had extended the Parthian domination (*imperium Parthorum*) from the Caucasus Mountains to the Euphrates River [25:353]. From a superficial study of this information, a hasty conclusion was made about the dependence of Great Armenia on Parthia already in the time of Mithridates I. The information of Justinian, which has not been properly explained in the research literature so far, is subject to consideration. It is clear from Justin's message that the western border of Parthia at the time of the death of Mithridates I was the left bank of the Euphrates, and the other one was the Caucasus Mountains. The discrepancy regarding the Caucasus Mountains, in the specificity of that part of the world, is not accidental. The cause for this was the information provided by Strabo, who says the following about the Caucasus: "The stories that have been spread far and wide with a view to glorifying Alexander are not accepted by all; and their fabricators were men who cared for flattery rather than truth. For instance, they transferred the Caucasus into the region of the eastern sea which lies near those mountains from the Euxine; for these are the mountains which the Greeks named Caucasus, which is more than thirty thousand stadias distant from India; and here it was that they laid the scene of the story of Prometheus and of his being put in bonds; for these were the farthest mountains towards the east that were known to writers of that time" [42:238-241]. Such a diametric representation of ancient geographers about the Caucasus, given the information provided by Strabo [43:224-225] about the successful resistance of Armenians to Parthian aggression, allows us to give concrete content to the answer to the above question. Obviously, in Justinian's report about the Caucasus, it is the eastern border of the Parthian power, where the Caucasus is understood as the Indian Mountains. This opinion is confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, saying that Mithridates, "king of the Parthians, being a mild and gracious prince, was exceedingly prosperous and successful, and greatly enlarged the bounds of his empire. He conquered all before him, as far as

to India, where Porus reigned formerly, with a great deal of ease; and though he had achieved that degree of power and authority, yet he inclined not in the least to pride and luxury, as is common with princes in such cases. He was kind to his subjects, and valiant in warfare against his enemies; and having subdued many nations, he collected the best of their customs, and imparted them to the Parthians” [8:34-37]. The mentioned Por was a Punjabi rajah known from ancient sources, whose possessions stretched between the rivers Hidaspes (now Jhelam) and Chandrabhaga (now Chenab). The information by Diodorus is also supported by the report of Paulus Orosius about the invasion of Mithridates I into India [30:311-312;31:140-141]. The successful wars of Mithridates I expanded the borders of Parthia in the east to India, which gave rise to the mention of the Caucasus, which, judging by Strabo's message, also meant the Indian Mountains. That is, when describing the borders of Parthia under Mithridates I, Justin (Justinus) implies their extension from east to west, but not to west and north.

Greek geographer Strabo writes in Book XVI of his Geography: “For the Medes and the Armenians, and third Babylonians, the three greatest of the tribes in that part of the world, were so continued from the beginning, and continued to be, that at time opportune for each they would attack one another and in turn become reconciled. And this continued down to the supremacy of the Parthians. Now the Parthians rule over the Medes and the Babylonians, but they have never once ruled over the Armenians; indeed, the Armenians have been attacked many times, but they could not be overcome by force, since Tigranes, opposed all attacks mightily, as I have stated in my description of Armenia” [43:224-224].

As we can see, Strabo was aware of three important circumstances, which he recorded in his work: 1) Armenia was repeatedly attacked by Parthians; 2) Parthians never managed to defeat Armenians by force of arms; 3) Tigranes was given as hostage to Parthians. Hence, three important conclu-

sions emerge: 1) if the sources do not record the victory of the Parthian kings Mithridates I and Mithridates II over Great Armenia, then, accordingly, there is no reason to link the adoption of the imperial title of “king of kings” by Mithridates II the Great with the extradition of Tigran as a hostage; 2) if there was no military defeat of the Armenian king, then Tigranes could not be handed over as an expression of submission or as a guarantor of fulfilment of certain requirements by the Armenian side dictated by the Parthian side in connection with the defeat; 3) the date of Tigranes' extradition as a hostage to the Parthians does not have to be linked to the era of Mithridates II the Great and his assumption of the title of “king of kings”. Consequently, the circumstances of Tigranes' hostage-taking require other explanations, which could simultaneously harmonize the information of Justin [25:332] and Strabo [42:336-340] about Tigranes' hostage-taking to the Parthians, taking into account the data by Strabo [43:224-225] about the successful resistance of Armenians to Parthian aggression.

We found several similar cases in a number of sources. One of them is described in a Georgian source, Leont'i Mroveli's “The Lives of Georgian Kings”. The described case is connected with the epoch of reigning of the representative of the side line of the Parthian Arsacids in Great Armenia, who reigned in the year of the death of Antiochus VII Sidetes in the battle with Phraates II (129 BC). His name was Arshak (Arsac, Vagharshak), and we mentioned him above. So, let us directly turn to our source.

“During his rule, the reign of Antioch (Antiochus VII) in Babylon ended (129 BC). At the same time a man by the name of Arshak' came to the throne in Armenia. Mirvan arranged the marriage of his daughter to Arshak's son - also Arshak'. After the death of Mirvan his son, Parnajom, became the king.”

He came to love the Persian faith and fire worshipping; he brought fire priests and magicians<sup>§</sup> from Persia, had them settle in Mtskheta at a place, which is now called Mogvta, and began to openly abuse the idols. The inhabitants of Kartli hated him, because they worshipped the idols. Most of the *eristavis* conspired against him and sent an envoy to the King of Armenia with this message: “Our King has abandoned the faith of our fathers and does not serve the gods, the masters of Kartli, any more. He introduced his father’s faith in Kartli and refused the faith of his mother. He does not deserve to be our King. Give us your son Arshak’, whose wife is from the family of the Parnavazids, our kings. Give us your army’s help and we will make Parnajom flee, he who has brought a new faith to Kartli. Let our King be your son Arshak’, and our Queen - his wife, the daughter of our kings.” That proposal appealed to the King of Armenia. He sent back the envoy with a positive answer, in which he said: “If you truly and honestly want to have my son as your king, give me your hostages and I will give him to you and shower you with all kinds of presents.” [17:26]

For comparison, I also offer my own translation of this fragment: “King Antiochus (Antiochus VII) was defeated in Babylon (129 BC), and at this moment Arsak became king in Armenia, with whom Georgian (Kartli) king Mirian was united. And Mirian died, and her son Parnajom became king in her stead.

This Parnajom loved the Persian religion, the worship of fire, summoned priests (fire worshipers) and mags from Persia, settled them in Mtskheta, in the place that is now called Mogvta, and openly began to blaspheme idols. Therefore, the inhabitants (natives) of Kartli (Georgia) hated him, since they prayed to idols. Then the majority of the Georgian *eristavi*-s

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<sup>§</sup> According to the oral communication of Dr Eduard Khurshudyan, this term, taking into account the era, is correctly translated as “mags”. I would like to thank him for his verbal advice on this matter.

hatched (formed) a conspiracy and they sent an ambassador (envoy) to the Armenian king with a petition (saying): "Our king has abandoned the faith of our fathers, no longer serves the gods, the rulers of Kartli, accepted the example of his father (this means king Mirian, who adopted him and raised him) and followed the religion of his mother".

Now he is not worthy to be our king anymore. Give us your son Arsak, whose wife is from the generation (line) of our Pharnavazian kings. Send your army to our aid and we will put Parnajom, who introduced a new religion to Kartli (Georgia), to flight. Let your son Arsak be our king, and let his wife, the daughter of our kings, be our queen.

The Armenian king liked this decision. He sent them back to the ambassador with a kind reply, saying: "If you truly, from the bottom of your heart, want to have my son as king, then give me hostages, and I will give you my son as king and shower you with all sorts of gifts."

The described case is very informative. It allows us to understand a crucial mechanism that existed in ancient times in Transcaucasia. In the absence of the king on the throne, the local nobility could turn to neighboring royal houses to obtain a royal offspring as king. And they, in turn, demanded the surrender of hostages from representatives of noble families as guarantees of the safety of their offspring. Let us note that the local nobility did not elect a new king from representatives of the local princely nobility. It is possible that this practice arose as a result of unsuccessful previous experience, and not an ancient tradition. From the work of Movses Khorenatsi, it is clearly seen that in the premature death of the king and the minority of the heirs, the first of the Arminian nakharars (nobility) could be chosen as king, as in the case of Ervand [27:91-92]. Such a candidate reigned without undergoing the coronation ceremony, which was carried out by the Bagratids [27:92]. Apparently, the coronation did not take place, since the minor children of the previous king, legally, remained heirs to the throne. However,

apparently, due to consequences that arose (Ervand's persecution of Artashes) [27:92-99], this practice was abandoned. It is also important that king Vagharsak I, who demanded hostages himself, became the king of Great Armenia, not by right of conquest of this country. The year of his accession (129 BC) coincides with the year of the death of the king of Great Armenia Tigranes I under a snow avalanche. Let us recall that the perished Armenian king was the father of Tigran the Great, who was given to the Parthians as a hostage. At the time of Tigranes' death his son and heir was about 10 years old. His young age prevented him from taking the throne. Probably, as in the case of the Georgian *eristavi*-s, who turned to Armenian king Vagharsak I (Arshak, Vagharshak), the Armenian nobility turned to the Parthian king Phraates II with a proposal to place a representative of the Parthian Arsacids on the throne of Great Armenia. And Parthian king Phraates II demanded the extradition of hostages as security guarantees. In such a case the possible date of Tigranes' extradition as a hostage could have been 129 BC. A new interpretation of events logically connects the accounts of Justin [25:322] and Strabo [42:336-340] regarding taking Tigranes II the Great hostage, which is confirmed by the late Babylonian cuneiform tablet, with information by Strabo [43:224-225] of successful Armenian resistance against repeated Parthian aggression.

Another possible practice is known and described by many ancient sources. It refers to an incident related to Parthian king Phraates IV (38-2 BC), who, for fear of outrages against his policies and attempts on his life, invited the then Roman prefect of Syria Titius for negotiations and gave him four of his legitimate sons as hostages: Seraspadanus, Rodaspes, Phraates and Bonones (Vonones) with two wives and four of their sons. The Parthian king realised that no one on his own could successfully fight him without the help of someone from the Arsacid family, as the Parthians are exceptionally loyal to this family. Therefore, by removing his sons, he endeavored

to take away this hope from the men who had maligned him [12:57,109; 25:361; 29:149-152; 30:421; 31:213; 43:234-238; 44:152-153,192-195; 45:384-385; 51:396-397; 51:246-249]. It should be noted that the Parthian king gave his sons and grandsons as hostages not at the request of the Roman side, but under the pressure of the internal political situation in Parthia.

It cannot be excluded that a similar situation could arise in Great Armenia, when one of the possible pretenders to the throne temporarily was removed from the country to eliminate such incidents. And though I consider this option of development of events less probable, and prefer the above described one, it still deserves attention as a possible way of development of events. During the reign of Artaxiads in Great Armenia, such situations repeatedly took place when the heirs to the throne or relatives of the king, disappointed with the royal policy and relying on the dissatisfied nobility, rebelled against the reigning monarch. They managed to mint coins, try on the sleeping royal crown of the still living monarch and even lead enemy troops to Great Armenia. According to Appian of Alexandria [2:437-439], Tigranes II the Great had several sons from Cleopatra, daughter of Mithridates VI Eupator, two of whom he executed: one he killed in battle when he started a war against him. Appian does not mention his name, but some researchers believe that this prince may well be Sariaster, the son of King Tigranes of Armenia, about whom Valerius Maximus tells in his work. Mentioning him, Valerius Maximus writes: “Sariaster, against his father Tigranes, the king of Armenia, formed a conspiracy with his friends in such a way that they let blood flow from their right hands and mutually tasted it” [48:416]. And although for our study, the issue of identification is not so fundamental, let us say that in the history of Armenia there were seven kings bearing the name Tigranes, and to our great regret, the mentioned passage from the work of Valerius Maximus does not allow us to specify which king Tigranes we are talking about. Thus, the attempt to connect together

the data from the work of Appian of Alexandria and Valerius Maximus is shaky in view of its hypotheticality. However, within the framework of this article, the passage from the work of Valerius Maximus is certainly of interest in terms of a specifically recorded case of complex relationships between the older and younger representatives of the royal family. Another of his sons was executed by Tigranes II the Great while hunting, because this son did not help him when he fell to the ground, but while he was still lying on the ground, the son put a diadem on himself. The third son, Tigranes, showed much sympathy for his father at this hunt, and was favoured by him. Yet some time later, he proved to be unfaithful to him, made war with his father, was defeated by him, and fled to Phraates, the Parthian king, who had just received power after his father Sintricus [2:437-439]. Phraates III gave away his daughter to Tigranes the Young [33:203-205], and then, at the request of his son-in-law, began a war with Tigranes II. Accompanied by the rebellious son of king Tigran and rebellious Armenian nobility, Phraates III invaded Armenia and reached the capital Artashat. Caught by surprise, then-old Tigranes was forced to flee to the mountainous regions of his country. However, the city of Artashat, remaining loyal to its king, offered stubborn resistance to the enemy [5:86-87]. When the Parthian king saw that the siege might take too long, he returned to his country, leaving part of his army to his son-in-law. However, after his departure, Tigranes II the Great attacked his traitor son and the rebellious Armenian princes, gathering around him the military forces that remained loyal to him, defeated them, pursued and restored his power in the country. Tigranes the Young was forced to flee from Armenia and, deciding to go to Mithridates VI, headed for Pontus, but on the way, he learnt that his grandfather had been defeated. At the cost of a new treason, he hoped to come to an agreement with Pompey and acquire the throne of his father. All this forced Tigranes II the Great

himself to appear at the negotiations with Pompey, as a result of which, the latter acted as umpire and resolved the dispute in favour of his father.

In 71 BC, Zarbienes, king of Corduene (Gordyene), rebelled in the hope of quick Roman help. He was denounced and Tigranes II the Great had him and his entire family executed (this was before the Romans invaded Armenia) [32:535-539].

Not infrequently, such conspiracies were brought to a successful conclusion by their initiators. Thus, in their works Octavian Augustus [51:390-393], Tacitus [45:386-389] and Dio Cassius [7:302-305] describe how Artaxias (Artashes) II, the grandson of Tigranes II the Great, was killed by his relatives.

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**ՏԻԳՐԱՆ ՄԵԾԻՆ ՊԱՐԹԵՎՆԵՐԻՆ ՊԱՏԱՆԴ ՀԱՆՁՆԵԼՈՒ  
ՀԱՆԳԱՄԱՆՔՆԵՐԻ, ՊԱՏՃԱՌՆԵՐԻ ԵՎ ՏԱՐԵԹՎԻ ՀԱՐՑԻ  
ՇՈՒՐՁ: Մ.Թ.Ա. 215-96 ԹԹ. ՀԱՅՈՑ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱԳՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎԵՐԱՆԱՅՈՒՄ\*\***

*Ռուսլան Կոբզար*

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Ժամանակագրություն, Արտաշիսյաններ, Երվանդ IV, Արտաշես I, Արտավազդ I, Տիգրան I, Վաղարշակ I, Արշակ I, Տիգրան II Մեծ, Միհրդատ I, Միհրդատ II Մեծ:

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\*\* Հորս՝ Առաքելյան Սամվել Խումաշարի լուսապայծառ հիշատակին:

Պատմական աղբյուրներում պարթևների Միհրդատ II և հայոց Արտավազդ արքաների միջև տեղի ունեցած պատերազմի մասին առկա տեղեկությունների և արքայազն Տիգրանի երկարատև պատանդառության փաստը հիմք ընդունելով՝ պատմաբանների կողմից վերականգնվել է մի իրավիճակ, իբր հայերը պարտություն են կրել պատերազմում և որպես իրենց ստանձնած պարտավորությունների կատարման երաշխիք ստիպված են եղել Տիգրանին պատանդ տալ պարթևներին: Ընդհանրացնելով իր և նախորդ ուսումնասիրողների ստացած արդյունքները՝ Ռ. Լ. Մանասերյանը վերոնշյալ դեպքերն առաջարկել է թվագրել Ք.ա. 115-111 թվականների միջակայքում՝ Միհրդատ II Մեծի կողմից «արքայից արքա» տիտղոսի ստանձնման նախընթաց շրջանում: Սակայն նման հետևությունը հակասության մեջ է մտնում Ստրաբոնի հաղորդած այն տեղեկության հետ, որ հայերը բազմիցս հաջողությամբ դիմագրավել են պարթևների հարձակումներին ու չեն նվաճվել նրանց կողմից: Հայ-պարթևական պատերազմի ընթացքն ու ելքը պատմական աղբյուրներում չի լուսաբանվում: Դատելով Պոմպեոս Տրոգոսի «Փիլիպպոսի պատմությունը» երկի Հուստինոսի համառոտ վերաշարադրանքից և անհայտ հեղինակի նախերգանքներից՝ հեղինակը հնարավոր է համարում, որ պատերազմը տեղի ունեցած լինի Միհրդատ I և Արտավազդ I արքաների գահակալման շրջանում: Ամեն դեպքում Միհրդատ II-ը չէր կարող պատերազմել Արտավազդ I-ի հետ: Հեղինակը, հենվելով աղբյուրների վրա, ցույց է տալիս, որ հաշտություն կնքելու դեպքերից բացի, գոյություն են ունեցել պատանդ տալու այլ իրողություններ ևս, և նման իրավիճակը չի բացառվում արքայազն Տիգրանի պարագայում: