WESTERN CANON OF HISTORIOGRAPHY
IN HELLENISTIC ARMENIA

Pragmatic and tragic histories*

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Introduction

The western canon implied rational perception of history with a purpose formulated still by Herodotus as follows - to find out how, when and why (πώς, ποτέ, διὰ τί) happened important events of history [Herod., I, 1, 1]. Efforts of Herodotus and his close contemporaries reformed the logographic genre of storytelling in an area of rationalistic study and explanation of the past. In accordance with this approach, the term ἱστορία was coined for denoting investigation in its proper sense. From this time, the image of historians gained a particular social significance since the investigation of the past (despite pure curiosity) pursued practical interests.

During centuries, rationalistic approach gave birth to numerous genres of historical writing, from chronicles and annals to ethno-geographic descriptions and biographic sketches, from local and global histories to moral and philosophical reflections on events of the past. Such transmissions were particularly effective within cultural context of Hellenistic age. It affected different historical traditions in different ethnic, social and cultural circumstances.

As it is established, Hellenistic elite culture was effectively introduced in Greater Armenia by around the middle of the third century BC. It represented a combination of Greek, Zoroastrian and native Armenian traditions in various areas of intellectuality and

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5 The imaginative formula of A. Dan expresses the significance of such cultural interchanges very exactly: "L’idée d’envisager la culture grecque comme une palimpseste sous lequel on retrouverait les traces des
practice - religion beliefs and rituals, administration system and court etiquette, literature and rhetoric, theater and philosophy. Scholars on the base of literature and archeological material have studied the process. My task is to trace this syncretism in historiography. Aspects of this approach have already been discussed and now it seems necessary to enrich and systematize them in the light of modern approaches.

In Greater Armenia, the two genres of Hellenistic historical writing seem to deserve peculiar attention – pragmatic history and tragic history. They marked the process of introduction of western tradition in Armenian intellectual environment and make up the focus of the present investigation of the problem.

1. Pragmatic History: Metrodorus of Scepsis

Initiated by Thucydides this genre (πραγματική ἱστορία) greatly influenced the subsequent development of historiography. It saw its inborn character in tracing profound meanings and results of history through concrete events and deeds. For this purpose, it applied ideas, concepts and research methods of philosophy and astronomy, geography and mathematics, rhetoric and poetry. From this point of view, the reflection of Thucydides on his own work seems exponential: “But he that desires to look into the truth of things done and which (according to the condition of humanity) may be done again, or at least their like, shall find enough herein to make him think it profitable. And it is compiled rather for an everlasting possession than to be rehearsed for a prize” [Thycid., I, 22, 4]. This new perception was against the everyday sense of storytelling in the frame of which “Most people, in fact, will take the trouble in finding out the truth, but are much inclined to accept the first history they hear” [Thycid., I, 20, 3].

Such inheritance was particularly current in the Hellenistic age. The most prominent of its representatives was Polybius (II century BC.) who raised the genre to its unprecedented highs. It comprised two various perceptions of history – theoretical and practical. The author explained the significance of the first perception as follows: “The subject I have undertaken to treat, the how, who and wherefore of the subjection of the known parts of the world to the dominion of Rome, should be viewed as a single whole, with a recognized beginning, a fixed duration, and an end which is not a matter of dispute […]” [Polyb., III, 1, 4 - 5]. As to the practical perception, it emphasized the influence of outstanding personalities on the course of history: “A physician cannot help the sick, if he is ignorant of the causes of certain conditions of the body, nor a statesman help his fellow citizen if he cannot follow how, why or by what process every event has developed” [Polyb., III, 7, 5].

Pragmatic history was thought as effective only in the case of a balanced combination of these opposite approaches. Many intellectuals of the II -I centuries BC. – particularly

6 From numerous studies of this problem, we should like to put out those of the three eminent scholars: Eremyan, 1948, 33 – 46; Sargsyan, 1966, 12 – 14; Tiratsyan, 1988, 116 – 121.
10 The two eminent representatives of the pragmatic history (πραγματική ἱστορία) were Thucydides and Polybius. It was believed that the term denoted: “[…] a formal approach to study of the past based on current methods in the practical sciences”. Herchenroeder., 2010, 72.
11 Walbank, 1972, 40 – 43.
Posidonius, Diodorus Siculus, Timagenes, and Strabo—adopted this assumption of history.\textsuperscript{12} Eminent Metrodorus of Sccepsis was among them: “[…] a man of agreeable speech and wide learning” [Plut., Luc., 22, 2]. It is attested that he graduated from the Athenian Academy and soon became celebrated in political philosophy and logic, rhetoric and law theory, geography and history.\textsuperscript{13} However, evidences about his concrete ideas and concepts are very scarce and fragmentary wherefore we found it reasonable to juxtapose three important texts concerning him—life-course, semantic code of works (corpus), and some global ideas of the treaty “On Tigranes”.

The first text implies a common sight to the biography of the philosopher in the light of the renowned concept that the life of a creative individuality is a more or less exact embodiment of his beliefs and ideas, perceptions and concepts.\textsuperscript{14} In other words, despite simple people, he lives within his own reverse perspective.

In 75 BC., Metrodorus graduated from Academy, the scholarch of which (from about 79 BC.) was the outstanding philosopher Antiochus of Ascalon who crucially changed the content of academic curriculum and research strategy. Particularly, he denied the Skepticism paving a path for compiling important values of Old Academy with those of Peripatetic and Stoic Schools. Due to that, the rationalistic assumption of world and human being was recognized as a guiding principle of contemplative and practical modes of life.\textsuperscript{15} We are going to demonstrate the adherence of Metrodorus to this assumption. An adherence, which continued to lead his mind, will and social activity throughout all his creative life.

Through prestigious marriage, the philosopher acquired citizenship of Chalcedon, the most prosperous city of Troas. Here, during the Third Mithridatic War (73 – 71 BC.), he met Mithridat VI Eupator, the king of Pontus. He took the side of the king with great enthusiasm and began to pursue a public career in the royal court. In other words, he abandoned pure philosophy to practice political life (ἐκ τοῦ φιλόσοφου μεταβεβλήκως ἐπὶ τῶν βίων πρακτικῶν) [Strabo, XIII,1, 55]\textsuperscript{16}. Soon, he gained an exceptional honor and influence being appointed to supervise all the affairs of state justice (τὰ περὶ δικαςδοσίας). In addition, he was granted with the title of king’s father and his authority and power reached to an incontestable height so that nobody could appeal against his decisions [Ibid.].

It is also important to outline the essential perspective of this phase of Motrodorus’ life. For this purpose, the Stoic ethic theory seems most appropriate. It prompted that a genuine philosopher (σοφὸς) had to step down from his pure contemplations to the level of appropriate actions (τὰ καθήκοντα) becoming a practicer (ἀσκητής).\textsuperscript{17} The principal care

\textsuperscript{12} Stepanyan, 2014, 196.
\textsuperscript{13} Fuchs, 1938, 34 – 36. Sometimes, scholars confuse him with another intellectual of the same name, Metrodorus of Sccepsis, a pupil of the Carneades. They neglect the account of Cicero: “[…] aequiēm fere meum ex Academia rhetorem nactus Metrodorum illum.” [Cic., De orat., III, 20, 75]. See Scullard, 1992, 685.
\textsuperscript{16} The problem of transition from speculative wisdom (σοφία) to practical wisdom (φρόνημα) is formulated by Aristotle as follows: “The end of theoretical knowledge is the truth (ἀλήθεια), while that of practical knowledge is action (τὸ ἐργὸν) […] practical men study not eternal principle but the relative and immediate application” [Arist., Met., II, 993b, 20]. The Stoics adopted this concept. Rist, 1977, 108 – 111. Philo of Alexandria proceeded from the same concept speaking about his endeavor to abandon the contemplative life for a political life [Philo, De spec. leg., III, 1 – 6]. Cf. Runia, 2000, 362.
\textsuperscript{17} Stoic philosophy was introduced in Rome in the 2d century BC., and the central figure of this adoption
of the latter was to bridge the social order with universal Order. This task seemed to be vital for the kingdom of Pontus consisting of numerous social and ethnic unities - from nomadic tribes and agricultural communities to industrious Greek cities - different languages, cultures and customs. Royal authority intended to bring them together through rational justice, law and administration. In Metrodorus, Mithridat Eupator (and his enlightened proximi) saw an adequate figure to carry out this paramount program.18

Soon, however, this idyll came to end. Relations between the king and philosopher soured sharply. The king secretly even planned to put him to death. According to Strabo, the philosopher “[…] incurred the enmity of men less just than himself” [Strabo, XIII, 1, 55]. Supposedly, they represented the conservative local (tribal) nobility longing to enlarge its traditional autonomy. This faction gained the upper hand in the second phase of the Third Mithridatic War when the king began to suffer defeats from Lucius Licinius Lucullus and lose control over his kingdom.19 In his turn, the king, probably, tried to depict the philosopher as a scapegoat of all his failures.

For averting the catastrophe, the Pontiac king strived to involve Greater Armenia into the war on his side. He sent Metrodorus to Tigran II, knowing about his sympathy to the philosopher. On his embassy, Metrodorus deserted the Pontian king and offered his service to the Armenian king.20 Moreover, he advised him to deny Mithridat’s proposal and keep a middle position of neutrality between the two enemies – beyond victory and defeat. Metrodorus went for it, in spite of his personal hatred to Rome.21 As to Tigran II, he still had an illusion that, creating his empire, he did not contradict to the Roman perspectives in the East.22

Metrodorus stayed in the Armenian court, but did not occupy any official position. Most probably, he was Tigran’s friend and private adviser (ϕίλος καὶ σύντροφος).23 It seemed that the philosopher had at last reached the calm haven of his instable life. However, these hops did not come true. In 69 BC., without declaring war, Lucullus, invaded Greater Armenia presenting himself as a liberator of peoples enslaved by Tigran [Plut., Luc., 29, 5]. The strategy of balanced neutrality thwarted. In the general battle, Tigran suffered a hard crash, and his capital Tigranocerta was sacked, captured and looted by the Roman soldiers. Under this ultimate condition, the king decided to come to terms with Mithridat, who had lost Pontus and lived in Armenia as a refugee.24 The king of Pontus met the proposal of collaboration with enthusiasm but advanced his own condition demanding to send back Metrodorus at his disposition. Tigran agreed but did not realize that it was a death sentence of the philosopher. Indeed, at his comeback, Mithridat immediately put him to death [Plut., Luc., 22, 3 - 4]. Metrodorus was about forty years old.

Parallels with Plato are obvious. Like the great philosopher, Metrodorus tried to pat-
tern his life-way in accordance with his social ideal. It is well attested, during all his long life, Plato did his best to incorporate his project of the ideal state in Syracuse.\(^\text{25}\) However, he failed and at last gave up. Nearly the same is traceable in Metrodorus’ life: he tried to bring about his theory of social order and justice in Pontus and Greater Armenia. However, in both cases, he failed and (in spite of Plato) paid for that with his life.

The second text concerns the semantic code of Metrodorus’ works. For such analysis, we decided to proceed from the titles of his treatises, which are unfortunately lost. At first sight, they represent an unbound series – “On Gymnastic Training”, “On Herds”, “A Contour [of World]”, “On Customs” “On History”, “On Rhetoric”, “On Tigranes” etc.\(^\text{26}\) Nonetheless, an experienced glance is able to trace some important common features uniting them.

Stoic theory attributes a support to speak about these features more exactly. The latter was based on a concept stating that an overwhelming sympathy integrated all elements of the universe making them to live in accordance with the Order of Nature.\(^\text{27}\) The Stoics denoted this creative principle by different terms – reason, fire, breath, governing principle, god, logos etc. (νοῦς, πύρ, πνεῦμα, τὸ ἰγιεμονικόν, θεός, λόγος). They considered its emanations (ἐκπύρωσις) to be aimed at the global cosmic determinism covering stars and planets, animals and men.\(^\text{28}\) Order, justice and harmony of this imagined universe gave grounds to compare it with an ideal Commonwealth (City) securing welfare and happiness for its partisan-citizens.\(^\text{29}\)

Human being was depicted as the mediator of the cosmic justice and harmony in earthly circumstances. His body was thought to function due to the association of its different parts. It was believed that the most important function of man was to reproduce the cosmic balance in themselves through skillful gymnastic instruction.\(^\text{30}\) The same was true about the partner relationship between creatures living with communal life (κοινοία) - from families, tribes to various forms of city communities, political associations and empires. It was held that laws (expressions of the overwhelming Universal Law) would guide various forms of social partnership. This was estimated as the principal condition for earthly communities to imitate their heavenly pattern consisting of stars, planets and pure spirits.\(^\text{31}\) In this regard, fatalism was considered as the most important feature of the Universe.

Besides this fatalism, the Stoics, however, recognized also the personal responsibility of men to learn the cosmic Order and to act in accordance with it.\(^\text{32}\) For this purpose, they

\(^\text{25}\) It is well attested, the philosopher undertook three voyages to Syracuse (389 – 388, 367 – 361, 361 – 357 BC.) to educate and turn the tyrants into beneficent philosopher-kings. Huard, 1976, 109 – 110.

\(^\text{26}\) This presumptive list of the titles is extracted from the primary sources on the life and intellectual activity of the philosopher [FGrH, 184, 204, 205; Apoll. Rhod., Scholl., IV, 133; Athen., XIII,14; Strabo, XVI, 3, 6; 4, 7].

\(^\text{27}\) Cicero defined this isomorphism very exactly: “Just as there is no part of our body which is not of less value than we ourselves are, so the cosmos as a whole must be of more value than any part of it” [Cic., De nat. deorum, II, 32].


\(^\text{31}\) Mitsis, 1999, 155 – 177.

\(^\text{32}\) The maxim of the Middle Stoa displayed this assumption entirely: volentem fata ducunt, nolentem tra-
were obliged to commit appropriate actions (τὰ καθήκοντα) which made up the focus of the intellectual and spiritual development of the advanced and selected men. In this light, it is worth to remind that the Greek mentality and practice traced parallels between the body training and rhetoric instruction believing that both were built on the same crucial values – proportion (καὶρος) and craft-wisdom (μητρις).

With the extension of these principles, the dwelled world (οἰκουμένη) would pass over all kinds of diversities. It would have a real chance to incorporate the cosmic Commonwealth building harmony of its ethnic and religious, cultural and moral, social and political aspects. The Stoics worked out a theory of global citizenship.

Perhaps, the close attention of Metrodorus to various tribes and peoples dwelling in the area from India to Caucasus, Asia Minor and Greece, Italy and (even) Germany must be discussed in the context of this approach [Plin. Hist. Nat., III, 20; VIII, 14; XXVIII, 23; XXXIV, 16; XXXVII, 15]. Though logical, this assumption stays still hypothetical and cannot pretend to unquestionable trustworthiness. Nevertheless, it draws a path in worldview system of Metrodorus.

The third text represents the treatise “On Tigranes”. Living in the Armenian court, the philosopher participated in activities of Tigran’s brain center. Presumably, he received suggestion to represent and vindicate the empire created by the king’s stable efforts. The treatise under consideration seems to be the result of this activity and most probably had an apologetic character.

Supposedly, the author proceeded from the Hellenistic political theory worked out under Platonic, Peripatetic and (particularly) Stoic ideas. Its central figure was the king estimated as an incorporated law (λόγος ἐξωρυχος). The objective of this function was to overcome real (or possible) disasters and connect the kingdom with cosmic Order. It was believed that the king would master this task through the military subjugation of his own realm. The next important step of legalization endowed king’s authority with religious features representing him as a savior (σωτήρ), benefactor (ἐυεργέτης) and even revealed god (ἐπιφάνης) of his people.

Do the ancient sources witness like ideas about Tigran II? The positive answer would enhance the probability of our proposition about the treatise under consideration. In this regard, three fragments of ancient authors seem to be of undoubted interest.
The first fragment belongs to Gn. Pompeius Trogus, an author of the 1st century B.C., whose narrative of world history - Historiae Philippicae – is credited to be composed on trustworthy primary sources. Telling about subduing of Seleucid Syria by the army of Tigran II, he records:

After the kings and kingdom of Syria had been exhausted by continual wars, occasioned by the mutual animosities of brothers, and by sons succeeding to the quarrels of their fathers, the people began look for relief from foreign parts, and to think of choosing a king from among the sovereigns of other nations. Some therefore advised that they should take Mithridates of Pontus, others Ptolemaeus of Egypt, but it being considered that Mithridates was engaged in war with the Romans, and Ptolemaeus had always been an enemy to Syria, the thoughts of all were directed to Tigranes king of Armenia, who, in addition to the strength of his own kingdom, was supported by an alliance with Parthia, and by matrimonial connection with Mithridates. Tigranes accordingly, being invited to the throne of Syria, enjoyed a most tranquil reign over it for seventeen years (per XVII annos tranquilissimo regno potitus est), without having occasion to go to war either to attack others or to defend himself [Just., Epit., XL, 1, 1 - 4].

This seems to be a description of a popular assembly with a well-elaborated scenario to vindicate Tigran’s peaceful conquest of Syria as a great benefaction. As the main achievements of the king, order and peace (pax) have been pointed out which, however, continued only seventeen years (83 – 66 BC.). This idealistic vision of the events, of course, was far from the historical truth because other sources relate about resistance of the Syrians to Tigran’s invasion [Strabo, XI, 14, 15; App., Syr., 48; Plut., Luc., 14, 5, 10]. Some scholars are inclined to trace in this fragment a citation from On Tigranes by Metrodorus of Scepsis. A treatise targeted at the legitimation and propaganda of the king’s empire. Without tangible risk of error, one can even state that the fragment contains information about the concept of pax Armenica.

The second fragment, which belongs to Plutarch, seems to continue the same concept on the new ideas and considerations. At first sight, it contains Tigran’s boastful self-estimation:

Above all else, the spirit of the king himself had become pompous and haughty in the midst of great prosperity. All the things which men most covet and admire, he not only had in his possession, but actually thought that they existed for his sake (ὅι ἀὐτῶν γεγονότα) [Plut., Luc., 33,3].

However, a close concern leads to the conclusion that the Armenian sovereign spoke in accordance with his hypostasis of a savior. We have noticed, according to the common

41 The key term of the fragment pax (peace), according to the Hellenistic and (particularly) Roman political theory, made up the essence of every genuine government. Parchmani, 2009, 31 – 58.
42 Mommsen, 1867, 46 – 47; Bevan, 1902, 261 – 263; Errington, 2008, 277. For balanced assessment of the situation, some scholars find that the two approaches must be combined. Cf. Asdourian, 1911, 34, Manandyan, 1943, 49 – 50; Garsoian, 1997, 65.
44 Stepanyan, 2012.
Hellenistic assumption, an eminent king accomplished this function through a (real or ritual) act of conquest and occupation of his own land. Therefore, in official documents, his realm often was named a land obtained by spear (χώρα δορίκτητος).\(^4^5\) Such concept emphasized his absolute authority over his subjects.\(^4^6\) In other words, the grotesque gesture, ascribed by the author to the king, was nothing else than a norm of the Hellenistic political theory and practice. In this case also, without significant risk of error, one can accept this text as a cornerstone of Metrodorus’ assumption of Tigran’s Empire.\(^4^7\)

The third fragment again belongs to Plutach and seems to contain elements of the Roman counter-propaganda based on nearly the same ideas and values as in the case of Tigran II. It states: “Lucullus, after filling Asia full of law and order; and full of peace (πολιτεία μὲν εὐνομίας, πολιτέα δ ἔλειπνα), did not neglect the things which minister to pleasure and favour [...]” [Plut., Luc., 23, 1]. Strictly speaking, the Roman general ascribed himself the same function of the savor of Asia. Was the target of his ideological attack Metrodorus the hater of Rome? It is hard to assert because we have no direct account about that, and the answer may only be sought in logical constructs and probabilities.

The fourth fragment belongs to G. Pompeius Trogus. The appropriate interpretation of it promises to illuminate the important aspect of the legitimation of the empire of Tigran. A task, which remains untouched by modern scholars. It is about the place that the empire occupied in general world history according to its official propaganda.

For this approach, one must proceed from the following consideration: within centuries, in the East, a theory functioned about super-states succeeding one other in world history. Initially, it comprised the three renowned super-states - Assyria, Media and Achaemenid Iran. The latter was considered as the crown of history because of its largest extent and high degree of administrative, social, religion and cultural achievements. Afterwards, however, the Seleucid royal propaganda decided to add the new empire to this string, and the triad of the super-states was soon reshaped in a quadrat - Assyria, Media, Achaemenid Iran and Seleucid Empire.\(^4^8\)

At the end of the Seleucid age, the idea of a new super-state revived. First of all, it found expression in religious expectations and professes of the época [Dan., II, 7; Lact., Div. inst., VII, 15–18; Just., Apol., I, 44, 12].\(^4^9\) Among the states pretending to this role were Parthia, Pontus and (most probably) Greater Armenia. They intended to occupy the fifth position in the list of the super-states. Political propaganda each of them came to work out ideas and concepts to prove its pretensions on this role.

Despite Parthia and Pontus, the claim of Greater Armenia has never been discussed in modern scholarship\(^5^0\), whereas there is a direct account of Trogus on this point.

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\(^{45}\) This concept had two various aspects. The first denoted the king’s mythological creative function. As to the second aspect, it represented the same concept reshaped, however, into a legal norm aimed at the regulation of real social relations. See Goodenough, 1928, 68 – 72; Mehl, 1980/1981, 174 – 190; Hahn, 2010, 458 – 464.

\(^{46}\) Cf. Dvornik, 1966, 262 – 263.

\(^{47}\) This Hellenistic concept is still traceable in the text of Moses Khorenatsi: “For the frontiers of the brave [...] are their weapons; as much they act, that much they hold” [Khor., I, 8, 4].

\(^{48}\) On this concept of world history, see in detail, Swain, 1940, 4 – 9.

\(^{49}\) On Hellenistic prophesies see in detail Cumont, 1931, 79 – 88. Two oracles also aroused spiritual enthusiasm in this transitive age – Oracula Sibyllina and Oracula Hystasipis. See, Parke, 1988, 125 – 133; Suderman, 2012, 606 – 609.

\(^{50}\) The Parthian claim was based on the ideology tracing blood relations between the Arsacids and Achaemenids. Neusner, 1963, 45 – 48; Dąbrowa, 2010, 130 – 131. As to Mithridates VI Eupator, he set up his claim
ing about subjugation of Syria by Gn. Pompey’s in 64 BC., he records that one of the last Seleucids, Antiochus XIII, visited the general and raised a claim to regain his ancestral throne. But he was sharply denied: “[...] he (Pompey) would not give Antiochus what he himself had yielded to Tigranes (ita quo cesserit Tigrani) and what he would not know how to defend” [Just., Epit., XL, 4]. In this way, the Roman general underlined the fact that he had taken over the Eastern legacy from the hands of Tigran II signing the Artaxata treatise in 66 BC. On these grounds, he began to reorganize Syria into a Roman province.51

In other words, the right interpretation of the Artaxata treatise has a principal significance for the claim of Greater Armenia on world dominance. It is a renowned fact that, after ebbs and flows of wars and internal strives, the Armenian king of kings gave up and decided to come to terms with the Romans.52 The sides elected to settle the problems at the meeting of the two leaders. Receiving Tigran II at the Roman camp, Pompey solemnly “[...] spoke words of encouragement, telling him among other things that he had not lost the kingdom of Armenia, but had gained the friendship of the Romans” [Dio Cass., XXX-VI, 52, 4].53 In other words, Greater Armenia abandoned the occupied territories and the status of the great empire. By the next step, it was recognized as a Roman partner of high rank - amicus populi Romani, which meant its acknowledgement the Roman suzerainty in the East.54

However, soon the Roman propaganda forgot about the Tigran’s empire. Usually, Rome was more tolerant and flexible in the similar situations.55 But the case under consideration was extraordinary because Roman intellectuals intended to solve an important ideological problem convincing the world that only their empire was the rightful heir of the Seleucid super-state. This perception found its full expression in the narrative of Velleius Paternculus:

The Assyrians were the first of all races to hold world power, then the Medes, after them the Persians, and then the Macedonians. Then through the defeat of Kings Philip and Antiochus, of Macedon origin [...] the world power passed to the Roman people (summa imperii ad populum Romanum pervenit)[Vel. Pat., I,6,6]56.

Coming back to the quest of Greater Armenia to the status of super-state, the following becomes clear: the impulse proceeded from the brain center of the court of Tigran II.

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51 Jones, Syrig, 1992, 1030.
52 The last test of the lot was the rebellion of the crone-prince Tigran the Young who tried to usurp the throne with the Parthian support but failed. He decided to offer his services to Pompey but the general preferred to build relationship with Tigran II. On these grounds, his relations with Pompey were spoiled and he ended life in Roman captivity. See Gray, 1992, 1073.
54 Gn. Pompey settled Roman East as a rather complicated system of relations beginning from provinces and ending with allies and friends. It supplied the Romans with facility to govern this great territory (full of ethnic, social and cultural diversities) with appropriate flexibility. See Downey, 1951, 149 – 163; Gruen, 1984, 668 – 670; Sherwin-White, 1984, 209 – 226; Ball, 2002, 33 – 34.
55 Braund, 1984, 81– 82.
56 Later, however, the Romans began to consider the Parthians as their equals. Relating about the meeting of the August’s heir Gaius Caesar with the Parthian king Fraataces, Velleius states: “[...] while two eminent leaders not only of the empires they represented but also of mankind (hominum) thus met in conference – truly a notable and memorable sight” [Vel. Pat., II, 51, 2].
In this regard, its concern with Metrodorus of Scepsis seems most probable.

On these grounds, bringing together the results of our discussion, we can tentatively point out the crucial concepts of the treatise “On Tigranes” as follows: a. Tigran’s empire was based on the principle of persuasion (ὁθὸς) but not on bare coercion (κράτος) and it was aimed at peace, order and justice; b. the empire was a result of the king’s creative efforts: he had built it as a savior and benefactor of all his subjects; c. the empire occupied a honorable place in the string of super-states representing glory and destiny of the East, beginning from Assyria; d. the treatise “On Tigranes”, probably, was composed as an essay of world history focused, however, on the deeds of the king of kings and his ancestors. On these grounds, bringing together the results of our discussion, we can tentatively point out the crucial concepts of the treatise “On Tigranes” as follows: a. Tigran’s empire was based on the principle of persuasion (ὁθὸς) but not on bare coercion (κράτος) and it was aimed at peace, order and justice; b. the empire was a result of the king’s creative efforts: he had built it as a savior and benefactor of all his subjects; c. the empire occupied a honorable place in the string of super-states representing glory and destiny of the East, beginning from Assyria; d. the treatise “On Tigranes”, probably, was composed as an essay of world history focused, however, on the deeds of the king of kings and his ancestors.57

Certainly, this narrative axis was complemented with numerous historical events and facts (τὰ πράγματα) but their consideration is beyond the limits our reach. We can only guess about them.

2. Features of Tragic History in Hellenistic Armenia

Theatricality was an obvious feature of everyday life in Hellenistic cities and (especially) royal courts. Respectively, scenic gesture began to prevail in ideology and decision making procedure.58 Current events were interpreted after the archetypes of old myths and tragedies. Immortal gods and Tyche were held as the essential authors of the plot of history.59 In this regard, the work of historian was believed to have a target to reveal the divine will through appropriate facilities and skills. Even Polybius, the most rationalistic historian of Hellenistic époque, could not remain indifferent to the ideas of tragic history and viewed in world history the greatest performance of Tyche (θεόμα) [Polyb., X,9,3, 11, 7 etc.].60

It is appropriate to look for a similar stimulus of adopting tragic history in Greater Armenia as well. In the court of Artaxiads (Artashēs I, Tigran II, Artavazd II), functioned a group Hellenistic intellectuals who could introduce this genre in the country.

a. Armavir Inscription (Arm., II, 4)

With a purpose to illuminate the genre of tragic history in Armenia, we decided to proceed from two different kinds of primary sources. On one hand, epigraphic data, on the other hand, the renowned fragment of Plutarch’s ‘Life of Crassus’ about theatrical performance in the court of the king Artavazd II (55 – 34 BC.).

Epigraphic data comes from archeological site of Armavir, the capital of Eruandid Armenia (6th – 3d centuries BC). Two basalt boulders (I, II) were discovered with Greek letters in 1911 and 1927. Scholars trace on them seven inscriptions – three on the first boulder and four on the second. They are fragmentary and sometimes poorly preserved, which makes their transcription, translation and interpretation extremely difficult. Despite

57 It is well known that compiling the recent period of Armenian history, Strabo had on hand an extend work and tried to sketch it in main features (ἐπι κεφαλαίων) [Strabo, XI, 14, 15]. Departing from this fact, some scholars found it possible to trace in this primary source the treatise of Metrodorus or Artavazd II. Cf. Sargsyan, 1969, 119 – 120.
58 In spite of ritualized rural life, in the Hellenistic cities (and especially in the courts), life was apparently theatricalized. See Chaniotis, 1997, 219 – 221.
60 Walbank, 1985, 68 – 69.
the efforts of scholars - J. Smirnov, A. Boltunova, H. Manandyan, C. Trever and J.-P. Mahé - our knowledge about their content is still ambiguous. Nevertheless, scholars are still unanimous about the character and (even) the content of some inscriptions [Arm., I, 1 – 3; II, 1, 4].

However, it is not the purpose of the present investigation to discuss the epigraphic, orthographic, stylistic or literary peculiarities of the Armavir inscriptions. Our focus is the semantic cod of the fourth inscription of the second boulder [Arm., II, 4] in A. Boltunova’s restoration and H. Manandyan’s interpretation. It seems more trustworthy and supposedly contains a fragment of an unknown tragedy:

“What (message) Numenius passes to Philadelphus, belongs to the murderer.
I deny it to contain anything disgraceful.
Indeed, he yielded up the ghost with a weapon in his hand…
… [the adversary] has captured Armenian land with a new city …”

In its information, H. Manandyan traced the events of 201 BC., when the last king of Eruandid dynasty, Eruand the Last, challenged by Young Artashēs, was murdered in a battle. As to Philadelphus, supposedly, she was the priestess of the temple of Artemis/Ana-hit connected with the late king with sacred marriage ties (λεῳγαμία), a religious experience and ritual reflecting the unity of basic cosmic and social elements in a sacred commonality.

The starting point of this interpretation is the fragment of Moses Khorenatsi recording in detail about the conflict of Eruand with Young Artashēs. The king is depicted as an evil tyrant who has usurped the royal throne and dignity massacring the house of his predecessor, the king Sanatruk. As to Artashēs, he is the only offspring of the late king who has escaped the destiny of his brothers and sisters. His tutor prince Smbat Bagratid saves him and brings up in the Parthian court.

Artashēs’ pretention to his paternal throne is quite legitimate, wherefore he is depicted as a personification justice and law. In a cruel battle, Eruand is defeated; abandoned by his soldiers and close entourage, he tries to find refuge in the palace of the royal capital Eruandashat: “However, one of soldiers entered and struck off Eruand’s head with a saber, scattering his brains over the floor. From such blow he died, having held the throne for

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63 Τῇ Φιλαδέλφῃ Νομίμησις [εἰπε] [φορείει] τούτ’ ἐποίη, ὀμηλίῳ δ’ οὐ δέθη ἔχων σκλῆρες.
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν ὄπλοφορῷ[ατα] λέπεν ὅ[ν]ῳσ ... 
 ... καὶ καταπολεμάρμεν Ἀρμενί[νη] κατ[χ]ριν ...  
64 H. Manandyan even found her to be the sister of Eruand the Last. Manandyan, 1946, 16. On the sacred marriage, see Frazer, 1914, 70 – 72; Koester, 1995, 171 – 177; Avagianou, 2008, 150 – 156.
Classical sources (especially Strabo and Plutarch) provide records, which come to complete the life course of Artashēs as the founder of Artaxiad dynasty (180 BC. – 52 AD.).

The legitimation of the authority of the new dynasty was one of the most important problems of Artashēs I. Its echo is clearly traceable in the inscription under consideration: despite Khorenatsi, it portrays the last Eruantid king as a valiant and brave warrior who died “with a weapon in his hand”. This approach seems quite explainable: the political propaganda of the new dynasty tried to show the blue blood of its predecessor. It was well attested by the fact, that the Eruandids traced their origin from Achaemenids, the dynasty whose heritage continued to be desirable for centuries. Subsequently, the next step of legitimation was to connect the Artaxiads with the Eruandids through ties of consanguinity. Scholars believe that this aspect is transparent in numerous Aramaic inscriptions found in contemporary Armenia. In them, Artashēs apparently names himself Eruandid - $RN\,KN$.

To define exactly the genre of the inscription under consideration, it seems necessary to point out the role of Numenius, a personage, who tells about the event, which has taken place beyond the visual scope. In other words, he tries to present the past event to the audience or readers. It makes possible to identify his figure with that of the messenger, a well-known mask of ancient theater.

As it is well attested, messengers ($m\nu\nu\nu\,\nu\nu\nu$) were introduced in Greek drama to relate about offstage events: “[…] thought is required wherever a statement is proved, or a general truth ($\gamma\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$) enunciated” [Arist., Poet., 1450a, 7]. Observations and comments, remarks and stories of messengers were usually based on accounts heard or seen by others. Scholars trace in their activity an effort to overcome the innate failure of Greek drama motivated by its threefold unity of action, time and place. In rational and transparent forms, messengers supported the motion of a dramatic plot to its logical and emotional end. Their information contained a secret designed to be uncovered during the performance. The focus of their words was the audience – real or imagined – who gained emotional and rational satisfaction.

66 In various religious systems, the sacred marriage personified the cause of cosmic and social harmony. 

67 We proceed from the idea that all the holders of the Armenian throne of the 1st half of the 1st century AD. – Tigran V, Zenon-Artashēs, Iberian princes (Mithridat and Rhadamast) Tigran VI, based their claims on the fact that they were Artaxiads by maternal line. Cf. Toumanoff, 1963, 81; Stepanyan, 2012, 28 – 68.


70 More than twenty Aramaic inscriptions are found in modern Armenia, in which the king names himself Eruandakan. Perikhanian, 1966, 17 – 29; Perikhanian, 1971, 5 – 11.


72 The intellectual stance was characteristic for the Greek theater spectators: “In the Greek theater the spectators had to do much of the work themselves, to imagine places and settings, important information and relationships from the mythical tradition visualise in their minds the events occurring off-stage and narrated by others”. Storey, Allan, 2003, 52.
In this light, summing up the results of the discussion, the following assumption appears more appropriate: the inscription under consideration displays a fragment of an unknown tragedy. Scholars have come to the same conclusion, proceeding from semantic, stylistic and metric peculiarities of the text. Some of them even find (of course, tentatively) that its author is the king Artavazd II (55 – 34 BC.) renowned by his literary, rhetoric and historical works.73

Combining this interpretation with that of H. Manandyan, we come up to a proposition that the fall Eruandid dynasty made up the content of a tragic plot which has not come down to us in its initial form. Continuing this logic, one could conclude that, in Hellenistic Armenia, historical past was staged in accordance with the canons of theatrical theory.

To what extent this proposition is true. For answer, we must explain another important question: are there more distinct evidences about the genre of tragic history in Hellenistic Greater Armenia? In other words, were there intellectuals enough acquainted with Aristotelian poetry which states particularly: “Poetry, therefore, is more philosophical and higher than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular” [Arist., Poet., 1451b, 4-5].

b. Tragic History of Artavazd II

The specified fragment of Plutarch (Plut., Crass., 19 - 33) is an important chain in the context of his narrative about the Parthian campaign of Marcus Licinius Crassus (54 – 53 BC.). He was one of the most influential politicians of the last generation of the Roman Republic. With G. J. Caesar and Gn. Pompey, he set up the so-called First Triumvirate in 60 BC.74 Endowed with extraordinary authority and power, he arrived in Syria, and initiated preparations of the great military campaign against the Parthian Empire. He counted on the Roman friends and allies (amicī et sociī) of the East and particularly distinguished the king of Greater Armenia Artavazd II.75

In 54 BC., the Armenian sovereign visited Crassus in Syria and promised a solid military support under his own conditions: “And he tried to persuade Crassus to invade Parthia by way of Armenia, for thus he would not only lead his forces along in the midst of plenty, which the king himself would provide, but would also proceed with safety […]”. Crassus, however, denied the proposal responding that “[...] he should march through Mesopotamia, where had left many brave Romans” [Plut., Crass.,19, 2]76. Upon this, the Armenian king left the Roman Camp.

In 53 BC., the Parthian king Orodes II invaded Greater Armenia: “[...] in order that Artavazdes, the son of Tigranes, the king of the land at that time, should send no assistance to the Romans through fear for his own land” [Dio Cass., 40, 16, 2]. On this occasion, Artavazd II turned with a letter to Crassus to come and route the Parthians with joint forces. This proposal was also denied. Moreover, the Roman general began charging the king of treachery threatening that “[...] another time he would come and punish Artavazd...
des for treachery” [Plut., Crass., 19,3]. The Roman general was unable to appreciate the situation and make adequate decisions. On the contrary, he led his legions through waterless steppes and deserts of the North Mesopotamia heading to Seleucia-on-Tigris.

To meet Crassus, the Parthian king equipped a new army under the eminent nobleman Surena. The latter pursued the traditional Parthian war tactics which demanded to come up to a general battle after exhausting the enemy forces through a series local scrambles. Implementing this tactics, Surena surrounded the Roman army at Carrhae and forced it to surrender. More than 20 000 Roman legionaries were killed. Many were captivated and lived in slavery during long years. As to Crassus, he was captured and beheaded: “And the Parthians, as some say, poured molten gold into his mouth in mockery […]” [Dio Cass., 40, 27, 3]. His head and right hand were sent to Artaxata, the capital of Greater Armenia, to Orodes II and Artavazd II, who had already stopped military actions and come to terms [Plut., Crass., 33, 2].

This unprecedented military crash left indelible mark in the memory of generations. The principal opponents estimated it from opposite points of view. The Romans saw in it the innate cruelty of the Parthians who, despite their promises, acted with an ultimate inhuman way - “war without truce and without treaty” [Plut., Crass., 18, 1]. The Parthians, in the contrary, saw in it a proof of their heroism and military prominence. They even staged a grandiose mockery procession (πομπὴν γελοίαν) moving through cities and villages of North Mesopotamia to humiliate and disgrace the Romans [Plut., Crass., 32, 2].

As to the Armenians, they tried to escape the white-and-black axiology and compose a balanced approach to the situation. The focus of it became the renowned theatrical performance set up at the Armenian court. In it, we believe, a scene of encounter of the opposite approaches is traceable.

As it is pinpointed above, the Parthian and Armenian kings had reconciled and, in honor of the event, the Armenian princess (the daughter of Tigranes II and the sister of Artavazd II) married the Parthian crone-prince Pacorus. On this occasion, the highest military and administrative elite of both Parthia and Greater Armenia came together for the wedding party. Besides delicious dishes, music, dances and other entertainments, they desired to watch a performance uncovering the profound meaning of the great victory. Certainly, the audience (following the old religious practice) first traced in the party a sacred marriage ritual purposed at the restoration of overwhelming peace, justice and order.

However, Plutarch’s narrative shows also the other side of the issue. It makes clear that the party was directed in accordance with a well-elaborated theatrical plot. Its author proceeded from the fact that his addressee was well acquainted with Greek language, lit-

77 Following “the letter and spirit” of Artaxata treaty, signed by Gn. Pompey and Tigran II (66 BC.), the king Artavazd II counted himself an amicus populi Romani whereas Crassus demanded from him duties of a socius populi Romani obliged to support Rome with all his resources. About similar situations, see Braud, 1984, 72 – 76. The fact is that, in the last period of The Republic, the Roman generals began to treat the partner states: “[...].in a traditional and almost feudal form of clientship”. Konstan, 1997, 3, 128 – 131.
78 Asdourian, 1911, 60 – 61; Ziegler, 1964, 34 – 35. Among the main causes of the disaster, modern scholars often point out the low level of the awareness of the Romans about the Parthians. Cf. Campbell, 1993, 216.
79 The procession represented a set of pictorial fragments to express the low passions and avarice of the enemy. Its plot was patterned on the Old Iranian world-view system well attested by numerous bas-reliefs of the Achaemenid and Sasanid ages – Behistun, Naqgh-i Rostam, Bisapur, Taq-i Bostan etc. See in detail, MacDermot, 1954, 76 – 80; Herman, 2000, 35 – 40; Canepa, 2010, 582 – 584.
80 Stepanyan, 2015, 114.
erature, rhetoric and everyday mode of life. According to Plutarch, it was true particularly about the two kings. This fact makes to think that the reverse perspective of the audience was active and ready to play an important role in the forthcoming performance.

The wedding party was held in the banquet-hall (τῶν ἀνθρώπων) of the Artaxata court and comprised two phases. The first phase represented the traditional banquet (ἐστιάσεις τε καὶ πότοι) [Plut., Crass., 33, 1]. The kings and their close entourage (φίλοι καὶ συντροφοί) took a separate seat. From time to time, they invited an eminent guest to honor him with a drink or gift. In its profound essence, these (and similar) actions were designed to reestablish the elite hierarchy and re-consolidate it around the royal authority.

The first phase ended, and the servants removed the tables. The second phase of the party started which, like old Greek symposia, contained a literary component as well. According to tradition, the choice and interpretation of the piece depended on the artistic and philosophical taste of the head of the banquet (συμποσιαρχός) [cf. Plato, Symp., 176a]. In this regard, it must be added that such banquets were considered as private enterprises, and were most popular in the Hellenistic age. For example, Alexander the Great’s symposia as a rule included dramatic and literary performances with the objective of illustrating the essence of contemporary events. Theatricality emerged as a prevailing mode of public behavior within decision-making procedure; and current events were interpreted in accordance with the archetypes of old myths and tragedies.

In our case, the head of the banquet also preferred to uncover the meaning of current events by means of tragedy. Presumably, he adhered to a tragic understanding of history which appeared among members of the Peripatetic school in response to the Aristotelian concept of the strict opposition between history and tragedy (poetry) [Arist., Poet., 1451b, 4 - 5]. They believed in the possibility of a genre of historical writing aimed at expressing universal meanings through concrete events and characters.

Following this perception, the director of the Artaxata performance stopped his choice on the Bacchae of Euripides as a model of his interpretation of the event of the day. Supposedly, he departed from the idea that “[...] tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of certain magnitude” [Arist., Poet., 1449b, 12]. As it is obvious from ensuing text, it was first of all implemented with an intention to define an action which is complete and whole. In its turn, “A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end”[Arist., Poet.,1450b, 27]. For tracing this, we must restore the plot of the

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81 Hellenism was an elite cultural phenomenon having its specific particularities in each concrete country. See, Traina, 2002, 22 – 23.
82 The eminent theologian and philosopher P. Florensky as a specific method of perception work out the theory of the reverse perspective when the inner space of an audience actively implements the content and meaning of a piece of art. See Florensky, 2006, 218 – 221.
84 Wecowski, 2014, 28 – 33.
85 Murray, 1990, 5.
88 Vernant, 1990a, 245 – 246. The following fact is very indicative: Polybius the greatest critic of tragic history could not remain indifferent to its principal perception, and viewed the performance (θέαμα) Tyche in world history. Cf. Walbank, 1983, 225.
90 Butcher, 1920, 334 – 336; Ackrill 1., 1977, 595 – 601; It must be underlined that modern narrative
tragedy in brief:

It begins with the comeback of Dionysus from the East to Thebes to take avenge on the royal house refusing to recognize and worship him. He also desires to vindicate his late mother, Semele, disgraced by the Thebans. God drives the Theban women into ecstatic madness and sends them on the top of Mount Cithaeron to commit orgies. They are turned into maenads and are led by Agave - the sister of Semele and mother of the young Theban king Pentheus. Dionysus meets with Pentheus disguised as a Stranger and enchant him as well. He convinces him to put on woman’s clothing and go to Cithaeron to watch the orgies. But maenads catch him and in wild rush tear to pieces. In their mad imagination, Pentheus looks like a young lion. More active is Agave who holds the lion’s head above her head solemnly leading the maenads to Thebes. She is in ritual delight but the trance soon wears off. She comes back to reality understanding that she has killed her beloved son. The mother’s grief is limitless, and nobody can condole with her. The vengeance of Dionysus also concerns his earthly grandparents, Cadmus and his wife, and turns them into serpents. In the last action, Dionysus appears on the scene in all his glory. His triumph is complete since he has demonstrated divine power and established his worship in Thebes.

This plot and its general idea (γνώριμα) were most probably present in the reverse perspective of the participants of the Artaxata performance, and the director was prepared to model his own vision of the day’s event after it. More exactly, he planned to demonstrate in what way Crassus’ Parthian expedition ended as a tragedy (ὡσπερ τραγῳδίαν τελευτᾷσαι) [Plut.,Crass.,33, 4]. We believe, Plutarch’s narrative contains sufficient information for outlining this new plot.

Tragic actors and a chorus were invited for this purpose. Made up they an itinerant artistic association (τεχνιταὶ Διονυσιακοὶ) or lived permanently in the Armenian court? This question remains ambiguous. In any event, the group played the roles prescribed it by the director, and the leading position belonged to Jason of Tralles who played the roles of both Agave and her son Pentheus.

Most probably, the performance was not designed to demonstrate the Bacchae in its entity, but only some fragments appropriate to the day’s event. In accordance with this approach, Jason first played the role of Pentheus presenting, evidently, his refusal to recognize Dionysus’ divinity. The second fragment began with the song preparing the entrance of Agave. The participants likely had to restore the connection of the two fragments by memory proceeding from the text of Euripides.

theory proceeds just from this Aristotelian idea. See White, 1984, 3–5.

91 The two persons make up the main opposition of tragic plot - Dionysus and Pentheus (anti-Dionysus). The first embodies the polarities of vitality: life and death, joy and sorrow, wisdom and violence. As to the second, he is tyrannous, lawless and selfish. See Vernant, 1990b, 403.


94 The similar practice was well known at Hellenistic courts. See Borza, 1983, 171; Chaniotis, 1997, 232.
The deviation from Euripides plot began in the third fragment. A messenger of the general Surena came up to the door of the banqueting-hall: “[…] and after a law obeisance cast the head of Crassus into the center of the company” [Plut., Crass., 33, 2]. He brought information about offstage events. From this point on, a new tragedy plot began on the conventional scene of the hall. With applause and shouts of joy, the audience accepted the main idea of the director about the identity of Pentheus and Crassus.95 In this light, the Roman general looked as tyrannous, lawless and selfish antihero whose evil destiny was inevitable.

Meanwhile, Jason of Tralles continued in this vein, discarded the costume of Pentheus: “and assuming the role of the frenzied Agave, sang these verses as if inspired”:

We bring from the mountain
A tendril fresh-cut to the palace,
A wonderful prey” [Eur., Bacch., 1170 – 1172, Plut., Crass., 33, 3].

Following Euripides’ plot, the audience would come back to the image of the unhappy mother who had killed her son. In the case of Crassus, Mother-Rome would have been imagined in the role of Agave. According to this logic, the ideology of the tragic performance would have coincided with that of the ritual procession in which Rome represented the pole of evil. As it is shown above, the procession reflected the Parthian official interpretation formulated in the ideological center of the king of kings.96 However, such expectations did not come to pass. The deviation from the standard plot continued, and Agave came up to her renowned dialogue with the chorus:

“Who slew him? (Chorus)
Mine is the honour”. (Agave) [Ibid.].

Suddenly, one of the Parthian grandees, Pomaxathres97: “[…] sprang up and laid hold of the head, feeling that it was more appropriate for him to say this than for Jason” [Plut., Crass., 33,3]. On this occasion, the new interpretation of the plot became apparent: Mother-Rome had no part in the murder of Crassus. The author of this tragic incident was a Parthian grandee. In Plutarch’s words, the Parthian king was delighted and endowed both Pomaxathres and Jason with rich gifts. Supposedly, this interpretation was a surprise for him.

The author of the new plot had a task to legitimize the alteration through the previous course of actions of the antihero. He would have to make it in accordance with the canon of tragic plays, looking particularly for the point when the change of fortune occurred.98 Keeping in mind the fact that tragedy represented a complete action, he would have to come back to the beginning of the Parthian expedition of Crassus.99

The beginning of Crassus’ expedition, according to Plutarch’s narrative, was marked with dramatic events. In 54 BC, Crassus held consulship with Pompey, and Syria fell to him for the forthcoming five years by lot.100 He accepted this with great exaltation and

95 Stepanyan, 2015, 121.
96 On this center and its activity see in detail: Neusner, 1963, 58; Dąbrowa, 2008, 25 – 31;
98 According to the canon of the classical tragedy, this point (τὸ μεταβολεῖν) was designed to reveal the essential motives and movements of the plot. de Romilly, 1970, 17; Wiles, 1997, 134 – 135.
100 It was an imitation of the common practice of the sortation of provinces between consuls (sortiri provincias). Cf. Badian, 1992, 891 –892.
began thinking: “[…] he would not consider Syria nor even Parthia as the boundaries of his success, but thought to make the campaigns of Lucullus against Tigranes and those of Pompey against Mithridates seem mere child’s play, and flew on the wings of his hopes as far as Bactria and India and the Outer Sea” [Plut., Crass., 16, 2].

Crassus boasted in this manner among the intimate circle of his friends but the rumor was soon spread in Rome, and the enemies initiated attacks against him. The plebeian tribunes were more active: invested with sacred power of veto in the borders of the City, they did their best to stop the expedition. They motivated their denial by divine and human justice: “[…] and a large party arose which was displeased that anyone should go out to wage war on men who had done the state no wrong (οὐδὲν ἄδικου θεύτην), but were in treaty relations with it (ἄλλα ἐν τοιούτοις)” [Crass., 16, 3]. They particularly pointed out the fact that: “[…] in the decree which was passed regarding his mission there was no mention of a Parthian war” [Ibid.]. Caesar and Pompey, on the contrary, supported and encouraged Crassus.

On the day of the departure, the multitude was summoned by the plebeian tribunes to block Crassus’ passage out of the City. Nevertheless, the latter had foreseen such a possibility and had sought the support of Pompey who had great influence in Rome. Pompey joined Crassus’ procession and when the people saw his presence: “[…] they were mollified and gave way before them in silence” [Ibid.]. One of the plebeian tribunes, Ateius: “[…] on meeting Crassus, at first tried to stop him with words, and protested against his advance; then he bade his attendant to seize the person of Crassus and detain him” [Crass., 16, 4]. However, the other tribunes did not support him, and Crassus trod to the gate of the City. But Ateius did not give up:

_He ran on ahead to the city gate, he placed there blazing brazier, and when Crassus came up, cast incense and libations upon it, and invoked curses which were dreadful and terrifying in themselves, and were reinforced by sundry and dreadful gods whom he summoned and called by name [Plut., Crass., 16, 5]._

The populace found fault with Ateius for casting these curses since, although he tried to obstruct Crassus for the sake of the City (ὅδε πόλιν), the curses were believed to harm Rome as well. Indeed, it was an impressive change of fortune: Mother-Rome tried unsuccessfully to stop the plans of Crassus, her insane son, but he had already set up a triumvirate with Caesar and Pompey with the end: “[…] to make themselves sole masters of the

101 The collegium of plebeian tribunes was probably established in 494 BC. It contained ten members who were charged with the defense of the lives and property of the Roman citizens (ius auxilii). The person of the tribunes was sacrosanct, and nobody could insult them without sever punishment. If unanimous, they could excise a veto (ius intercession) against the acts of magistrates, laws, election and senatus consults. They could also hold comitia tributata and pass decries. The authority of the tribunes was valid in the borders of the City. See Abbott, 1901, 195 – 198; Momigliano, 1992, 1092; Lintott, 1999, 30 – 32; North, 2011, 264 – 266.

102 The procedure of the allotment of provinces usually resulted with a Senate decree designating the main tasks of the governor’s future mission. Cf. Lintott, 1999, 102.

103 Pompey understood that the campaign was fraud with great dangers that could cause it to end in disaster. However, he supported Crassus since such an outcome would not contradict his own plans. Supposedly, the same was true about Caesar’s support.

104 The walls and gates of the City spatially limited the power of the plebeian tribunes. At the same time, it was valid if all the member of the collegium (ten tribunes) were unanimous. Momigliano, 1992, 1092.
state” [Plut., Crass., 14, 5]. In other words, the Mother herself was in great danger and was not responsible for the evil actions of her son. From this perspective, the beginning and the end of Crassus’ life-tragedy seemed to be equivalent narrative units.

According to such interpretation, Rome was no longer assessed as the pole of evil, and the Parthian expedition of Crassus appeared as an unfortunate accident implemented by his personal avarice and vainglory. Consequently, with the catastrophe and murder of the antihero, the restoration of peace and harmony could now be quite possible. This message to Rome was uttered in the Armenian court through the deviation from the plot of the Bacchae of Euripides.

The correspondence of this message with the policy of Tigran II in last years of his reign was obvious. It implied friendly relations (amicitia) of Greater Armenia with both Rome and Parthia. In other words, the strategy demanded from the country to support none of the conflicting super-state against the other. In this light, we can tentatively reconstruct Artavazd’s argumentation as well: he had supported neither Crassus against Parthia nor Orodes II against Rome. His strategy implied a neutral position - beyond alienation and hatred, victory and defeat - to endorse a compromise, the equivalent of the existential and moral mean (to; mevson). In semiotic perception, the situation could be defined through the formula “neither... nor”.

The symmetric correspondence of the beginning of Crassus’ Parthian campaign with his tragic end performed in the Armenian court suggested that they may have composed the crucial elements of a tragic history which may have made up one of important primary sources of Plutarch’s narrative about Crassus’ eastern campaign.

We now come up to the last point of the present investigation concerning the authorship of the performance in the Artaxata court. Indeed, who directed the semantic development of the historical play and skillful deviation from the plot of the Bacchae? The answer to his question can only be tentative and based on common logic of the situation, which, as demonstrated above, was that the palace performance and the artistic representation of the exoneration of Rome sought the restoration of the policy of friendship of Greater Armenia with both super-states. The text of Plutarch may help point us in the right direction as it contains a rather transparent allusion to the authorship of the performance.

Embellishing the portrait of Artavazd II, the author pinpoints the fact that he “actually composed tragedies, and wrote orations and histories” [Plut., Crass., 33, 2]. It is well

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105 Some could even have interpreted this approach as an indication of the sympathy of the director to the old Roman Republic. However, I find it too bold in view of the fact that we have no direct accounts of it in our primary sources.
106 Usually, the Romans vindicated their military setback by the will of omnipotent Destiny. However, the case of Crassus was an exception: in time, the Roman public opinion formed a steady belief that his disaster resulted from his avarice and vainglory. See Traina, 2010, 209 – 212.
107 This equivalence makes up the narrative mainstream of numerous literary genres. Cf. Smith, 1968, 10 – 14.
109 It was after Artaxata treatise of friendship with the Romans (66 BC.), Tigran II came to terms with the Parthian king Phraates II. “For they both well understood that whichever of them should conquer the other would simply help along matters for the Romans and would himself become easier for them to subdue. For these reasons they were reconciled” [Dio Cass., 37, 7, 4]. Cf. Stepanyan, 2012, 138 – 139.
110 According to Aristotle, the mean marked the desirable middle of two extremes of the same quality. It corresponded to virtue excellence and beauty [Arist., Nic. Eth., Η06b, 19 – 29].
111 Stepanian, 2013, 32.
known that the king had been tutored under the supervision of the Greek intellectuals who had found refuge in the court of Tigran II. Among them the philosopher Methrodorus of Scæpsis and the orator Amphicrates of Athens were most renowned [Plut., Luc., 22, 10].

Moreover, Plutarch states that some of the works of Artavazd II were still preserved (οἷν ἐκπείθοντας κορωνιαῖς) [Plut., Crass., 33, 2]. The eminent biographer and moral philosopher was writing his Parallel Lives in Greece more than a hundred years after the events under consideration, and it would not be exaggeration to state that the works of the Armenian king continued to hold the interest of Greek intellectuals. Does Plutarch’s statement indicate that he had actually used Artavazd’s works? An absolute answer again remains tentative; nevertheless, there is a high degree of probability that he did that. In this regard, a synopsis of the lost historical work attributed to the king Artavazd could presumably have looked as follows:

The three most influential politicians of Rome, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, set up triumvirate to subdue the Republic. They occupied all the power and divided the empire between themselves. By lot, Crassus obtained Syria and fostered plans to overpower Parthia, Bactria, and India reaching the Outer Sea. Through plebeian tribunes, Rome tried to frustrate this insane plan but in vain. The Parthian campaign of Crassus ended in an unprecedented catastrophe at Charrae. Many Roman soldiers fell victims. The Parthians celebrated their victory with a great pomp. As to Greater Armenia, it adopted a middle position, which implied friendly relations with the both opposing sides. The Armenian king Artavazd II was well acquainted with the Hellenistic and Roman political theories according to which a friendly country (or a person) was obliged first of all not to harm the interests his partner. With this starting choice, the Armenian king decided to keep a neutral position between powerful neighbors. Consequently, he came to terms with the Parthians and hoped reach to the adequate relations with the Romans. He considered the Artaxata wedding party and theatrical performance as the focus for harmonizing the two approaches.

Summing up the discussion of the genre of tragic history, we have come to endorse the fact of undoubted presence of it in elite culture of Hellenistic Armenia. In both expressions of the latter – Armavir inscription and Plutarch’s text – Artavazd II (with different grade of certainty) is recognized as the author of this intellectual experience. The target of his narrative was to transform the crucial events of the past and present into historical narrative. This experience is to be viewed in the context of the first attempts of introducing the western canon of historiography in Armenia.

112 They made up an intellectual center operating under the patronage of the queen of queens Cleopatra. Stepanyan, 2012, 320 – 322.
113 It is fair to underline that G. Goyan had already come to the belief that the Artaxata performance was directed by Artavazd II. See Goyan, 135–148.
114 The director, obviously, departed from the idea that the form and context of the performance of a tragedy made the audience: “[…] to view the same characters and circumstances in a consciously constructed drama that pointed to a world beyond the theater”. Rehm, 1994, 46.
116 According to P. Ricoeur, this transformation passes through two important phases. First, it shapes events into a novel (plot), after that reshapes it into history. Ricoeur, 1985, 214.
Conclusion

Summing up the sketch of the process of introducing the western historical canon in ancient Armenia, two genres of it must be pointed out, the pragmatic and the tragic histories. They varied by research approaches and methods but pursued the same purpose to reshape the past and present as a comprehensible narrative able to give answers to the essential questions of historical investigation – how, when, and why happened this or that crucial event. This approach, however, did not entirely replace traditional epic history, and within time, a synthetic genre emerged aimed at the synthesis of the two genres.

The western canon of historiography was introduced as a branch of Hellenistic elite culture concentrated in the two capitals of Greater Armenia, Artaxata and Tigranocerta. In the royal court, lived and created a group of intellectuals - rhetors, philosophers, writers, who set up the brain center called to perform the Greek intellectual achievements in this remote land. Some of them even tried to interpret history of the country in accordance with the Hellenistic perceptions. By their efforts, the mentioned genres of historiography became prominent in Greater Armenia.

Primary sources give clear evidence about the genre of pragmatic history, associating it with the name of Metrodorus of Scepsis, the eminent rhetor and philosopher. The main concern his work On Tigranes was world history focused on the deeds of Tigran II. It interpreted them in the light of the political theory of Hellenistic age and had a purpose to legitimate Tigran’s empire as the personification of creative intentions of the East – both earthly and heavenly. Supposedly, it depicted the empire as a space of absolute peace and order led by the king to the prosperity of all ethnic and social units. The political propaganda of Tigran II considered the empire in the train of the great empires of the East - Assyria, Media, Achaemenid Iran and Seleucid Empire. It is no accident that Pompey justified the Roman dominance in Syria proceeding from the results of Artaxata treaty.

As to the second genre, the tragic history, it was associated with the name of Artavazd II. There is reason to believe that the king used the plots of eminent Greek tragedians to pattern the historical events of the past and present in order to uncover their profound metaphysic essence. Tragic history concerned the poetry of history and was ready to answer the question “what might happen” in this or that concrete situations. Applying the tools of tragic history, Artavazd II gave his interpretation of the Parthian campaign of Crassus, the insane son who caused a great trouble, against the will of his mother (Rome). In this light, Artavazd’s authorship of the renowned Armavir inscription receives a new share of probability.

Of course, all these constructions are of assumptive character. However, in every case, this quality was formed in accordance with numerous (though indirect) accounts and conjectures. A fact that bestows our restorations with a higher degree of probability.

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Ամփոփում ԱՐԵՎՄՏՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՄԱԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՆՈՆԸ ՀԵԼԼԵՆԻՍՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՅՔՈՒՄ

Ալբերտ Ա. Ստեփանյան

Բանալի բառեր - հելլենիզմ, պատմագիտություն, բարձրագույն գրականություն, հերոսական պատմություն, Արմավիրի արձանագրություններ, Արտավազդ Երկրորդ, Մետրոդորոս Սկեպսացի:

Հոդվածը խնդիր ունի լուսաբանելու բանական անցյալահայեցողության երկու կարևորագույն ժանրերի ձևավորումը և զարգացումը հայոց միջաբանության շրջանում: Դրանցից առաջինի՝ պրագմատիկ պատմության հետևորդը Մետրոդորոս Սկեպսացին էր՝ հելլենիստական նշանավոր իմաստասերն ու ճարտասան: Նրա «Գործք Տիգրանի» երկասիրության իմաստային արտահայտշումից հետո նշանակալի էր նրա կյանքում և այս կյանքը համանման կարգավիճակների ակնհայտությանը: Սկեպսացիի պատմագրությունները կարևորագույն ժանրերից են՝ իր համակարգի և այս կրտսեր հետու իր ճանաչումը համարվում էր հայաստանի կոմնակային կարևորագույն այնքանունչավոր: Մետրոդորոսը չտեսավ հայոց տերության անկումը և Հռոմի բարձրացումը Արևելքում: Չտեսավ նաև այն, որ վերջինս սկսեց իրեն վերագրել այս հերթագայության վերջին կարևոր բաղադրիչի դերակատարությունը:

Ողբերգական պատմության հետևորդը Արտավազդ Բ-ն էր (55 - 34 թթ.), որը ստացել էր հիմնավոր կրթություն և ծանոթ էր հելլենիստական իմաստասերին, ճարտասանության և գեղագիտության կարևորագույն նվաճումներին:

Արտաշատի արքունիքում կազմակերպված հանրահայտ թատերական ներկայացումը հիմք է տալիս մտածելու, որ Հայոց արքան համահնուցիչ էր այս ուղղության կողմնակիցների հետ: Ավելին, մանրակրկիտ քննությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ Կրասսոսի պարթևական արշավանքի մասին պատմող Պլուտարքոսի տեքստը կազմված է ըստ ողբերության կանոնի, և որ դրանի հեղինակը այս տեքստի ակնհայտության հիման վրա է գրել:
ЗАПАДНЫЙ ИСТОРИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ КАНОН В ЭЛЛИНИСТИЧЕСКОЙ АРМЕНИИ
Прагматическая и трагическая истории
Альберт А. Степанян

Статья имеет целью осветить процесс становления рационалистической рефлексии истории в Армении в II – I вв. до Р.Х. Последователем жанра прагматической истории стал Метродор Скепсийский, знаменитый эллинистический философ и ритор. Смысловая канва его трактата "О Тигране" в статье восстановлена по логике его жизненного пути и фрагментов разных произведений. Картина, конечно, гипотетическая, однако с большой долей вероятности. Согласно последней: а) империю Тиграна автор изображал на фоне всемирной истории, б) легитимировал ее согласно аксиологии эллинистической философии, изображая ее как социальную среду мира, справедливости и всеобщего благодеяния, в) рассматривал ее в череде мировых империй - Ассирия, Мидия, Ахеменидский Иран, держава Селевкидов.
Метродор не увидел падения империи Тиграна и возвышение Рима на Востоке. Не увидел также как римляне стали приписывать себе роль последней (и вечной) империи в мировой истории.
Последователем жанра трагической истории был царь Артавазд (55 - 34 до Р.Х.), получивший основательное эллинистическое образование и знакомый с философией, ораторским искусством и эстетикой эпохи.
Вопреки Аристотелю, в школе перипатетиков были мыслители, настроенные против упрощенного восприятия истории, полагая, что она способна раскрывать метафизические глубины прошлого и настоящего. Театрализацию истории они рассматривали как эффективный путь достижения подобной цели. Известное представление, организованное в царском дворе Арташата (53 г. до Р.Х.) дает основание думать, что Артавазд II был преемником этого направления. Из детального анализа текста Плутарха, рассказывающего об этом, можно полагать, что его автором, вероятнее всего, был сам царь. Именно этим объясняется внимание историографа к его произведениям.
Прагматический и трагический жанры историографии вновь появились в армянской среде спустя лишь столетия, в 5-м веке, в контексте культуры христианского эллинизма. Лучшими проявлениями этого стали произведения Егишэ и Мовсеса Хоренаци.