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TROPHY KINGS AND ROMAN POWER:
A ROMAN PERSPECTIVE ON CLIENT KINGDOMS*

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Internal and external opinions about leaders often bear no resemblance to one another. Thus, for instance, for a long time, the criticism on Tony Blair from within the UK was hardly echoed in the USA, where his reputation remained undiminished. More recently, during the latest US presidential elections, Barack Obama’s popularity in Europe outshone (by far) his already considerable support in the US. This is not a new phenomenon. To turn towards the area discussed in this volume (though in a chronologically challenged way), even just before the 1979 revolution, the Shah of Persia was still popular in the West. In his own country, however, his popularity was at a low point, and his power base too weak to last. He had claimed to turn his country into a second America within a generation. He was toppled virtually overnight.1 Only when the revolution had started did the western press pick up on the internal problems.

One could compare this with the Roman reaction to king Archelaos of Cappadocia. When, during Augustus’ reign, his subjects had accused him his power had remained unchallenged, though ‘he had once lost his mind to such an extent that a guardian was appointed’.2 More devastating for him, however, was a diplomatic error. Archelaos had slighted Tiberius at Rhodes, being informed by allies that he should better pay homage to Gaius Caesar instead. Tiberius never forgave him and summoned him to Rome ‘on the charge of rebellious conduct’. Dio recounts (57.17.6) how ‘in fact the prince’s condition was so serious that he was carried into the senate in a covered litter’. As it turned out, he was spared the death sentence, but died shortly afterwards anyhow, as Tacitus tells us:

* From the outset it should be made clear that this is only a tentative exploration of some themes related to Roman perspectives’ on client kingdoms. This essay does not aim for completeness, but rather tries to describe a direction from which to look at - and perhaps understand better - some Roman thoughts on client kings. That it was written at all owes much to Ted Kaizer, whose friendship and enthusiasm have often led me to try to analyse the Roman world from slightly different angles. My thanks for that. This was a challenge I could not resist. My thanks, also, to the participants of the highly successful colloquium at which a different version of this paper was originally delivered, and to those present at my presentation of the subject for the ‘ancient history research group’ at Nijmegen. Many have contributed with comments and criticisms, most of which found their way into this version. I would like to single out Gerda de Kleijn, who rightfully pointed out that some of my thoughts on Roman views of client kingdoms could be equally applied to the wider Roman periphery.

2 Dio, 57.17.5 cf. Suet. Aug. 48.
Not because of these accusations, which were fabricated against him, but because of fear and in the weariness of old age, and also because it is unusual for kings to be treated as equals, let alone degraded, he ended his life, through volition or fate.3

After his death in AD 17, Cappadocia became a Roman province. Earlier, Rome had added to Archelaos’ complexities of rule, by adding Rough Cilicia (Cilicia Tracheia) to his kingdom. According to Strabo (14.5.6 [671]), Rome’s reasons had been straightforward: ‘the reign was made by nature for brigandage and piracy … and with a view to all that it was thought that the districts should be under kings rather than subject to Roman governors …’.4 For Rome, local kingship was an easy way to keep a problematic area under control. There was no particular interest in the reactions of his subjects. In fact, we never learn what they had actually accused him of during Augustus’ reign. Only when Rome was directly involved, information is provided.

It is, then, perhaps not surprising that the best evidence for a Roman perspective on the ways in which client kings could use Roman influence to affect the affairs of their kingdoms comes from a non-Roman, only partly addressing a Roman audience. Flavius Josephus describes in detail how Herod sent his sons to Rome, in order to meet the emperor. Alexander, Aristobalos and a third son of Herod and Mariamme I went to Rome in ca 23 BC, and stayed at the imperial court.5 They were followed by Antipater and, following various intrigues, Archelaos, Philip, Antipas and the younger Herod.6 We shall return to the issue of Roman education below, but the immediate point is that without Josephus’ writings there would be no information of these princely visits to – and sojourns at – the imperial capital. Similarly, the relegation of Archelaos, one of the three sons who jointly inherited Herod’s territory, is almost entirely transmitted through Josephus’ account – though he may have based himself on Herod’s court historian, Nicolaus of Damascus.7 Archelaos’ demotion – and ensuing banishment to Vienne in Southern Gaul – is said to have been caused by his incompetence. Again, as with his Cappadocian namesake, no interest in subjects’ complaints was expressed from the Roman perspective.8

As Braund already pointed out twenty years ago, “other dynasties did not have a Josephus”.9 Relations between various kings and Rome are therefore difficult to reconstruct. Of course there is an assortment of epigraphic evidence. Numerous monarchs, for instance, claimed to be a friend of Rome or the emperor (philorho-

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3 Tac. Ann. 2.42.3: *non ob crimina quae fingebantur sed angore, simul fessus senio et quia regibus aequa, nedum infima insolita sunt, finem vitae sponte an fato implevit.*


6 Jos. Ant. 15.52–3; 17.201–1; 17.80; BJ 1.573; 1.602–3; Braund (1984), p. 10–1.


8 Strabo 16.2.46 (765), again not quite a Roman perspective, refers to the events rather minimalistically: ‘one of them [Herod’s sons] spent the rest of life in exile.’ Josephus also includes other peoples trying to end Herodian rule, but again, his and Nicolaus’ account forms the only transmitted evidence: Jos. Ant. 15.354–9; 17.300; Nic. Dam. FGrH 90, F.131.Cf. Millar (1996), p. 161.

maios, philokaisar or philosebastos). But the impact in Rome of such statements is difficult to trace. Clearly, the assertions were meant to show enthusiasm for Rome. The lack of Roman reaction is striking. Perhaps they were meant more for internal than external use, but, if not, they clearly failed to impress Rome. When there is evidence of a Roman reaction, it is hardly flattering. Cicero, in a letter to his brother, puts one of the better-known philoromanoi, Antiochus I of Commagene, in place rather harshly:

As for him of Commagene ... I poked fun at the king comically enough, not merely twisting that little town of his in the Bridge of Euphrates out of his grip, but raising a storm of laughter by my jibes at the purple-bordered gown he received during Caesar’s consulship: «Now as for his request for the renewal of the honours accorded to him, far be it from me to suggest that this House should gainsay his right to give the purple-bordered gown an annual touching up. But I appeal to members of the nobility here present; you gentlemen drew the line at Oxnose; are you going to accept Commagene ointment?».

The cruel jokes, of course, do imply an awareness of the kingly claims – if not acceptance. But even the kind of negative reception that can be read in Cicero does not make it into the writings of the historians of imperial Rome. Perhaps changed rules of competition, such as different approaches to foreign clientela, caused different modes of interaction.

That is not to say that there was no Roman perspective on client kings during the empire. Some examples may prove illustrative. Occasionally, affairs seemed sufficiently weighty to be mentioned in detail. Not the misbehaviour of a king in his own kingdom, but the dispossession of a monarch favoured by Rome was newsworthy – much like the disposal of the Shah of Shahs almost two millennia later. Thus, though on the whole Tacitus has little interest in client kings, he occasionally provides useful information, for instance on Corbulo’s campaigns in the East. The story is well known: Tigranes V was sent from Rome in AD 60 to take over the throne of Armenia from Tiridates, but was consecutively dislodged by the latter. The ensuing Roman warfare, not always successful, is described at length, with as result a final compromise in which Tiridates travels to Rome to officially receive the Armenian crown from Nero:

11 Cic. Q. fr. 2.10: De Commageno ... Eumque lusi iocose satis neque solum illud extorsi oppidum quod erat positus in Euphratii Zeugmate, sed praeterea togam sum eius praetextam quam erat adeptus Caesare consulide magno hominum risu cavillatus. «Quod vult» inquam «renovari honores eodem, quominus togam praetextam quotannis interpolet decernendum nihil censeo; vos autem homines nobiles qui Burrenum praetextatum non ferebatis, Commagenum feretis?». Cf. Facella (2005a) with further references and Rowland Jr. (1972).
12 Badian (1958) remains crucial. I will expand on this point in Hekster (forthcoming).
13 Gowing (1990), p. 316: “on a rough estimate, approximately thirty client kings may be identified in what remains of the Annales. For the most part, they are minor characters, brought out for a scene or two, then killed off or forgotten”.
It was then agreed that Tiridates should lay down his royal crown before Caesar’s image, and resume it only from the hand of Nero. The interview then ended with a kiss. After an interval of a few days there was a grand display on both sides; on the one, cavalry ranged in squadrons with their national ensigns; on the other stood the columns of our legions with glittering eagles and standards and images of deities, after the appearance of a temple. In the midst, on a tribunal, was a chair of state, and on the chair a statue of Nero. To this Tiridates advanced, and having slain the customary victims, he removed the crown from his head, and set it at the foot of the statue; whereupon all felt a deep thrill of emotion, rendered the more intense by the sight which yet lingered before their eyes, of the slaughter or siege of Roman armies. “But now,” they thought, “the calamity is reversed; Tiridates is about to go, a spectacle to the world, little better than a prisoner.”

The attention in most of the narrative is on the war and Roman prestige – not on the individual and, as it turns out, interchangeable kings. Only when the king comes to Rome a captive, the person of Tiridates come to the fore.

Similarly, Tacitus’ description of the problems in the Bosporus during Claudius’ reign. Mithridates VIII was given his Bosporus kingdom by Claudius in AD 41 (Dio, 60.8), but had it taken away for – significantly – unknown reasons (although perhaps more information was provided in the lost part of Dio). Through the services of Aulus Didius Gallus (the legatus of Moesia) this Roman-supported potentate had been replaced by his brother, Cotys. Unsurprisingly, Mithridates did not take this lightly and reclaimed his affairs through rebellion, the moment Gallus had gone. Rome therefore became militarily involved, with an instant Roman (Tacitean) perspective as result. As it happens, in the end Mithridates gave himself up to another client king, Eunones of the Aorsi, who interceded on his behalf, asking only that Mithridates ‘should not be led in triumph, nor expiate his faults with his life’ (Tac. Ann. 12.19). Claudius accepts, for telling reasons. Not accepting the offer would mean:

undertaking a war in a roadless country and upon a harbourless sea; consider, too, the martial kings, their nomadic peoples, the unfertile soil: the tedium consequent of delay, the dangers consequent of haste; the modest laurels of victory, the pronounced humiliation of resistance!

The area, much like Rough Cilicia mentioned above, is not worth fighting for. One should better leave it to client kings. It may not be a coincidence that Arrian, writing to Hadrian, only lists those kings ruling the areas surrounding the Black Sea;

17 Tac. Ann. 12.20: bellum avio itinere, importuosus mari; ad hoc reges fercis, vagos populos, solum frugum egenum, taediam ex mora, pericula ex properantia, modicam victoribus laudem ac multum infamiae, si pellentur.
so that in case you were making plans in relation to the Bosporus, you could do so on an informed basis'. 18

It could be argued, with some reason, that such tunnel vision - specific interest in an area is only expressed when that area becomes directly and undeniably involved in Roman affairs - applies to a Roman perspective on the periphery of its empire in general. One knows equally little about internal problems when governors are appointed or reprimanded. 19 In more general terms, information about the relationship between centre and margins of empires is often formulated in more abstract terms, and often difficult to trace. 20

The story of Mithridates, however, illustrates another point, specifically relevant for client kings. Mithridates is brought over to Rome by Junius Cilo, the procurator of Pontus (Tac. Ann. 12.21). Then, in Rome, the king's physical presence makes more impact on the wider Roman public perspective than any of the emperor's military considerations could have done. For, famously,

the tale went that he [Mithridates] spoke before the emperor's tribunal with a spirit not warranted by his situation, and one sentence came to the knowledge of the public, the words being: "I have not been returned to you. I return. If you doubt, let me go, and fetch me." His features did not even show fear when he was displayed beside the rostra, surrounded by guards, to the gaze of the people. 21

Mithridates had particularly tried to avoid being put on parade. Eunones has asked that 'he should not be led in triumph', so Mithridates ends up being put on display on the rostra instead. 22 It is this 'trophy' notion of the conquered king that is particularly relevant when thinking of the Roman public perspective of client kings. Integral to it is the special ideology linked to any notion of kingship in Rome. 23 Mithridates is interesting in Roman eyes because he remains so kingly - arrogant, self-confident, and very much above the mundane. 24

Similar traits can be found in another king whom, according to Tacitus, Claudius was to put on parade. Caratacus' reputation, after the British revolt, was such

19 But see Brunt (1961) for valuable observations. On the role of the governor in the Greek speaking part of the Roman empire, see now especially Meyer-Zwiffelholfer (2002) and for the late empire Slootjes (2006).
20 Cf. e.g. Smith (2001), esp. p. 130 and p. 143–4; Liverani (2001), p. 388. Similarly, the appointment policy of provincial governors in Ch'ing China can only be properly understood when looking at considerations at the centre, see Kent Guy (1994).
22 On the importance of 'visibility' in delineating Roman perceptions of power, see Hekster (2005).
23 See esp. Braund (1988), which has greatly influenced my thinking on the matter.
24 Mithridates survives the ordeal, and through his status becomes a known name in Roman society. His influence was sufficient for Nero to comment upon his behaviour (Suet. Nero 24.2) and for him to be implicated in Nymphidius Sabinus' plot against Galba, who executed him (Plut. Galba 15.1).
that Claudius showed him to the populace, inviting them ‘as if to some spectacle of note’ (\textit{ut ad insigne spectaculum}). But the king stayed proud and upright, ‘asking for pity neither through downcast looks nor through words’ (\textit{aut vultu demisso aut verbis misericordiam requirens}, Tac. \textit{Ann.} 12.36). Indeed, his words were, in a sense, as proud as those of Mithridates:

Had my lineage and rank been matched by moderation in success, I should have entered this city rather as a friend than as a captive. Nor would you have scorned to admit to a peaceful league a king sprung from famous ancestors and holding sway over many peoples.\textsuperscript{25}

The above quoted Tacitean passage (\textit{Ann.} 2.42.3) on Archelaos of Cappadocia already betrayed similar traits: ‘because it is unusual for kings to be treated as equals, let alone degraded’ (\textit{quia regibus aequa, nedum infima insolita sunt}). Kingliness as core quality. Such a notion of ‘trophy kings’ may also explain the continuous emphasis on how rulers were paraded in front of the Roman people in gold chains.\textsuperscript{26} Mark Antony used gold on Artavasdes, the king of Armenia, ‘lest [the king’s] status be diminished’.\textsuperscript{27} Augustus did likewise, according to Propertius in his \textit{Ode to Maecenas} (2.1.33): ‘or the necks of kings hung round with golden chains’ (\textit{aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis}). Similarly, Josephus recounts how Gaius released Agrippa when he came to power, appointed him king, and then ‘changed his iron chain for a golden one of equal weight’.\textsuperscript{28} Much later, the unknown author of the \textit{Historia Augusta} made the same point, mentioning how in Aurelian’s triumph Zenobia was paraded in gold chains.\textsuperscript{29} The factuality of affairs is less important than the continuous underlying conception that kings, even in captivity, were to be treated special.

For such ‘royal shows’ to work, the king’s physical presence in the city of Rome was of the utmost importance, as it was in more general terms for Roman perspectives on client kings. The king could only become a trophy when he was there to be put on display. Hence, perhaps, the division in the achievements mentioned in the \textit{Res Gestae} which have to do with the subject:

\begin{quote}
31. \textit{Ad me ex Indi\ae regum legationes saepe missae sunt nunquam visae ante id tempus apud quorum Romanorum duem. Nostram amicitiam petiunt per legatos Bastarnae Scythaeque et Sarmatarum qui sunt intra flumen Tanaeim et ultra reges Albinorumque rex et Hiberorum et Medorum.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} Tac. \textit{Ann.} 12.37: \textit{Si quanta nobilitas et fortuna mihi fuit, tanta rerum prosperarum moderatio fuisset, amicus potius in hanc urbem quam captus venissem, neque dedignatus esses claris maioribus ortum, plurimis gentibus imperantem foedere [in] pacem accipere.}


\textsuperscript{27} Vell. \textit{Pat.} 2.82. Cf. Dio, 49.39.6. Cf. the contribution by A. Raggi to this volume.

\textsuperscript{28} Jos. \textit{Ant.} 18.6.10. Cf. 19.6.1, which states that Agrippa hung this chain ‘within the limits of the temple, over the treasury’. This reference was brought to my attention by Jonathan Kirkpatrick. See also below, on Gaius awarding Agrippa territory.

\textsuperscript{29} SHA \textit{Tyr.Trig.} 30.26; SHA \textit{Aurel.} 34.3.


31. Embassies from kings in India were frequently sent to me; never before had they been seen with any Roman commander. The Bastarnae, Scythians and the kings of the Sarmatians on either side of the river Don, and the kings of the Albanians and the Iberians and the Medes sent embassies to seek our friendship.

32. The following kings sought refuge with me as suppliants: Tiridates, King of Parthia, and later Phraates son of King Phraates; Artavasdes, King of the Medes; Artaxares, King of the Adiabeni; Dumnobellaunus and Tincommius, Kings of the Britons; Maelo, King of the Sugambri; Segimerus, King of the Marcomanni and Suebi. Phraates, son of Orodes, King of Parthia, sent all his sons and grandsons to me in Italy, not that he had been overcome in war, but because he sought our friendship by pledging his children. While I was the leading citizen very many other peoples have experienced the good faith of the Roman people which had never previously exchanged embassies or had friendly relations with the Roman people.

33. The Parthian and Median peoples sent to me ambassadors of their nobility who sought and received kings from me, for the Parthians Vonones, son of King Phraates, grandson of King Orodes, and for the Medes, Ariobarzanes, son of King Artavasdes, grandson of King Ariobarzanes.30

A fairly short section on embassies is followed by a substantially longer and more detailed passage on kings who came as suppliants themselves. Likewise, in the third part attention focuses on the individuals made king by Augustus. A clear division is maintained between ‘normal’ ambassadors of kings, ambassadors of the nobility, and kings who came themselves or at least sent their sons. Unsurprisingly, the latter group is given most attention. Their kingdoms are mentioned, but it almost seems that where they are from is much less important than the fact that they are kings, and come to Rome.31


31 Note also the echoes of RG 33 in Tac. Ann. 2.2: … venere in urbeam legati a primoribus Parthis, qui Vononem vetustissimum liberorum eius accirent. magnificum id sibi creditit Caesar auxit-
The presence of client rulers in Rome may have been crucial for the way Romans thought about them, but it was not always unproblematic. Who can forget Titus’ ‘famous passion for queen Berenice, to whom he was even said’, according to Suetonius (Tit. 7), ‘to have promised marriage’ (insignem reginae Berenices amorem, cui etiam nuptias pollicitus). Aurelius Victor’s epitomer (Epit. de Caes. 9.7) goes further still, and presents Titus and the Jewish queen as married. Such a glamorous love affair with more than a touch of royalty was always going to grasp attention. Tacitus (Hist. 2.2) too notes the ‘passionate longing to see again queen Berenice’. He later stresses the queen’s ‘splendid gifts to Vespasian’, but even there emphasises her ‘great youthful beauty’ (Hist. 2.81).32 Trophy girlfriends will not have been a problem, but when Berenice’s role went beyond that of an exotic flavour, matters became problematic.

Marriage was out of the question. Even so, her position – and especially her high profile – was difficult. If Titus had expected her to be unassuming, he was mistaken. Berenice apparently involved herself in legal affairs. The famous contemporary orator Quintillian writes how she acted as a judge (Institutiones 4.1.19): ‘I myself, when I appeared on behalf of queen Berenice, actually pleaded before her’ (ego pro regina Berenice apud ipsam eam dixi). Other sources also testify to this judicial expertise, notably Acts 25–6, and Josephus, Vita 343 and 355.33 Still, for a foreign queen to partake visibly in legal affairs in Rome itself made her different from just an enviable prize. Small wonder, then, that Juvenal accuses her of that commonest of commonplaces – incest with her brother Agrippa, who was also present at Rome.34 More than a token queen, Berenice threatened to become a ‘player’ in Roman politics. Her denouncement followed soon:

In addition to all the other talk that there was, certain sophists of the Cynic school managed somehow to slip into the city at this time, too; and first Diogenes, entering the theatre when it was full, denounced the pair in a long, abusive speech, for which he was flogged. After him,
Trophy kings and Roman power

Heras, expecting no harsher punishment, gave vent to many senseless yelpings in true Cynic fashion, and for this he was beheaded.35

Berenice was sent away: Roman public perspective could not cope with a queen who was getting involved in government, rather than just looking regal.36

In any case, the Flavians wanted the emphasis on Judea to be a different one. Numerous passages, a multitude of coins, and indeed the Templum Pacis and Domitian’s arch of Titus testify to the importance of the victory over Judea for Flavian representation.37 Again, when military involvement was an issue, client kingdoms were brought into the Roman perspective. The difference with the Bar Kokhba revolt – when Judea was no longer a client kingdom – is striking. Where the first victory was celebrated in every possible way, the latter victory was all but ignored. Subduing a province was different from subduing a kingdom. In this case, however, the difference in celebrations was also strongly dictated by the different kinds of emperors who were in control, their policies, and the loss of Roman lives.38

The scandal surrounding Berenice drew attention. Likewise the public displays of Mithridates, Caratacus and, to an extent, Tiridates.39 That should not detract from the fact that what were doubtless the most common type of physical presence of client kings – embassies, requests and the like – are hardly reflected in Roman sources. For instance, Josephus points out in detail when Herod went to Rome and how he was received.40 For Herod, this was important. For Augustus, it was not. Or rather, the fact that it was Herod who was there was not important. Clearly, Augustus placed great weight on showing the different ordines, properly dressed and divided at spectacles.41 Kings must have had their place in this microcosm of the Roman world. But unless something went spectacularly wrong, kings were interesting as interchangeable institutions, not as individuals, notwithstanding the continuous efforts of individual kings to stand out.

To an extent, a similar difference of interest, between kings trying to impress as individuals at the centre, and a centre which is only interested in the kings as generics, applies to education at Rome. For client kings, being educated in Rome mattered greatly. Indeed, there is ample evidence that it helped them in their further career. Good relations, after all, are everything. Thus, famously, Herod Antipas’ boyhood friendship with Tiberius – started when he was educated in Rome – led to the emperor ordering the governor of Syria Vitellius, himself briefly emperor in AD 68, to support Antipas against his former father-in-law Aretas IV of Nabataea. Unfortunately for Antipas, it was not until the spring of AD 37 that Vitellius was ready to intervene, at which stage Tiberius had died. Vitellius abandoned the campaign

35 Dio 65.15.5
36 Braund (1984), p. 120–3; further references in Jones and Milns (2002), p. 106.
39 One could perhaps add the inversion of the normal relation between Rome and client king in the rapport between Nicomedes and Caesar, again causing a scandal; Suet. Ital. 49, with the contribution by Ll. Morgan in this volume.
immediately, quite possibly because Aretas, in his turn, had been an old friend of Germanicus, the father of the new emperor Gaius Caligula. There is even some evidence that Caligula may have awarded Aretas further territory.

Similarly, Agrippa I did quite well out of his friendship with Caligula, eventually obtaining Antipas’ personal property, and his tetrarchy. Agrippa’s later behaviour in Alexandria – where he showed off his imperial support to the resentment of the local mob, who took their revenge on the Jews after he left – backfired rather dramatically, but, at least as far as Caligula’s plans for desecrating the Temple were concerned, Agrippa’s influence on his friend may still have played a key-role. Yet, just as we have seen throughout this essay, information is overwhelmingly provided from a non-Roman perspective; Josephus and Philo. The effects of the relationships between kings and the powers-that-be in Rome were much more important for the periphery than they were for the centre.

That is not to say that the (educational) presence of kings at the centre went unnoticed. Tacitus makes a point out of illustrating how Roman education made princes unsuited to reign. Juvenal makes a similar observation (2.170). The best evidence on Roman education of client kings and princes, however, describes them once again in generic, rather than individual, terms:

> Except in a few instances [Augustus] restored the kingdoms of which he had gained possession by the right of conquest to those from whom he had taken them or joined them with other foreign nations. He also united the kings with whom he was in alliance by mutual ties, and was very ready to propose or favour intermarriages or friendships among them. He never failed to treat them all with consideration as integral part of the empire, regularly appointing a guardian for those who were too young to rule, or whose minds were affected, until they grew up or recovered. And he brought up the children of many of them, and educated them with his own.

Attractive as the idea of a princely kindergarten in Rome is, the crucial point from the Roman perspective must be Augustus’ interest in making sure that difficult territories were run by those with whom he was in close touch. As we have seen,

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45 A concise account is presented by Barrett (1989), p. 186–90, with further references.
46 Tac. Ann. 6.31; 6.32.2; 6.41.2; 6.43.3; 6.44; 11.16.1; 11.17.3; 12.11; 12.14.3. Noted by Gowing (1990), p. 320–1.
48 Ittai Gradel has rightly pointed out to me the ambiguity of being educated cum suis. The Augustan familia, after all, incorporated servants as well as princes. What exactly the status of ‘client princes’ in that constellation was may not have been instantly obvious.
kings were extremely useful to rule territories of ‘roadless land and harbourless sea’ (Tac. Ann. 12.20). The closer those kings were tied to Roman rule – through education or marriage – the better. This Roman perspective, however, might have had a blind spot. Rome may have expressed dominance by educating these guests/hostages and sending them out to rule, but that need not have meant that those kings who had sent family members to Rome acknowledged Roman rule as universal. Doubtless more rulers did what king Izates decided, and sent ‘some children to Claudius Caesar in Rome as hostages, and others to Artabanus the Parthian king’. If children were sent to both camps, this says less about the obedience of fathers than Rome wanted to convey.

Izates’ duplicity eventually became problematic. Artabanus’ successor Vardanes planned to attack the Romans, and demanded Izates’ support. Izates, however, would not give military support because of his ‘five sons of tender age’ whom he had sent away (Jos. Ant. 20.71). Once a dominant power demanded assistance, having multiple ties was not helpful. Such assistance, however, was the best way for a king to be individually noticed by Rome. If, after all, military affairs drew most attention, than sending royal troops to support Rome was a certain way of being observed by those who mattered. Unsurprisingly, it is once more Josephus who supplies details on the troops supporting Vespasian, but Tacitus, too, mentions how allied forces support the Romans – singling out Agrippa, Antiochus and Sohaemus for their support to Corbulo and Titus. Later, Herodian writes how Hatrene forces supported Pescennius Niger (a rather foolish action, as it turned out), and Ammianus tells us that Armenia supported Julian in AD 363. Client kings who militarily supported Rome, it seems, made it into the Roman press. Apparently the one thing that was better than a trophy king being put on display in Rome, was a friendly king committing his troops to the Roman cause.

49 An interesting parallel may be the attention which the ‘American State Department Educational Advising Center’ gives to ‘Foreign Students Yesterday. World Leaders Today’, see http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/leaders.htm, a list of those foreign dignitaries who have been part of the American educational system, and which included in August 2009 forty former and eighteen current presidents and prime-ministers, two former secretary generals of the UN, one of NATO, the king of Jordan, the crown-prince of Norway and the crown princess of Japan. The list reads much like parts of the Res Gestae, expressing dominance through numbers.

50 Jos. Ant. 20.37. I owe this reference to Richard Fowler.


52 Elton (1996), p. 31, with p. 122 n. 68; Herodian 3.1.2–3, 3.9.2; Amm. Marc. 23.2.2. Cf. AÉ 1856.124.