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## TWO QUEENS IN THE ANATOLIA OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY BC: NYSA FROM KAPPADOKIA AND LAODIKE FROM PONTOS

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### Abstract

Upon the death of the King of Kappadokia Ariarathes V Eusebes Philopator while he was suppressing the Aristonikos Revolt in 129 BC his wife, Queen Nysa, ascended to the Kappadokia throne. In the year of 120 BC after the death of the King of Pontos Mithridates V Euergetes, his wife the Queen Laodike, who was the daughter of Antiokhos IV Epiphanes-the King of Seleukos, took over the management of the Kingdom. In Anatolia in the 2nd century BC, during the power of Queen of Kappadokia Nysa and the Queen of Pontos Laodike in the areas of their reign, the management, the fights for the throne, their sacrifices for the sake of their sympathy for Rome damaged the politics of Kappadokia and Pontos Kingdom to a great extent.

**Keywords:** Kappadokia Kingdom, Pontos Kingdom, Nysa.

### 1. Introduction

Queens, namely, women monarchs are seemed quite effective in the antiquity of Anatolia. For example, it's known from the Ebla tablets that Harran located in the southeast of Anatolia was ruled by a queen named Zugalum in around 24th century BC (Archi, 2015: 211). The tradition of female rulers continued in Anatolia in the period of Hittites too. According to the state management of Hittites, the sovereign after the king was the queen entitled Tavananna and two of these queens named Ašmunikal and Puduhepa were very effective in the management (Akurgal, 2000: 118). The tradition of female rulers is also seen in the antiquity of Anatolia in the later periods.

### 2. Findings and Discussion

After the King of Kappadokia, Ariarathes IV Eusebes (220-162 BC) died his son Mithridates inherited the throne. As soon as Mithridates ascended to the Kappadokia throne (162 BC) he got the titles of Eusebes (tied to the Gods' apron strings) and Philopator (the man who loves his dad) and his name was changed into Ariarathes V Eusebes Philopator (Diodorus Siculus, 1814: 538; Mørkholm, 2011:194; Stewart, 2014: 99). Ariarathes V received a good education in Athens and he also took lessons from Karneades (214-129 BC) who was one of the most famous philosophers of the time to support his education. Ariarathes V, who set to work to make reforms in Kappadokia lands with the effects of his education, constituted especially the articles<sup>1</sup> about the continuity of family, children rights and cares of orphans (Cohen, 1995: 377).

Ariarathes V carried on Rome sympathy adhering to his father's governing policy. For this cause, in Aristonikos Revolt that caused him to end up badly he was on Rome's side. Accordingly, the King of Pergamon, Attalos III Philometor Euergetes (139-133 BC) bequeathed to give the lands of Pergamon Kingdom to Rome without battling (Malay, 1987: 34; Strabon, 2015: XIII.4.2). Aristonikos (133-129 BC) asserted that himself was the illegitimate son of Eumenes II who was the brother of Attalos III and he started a revolt against Rome near Smyrna (İzmir) protesting this will (Malay, 1987: 36-37; Cohen, 1995: 201; Strabon, 2015: XIV.1.38).

Rome asked Hellenistic Kingdoms, which were their supporters in Anatolia, to quell the revolt that was started by Aristonikos. The King of Bithynia Nikomedes II, the King of Kappadokia Ariarathes V Eusebes Philopator, the King of Pontos Mithridates V Euergetes and the King of Paphlagonia Pylaimenes all acted in unison with their subordinate armies to suppress the revolt (Gruen, 1984: 599; Arslan, 2010: 300; Strabon, 2015: XIV.1.38). These small kingdoms in Anatolia were unsuccessful to suppress Aristonikos Revolt. Thereupon, Rome first sent 5 messengers to Anatolia and then an army under the guidance of consul Publius Licinius Crassus. The King of Kappadokia Ariarathes V, participated in the battles again along with

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<sup>1</sup>Strabon declares that Kharondos Laws are applied in Mazaka, capital of Kappadokia with the other known name in Eusebia near Argaious (Mount Erziyes).

consul Publius Licinius Crassus and he died during the clashes (Clinton, 1851: 387; Townsend, 1862: 182; Hazel, 2002: 20; Strabon, 2015: XIV.1.38).

The sons of Ariarathes V were under age, so his wife Queen Nysa inherited the throne of Kappadokia (McGing, 1986: 34; Sayles, 2007: 201-202). It's probable that Queen Nysa's father was the King of Pontos Pharnakes I (223-187 BC), who had Persian and Macedonian blood and her mother Nysa was the daughter of the King of Seleukos Antiokhos III Megas (223-187 BC) and Laodike (Mattingly, 1997: 123, 139; Arslan, 2007: 66).

The King of Seleukos Demetrios I Soter (162-150 BC) chose the King of Kappadokia Ariarathes V Eusebes Philopator as an allied for him to be stronger for eventful throne struggle. Demetrios I wanted to base this alliance on marriage to make it more powerful. For this reason, Demetrios I tried to marry his sister Laodike, who was the widow wife of Perseus (179-168 BC), Macedonian King of Antigonos, to Ariarathes V (Grainger, 1997: 49, 64, 659; Mattingly, 2007: 49; Arslan, 2010: 294). However, Ariarathes V rejected this proposal and he married Pontos Princes, Nysa (McGing, 1986: 73; Cohen, 1995: 379; Mattingly, 2007: 66).

Nysa, who was a Rome sympathizer like her husband, took over the Kappadokia throne with enlarged lands. Upon the death of Ariarathes V, Kappadokia lands were enlarged by consul Manius Aquillus. Before he made them *provincial* Asia (Asia State) consul Manius Aquillus shared some of the lands of Pergamon Kingdom to Hellenistic Kingdoms in Anatolia as bounty lands since they were on Rome's side during Aristonikos Revolt. According to this sharing, Kilikia and Lykaonia Regions were given to Ariarathes V's sons (Kaya, 2005: 16; Arslan, 2007: 69; Thonemann, 2011: 112; Tozan, 2014: 26; Kay, 2014: 64). When consul Manius Aquillus was sued because he was involved in corruption allegations along with the King of Pontos Mithridates V Euergetes, Rome *Senatus* objected the sharing of the lands of Asia State to these two kingdoms (Magie, 1950: 169; Kay, 2014: 78-79).

Kappadokia Kingdom which was in complexity was ruled by Ariarathes VI and Queen Nysa together for a few years while its borders were trying to be redrawn by Rome and Pontos Kingdom and they minted the management coins with the portraits of Queen Nysa on one side and Ariarathes VI on the other side (Wroth, 1899: xxix; Magie, 1950: 202-203; Simonetta, 1977: 29; Mørkholm, 1979: 245; Arslan, 2007: 70). Queen Nysa poisoned 5 of her 6 sons to be able to continue her sovereignty for a long time<sup>2</sup>. Her sixth son Ariarathes VI was abducted and saved from this massacre by his relatives (Boyce and Grenet, 1991: 268; Arslan, 2007: 70). However, the fact that Queen Nysa poisoned her sons caused an unexpected revolt among worried Kappadokia people. The King of Pontos, Mithridates V took advantage of the revolt of Kappadokia people and invaded the region and then he enthroned Ariarathes VI Epiphanes Philopator. He also married his daughter Laodike to Ariarathes VI Epiphanes Philopator to make family bound between Kappadokia Kingdom and Pontos Kingdom (Hazel, 2002: 20; Sayles, 2007: 202).

Just after Mithridates IV Philopator Philadelphos (160/159-150 BC) his parental guardian Mithridates V Euergetes (150-120 BC) inherited the Pontos throne (Arslan, 2007: 68). Mithridates V who was told to have a good education according to ancient sources followed a pro-Rome policy during his rule. Especially in the Third Punic War (149-146 BC) and in Aristonikos Revolt he adopted a manner clearly and took Rome's side (Long 1866: 258-259; McGing, 1986: 36). Upon Aristonikos Revolt, Rome didn't waste Mithridates V's efforts and rewarded him with bounty lands just like rewarded the Hellenistic Kingdoms in Anatolia. Consul Manius Aquillus turned over the management of Great Phrygia and Galatia Regions to Mithridates V Euergetes (Euergetes: benefactor), to Pontos Kingdom that's to say (McGing, 1980: 35; Rankin, 1996: 201; Kaya, 2005: 16; Arslan, 2007: 69; Kay, 2014: 64). After a while, however, allegations were put forward that Mithridates V obtained those regions by giving bribe to consul Manius Aquillus and senators. In the case with bribe assertions, although it was proved that consul Manius Aquillus was innocent, the arrangements of the regions that were given to Pontos and Kappadokia Kingdoms after taking from Pergamon Kingdom were cancelled. Because of this, Mithridates V was vilified and his relations with Rome were spoiled (Dillon and Garland, 2015: 374; Arslan, 2007: 70; Tozan, 2014: 33). Mithridates V fell out with Rome in the last years of his reign due to his aggressive and imperialist policy in Pahplagonia Region. Upon the death of Mithridates V, Rome which took advantage of the ascending of Mithridates VI Eupator (120-63 BC) to the throne at his very early age and the unstable ruling of his mother Laodike annexed the Great Phrygia to the Asia State in accordance with the *lex Sempronia de provincia Asia* which legislated under the leadership of Roman people *tribunus* Gaius Gracchus (Glew, 1977: 388; Sherwin-White, 1977: 70; Kaya, 2005: 16; Arslan, 2010: 304; Kay, 2014: 77; Tozan, 2014: 27-29, 33).

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<sup>2</sup> In some ancient sources, the wife of Kappadokia King Ariarathes V Eusebes was accepted as Laodike. But by means of epigraphic documents the name of Kappadokia King Ariarathes V's wife was verified as Nysa (Cohen, 1995: 279; Mattingly, 1997: 139; Arslan, 2007: 78, dn. 342).

Upon the sudden death of Mithridates V, Queen Laodike (second century BC) inherited the Pontos throne as parental guardian of Mithridates VI and Mithridates Khrestos who were at an early age (McGing, 1986: 44; Arslan, 2007: 77; Mayor, 2010: 44). Pontos Queen Laodike was the daughter of Laodike (third century BC) and the King of Seleukos, Antiokhos IV Epiphanes (Green, 1990: 426; Cohen, 2006: 83; Arslan, 2007: 68).

Mithridates V died dubiously in Sinope in 120 BC According to some ancient sources, Mithridates V was poisoned by his close friends at a feast he held at Sinope Palace (Strabo, 1852: X.4.10; Mayor, 2010: 68). But according to some ancient sources his wife Laodike herself poisoned him with the pressure of Rome. Moreover, Mithridates VI Eupator witnessed his father's poisoning by his mother and he started to drink antidote at an early age for he was afraid to be poisoned by his mother, too (McGing, 1986: 43; Green, 1990: 558; Stuart, 2004: 112; Mayor, 2010: 122).

With reference to the statements of antique writers, the fact that he was thought to be poisoned by his mother was not the only reason Mithridates VI was afraid of her. The Queen of Pontos, Laodike had set several traps for Mithridates VI from his childhood. They made him ride on undomesticated horses, he was tortured pushing the limits of his child-body constantly by forcing him to train with real weapons under the name of so-called instruction (Appianus, 1912-1913: 112; McGing, 1986: 44).

Mithridates VI, who couldn't resist this pressure any more, left his palace in Sinope finally and started to live in the mountains. After a while Mithridates VI got stronger and reacquired his kingdom. Then, he dethroned and imprisoned Queen Laodike who was known as a Rome sympathizer like her husband Mithridates V and got into jollification and raffishness at Sinope Palace (McGing, 1986: 44; Arslan, 2007: 79). In ancient letters there are different assertions about the death of Queen Laodike. One of these assertions is that the uncrowned Queen of Pontos died a natural death in prison and the other one is that she was poisoned by her own son Mithridates VI (Appianus, 1912-1913: 112; Memnon, 2007: 52-53).

According to Memnon; Mithridates VI had a cruel personality by birth. Mithridates VI rebelled even his father Mithridates V who deputed him and his mother Laodike for the ruling of the Pontos Kingdom. For the sake of reign, he excluded his mother and brother from the management with various tricks and then murdered them not to make them a candidate for the throne (Memnon, 2007: 52-53).

### Conclusions

According to the testament of the King of Pergamon, Attalos III, Rome's changing plans over Anatolia witnessed some chain of events from affinity to hostility between Rome and Pontos Kingdom. The Queen of the Pontos Kingdom Laodike took the side of Alexandros I Balas, who tried to get the Seleukos throne asserting that he was the son of the King of Seleukos, Antiokhos IV Epiphanes and Laodike, against Demetrios I Soter who was known as her own brother. Alexandros I Balas rewarded Laodike who took his side and showed her as a concurator for the throne (Polybius, 1889: 478). Even though Laodike's attempts to get the reign before the Pontos Throne could be considered as the queen's passion for the throne; the idea that she might poison her husband Mithridates V Eusebes and her son Mithridates VI Eupator fits better.

According to antique writers, common murder type of that age was poison. Indeed, when consul Manius Aquillius arrived in Anatolia he saw that Mysia Region, one of the regions that was seduced by Aristonikos to revolt, was still in resistance. Under these circumstances, Manius Aquillius poisoned the wells used by people for water requirement to break the resistance of Mysia people (Malay, 1987: 45; Green, 1990: 531). Many scholars of antiquity like Claudios Galenos, Plinius, Columella, Varro, etc. stated that Attalos III dedicated his a few years before his death to toxicology (Malay, 1987: 19; Mattern, 2013: 73). The greatest present of this age to humanity was the antidote Mithridaticum that was invented by Mithridates VI, the toxicologist king of the antiquity, and carried with the same name with its inventor. When Mithridaticum fell into the Roman Empire's physicians' hands from the hands of the Pontos King Mithridates VI, it was turned into a therapeutic medicine and it was used by the physicians until the 18th century by the name of Theriacum (Dale, 1957: 425; Wheelwright 1974: 80; Köknel, 2002: 204). Accordingly, Mithridaticum had approximately 50 mineral and herbal drugs and 4 animal drugs; however, the number of substances in Mithridaticum was increased to 70 from 54 (in some sources it is 64) by Andromachus (1st century) who was Rome Emperor Neron's physician. This mixture named Theriak was last formed by physician Claudios Galenos from Pergamon (129-200). This miracle medicine that Galenos formed by adding viper meat and more than 70 active substances took the first place in Panacea list, that means the list of cure-all medicines (Nutton, 1985: 139, 142; Swain, 1998: 377; Magner, 2005: 130-131).

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