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## 2. From Cradle to Grave: Izates' Birth and Death in Ant. 20:17-96

### 2.1. Recent Scholarship

Scholars seem to be somewhat puzzled about what they find at the outset of the Adiabene narrative. Täubler has simply labelled the whole passage as “permeated with fairy-tales and pious observations”<sup>98</sup>. Schiffman has briefly remarked that the Adiabene passage begins with “a typical myth story regarding a hero who is born under strange circumstances”<sup>99</sup>. Frenschkowski has been the only scholar who undertook a more in-depth analysis of the relevant part of the narrative. According to him, in Ant. 20:17-96 we have “a royal birth legend” which has its roots in the Iranian literary tradition<sup>100</sup>. This legend, evident from Ant. 20:18 up to Ant. 20:33 (when Izates takes over power in Adiabene) consists of three motifs typical of the Iranian literature background – a voice heard at night, persecution taking place from the earliest childhood or youth (Frenschkowski finds, however, this motif to be minimally present in Ant. 20:17-96), taking over the power in the kingdom. According to Frenschkowski, the version of the royal birth legend, as we have it now in the Adiabene passage, lacks two elements – that of a fight against Dragon and that of salvation of the daughter of the older ruler. According to Frenschkowski, this lack probably results from the fact that these elements may not have grown upon history of Izates yet when the story, as we know it today, reached the author<sup>101</sup>. This position has been strongly opposed by Broer whose main point was that such motifs are not limited to literature with an Iranian background, but are widespread in ancient literature including that with a Roman and Greek background<sup>102</sup>.

The last contribution to the matter has been done by R. K. Gnuse who provides us with a detailed study on dreams in Josephus<sup>103</sup>. Gnuse's approach to the study on dreams in Josephus can be characterized by two major features. First, Gnuse's study has a form-critical approach which is focused on literary forms of accounts. Secondly, Josephus' mode of presenting dreams is depicted in the light of older and contemporary literary traditions. As far as the Adiabene passage is concerned, Gnuse analyzes Ant. 20:18-19, referred to as “Monobazus' dream”<sup>104</sup>. Inclusion of Ant. 20:18-19 in the list of dream reports of Josephus was done by Gnuse mainly because of formal criteria which are fulfilled by the text. First of all, Monobazos is asleep which is first conveyed by the verb participle *συγκαθεύδων* and then once again stressed by the fact that he awoke (*προσαναπαύσας*)<sup>105</sup>. What is more, we can find in Ant. 20:18-19 technical terms used also in other ancient dream narratives. First and foremost, this is the verb *δοκέω* - a typical device to report what is seen and/or heard in a dream<sup>106</sup>. Further, some elements of the structure of the dream of Monobazos fit well a typical structure of dream reports<sup>107</sup>. Thanks to Gnuse's important contribution, there is no doubt that Ant. 20:18-19 has the distinctive literary form of a dream report.

Of course, the question arises whether it is enough to treat the beginning of the Adiabene narrative only as an example of a dream report. A dream report appears only in Ant. 20:18-19 and the character of the rest of the narrative until Ant. 20:33 remains open. Other scholars suggested other names for Ant. 20:18-19 (and Ant. 20:20-33): “a royal birth legend” (Frenschkowski), “a

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<sup>98</sup> Täubler 1904: 62-65.

<sup>99</sup> Schiffman 1987: 295.

<sup>100</sup> Frenschkowski 1990: 223-228.

<sup>101</sup> Frenschkowski 1990: 228: „Diese eher märchenhaften Elemente konnten so früh nach dem Ableben des betroffenen Herrschers noch nicht an die Historie anwachsen”.

<sup>102</sup> Broer 1994: 152-153.

<sup>103</sup> Gnuse 1996. See about Gnuse's contribution Begg 1999 and Gray 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Gnuse 1996: 196-197.

<sup>105</sup> Gnuse 1996: 196-197.

<sup>106</sup> Hanson 1980: 1409.

<sup>107</sup> Gnuse 1996: 196-197.

myth story about a birth of hero” (Schiffman). These two other characterizations of the account are also helpful because they point out to a broader category of literary traditions that are about miraculous events preceding or accompanying the birth of a hero, but also touch on the broader context in that they mostly carry the story lines until the hero definitely takes a grip over the situation (in the case of a royal hero he usually overcomes his enemies and takes over power). Thus, apart from going the path marked by Gnuse (Ant. 20:18-19 as a distinctive case of an ancient dream report), we shall also follow traces indicated by Frenschkowski and Schiffman (Ant. 20:18-33 and the literary tradition of *Kindsheitsgeschichten*).

As for Ant. 20:92-96 and its report on Izates’ death, it has attracted considerably less attention of scholarship than Ant. 20:18-19. In fact, we have only separate references by scholars to Ant. 20:92-96 who predominantly focus on only two pieces of data. First, it is the number of Izates’ sons and daughters and the number of years of his life and reign (Ant. 20:92). Second, it is the reference to the burial place of Izates and Helena (Ant. 20:95). Both issues are mostly classified under the topic of chronology (when did Izates die and how long did he reign?) and archaeology (where to find Helena’s monuments?). However, the fact that data on Izates’ life, reign and offspring is conveyed with ominous numbers (which frequently appear in Biblical narratives) led some scholars to dwell on the nature of this reference. Graetz called it “verdächtig”<sup>108</sup>, both Frenschkowski<sup>109</sup> and Schiffman saw legendary or mythological significance of the number 24<sup>110</sup>. However, most of such opinions approach this information from the point of view of historical credibility. This research task can indeed be performed (see chapter 12), but our present aim will be to ask about the meaning of Ant. 20:92-96 as a literary product, especially as a piece of biographical literature.

## 2.2. Introduction to Izates’ Birth

Generally speaking, biographies start with a report of the protagonist’s birth. So is the case with Izates. At the same time, what strikes us is how very much miraculous the birth of Izates appears to be. This fact, and not the birth itself, can be perceived in two ways. On the one hand, we have to keep in mind that according to “the *περὶ βασιλείας* literature” (see chapter 3.2.), a good birth was not absolutely necessary for a good king. When the king asks in the *Letter of Aristeas* what is best for people – a private citizen or a member of the royal family to be appointed as king, he receives the answer that only the one who “is best by nature” (*Let. Aris.* 288-290)<sup>111</sup>. Likewise, Plato holds that Dareios I was able to exhibit so many virtues precisely because he was not born as the son of a king (Plato, *Leges*, 3.694c-695d). On the other hand, the Greek literature made a virtue of good birth in and of itself<sup>112</sup>. Not only theorists writing on human life like Plato and Aristotle paid a lot of attention to one’s genealogy (Plato, *Hippias Maior*, 285D; Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 2.15.1390B11-30), but most ancient biographies start with information on genealogy of a given protagonist. So much stress was placed on the matter, that it became a fix subject for satire in the Hellenistic literature<sup>113</sup>. In an anonymous parody of Homer’s *Iliad* entitled “the Battle of the Frogs and Mice” a frog questioned a mouse – “who are you, stranger? Whence do you come to this shore? And who is the one who begot you?”<sup>114</sup>. Nevertheless, a literary leaning to explore one’s genealogy continued and we can find its abundance well into Josephus’ times and later. It was surely a standard to which Josephus had to conform if he wanted to present his protagonist as a

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<sup>108</sup> Graetz 1877: 241.

<sup>109</sup> Frenschkowski 1990: 229, n. 66.

<sup>110</sup> Schiffman 1987: 297. Likewise Broer 1994: 149-150.

<sup>111</sup> O. Murray 1967: 358-359.

<sup>112</sup> Feldman 1998a: 85.

<sup>113</sup> Feldman 1998a: 86.

<sup>114</sup> Feldman 1998a: 86.

great hero. After all, since Izates is best fit by nature to become a king, it is additionally positive to describe him as being of a good birth. Accordingly, in Ant. 20:18-19 we find the report on a miraculous event preceding Izates' birth and the reference to his birth itself. Further, from Ant. 20:20 onwards we witness his youth until Ant. 20:33 where Izates is said to succeed his father on the throne of Adiabene. After Ant. 20:33 the narrative takes a thematic path through such topics as conversion and challenges of domestic and foreign policy. As a result, the part of the Adiabene narrative that is specifically focused on Izates' birth and youth (and will therefore require our attention) is located only from Ant. 20:18-19 (the birth of Izates) until Ant. 20:33.

### 2.3. The Report on Izates' Birth and Youth (Ant. 20:18-33) in Light of Ancient *Kindheitsgeschichten*

It is well-known that in many literary traditions we can find texts that report miraculous events accompanying the birth of a child, in most cases they also pertain to the first years of his life<sup>115</sup>. Such stories have frequently been labeled as *Kindheitsgeschichten*. They of course differ from each other when it comes to details, but, on the other hand, one can get the impression of some similarities between them. Namely, they share a number of recurring themes. Therefore, scholars tried to list them and in this way show a number of most often recurring themes that account for striking similarities<sup>116</sup>. For example, U. Luz gives 14 examples including the Biblical and Near Eastern sources, Greek and Roman texts, as well as Persian and Indian traditions<sup>117</sup>. Generally speaking, the most common themes are the prediction of the child's future greatness, the threat to the child and finally a sort of a happy ending when the child overcomes the difficulties.

The prediction of the future greatness of the child (including an extraordinary announcement of the birth) can be foretold in many ways: a dream received by the mother or the father or even an enemy of the child, an oracle, a comet, a vision or other miraculous events indirectly indicating great things to come<sup>118</sup>. Thanks to Gnuse's excellent contribution, we can now safely state that this element of *Kindheitsgeschichten* is well present in Ant. 20:17-96 (to be precise in Ant. 20:18-19), and is conveyed through a distinctive literary genre of a dream report.

The dream report as such had a long literary tradition before it reached Josephus. A number of studies focused on dream reports in ancient literature have made it clear that there were standardized formats for reporting dreams in ancient literature<sup>119</sup>. Of course, some significant differences can be found between traditions, but the fact remains that we find substantial continuity in conventional forms, vocabulary, content and functions from the ancient Near East to the Mediterranean world<sup>120</sup>. Thus, ancient dream reports fall into a few categories of reporting, some of these categories are more typical of one literary background than of others, but most transcend cultural, linguistic and geographic lines<sup>121</sup>. As for Josephus, he was, to be sure, indebted to the Biblical tradition and through it to the Near Eastern output; however, he wrote in Greek and was primarily influenced by the Greco-Roman standards of dream reporting. Furthermore, despite the existence of at least three different categories of the Greco-Roman dream reports (1- audio-visual dream-visions 2- auditory dream-visions 3-visual dream-visions<sup>122</sup>), it is possible to recognize a paradigm behind the formats of different types of dream reports. The format as suggested by

<sup>115</sup> Zeller 1981: 27-48; Luz 1985: 125-127; Frenschkowski 1990: 223-228; Feldman 1998a: 87-89.

<sup>116</sup> Zeller 1981: 27-48; Luz 1985: 126-127.

<sup>117</sup> Luz 1985: 126-127.

<sup>118</sup> Luz 1985: 126-127.

<sup>119</sup> Oppenheim 1956; Hanson 1980; Gnuse 1996; Weber 2000; Flannery-Dailey 2004. See also Sulzbach 2008 for a review of Flannery-Dailey's contribution.

<sup>120</sup> Flannery-Dailey 2004: 281.

<sup>121</sup> Flannery-Dailey 2004: 7.

<sup>122</sup> Hanson 1980: 1409-1412.

Hanson is as follows<sup>123</sup>: 1. scene-setting including a dreamer (name, personality, and status), place of the dream, time (season and time of day), mental state or activity of the dreamer, 2. report of the dream: a term for the dream, introduction with the verb δοκέω, 3. content of the dream, 4. reaction to the dream (a wide range of emotions can be found here), 5. response to the dream (which is the direct action undertaken by the dreamer).

Ant. 20:18-19 is included in the second category of dream types (which features only purely auditory revelations). Further, Ant. 20:18-19 fits perfectly the Greco-Roman standard of dream reporting including the structure and the usage of a distinctive terminology. First, the fact that Ant. 20:18-19 is a dream report stands beyond doubt because Monobazos is first said to be asleep (συγκαθεύδων) and then is said to wake up (προσαναπαύσας). In-between, he hears the divine message. Further, the scene-setting is provided. We are told about the name (Monobazos, we are given even his nickname) and status of the dreamer (king of Adiabene, a brother and husband to Helena), as well as of his wife involved in the background of the dream (Helena, sister and wife to Monobazos). Information about events preceding the time of the dream (love, marriage, pregnancy) belongs to characterization of the dreamer. They are necessary here because both Monobazos and Helena are new characters for Josephus. Normally, people whose dreams were related had appeared in the narrative earlier and this literary context (biography or history) made further details unnecessary<sup>124</sup>. Thus, Ant. 20:18 with all details on Monobazos' and Helena's marriage can be best understood as an introductory part of a dream report format, and consequently it is not necessary to see it as any kind of Oriental romance<sup>125</sup>. Ant. 20:18 also gives further elements of the scene-setting – the time, however, in this case this reference is very general – “on one occasion”. Yet, it is still in accordance with the pattern since “the dream vision may occur at any and all times”<sup>126</sup>. Further, activity of the dreamer immediately preceding the dream is mentioned (sleep with his wife, putting his hand on Helena's belly). When it comes to the dream report itself, we lack a technical term for a dream; however, this is not unusual. In many cases, the context decides whether or not we have to do with a dream experience. The content of the dream is preceded with a key technical word, δοκεῖν. After the content of the dream narrated in third person discourse, we have a termination (Monobazos awakes) and reaction (Monobazos is disturbed and tells his dream to Helena like Amram in Ant. 2:217). Furthermore, the last activity referred by the text of Ant. 20:19 to Monobazos, namely the name-giving of Izates, can be seen as “the direct action that the dreamer is depicted as taking in consequence of the dream ... the exact nature of the response in a given case will obviously depend on the particular message or meaning ... ” of the dream<sup>127</sup>. All in all, we have a very good example-text of a dream report in Ant. 20:18-19, which is written in Greek and conforms perfectly to Greek modes of dreams reporting. Thus, even if we were to assume, as some scholars do, that Josephus's source for this passage was not Greek<sup>128</sup>, Josephus put this source into his text and crafted the narrative in Greek and in accordance with well-established Hellenistic modes of dream reports.

Thus, we must say Ant. 20:18-19 is very close to the tradition of miraculous events preceding the birth of a great hero. The announcement of Izates' birth including the prediction of his future greatness is presented in a dream report. What about other recurring themes of the *Kindheitsgeschichte*-tradition, especially that of a threat to the child and his final overcoming of the difficulties?

The very reason for God stepping in and delivering the message is the possible harm done to the baby through his father's hand laid upon Helena's belly. Thus, the Adiabene narrative also

<sup>123</sup> Hanson 1980: 1409-1413.

<sup>124</sup> Hanson 1980: 1406 and n. 44.

<sup>125</sup> By contrast, see e.g. Gruen 2002: 247; J.B. Segal 2005: 67; Ilan 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Hanson 1980: 1406.

<sup>127</sup> Hanson 1980: 1413.

<sup>128</sup> Schalit 1965: 163-188; Schalit 1973: 367-400; N. Cohen 1975/76: 30-37; Schiffman 1987: 293-312.

possesses the theme of threat to the child from which the child has to be miraculously rescued. However, it is the point where the Adiabene narrative considerably departs from the standardized theme of most *Kindheitsgeschichten* of royal background, because there is no rivalry between the child-heir and the king (who often is the father of the child). This is especially evident if we take account of Oriental versions of the *royal birth legends*. Kyros is persecuted by Astyages (Herodotus, *Historiae* 1.107-122; Justinus, *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum* 1.4-6), Dürsraw tries to kill Zarathustra (*Dēnkard* 7.3 and *Zādspram* 12 where Zarathustra's father also opposes his son), Farīdūn has to escape the assassination plan of Zāhhāk, the Dragon-King (*Shahname* 4). Furthermore, such a background of a threat is also present in some Greek and Roman texts (see Zeus and Thetis, Danae and Akrisios, king of Argos, Oedipus and Laios, Romulus and Remus versus King Amulius, as well as many others: Achilles, Paris, Telephos, and Herakles)<sup>129</sup>. Likewise, Biblical traditions too provide us with stories about the persecution of prodigy children such as Moses or Jesus<sup>130</sup>. By contrast, Monobazos is always on the side of his son. He loves him as if he were his only child (Ant. 20:20), he sends him to Charax Spasini only to protect him (Ant. 20:22), he wants to see him before death (Ant. 20:24), decides to leave his kingdom to him (at least in the words of Helena – Ant. 20:27 and of the royal council – Ant. 20:28). Thus, Monobazos is presented as unambiguously positively disposed towards Izates. The moment when he brought possibility of harm to Izates took place while at sleep and as such must be treated as unconscious. The lack of real animosity between Izates and Monobazos sets the Adiabene narrative apart from the mainstream of *Kindheitsgeschichten*. If so, what other kinds of threat can we find in Ant. 20:18-33?

There is indeed another strand of the theme of threat posed to Izates, this time by his half-brothers. Yet, the danger arising from Izates' half-brothers' hatred and envy, as it is narrated in Ant. 20:21-22, surprisingly lacks any sort of political undertone. If Izates' enemies from Ant. 20:21-22 and Ant. 20:28-30 (Izates' brothers and kinsmen mentioned by the council of high officials in their speech to Helena) are to be understood as the same, then only in Ant. 20:28-30 does this kind of threat takes on a political meaning. Yet, it originally arises from personal envy and hatred created by family conditions (Ant. 20:21-22). In fact, Izates' family relations in Ant. 20:21-22 do not follow the pattern of *Kindheitsgeschichten*, but instead echo those in the biblical Joseph story (as Josephus knew it in Ant. 2:9-200). This can be argued because of *the striking occurrence of two terms* in Ant. 20:21 and 29: φθόνος and μῖσος, used by Josephus within one sentence only six times in all his writings (Ant 2:10; Ant. 6:193; Ant. 20:21 and 29; Bell. 2:82; Bell. 4:566), and particularly the examples from Ant. (Ant. 2:10: the biblical Joseph and his brothers; Ant. 6:193: David and Saul; Ant. 20:21,29: Izates and his brothers) are very telling. Namely, all three victims of φθόνος and μῖσος are God's elected ones, and apparently their rise supported by God's providence evokes others' envy and hatred<sup>131</sup>. Furthermore, even in Ant. 20:28-30 where the half-brothers account for some opposition against Izates, Izates has mighty supporters including the deceased king, the queen mother and the nobles. Thus, this kind of threat is not the most serious for Izates. What is more, it is not really Izates who has to overcome the difficulties, since all troubles are removed by his mother, before he arrives in Adiabene. This easiness stands out among other *Kindheitsgeschichten* where young heroes undergo serious tribulations.

Thus, there is indeed the theme of threat to the young Izates that resembles the tradition of *Kindheitsgeschichten* but Ant. 20:18-33 has also its own distinctive features that do not allow us to classify Ant. 20:18-33 as a slavish imitation. Furthermore, the theme of the threat to Izates

<sup>129</sup> Feldman 1998a: 87-89.

<sup>130</sup> For the Moses tradition and the Infancy narrative in the NT – see Crossan 1968: 119-135; Crossan 1986: 18-27. However, they lack the element of the son and *father* conflict and this sets them a little apart from other *Kindheitsgeschichten*.

<sup>131</sup> For more, see Marciak 2011a: 63-83, esp. 70-71, 73, 82.

continues until the end of Ant. 20:17-96 and takes on different undertones – a threat because of Izates' foreign policy (Ant. 20:69-74) or a danger because of his adoption of Jewish customs (Ant. 20:75-91). Thus, while Ant. 20:17-96 is centered on Izates' conversion as the main topic, it is also built along the theme of dangers to Izates from which he is always miraculously rescued by God. The kinds of dangers change, but God's hand unchangeably accompanies Izates. Consequently, the idea of *the political threat* to the child-heir, so closed to royal *Kindheitsgeschichten*, is only a small part of a broader theme of dangers to Izates.

To sum up, we can find in Ant. 20:17-96 some features of *Kindheitsgeschichten* that were widespread throughout ancient cultures. However, not all elements are present to the same extent. The great future of the child is indeed announced in a dream. Further, the idea of the threat to the child-heir is also present but it is only part of a larger theme within the whole Adiabene narrative and consequently its origin cannot be reduced only to the *Kindheitsgeschichte*-tradition. Again, the way the threat is presented in the narrative is far away from the standard in that it does not move around the king-heir-conflict idea.

#### 2.4. The Report on Izates' Death (Ant. 20:92-96) in Light of Ancient βίαι

Since Ant. 20:17-96 opens the plot with a report (Ant. 20:18-19) on the birth of the main protagonist, it is most appropriate for an account organized as a biography to conclude with the protagonist's death<sup>132</sup>. In this manner, readers/listeners can get a sense of completeness so natural for an account whose narrative framework resembles natural limits of human life. This is indeed the case with the Adiabene narrative that comes to an end with Ant. 20:92-96 where both Izates' death and burial are presented alongside those of his mother Helena.

However, the purpose of concluding chapters in ancient biographies was not limited to simply recording the fact of one's decease. Indeed, the essence of such conclusions lay in recapitulating the character of the protagonist, praising his most important achievements, and emphasizing his lasting legacy<sup>133</sup>. Additionally, information on funeral and/or burial, as well as on all miraculous circumstances accompanying the first post-mortal record of the protagonist, was thoroughly narrated<sup>134</sup>.

Indeed, Izates' life is again looked back on in Ant. 20:92-96, and presented as completely fulfilled. Izates' life and reign are presented as long; his death takes place in a natural way unlike those of most (but not all) ancient protagonists recalled in biographies<sup>135</sup>. He also left an extraordinary number of descendants, 24 sons and daughters, being clearly a sign of prosperity<sup>136</sup>. Likewise, Ant. 20:92-96 strikes us with a picture of idyllic family relations in Izates' family, especially between Izates and his mother and older brother. This not only contrasts with earlier phases of Izates' life, but strikingly departs from what has been widely thought about Parthian royal courts in the Roman society<sup>137</sup>, and even what started to become the pressing dilemma of the Roman Empire itself<sup>138</sup>.

Concluding parts of ancient biographies again referred to the character of their protagonist. Of course, since the whole narrative was designed to focus at length on deeds and virtues, the concluding insight into the protagonist's character could not be a mere repetition. Instead, the conclusion aimed at either revealing the true character (previously hidden or not well enough

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<sup>132</sup> Burrige 2006: 142, 174.

<sup>133</sup> Burrige 2006: 33.

<sup>134</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 339-350.

<sup>135</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 303-304; Burrige 2006: 174-175.

<sup>136</sup> Ginzberg 1938: 484.

<sup>137</sup> Campbell 1993: 219.

<sup>138</sup> Charlesworth 1936: 110.

revealed) or recapitulating the essence of the protagonist<sup>139</sup>. Accordingly, Izates is called εὐσεβέστατος (most pious). Since piety is the virtue most frequently recalled throughout Ant. 20:17-96 (see chapters 1.3., 1.4. and 5.3.1.), it can be seen as the essence of Izates' character. Further, since one of the basic purposes of ancient biographies was to preserve the memory of the protagonist<sup>140</sup>, and, as Isocrates put it, a praiseworthy character is a far better memorial than any statue (*Evagoras* 73-74), it is piety as a most important aspect of Izates' model that Josephus recommends to the readers/listeners of Ant. 20:17-96.

Concluding parts of ancient biographies often conveyed definite instructions or the greatest deeds of their protagonists<sup>141</sup>. In the case of Ant. 20:92-96, there is actually only one, but very important, strand of that tradition. Namely, Izates gives the orders concerning the succession on the Adiabene throne and it is Monobazos, his brother, who is chosen to succeed Izates. In this aspect, Izates acted like a good statement such as Emperor Augustus who not only assigned Tiberius as his successor well in advance<sup>142</sup>, but devoted lots of his last hours to instructive talks with him (Suetonius, *Augustus* 99)<sup>143</sup>. Indeed, securing a stable succession in the kingdom was one of the basic duties of a good ruler according to the Hellenistic royal ideology<sup>144</sup>. Josephus' emphasis on this element of Izates' legacy can be best understood in the context of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Rome, whose power started to suffer from internal crises revolving around the problem of succession<sup>145</sup>. By the same token, Izates is presented as the opposite of what was considered in Rome to be typically Parthian (and negative)<sup>146</sup>.

Ancient biographies pay a lot of attention to the funeral and/or burial of protagonists. Generally speaking, good protagonists deserve an honorable place of eternal resting, while bad protagonists are refused an appropriate burial and are consequently sentenced for condemnation of their memory<sup>147</sup>. People's reactions to the death of the protagonist, especially all expressions of sorrow or respect, are carefully recorded as meaningful signs of honor for the protagonists<sup>148</sup>. In this context, two characteristics of Izates' portrait in Ant.20:92-96 stand out. First, Helena's sorrow (that is said to have contributed to her passing away), and Monobazos' respect for the physical remains of Izates (and Helena) show us that Izates' life earned a lot of admiration and respect among his contemporaries. Finally, the place of Izates' burial is not incidental for two reasons. First, the physical shape of a resting place was not without meaning. A *great* hero should be given an *appropriate* resting place as a sign of recognition for his *great* life<sup>149</sup>. Thus, structures of considerable proportion and extraordinary ornamentation were particularly fit for protagonists whose lives have been praised in biographies. Josephus' description of Izates' resting place as *pyramids* seems to fulfill these requirements. Interestingly, what Josephus puts in Ant. 20:95 as *three pyramids* built for Helena and also her sons, is repeatedly described in *Bell.* (see chapter 7.3.2) as the *monuments of Helena* alone and her sons are not mentioned at all. It seems then that the tradition of these monuments recalled in *Bell.* and the other ancient literature was inherently connected with Helena, but in Ant. 20:92-96 it is also used for Izates. The reason is that Izates as a great hero is supposed to receive a royal burial, and so the *monuments of Helena* became the *tomb of Izates and Helena* in Ant. 20:92-96 (for the role of the *monuments of Helena* in a social dimension see chapters 7.2.2. and 7.2.3.). Finally, great heroes described as national leaders were

<sup>139</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 347-348; Burrige 2004: 33.

<sup>140</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 347-348.

<sup>141</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 331-333; Burrige 2004: 33.

<sup>142</sup> Charlesworth 1936: 110-111.

<sup>143</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 332.

<sup>144</sup> Charlesworth 1936: 110-111, n. 9.

<sup>145</sup> Charlesworth 1936: 107-132.

<sup>146</sup> Campbell 1993: 218-219 and 219, n. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 341-342.

<sup>148</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 339-342; Burrige 2006: 175.

<sup>149</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 341-342.



expected to be buried in the fatherland<sup>150</sup>. A burial outside the home country for political leaders was seen as exile, and treated as a personal tragedy<sup>151</sup>. So was the fate of Themistocles who died in exile, but expressed his wish to have his remains later transferred to Attica (Cornelius Nepos, *Themistocles* 8-10). Consequently, the location of Izates' and Helena's resting place shows that it was Judea and not Adiabene that became their first home country.

Remarkably, there is not a single word in Ant. 20:92-96 about miraculous signs accompanying Izates' death and burial, especially no motifs widespread in non-Jewish literature that could suggest a divine character of Izates<sup>152</sup>. This surely results from the ideological restraint in Josephus proper to his Jewish background. This also means that the divine aura of the dream report in Ant. 20:18-19 is to be interpreted within this Jewish restraint. Izates is therefore presented as a great hero whose future greatness is announced already before his birth, but he is *not* a divine figure<sup>153</sup>. By the same token, he shares the same mortality as all other people. However, what helps preserve his legacy for future generations is his magnificent burial place and, the more so, the memory of utmost-piety among his contemporaries.

## 2.5. Conclusions

1. Ant. 20:18-33 clearly belongs to a long literary tradition well present throughout ancient cultures that concern the birth and childhood of great heroes. Their birth is announced in a miraculous way; their future greatness is also predicted. Further, we hear of great dangers heroes face and how they overcome them. Yet, we find many recurring themes in *Kindheitsgeschichten* but there also some important differences between such stories. Consequently, one cannot expect all *Kindheitsgeschichten* to closely follow up the pattern because such a pattern was very loose if it existed at all. In this context, we must remark that Ant. 20:18-33 departs considerably from the standard use of the theme of the threat. One cannot therefore say that Ant. 20:18-33 has been closely modelled on a particular kind of the *Kindheitsgeschichte*. We may rather speak of a great deal of affinity, but not of a strict conformity to a pattern.

2. The announcement of birth in Ant. 20:18-19 is in particular conveyed by a dream report. Thus, while we cannot perceive Ant. 20:18-33 as a whole or any other part of Ant. 20:18-33 as a distinctive genre in the strict sense (especially as a *Kindheitsgeschichte*), Ant. 20:18-19 can be classified as a typical case of a dream report.

3. With regard to Frenschkowski's idea about the Iranian provenience of the *royal birth legend* in the Adiabene narrative, we must remark that the literary motifs present in Ant. 20:18-33 cannot be strictly limited to one literary tradition. Further, the format of dream reporting in Ant. 20:18-19 finds its closest parallels in Greco-Roman literature. Thus, whatever the provenience of sources underlying Ant. 20:18-33 is, Josephus used them and crafted his narrative in Greek and in accordance with all widely accepted standards of Greek-Roman dream reports (for more on the problem of the sources of Ant. 20:17-96 as a whole, see *conclusions to part I*).

4. The presence of a birth announcement (Ant. 20:18-19) in Ant. 20:17-96 implies that Izates is a great hero chosen by God before his birth. In this manner, Ant. 20:18-19 sets the agenda for the following course of the narrative: God's choice ensures divine protection for Izates from any possible harm.

5. A motif of danger to Izates and a motif of God's protection began with the birth announcement and continue throughout the whole Adiabene passage. However, only two aspects of the danger-motif are basically related to the literary tradition of miraculous births and childhoods of great heroes. Those are namely the danger posed by his father's hand and the danger

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<sup>150</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 341, 414.

<sup>151</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 341, 414.

<sup>152</sup> Frickenschmidt 1997: 340-345.

<sup>153</sup> By contrast, see Frenschkowski 1990: 216-217.

on the side of other claimants to the throne. The danger arising from Izates' half-brothers' hatred and envy, as it is narrated in Ant. 20:20-22, does not belong to this literary tradition.

7. If we ask why Josephus used a dream report, then we can safely say that it helped him present Izates as a great hero chosen by God even before his birth. Again, a choice to write Ant. 20:18-33 in a way close to ancient *Kindheitsgeschichten* was consistent with Josephus' intention to build the narrative of Ant. 20:17-96 alongside the theme of danger and salvation. Finally, because Josephus recalled Izates and Helena on the account of their conversion and intended to make the conversion story the climax of the whole account, he had to gradually bring his readers/listeners up to this point. The best way to do that was to start with the birth and later finish with a report on death. Thus, Josephus nicely used a loose pattern of *Kindheitsgeschichten* to fill the gap between Ant. 20:17 and Ant. 20:34.

8. Closing the Adiabene narrative with the report on Izates' death and burial is a typical feature of ancient biographical literature. The message of Ant. 20:92-96 is in keeping with the whole account – Izates is a great hero whose lasting memory will be preserved for future generations not only through a magnificent resting place, but even more so through the extraordinary example of his life, the essence of which was utmost piety.

9. Looking at Ant. 20:17-96 through the perspective of its formal beginning and ending, the Adiabene narrative turns out to be a story about the working of God's providence in the life of a most-pious king. The connection between God's providence and human piety remains to be explored in chapter 5.

