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3. Izates as a King

3.1. Introduction

As we have already seen (pp. 21-23 and chapter 2), Ant. 20:17-96 can be read as a biography of Izates. Ancient biographies could be devoted to characters of different backgrounds, but a large part of them focused on political leaders, and that is why we can speak of a political biography as a distinctive subgroup among other ancient biographies¹⁵⁴. Furthermore, ancient biographies had a moralistic streak in that they either presented ideal protagonists or conveyed a moral agenda by criticizing political mistakes or moral failings¹⁵⁵. Either way, by reading a biography we realize the ideal revealed through the author's praise or criticism.

There can be no doubt that the Adiabene narrative can be read as a political biography. First, Izates matches a pattern of a *political type of human life*, particularly a royal one. In fact, we do not get to know Izates in any other way than as a royal figure. Secondly, Josephus' portrayal of Izates' life is unambiguously positive. In fact, there is not the slightest hint of narratorial criticism against Izates and whatever Josephus has to say about his protagonist is positive. This leads us to the conclusion that Josephus paints a picture of an ideal king. Therefore, the Adiabene narrative can be understood in the light of ancient royal ideology.

Ancient texts are full of references to kings and kingship. Some have a theorizing character, namely, they aim at constructing the concept of a good king, that is they contain explicit treatments of kingship and come up with instructions as to how a good king should rule¹⁵⁶. That is why they will be of primary interest to us. However, kingship and other categories of political leadership sometimes overlap in ancient sources¹⁵⁷. By way of illustration, the concept of a good king could not be directly used by Roman statesmen at the time of the Republic, since none of them was a king¹⁵⁸. Nevertheless, leading Roman politicians seem to have known and been influenced by the Hellenistic model of a good king¹⁵⁹. This Hellenistic concept was simply transferred into a different political environment of the Republic and virtues of Hellenistic kings were now attributed to Roman statesmen¹⁶⁰. Thus, although our focus is on kingship, we will also take account of political ideology directed towards other ancient political leaders, whenever such ideology remains in close connection to royal political ideology.

All in all, before we turn to Josephus' portrayal of Izates as a king, we want to look into two issues which are highly relevant to our understanding of the royal ideology of Ant. 20:17-96. First, what ideals of a good ruler, especially (but not exclusively) a king, were present in the ancient world. Of special importance are traditions that had a special hold on Josephus. Those are Greek and Roman traditions and Jewish literature. Secondly, we will briefly take a glimpse at Josephus' political views expressed in other places of his writings than Ant. 20:17-96. Lastly, we will see how Josephus paints a picture of Izates as a king and how this portrayal presents itself in comparison to the ancient concept of a good ruler, and Josephus' political ideas expressed outside Ant. 20:17-96.

¹⁵⁴ Steidle 1963: 140; Geiger 1985: 18.

¹⁵⁵ Geiger 1985: 24-25.

¹⁵⁶ Cairns 1989: 10-11.

¹⁵⁷ Cairns 1989: 11.

¹⁵⁸ On the alleged Roman aversion to the idea of kingship and a probably more sophisticated attitude towards it among republican Romans, see Wirszubski 1950: 121-123, 130-158; Rawson 1975: 148-159 and Cairns 1989: 1-10.

¹⁵⁹ Cairns 1989: 15-16.

¹⁶⁰ Cairns 1989: 15-16.

3.2. The Greek and Roman Royal Ideology

The concept of a good ruler has a long tradition in Greek and Roman philosophy and rhetoric¹⁶¹. The earliest passage theorizing on kingship is delivered by Herodotus who narrates the debate set among the Persians about the merits and faults of different types of government – monarchy, oligarchy and democracy (Herodotus, *Historiae*, 3.80-82)¹⁶². Herodotus' disputants make the case that the rule of one man can easily change into tyranny, however, if the rule is assigned to an individual man of the best kind, then this kind of government could well escape the main disadvantages of other kinds of government - oligarchy (enmities between members of aristocracy) and democracy (masses are fickle). Yet, it was the classical period of the 4th c. CE when the topic of monarchy started to be employed more extensively in philosophical and panegyric writings¹⁶³. Of special importance here are writings of Isocrates, Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle. Isocrates' prose laudations (*Evagoras*, *Nicocles*, *Ad Nicoclem*, and *Phillippus*) are the earliest extant examples of "a full-scale rhetorical idealization of kingship"¹⁶⁴. Xenophon's *Anabasis* (1.9), *Cyropaedia*, and *Agesilaus* also represent panegyric idealizations of their protagonists - Cyrus and Agesilaus¹⁶⁵. Both Isocrates' and Xenophon's writings convey their ideal pictures of kings through the enumeration of many positive qualities possessed by their protagonists, e.g. Agesilaus is presented as "god-fearing, just, generous, incorruptible, self-controlled in food, drink and sexual pleasures, courageous, patriotic, and the enemy of barbarians"¹⁶⁶. Although some passages in Isocrates' and Xenophon's writings indeed contain more theoretical treatments of kingship (e.g. in *Nicocles* the dispute touches on the problem of the best constitution and Isocrates recommends monarchy over democracy and oligarchy because of its permanence and stability¹⁶⁷), it is mainly Plato and Aristotle who provide extensive theoretical discussions and not only rhetorical idealizations of their literary protagonists¹⁶⁸. Plato exhibited a lot of interest in kingship in a number of his works, including *Politicus*, *Leges*, *Alcibiades major*¹⁶⁹. Yet, a locus classicus of Plato's ideas on monarchy is his *Respublica*, where he describes an imaginary *just* society composed of three elements, the kings, their auxiliaries and the rest of citizens¹⁷⁰. In this context, the rulers are thought by Plato to serve as the embodiment of reason in the just state, prescribing what lies in the common interest¹⁷¹. Finally, Aristotle's *Peri basileias* has not survived, but his *Politica* 3 contains an extensive discussion and critique of the 4th c. BCE kingship theory¹⁷². As for the principle, Aristotle considers the rule of one man to be contrary to the equality of human race (*Pol.* 3.17); what is more, he thinks that the statistics speaks against monarchy – two good men are always better than one good (*Pol.* 3.16). Of course, it can theoretically happen that the ruler will be of exceptional virtue and so his rule will be beneficial to all (*Pol.* 3.17), but this is not likely to happen frequently, and if a man not exceeding others in virtue comes into monarchic power (and this is likely to happen often), his rule can very easily turn

¹⁶¹ For concise overviews of the history of the royal ideology, see Walbank 1984: 75-100; Cairns 1989: 10-19; O. Murray 2007: 13-27; Braund 2009: 16-70. These publications provide a basis for the following presentation.

¹⁶² Braund 2009: 24.

¹⁶³ Walbank 1984: 75; Cairns 1989: 11.

¹⁶⁴ Cairns 1989: 11.

¹⁶⁵ Braund 2009: 18.

¹⁶⁶ Walbank 1984: 75.

¹⁶⁷ Walbank 1984: 75.

¹⁶⁸ Braund 2009: 24.

¹⁶⁹ Cairns 1989: 12.

¹⁷⁰ Braund 2009: 24.

¹⁷¹ Braund 2009: 24.

¹⁷² Cairns 1989: 12; O. Murray 2007: 14.

into tyranny (*Pol.* 3.8). Aristotle's contribution is said to be "the most important philosophical discussion of kingship in antiquity"¹⁷³, but, at the same time, his critique "was left forgotten for half a millennium until Julian Apostate"¹⁷⁴.

The 4th c. CE contributions to royal ideology laid the foundations on which later generations built¹⁷⁵. At the same time, it was the Hellenistic period when discussions on the best form of government typical of the classical period were replaced by the assumption that this was in fact kingship¹⁷⁶. As a result, theorizing on kingship became a major occupation of philosophers¹⁷⁷. All major philosophical schools seem to have produced kingship treatises (περὶ βασιλείας *per se*) – the Pythagoreans, the Peripatetics, the Stoics, the Academy, the Cynics, and the Epicureans¹⁷⁸. Of course, all schools developed their own theories of kingship and their theories could differ slightly from one system to the other¹⁷⁹, but it was "more often a question of emphasis than one of substance"¹⁸⁰. Kingship treatises were written in the form of lists of virtues that the king should possess, and consequently we can find the stereotype of an ideal ruler in philosophical sources of different school backgrounds¹⁸¹. Basically, a good king should have love for all mankind (φιλανθρωπία), and his subjects in particular, he has to have a good will towards them (εὐνοία), exercise a watchful care (πρόνοια) and benefit his subjects (εὐργεσία). In all his conduct, the king is to imitate divine virtues. A good king has to abound in virtues, among others: wisdom (in all its different aspects: σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις, σοφία), courage (ἀνδρεία), justice (δικαιοσύνη), self-control (ἐγκράτεια), piety (εὐσέβεια), and many others¹⁸².

The Hellenistic stereotype of a good ruler as a most virtuous man persisted into the Roman period¹⁸³. In fact, the Hellenistic tendency to deal with virtues in general and refer that phenomenon to political activity in particular was right up the Romans' alley. Virtue was a very traditional thing in early Roman culture¹⁸⁴. Every Roman citizen was supposed to be virtuous; Roman statesmen are described as perceiving their public service as the practice of virtue¹⁸⁵. At the same time, the Roman inclination was primarily very practical¹⁸⁶. They were less interested in theorizing on kingship and political leadership, and that is why the Roman literature did not produce a single treatise on kingship in a long time¹⁸⁷. Instead, the Roman statesmen used a very practical presentation of kingship in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as "a textbook of statesmanship" for Roman political leaders¹⁸⁸. In fact, the earliest examples of writers in Rome who wrote on Roman government were indeed Greeks who interpreted Roman political institutions in Greek terms – Polybius, Panaetius, Philodemus of Gadara¹⁸⁹. However, with time there arose a philosophical and

¹⁷³ O. Murray 2007: 17-18.

¹⁷⁴ O. Murray 2007: 14.

¹⁷⁵ O. Murray 2007: 14; Braund 2009: 18.

¹⁷⁶ Cairns 1989: 12; Braund 2009: 18.

¹⁷⁷ Braund 2009: 18.

¹⁷⁸ In fact, most of the reconstruction of the Hellenistic royal ideology is based on indirect evidence since most sources have not survived. See Cairns 1989: 13-15; O. Murray 2007: 14-15, 17-21; Braund 2009: 18.

¹⁷⁹ Cairns 1989: 18; O. Murray 2007: 24; Braund 2009: 27.

¹⁸⁰ O. Murray 2007: 24.

¹⁸¹ Cairns 1989: 18-21; O. Murray 2007: 24; Braund 2009: 27.

¹⁸² On the problem of existence (or lack) of a set canon of (four) virtues, see Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 300-301. For lists of most frequently recurring virtues, see Cairns 1989: 18-21; O. Murray 2007: 24-25; Braund 2009: 27.

¹⁸³ O. Murray 2007: 15 who, however, prefers to call it "the post-Hellenistic period". See also Cairns 1989:15 and Braund 2009: 27.

¹⁸⁴ Fears 1981: 827-948.

¹⁸⁵ Fears 1981: 827-948.

¹⁸⁶ Braund 2009: 27.

¹⁸⁷ Braund 2009: 18-19.

¹⁸⁸ Cairns 1989: 11.

¹⁸⁹ Braund 2009: 27-28.

rhetoical tradition in ancient Rome that contributed to the ancient royal ideology. The most important writers are Cicero, Seneca and Pliny the Younger, all writing in Latin.

Cicero's ideas on political leadership can be found in a number of his writings, *De republica*, *De officiis*, *De legibus*¹⁹⁰. Neither can be called "a kingship treaty as such"¹⁹¹. Nevertheless, Cicero was clearly familiar with the περὶ βασιλείας tradition and many of his ideas "developed organically from the Hellenistic kingship treaties"¹⁹², yet, his contribution was to draw upon the Hellenistic royal ideology and refer it to the Roman conditions of the late Republic¹⁹³. As a result, his contribution was accordingly called "the Romanized version of the Greek political theory"¹⁹⁴. In his writings Cicero opts for "mixed government" that integrates the basic elements of the three main political systems of ancient times (democracy, oligarchy and monarchy) and where there is a special separation of constitutional powers (some issues are left to the decision of the majority of citizens, some other can be decided by a few representatives, and finally some other issues are left to the decision of only one person)¹⁹⁵. In Cicero's mixed constitution the role of the monarch is performed by the consuls, the Senate accounts for the aristocratic element and the democratic one is played by the Plebeian Council and its representatives - tribunes¹⁹⁶. Of course, this ideal can work provided that all its decision makers act as virtuous statesmen¹⁹⁷.

The writings of Seneca and Pliny the Younger clearly witness to a constitutional change from the Republic to the Roman Empire. Both philosophers and rhetoricians could now more closely adapt Hellenistic ideas on royal power to a new political constellation: the Roman Empire. Their portrayals of Roman emperors seem to be more substantially based on the Hellenistic royal ideology, though with a different flavor, than its earlier Republican receptions¹⁹⁸. Seneca's *De clementia* seems to be "the closest thing we have to a 'kingship treatise' in Latin literature from any period"¹⁹⁹. Its focus lies on one virtue particularly recommended to the Roman Emperor – *clementia* which is understood as the decision of the ruler (who stands above the laws) informed by 'what is right and good' producing the most just course of action possible²⁰⁰. In turn, *Panegyricus* of Pliny the Younger is a manifesto of what an ideal *princeps* should be²⁰¹. *Panegyricus* enumerates 51 virtues that should be possessed by an ideal *princeps*; all these imperial virtues have one thing in common – they recommend the ability to "moderate absolute imperial power and to observe self-imposed limitations"²⁰².

From the 2nd c. CE on, the switch was clearly in the direction of rhetorical schools of imperial panegyrics whose production reached its climax by 4th c. CE²⁰³. Imperial coinage also became increasingly important as expressions of imperial ideology²⁰⁴. The rhetorical tradition was transmitted into the Byzantine tradition and continued until the end of its existence in the 15th c.

¹⁹⁰ Cairns 1989: 15; Braund 2009: 19.

¹⁹¹ Braund 2009: 19.

¹⁹² Braund 2009: 19.

¹⁹³ Aalders 1968: 109.

¹⁹⁴ Cairns 1989: 16.

¹⁹⁵ For an overview of the ancient political ideology of the mixed government, see Aalders 1968. See also Walbank's review of Aalders's work – Walbank 1969: 314-317.

¹⁹⁶ Aalders 1968: 113.

¹⁹⁷ See Aalders 1968: 114; Cairns 1989: 16.

¹⁹⁸ Cairns 1989: 16.

¹⁹⁹ Braund 2009: 19.

²⁰⁰ Braund 2009: 30 and 42.

²⁰¹ Radice 1968: 168; Roche 2011: 5-6.

²⁰² Roche 2001: 8.

²⁰³ O. Murray 2007: 15.

²⁰⁴ See Charlesworth 1936: 110-132; Charlesworth 1937: 8-9; Norena 2001: 152-160.

CE²⁰⁵. In fact, the ideals of kingship that originated in antiquity continued to have relevance in the political thought of post-medieval Europe²⁰⁶.

Summing up, from different philosophical and rhetorical traditions up to 2 c. CE there emerges a stereotype of a good king. Based on the 4th c. BCE philosophical foundations, it was substantially shaped in the Hellenistic period and later persisted into the Roman period²⁰⁷. Of course, alongside a great deal of continuity, there is some diversity to which we now turn our attention. A good king is supposed to be a man of virtues. Yet, any attempt to give a list of virtues expected of a good king raises a certain problem. Namely, there is plenty of virtues in sources used for descriptions of political leaders. Further, a definition of each of them can differ from one source to another, not to mention development of meaning over time and differences between Greek and Roman versions. By way of illustration, while Valerius Maximus understands *clementia* and *humanitas* as synonyms, Seneca sets *clementia* apart from *humanitas*. The former is a *divine* act of an emperor as a *supreme* judge, while the latter is a virtue characteristic of human nature²⁰⁸. Another example, the Roman concept of *providentia* seems to be broader than its Greek equivalent – *πρόνοια*. In substance, both mean that a good ruler has to *care about* his people, but the Roman notion developed into further details not really present in its Greek equivalent²⁰⁹. Namely, the emperors were expected to ward off conspiracies and provide for a stable succession by choosing an heir. In doing so, he contributed to the *aeternitas* of Rome. Lastly, there is the ambiguous issue of the relation between *the ruler* and *the written laws (statutes)*²¹⁰. First, the stress of the royal ideology on king's virtues means that "justification of monarchic rule lay essentially in the virtues of the monarch"²¹¹ and consequently there was not much room for statutes whose practice (or lack of) by the king made his rule positive or negative²¹². A good ruler in terms of his personal attitudes automatically meant a good rule²¹³. Secondly, while it is obvious that political leaders of the Greek polis had to obey laws²¹⁴, this can be hardly said about Roman emperors who, in practical terms, stood above laws²¹⁵ and it is presented as an ideological and positive norm in Seneca's *Clementia*²¹⁶. Yet, at the same time, Trajan is praised by Pliny the Younger for restricting himself to the rule of laws and this is presented as a long-awaited return to ancestral customs²¹⁷. The question of the relation of Hellenistic rulers to statutes is not clear-cut either. While there is some evidence for the Ptolemaic Egypt on rulers' usage of laws²¹⁸, some other texts reveal the idea of the ruler as the living law²¹⁹ (*νόμος ἑμψυχος*²²⁰) and this idea meant that the statutes become

²⁰⁵ O. Murray 2007: 15.

²⁰⁶ O. Murray 2007: 15.

²⁰⁷ Cairns 1989: 17; O. Murray 2007: 15.

²⁰⁸ Braund 2007: 39-40.

²⁰⁹ Charlesworth 1936: 107-132, especially 110, 122, 131.

²¹⁰ See Cairns 1989: 18.20; Farber 1979: 502-505; Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 39; Martens 2003: 1-66; O. Murray 2007: 17.25. What is more, for differences between higher laws (the unwritten law, the law of nature, the living law) and written laws, see Martens 2003: 1-60.

²¹¹ O. Murray 2007: 21.

²¹² O. Murray 2007: 17, 25.

²¹³ O. Murray 2007: 17, 25.

²¹⁴ Tcherikover 1958: 65, n. 23; Farber 1979: 503-504.

²¹⁵ Wirszubski 1950: 150-153.

²¹⁶ Braund 2009: 40-42.

²¹⁷ Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 82; Braund 2009: 40-41.

²¹⁸ Schubart 1936/37: 1-26 (esp. 6-7), though his reading of the source material is heavily based on the *Letter of Aristeas* whose ideas, in terms of their provenance, are very differently judged. However, there is some tendency to see Aristeas' stress on the role of laws in a king's conduct as being typically Jewish – Zuntz 1959: 21-23, 35-36; Tcherikover 1958: 66; O. Murray 1967: 353-361, especially 360-361; Mendels 1979: 127-136. If so, then its stress on a ruler's use of laws cannot be taken as representative of the Hellenistic practice.

²¹⁹ Goodenough: 1928: 55-102 (particularly 60-69). This is the case with the neo-Pythagorean writers, especially Diotogenes (apud Stobaeus 4.7.62).

²²⁰ For different translations of the Greek *νόμος ἑμψυχος*, see Martens 2003: 31, n. 1.

superfluous and are replaced by the king who substitutes for laws²²¹. All in all, it seems that on the question of a rulers' position towards legal regulations one has to consider each case individually.

3.3. Kingship in the Jewish Tradition

References to kings and kingship can also be found in the Hebrew Bible. First, there is the traditional Israelite wisdom such as the biblical *Proverbs* where the theme of kings' behavior and their exercise of rule is an important topic (e.g. Prov 31:1-9)²²². Secondly, the narrative traditions of Israel also provide many references to Israelite and Judahite kings, as well as some programmatic statements on the nature and role of kingship in the Hebrew community²²³. Remarkably, some biblical traditions differ radically on their assessment of the role of kingship. Some of these statements are favorable (e.g. Ps 18; Isa 9:5-6); some other (e.g. 1 Sam 8:11-18) are clearly antimonarchic, while again some other (e.g. Deut 17:14-20) tone down the harsh criticism and rather come up with a proposal of a sort of limited monarchy where the king should be the first to obey the divine laws²²⁴. All this ambiguity has its roots in the other concept that is more substantial to Biblical traditions – the concept of God's power over His people (what later became known as "theocracy")²²⁵. Thus, every form of government in the Bible will be judged depending on whether or not it serves as a good tool for achieving the ideals of theocracy²²⁶.

What is more, the Hebrew text has been reread and rewritten in the Hellenistic period in the Septuagint. How interpreters/translators rendered Hebrew texts reveal a lot about their own outlook on their own time in which they lived. Most renderings give away the subtle influence of Greek political thought through the use of Greek terminology; some texts are, however, more deeply influenced by Greek political ideas of that time²²⁷. E.g., in referring to royal anger and advising how to avoid its negative consequences, Greek *Proverbs* uses a Hellenistic stereotype of an angry tyrant²²⁸. The same model is present in *the book of Daniel* (Nebuchadnezzar)²²⁹ and *3 Maccabees* (Ptolemy)²³⁰. The basic idea behind the criticism of tyrannical kings is that kings should be driven by reason (λογισμός) and not exhibit a lack of self-control, especially anger (θυμός and ὀργή)²³¹. However, both books go a step further - while the Greek opposition against tyranny was rooted in a concept of an innate individual liberty, the Jewish refusal to royal tyranny was rooted in a concept of the Law bestowed by God that embraces equally the kings and his subjects and consequently sets limits to royal power²³². Two other writings, *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Sirach*, are of special importance here since they contain longer accounts on kings and kingship that are of programmatic character.

The Wisdom of Solomon, dated differently from 2 c. BCE until 1st c. CE²³³, is without doubt "one of major products of the Egyptian Diaspora"²³⁴ and as such is well convergent with Greek

²²¹ Goodenough 1928: 67-68; Wirszubski 1950: 130-136; Tcherikover 1958: 65, n. 23; Fears 1975: 491-494; Martens 2003: 53 and 65.

²²² Scott 1965: 22-27; Whybray 1995: 18-22.

²²³ For a selection of passages, see R. de Vaux 1991: 91-99.

²²⁴ R. de Vaux 1991: 98-99; Rajak 1996a: 99-100.

²²⁵ R. de Vaux 1991: 99.

²²⁶ R. de Vaux 1991: 99.

²²⁷ For a number of good examples other than those provided in the text, see Pearce 2007: 165-189; Aitken 2007: 190-204; Dines 2007: 205-224; Grabbe 2007: 225-237.

²²⁸ Rajak 2007b: 116-117.

²²⁹ Rajak 2007b: 117-118.

²³⁰ Alexander P./Alexander L. 2007: 96-98.

²³¹ Rajak 2007b: 111-113, 116, 117-118.

²³² Alexander P./Alexander L. 2007: 104, 107, n. 19.

²³³ Soggin 1976: 445; Winston 1979: 20-25; Georgi 1980: 396.

²³⁴ Collins 2000: 195.

culture and philosophy²³⁵. Especially *Wisdom* 6-10 is relevant to our discussion since it presents Solomon as an ideal king and a model for its readers to follow²³⁶. Its portrayal of an ideal king seems to be directly influenced by the *περὶ βασιλείας* treatises²³⁷. According to *Wisdom*, a king shares a common humanity with all other people in that he shares in man's universal intrinsic weakness (7:1-6; 8:19-21)²³⁸. However, a king can achieve his perfection if recognizing his weakness he seeks a share in the divine wisdom – σοφία (7:7-14) that is the origin of all human perfection²³⁹. A king's perfection takes place through an imitation of the divine virtues of the ruler of the universe – temperance, wisdom, justice, courage (σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, and ἀνδρεία in 8:7)²⁴⁰. In all his conduct, an ideal king should imitate the universal ruler who cares for all people (μέλει περὶ πάντων), exercises his power with justice (οὐκ ἄδίκως) and, above all, clemency (ἐπιείκεια), and sets up an example for others how to be φιλόανθρωπος (12:13-19)²⁴¹. Furthermore, *Wisdom* conveys a typically Hellenistic notion of εὐεργεσία. An ideal king, being himself benefactor of the divine ruler, is supposed to be the benefactor for all his subjects (16:11.24)²⁴².

Another important example of the Jewish-Greek thought is the Greek *Sirach* who in many places of his opus refers to his contemporary rulers (including kings but also other members of the ruling class of the Judean society²⁴³) criticizing some behaviors and setting ideals for the right conduct (see especially 9:17-10:18)²⁴⁴. What is more, in Sir 44:1-50:24 (*the Praise of the Ancestors*) he directly refers to the figures from the Israelite past, particularly to kings and high-priests²⁴⁵, and judges their political leadership. Sirach is said not to be dependent on the Hellenistic royal ideology since he does not use a distinctive terminology typical of the *περὶ βασιλείας* tradition²⁴⁶. Instead, his paradigm for ideal kingship seems to have developed from the traditional Israelite wisdom, yet some of his statements are of so universal a character that they can be also found in other traditions, including the Hellenistic royal ideology²⁴⁷. Sirach believes that it is God who is the king who reigns over the universe; he appoints or removes all rulers and has power over them. The primary duty of earthly rulers is to provide for their subjects and to beware wealth (πλοῦτος) and arrogance (ὑπερηφάνια) in their conduct, both of which lead to downfall²⁴⁸. All this can be achieved by those who possess the virtue that plays a central role in Sirach, that is “fear of the Lord” (Sir 10:19-24: οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον)²⁴⁹.

One of most important Jewish-Greek pieces of literature concerned with the idea of kingship is the *Letter of Aristeas*, especially its long section (187-300) called *The seven banquets*. The section presents a series of banquets given by the Ptolemaic king for 72 Jewish translators during which the king receives answers to his questions directed to Jewish sages²⁵⁰. Most answers and questions are concerned with the idea of kingship and the text was considered by scholars

²³⁵ Soggin 1976: 446; Collins 2000: 195-202; McGlynn 2010: 72-77.

²³⁶ Grabbe 1997: 63.

²³⁷ Reese 1970: 72-78; Kloppenborg 1982: 73-78; Grabbe 1997: 64.

²³⁸ Reese 1970: 72; McGlynn 2010: 68-69.

²³⁹ Reese 1970: 72; McGlynn 2010: 68-69.

²⁴⁰ Reese 1970: 76.

²⁴¹ Reese 1970: 74-76.

²⁴² Reese 1970: 78.

²⁴³ Horsley/Tiller 2002: 74-107; Wright/Camp 2001: 162-169; Wright 2007: 77-78.

²⁴⁴ Wright 2007: 76-85.

²⁴⁵ For the development of the ideology of the royal priesthood in Sirach and elsewhere, see Rajak 1996a: 99-115; Himmelfarb 2000: 89-98; Rooke 2000: 289-302, 326-327, 329-330; van der Kooij 2005: 443-444; van der Kooij 2007: 255-264; Dąbrowa 2010a: 105-116.

²⁴⁶ Wright 2007: 81-82, 87-88, 90.

²⁴⁷ Wright 2007: 81-82, 87-88, 90; Rajak 1996a: 101-102.

²⁴⁸ Wright 2007: 78-83.

²⁴⁹ Collins 2000: 31; Wright/Camp 2001: 169; Wright 2007: 88-89.

²⁵⁰ See Zuntz 1959; Tcherikover 1958; O. Murray 1967.

either a *περὶ βασιλείας* or to be based on one of such treatises or at least to be significantly indebted to the Hellenistic royal ideology²⁵¹ (alongside the traditional Biblical wisdom²⁵²). In the eyes of the *Letter of Aristeas* the greatest achievements of kingship are peace (εἰρήνη) prevailing in the kingdom (including prosperity) and the exercise of justice (δικαιοσύνη) by the king (*Let. Aris.* 291)²⁵³. All this can be only achieved through a good character of the ruler²⁵⁴. Such a ruler must be a man of virtue - ἀρετή (*Let. Aris.* 272) that he can learn and master only by imitating God Himself (*Let. Aris.* 210)²⁵⁵. Many virtues are named by the author, but some indeed play the key role²⁵⁶. Namely, the king must be a φιλόανθρωπος (*Aristeas'* φιλανθρωπία has also a synonym - ἀγάπησις) that is to love all mankind in general and his subjects in particular (*Let. Aris.* 208), this leads him to show care (πρόνοια) and practice εὐεργεσία towards his people (*Let. Aris.* 190)²⁵⁷. The king must rule with justice (δικαιοσύνη) and, even more so, with clemency - ἐπιείκεια (*Let. Aris.* 187)²⁵⁸. The evidence of the *Letter of Aristeas* ideology is very important to us for three reasons. First, it is one of few extant pieces of Hellenistic literature on the royal ideology at all and consequently most reconstructions of the Hellenistic royal ideology depend heavily on it²⁵⁹. Secondly, it is a Jewish work written in Greek. Thus, both cultural traditions meet here and produce a work that forms an integral part of both cultural worlds²⁶⁰. Thirdly, the story underlying the main plot of the *Letter of Aristeas* was not only known to Josephus but Josephus himself compared it with his situation in writing *Antiquitates Judaice* (*Ant.* 1:10-12, see also *Ant.* 2:13-57).

Philo of Alexandria is also an excellent case of a Jewish-Greek synthesis of thought²⁶¹. What is more, his ideas on kingship are said to be Greek in substance²⁶² and to be expressed in exactly the same terms as the current Hellenistic royal ideology²⁶³. Philo conveys his kingly ideal in a number of writings; first of all, he often perceives God as the ideal king, secondly, his most elaborate portrayals of earthly ideal kings are the biblical Joseph (*De Iosepho*)²⁶⁴ and Moses (*De Vita Mosis*), and finally in his apologetic writings, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, he had to resort to the concept of a good ruler to back up his demand of respect for the Jewish civil rights²⁶⁵. Philo's idea on perfect rulership on earth is founded on two principles - ideal imitation of God's rule to men, and a ruler being in a special relation to God²⁶⁶. God is of course an ideal king for all the universe, and that is why an earthly ruler has to imitate Him²⁶⁷. To achieve this, the king has to be a philosopher-king, since only then can he learn the wisdom that is necessary to absorb the general law of nature²⁶⁸. In this way, the king will be able to transform unwritten laws of nature

²⁵¹ See Tarn 1951: 426; Zuntz 1959: 29-36; Bickerman 1930: 285-298.

²⁵² There is indeed some tendency to classify *Aristeas'* ideas as more Greek than Jewish in origin or vice versa, alternatively, other scholars regard *Aristeas'* ideas as commonplaces that can be found throughout different cultures. See O. Murray 1967: 360-361.

²⁵³ O. Murray 1967: 353.

²⁵⁴ O. Murray 1967: 353.

²⁵⁵ O. Murray 1967: 359-360.

²⁵⁶ For a good list of "*Aristeas'* virtues", see Zuntz 1959: 28-29.

²⁵⁷ O. Murray 1967: 353.

²⁵⁸ O. Murray 1967: 355-356.

²⁵⁹ O. Murray 2007: 22.

²⁶⁰ O. Murray 1967: 360-361.

²⁶¹ Sandmel 1979: 4.

²⁶² Sandmel 1979: 104.

²⁶³ Goodenough 1938: 110 who says: „in exactly the same terms as the Pythagoreans". Yet, there is a lot of controversy whether the sources identified by Goodenough as Pythagorean are indeed of that provenience. This is however not the issue here. See O. Murray 2007: 20-21.

²⁶⁴ Yet, see also some ambiguity in Philo's approach to Joseph – Hollander 1998: 245-248. See also Feldman 1992b: 379-417, 504-528.

²⁶⁵ Goodenough 1938: 86-120.

²⁶⁶ Goodenough 1938: 90-91, 95-100, 119.

²⁶⁷ Goodenough 1938: 90-91, 95-100, 119.

²⁶⁸ Sandmel 1979: 104.

into written statues and consequently will himself become νόμος ἔμψυχος (incarnated law)²⁶⁹. A king like this will have love for all mankind (φιλανθρωπία), act as savior and benefactor (σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης) and consequently evoke love and good will (φιλία and εὖνοια) in his subjects²⁷⁰. Consequently, the ideal ruler in Philo is like God himself in terms of the power of his authority and his rank²⁷¹.

As for Josephus, there are two issues in his political agenda that are of particular interest to us – Josephus' apologetic presentation of the Jewish people and culture to his audience, as well as his views on political constitutions and legal systems. Both issues are in fact tied together and strictly connected with Josephus' *Sitz im Leben* – he addresses a local Greek-speaking audience in the Flavian Rome, to which he presents the Jewish history and constitution (see πολιτεία in Ant. 1:10; and εὐσέβεια and ἀρετή in Ant. 1:6 that stand for synonyms of a distinctive way of life of a whole people). Being Jewish himself, Josephus is naturally inclined to present his people in a favorable way, and, at the same time, to counter some allegations against them widespread in the Greco-Roman world²⁷². Thus, Josephus presents the Jewish way of life (called πολιτεία, εὐσέβεια, ἀρετή or νόμοι) as being superior on a world scale²⁷³, and as not really particularistic since it conforms to the universal nature (see Ant. 19:25 and Ant. 1:19-21)²⁷⁴. Yet, is this perfect Jewish political arrangement a type of democracy, aristocracy or monarchy? According to Josephus, the Jewish constitution was given by God via Moses, and so can be rightly called θεοκρατία - C. Ap. 2:165. Of course, God's supervision over his people has to be realized on earth, and Josephus' overview of the Jewish history shows a number of attempts to realize the Jewish constitution through a number of political systems known to the Greeks and Romans (democracy, aristocracy and monarchy)²⁷⁵. Josephus (being himself of high social standing during his years in Judea and in Rome alike) was socially conservative – he clearly reveals contempt for masses as a political factor, revolutionaries of various kinds and civil strife²⁷⁶. Thus, democracy is not a system Josephus recommends²⁷⁷. By contrast, Josephus clearly exposes in his writings a preference for an aristocratic political arrangement (the rule of high priests in Jerusalem and of the Senate in Rome)²⁷⁸. What then about monarchy? As said, Josephus clearly prefers aristocracy, but his approach towards monarchy is not entirely negative. Though he clearly sees that monarchy can easily turn into tyranny, he still reports a few positive examples of monarchic rule in Judah and Israel, and, generally speaking, his picture of Biblical kings is much more positive than that in the Bible itself²⁷⁹. Thus, though Josephus' preference for an aristocratic form of government is clear²⁸⁰, it seems that he could still accept monarchy provided that a king is a virtuous servant of God (see Ant. 4:223-224)²⁸¹.

There are several accusations against the Jews that Josephus aims to counter, two of them being, however, most important to us²⁸². The first was a claim that Jewish history did not produce extraordinary people²⁸³; the second one claimed that Jews are not loyal to foreign rulers and care

²⁶⁹ Sandmel 1979: 104.

²⁷⁰ Goodenough 1938: 91.

²⁷¹ Goodenough 1938: 99-100; Sandmel 1979: 105.

²⁷² Feldman 1998a: 660-662; Feldman 1998b: 543, 546, 556-559.

²⁷³ Mason 2009 (forthcoming).

²⁷⁴ Attridge 1976: 42.

²⁷⁵ Feldman 1998a: 144-145, n. 7.

²⁷⁶ Rajak 1984: 78-174; Feldman 1998b: 553-556; Mason 2009.

²⁷⁷ Mason 2009.

²⁷⁸ Mason 2009.

²⁷⁹ Begg 2000: 633-635; Castelli 2010: 541-559; J. Smith 2011: 155-162.

²⁸⁰ For a striking example, see Ant. 6:36 and its interpretation by Feldman 1998a: 502 and Begg 2005: 105-106, n. 135.

²⁸¹ Horbury 2003: 170; J. Smith 2011: 162. By contrast, see Spilsbury 1998: 166-168.

²⁸² Feldman 1998a: 132-162.

²⁸³ Feldman 1998a: 74, 133; Feldman 1998b: 554.

only about their own kinsmen²⁸⁴. Thus, to counter such charges Josephus first centres his narrative upon great figures like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and some Jewish kings, and enriches their portrayal with a number of virtues appealing to a taste of the Hellenistic elite. There is hardly a virtue that is not ascribed by Josephus to his Jewish heroes²⁸⁵. Secondly, Josephus emphasizes the role of those of his protagonists who, being Jewish, came into power over non-Jewish subjects or rose to power under a foreign ruler: e.g. Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Zerubabel, Nehemiah, Onias and Dositheus, and who unselfishly contributed to the welfare of non-Jews²⁸⁶.

To conclude our presentation of the ancient royal ideology, we can easily notice that from ancient sources (from ancient Palestine to Rome) there emerges a general stereotype of a good king who has some obligations towards his subjects and must be a man of many virtues, because it is the possession of the virtues that justifies his rule. In this context, addressing an educated audience of the 1st c. CE Rome required some knowledge of this widely accepted repertoire. If Josephus, in making his best to cast Jewish people in a positive light to his audience, wants to strike a positive chord with his listeners/readers, he must be aware of the standards he expected to meet. Therefore, it remains to us to see how Josephus' portrayal of Izates can be seen in this light.

3.4. Josephus' Portrayal of Izates as a King

As we have tentatively indicated (chapters 1.3, 1.4 and 2.5), piety seems to be Izates' main virtue in Ant. 20:17-96, it is explicitly named in Ant. 20:32, 20:44, 20:94 and 20:48. What piety in Ant. 20:17-96 actually means will be answered later (see chapter 5), but let us briefly remark here that such a strong emphasis on piety is not surprising in Ant. 20:17-96 since its main subject pertains to conversion, thus, religious interest of the passage certainly enhances the role of piety.

3.4.1. Izates' Wisdom

Interestingly, we do not learn anything specific on Izates' personality until Ant. 20:34. It is only in the conversion story where Izates comes to the fore directly, and, for the first time, we learn of him as a person, since we are told about his explicit relation to others, opinions on different matters, and his search for the Divine. First, we can observe that Izates is a sociable person, and second, that he can be influenced either by others' rational arguments or by the examples their lives set. For example, Izates must be in close contact with people at the Charakene court, and the level of this contact must be very personal, since this contact means that Izates learned about the religious attitudes of the king's wives. By their means he gets in touch with a Jewish merchant teaching "the king's wives" about Jewish traditions (Ant. 20:34). Again, the role of religious teachers is highly important throughout Izates' life²⁸⁷. Ananias must be the first teacher of Jewish traditions in Izates' life to have impressed him immensely, since Izates "urges him" to go with him to Adiabene. Further, Izates seeks the advice of Ananias (20:40 and 47), and he does it on his own initiative. Above all, a special role in Izates' religious life is played by his mother. It is Helena whose example makes Izates keen to be brought over to Jewish national practices himself (20:38). The text has Helena and Izates exchanging their thoughts twice. First, according to Ant. 20:39, when Helena learns of Izates' intention to adopt Jewish customs, she talks him out of this desire. Izates must take and consider her advice seriously since he reports her arguments to Ananias (Ant. 20:40). Second, even when Izates has decided to act contrary to his mother's (and Ananias') arguments, he lets them know about his decision, showing that he still respects their important roles in his life (Ant. 20:46). Lastly, the fact that Izates can listen to reason and be persuaded by

²⁸⁴ Feldman 1998a: 149, 335; Feldman 1998b: 556.

²⁸⁵ Feldman 1998a: 74-131; Feldman 1998b: 546-554.

²⁸⁶ Feldman 1998a: 149-150, 335; Feldman 1998ab: 556.

²⁸⁷ Zangenberg 2005: 18.

others' opinions is best shown by the fact that, although he did not give up completely his desire to be circumcised, he allows himself to be convinced by Helena's and Ananias' arguments for some time (20:42-43, the text has λόγοι – something which is undoubtedly of a rational character in Greek). What is more, in this context the case of Eleazar is particularly telling. First, it is Eleazar who comes to Izates on his own initiative (as for Ananias, it was Izates who took the initiative). This is very interesting, since a Jew who apparently comes for the first time to the Adiabene court dares to go to greet (ἀσπάζομαι) the king. This may indicate firstly that Izates' interest in Jewish traditions is known among Jews in and around Adiabene, and secondly that Eleazar can count on the reception of the king. Especially the second option contributes to our picture of Izates as an approachable and open-minded person eager to meet others and exchange thoughts. Yet, there is even more to Eleazar's appearance on the Adiabene court than that. Eleazar's conduct goes further than that of Ananias and Helena in that he delivers much more than just a piece of advice to be weighted and evaluated – he rather comes up with unambiguous and strong criticism of Izates' religious conduct, and Izates (surprisingly - if we take account of a reputation of ancient kings as not willing to hear anything but flattery²⁸⁸) follows this immediately. This clearly shows how open-minded and self-critical Josephus' Izates is, especially compared to his other ancient counterparts.

What is more, not only social contact, but also a more theoretical pursuit of knowledge paved Izates' way to him embracing Jewish traditions. Namely, in Ant. 20:48 we find him reading the Law of Moses. Again, in Ant. 20:71 we learn that he sent his sons to get a thorough education in Jerusalem. Izates is thus a man who applies himself to personal study; he also appreciates education since he gives a chance of it to his sons.

To summarize, Izates' way to the adoption of Jewish customs and laws was marked by a great deal of sociability, willingness to listen to good counsel, appreciation of study and education (his own and that of his children), as well as an open-mindedness to change his mind. All four qualities were very important to the Hellenistic and Roman audience as strains of wisdom²⁸⁹. Ideally, according to Plato only a philosopher can be a king, or a king must genuinely and adequately philosophize (*Respublica* 5.473d). The same ideal was later held by Philo and especially by the Stoics – only a wise man can be a king since such enormous power lies in his hands that only wisdom can guarantee a good use of that power for the benefit of all (Diogenes Laertius 7.122). However, since life in the real world rarely follows the ideal, the Stoics believed that it is sufficient for the king to seek to approximate the ideal²⁹⁰. To be able to do it, a king needed good advisers, especially philosophers²⁹¹. Yet, even the best advisers could not help if the king was not willing to listen and further did not expose enough open-mindedness to change his mind if honestly convinced by others. Accordingly, in the *Letter of Aristeas* the king exhibits interest in the problem of how to be a good listener (*Let. Aris.* 239) or how to be without error (*Let. Aris.* 252)²⁹². In both cases, he hears the advice that first implies him being exposed to advisers and secondly suggests that he himself is to prove things said to him and choose the right option from a variety of opinions. What is more, a good king is not only supposed to rely in his decision on 'what is said to him' (*Let. Aris.* 252), but to look for knowledge on his own. Demetrios of Phaleron's advice to Ptolemy Soter was to get and read books on kingship and leadership since the royal ministers do not dare tell kings the things that are written in those books (*Plutarch, Moralia* 189D). The *Letter of Aristeas* goes so far that it recommends the king to spend most of his time in reading (*Let. Aris.* 283). Further, king's symposia should be always organized on the model of that given for the translators – the goal must be in receiving learned men capable of advising the kingdom and

²⁸⁸ See *Plutarch, Mor.* 189D where Demetrios of Phaleron expresses his views on those who accompany kings – their primary concern is to flatter their masters.

²⁸⁹ Feldman 1998a: 96-106; Feldman 1998b: 547-548.

²⁹⁰ O. Murray 2007: 19, 25-26.

²⁹¹ O. Murray 2007: 19, 25-26.

²⁹² See O. Murray 1967: 357.

the lives of its subjects (*Let. Aris.* 286). Likewise, the Biblical tradition of Deuteronomy instructs the king to have a copy of the Law prepared and to have it always with him so as to read it all the days of his life and consequently follow all its commandments (*Deut* 17:18-20).

Furthermore, there is another strain of wisdom that is present in Josephus' portrayal of Izates. Namely, since kings were like captains of a naval vessel (as in the ship of state metaphor by Plato, *Respublica* 6), they had to navigate through dangers. In the case of every ruler there is a range of foreign policy that requires a great deal of skills. In fact, Izates appears to be a gifted politician with regards to foreign policy. Namely, he knows the strength and achievements of the Romans which makes him unwilling to go to war against Rome with Vardanes, he is aware that the demands of Vologases are only an excuse and no matter how he responds, the Parthian kings will attack him, and he is able to solve the dynastical problem at the Parthian court at the time of Artabanos. Thus, Josephus surely presents Izates as a gifted politician, able to understand the course of foreign politics.

There is a well-known anecdote about Epicurus' view on kings (Plutarch, *Mor.* 1095c)²⁹³. He suggested that philosophers and kings should part their ways, otherwise it is a waste of everyone's time. Kings should rather submit to military anecdotes and coarse horseplay at symposia than to pretend to be interested in literary and learned discussion of scholars. It is exactly the reverse that was done by Izates who is presented by Josephus as a wise king (though, the terminology explicitly denoting different aspects of wisdom does not appear in the text²⁹⁴) who is an open-minded and sociable person, devoted to study and education, and a smart conductor of foreign affairs of his state. In this manner, Izates is very close to the ideal of a wise ruler imagined by Plato and recommended by the Stoics, as well as by Philo, the *Letter of Aristeas* and the Biblical Deuteronomy. Josephus' portrayal of Izates will suit the taste of everyone well versed in this kind of political thought.

3.4.2. Izates' Self-Control and Courage

Twice Izates had a good occasion to exhibit courage (or its lack) when Adiabene faced invasions of foreign troops (*Ant.* 20:75-80 and *Ant.* 20:81-95). In both cases, Izates' courage is indirectly indicated (like an *argumentum e contrario*) since we are told that he did not want to give the impression that he acts "out of fear" in *Ant.* 20:83 (διὰ φόβου) and in *Ant.* 20:79 we read that he was not "panic-stricken" (κατεπλάγη). Both invasions are gripping and dramatic stories full of sudden changes of action and as such give excellent opportunities to reflect on the main protagonist's behavior in extremely difficult situations. Especially during Abias' invasion in *Ant.* 20:75-80 (Vologases' invasion in *Ant.* 20:81-95 seems to reflect more on Izates' extraordinary trust in God in an extremely hopeless situation) Izates exhibits a number of human qualities highly regarded by the ancient theorists of kingship. Namely, Izates is forced into quick and decisive actions on the battlefield. First, we once again learn that Izates can be a wise politician, since he detected the high nobles' treachery soon enough to overcome it. Secondly, Izates was not panic-stricken, but rather he appears to expose a great deal of self-control in the face of great danger when he has to fight with the enemy, as well as being left by (at least) part of his troops. His self-control is then self-evident – in the midst of ongoing battle and rebellion, Izates can undertake a number of quick and decisive actions in a rapid succession – he withdraws to the camp, puts the guilty to death, and then returns to the battlefield in time still to be able to win. Further, he does not shy from taking harsh actions – the guilty are put to death. However, although the situation was

²⁹³ See also O. Murray 2007: 18-19.

²⁹⁴ See e.g. Feldman 2000: 132, n. 52 to see how Josephus operates with different terms from a broad range of wisdom in his portrayal of the biblical Joseph - σοφία ("wisdom"), σύνεσις ("comprehension," "intelligence", "insight", "understanding") δειξιότης ("dexterity", "cleverness"), φρόνησις ("understanding", "insight", "intelligence"), φρόνημα ("aim", "aspiration", in the sense of practical wisdom), λογισμός ("thought", "reasoning", "sophistry").

trying, he undertook an enquiry (τὴν αἰτίαν ζητήσας). Thus, Izates exposes perfect self-control of negative emotions – lack of panic, lack of anger. He rather makes inquiry and apparently delivers justice to the guilty. Finally, Izates succeeds on the battlefield (also while withdrawing to the camp – the ability to lead a retreat was considered an important military skill too²⁹⁵), as well as later during the siege of the fortress, thus proving his skills as a commander-in-chief. As a result, in one small episode packed with action, Josephus shows Izates' courage coupled with a number of other positive qualities – self-control (as lack of negative emotions, especially panic and anger), excellent military skills (while retreat, on the battlefield, during siege, especially the last would not be expected from an Oriental king by the Romans²⁹⁶), as well as Izates' justice as a judge of his subjects.

Ant. 20:81-95 displays a number of qualities possessed by Izates that were highly regarded by ancient theorists of kingship. It is first of all an excellent military skill. Courage (ἀνδρεία) was expected of those who were in charge of forces. Hellenistic kings acquired their lands by conquest and consequently their military ability became a sine qua non quality for the preservation of their possessions²⁹⁷. Hellenistic sources are in fact saturated with reports on the military achievements of their protagonists. In turn, the Roman *virtus* was the traditional ideal of the Roman citizen; it was behavior in war for which one was rewarded with military distinctions and later with political career (*honores*)²⁹⁸. However, there is one remarkable thing in all Izates' behavior. All wars that he conducts are *bellum iustum*, since he never seeks war for its own sake and wages them only in self-defense. Even when he had to take active steps to regain Artabanos' throne, he writes a letter where he “urges” the Parthians to welcome back Artabanos. There is only urging and not demanding, and especially there is no word of “threat” in the mouth of Izates, who even promises amnesty to those who contributed to the expulsion of Artabanos. Here Izates shows the next two qualities expected from a good leader – the ability to persuade the people and to bring peace. The first quality was connected with the conviction that masses are fickle and need a good leader (*Thucydides* 2.60 referring to Pericles), but a good leader resorts to war only as a last resort. This approach was highly recommended to kings by the *Letter of Aristeas*²⁹⁹. First, it is peace that belongs to the most important features of a good rule (*Let. Aris.* 291), secondly, the *Letter of Aristeas* denies any importance to military exploits and a fame acquired through them, it instead recommends a policy of non-aggression (*Let. Aris.* 223, 281)³⁰⁰. The ability to bring peace was also a very important virtue for the Romans who rarely witnessed periods of peace when the doors to the temple of Janus in the Romanum Forum were closed (*Livius, Ab urbe condita* 1.19.3)³⁰¹.

A potential lack of self-control in a king was exactly one of two main issues that held Aristotle back from recommending monarchy as a better type of government than democracy. Human nature is inclined towards passion; even most virtuous men come down with it. Yet, if a king falls into anger, everyone else has to suffer from its arbitrariness (*Politica* 3.10.6; 3.11.4). The *Letter of Aristeas* likewise remarks that the highest form of government is “be master of yourself and not to be carried away by impulses” (*Let. Aris.* 222), especially anger is to be avoided, for a king gives way to anger in his conduct, having absolute power, he will be the cause of death (*Let. Aris.* 253)³⁰². The Roman elites too could very easily understand that problem once they started to suffer from the increasing arbitrariness of their emperors' judgments. No wonder Pliny praises Trajan' *moderatio* in his use of imperial power (Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* 59). Thus, Izates'

²⁹⁵ Feldman 1998a: 106-109.

²⁹⁶ Campbell 1993: 219.

²⁹⁷ Koester 1995: 35.

²⁹⁸ Weinstock 1971: 230.

²⁹⁹ O. Murray 1967: 353-355.

³⁰⁰ O. Murray 1967: 353-355.

³⁰¹ Feldman 1998a: 94-95.

³⁰² O. Murray 1967: 356-357.

perfect self-control of negative emotions meets all standards of the Hellenistic-Roman kingship theory.

3.4.3. Izates' Justice and Clemency

The fact that amidst ongoing battle and rebellion Izates undertakes inquiry to punish the guilty is striking. It seems that the primary purpose of this presentation is to show Izates' self-control, namely his lack of anger. As a king, Izates does not take decisions without consideration and under the influence of his emotions, may they be anger, revenge or just haste caused by the trying situation. At the same time, the fact that Izates undertakes inquiry and those put to death are said to be guilty leads us to the conviction that he has delivered *justice*.

Once more Izates acts as a supreme judge in Ant. 20:37 wherein Izates decides upon the fate of his "brothers and other kinsmen" who are said to pose a threat to his reign. Izates' action is not easy to categorize. It is so because his motivation is explicitly attributed only to piety. Namely, he considers the death or imprisonment of his relatives to be impious. However, once the option that results in impiety is ruled out, rational thinking takes place. To keep them at home seems to be hazardous because of their resentment. He finally decides to ship them away to Rome and Parthia. What does Izates perform towards his "brothers and other kinsmen"? Is it an act of ἐπιείκεια / *clementia* or δικαιοσύνη / *iustitia* or perhaps there is no strict separation of both notions in Ant. 20:37? According to the *Letter of Aristeeas* 210 the true mark of piety is said to lie in knowing that "no man doing injustice or working evil can escape God's notice"³⁰³. Thus, Izates wants to avoid impiety that would take place through his acting unjustly. After ruling out the possibility of *injustice*, he still seeks to find the *just* solution and he finally appears to find it. If so, Izates fulfills one of the requirements of the anonymous *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*³⁰⁴ where a *just* man is said never to use his own political position to destroy his political enemies³⁰⁵.

As for *clementia*, there is one thing that does not really fit the situation in Ant. 20:37 – Izates' clemency towards his relatives implies the forgiveness of a crime that must have been committed. By contrast, the Adiabene narrative does not speak of any wrong-doing by the relatives, but only of their potential to do so. Thus, the idea of putting Izates' relatives to death is presented in Ant. 20:29 as a preventive measure. However, the Roman notion of *clementia* had a long history with significant changes in the semantic meaning of this term through time³⁰⁶ and Izates' behavior in fact fits some later development attested in Pliny's *De clementia*³⁰⁷. Namely, the idea of remission of a deserved penalty is included in Seneca's concept of *uenia* (see e.g. *Clem.* 2.7.1. and 2.7.3. where *uenia* is apparently understood as *pardon*³⁰⁸), while the notion of *clementia* is the act of grace by the emperor acting as a supreme judge (so is Izates since all decisions are left to him by Helena and the council) that produces "the most just course of action possible" (*Clem.* 2.7.3.)³⁰⁹. So does Izates who weighs different options and in the end chooses the most just option possible. Furthermore, another strain of Seneca's concept of *clementia* is that the main purpose of its exercise lies in saving someone from death³¹⁰. This is what has been done by Izates as opposed

³⁰³ Hadas 1973: 183.

³⁰⁴ Anonymous according to Feldman 1998a: 113, but also attributed to Plutarch – see vol. 10 of the Loeb Classical Library edition published in 1936.

³⁰⁵ Feldman 1998a: 113.

³⁰⁶ For the history of the meaning of *clementia*, see Wirszubski 1950:233-243; Braund 2009: 33-38.

³⁰⁷ Braund 2009: 30-44.

³⁰⁸ Braund 2009: 414-415, 419.

³⁰⁹ Braund 2009: 30.

³¹⁰ Braund 2009: 43-44.

to the wishes of the council. To sum up, Izates' behavior in Ant. 20:37 can also be seen as the exercise of *clementia* that leads to the most *just* action possible in the present situation³¹¹.

Needless to say, both clemency and justice were very important virtues in ancient political literature. The issue of clemency became relevant in imperial Rome in particular as the power of Roman princeps elevated them above other citizens and laws. In this regard, clemency implied some degree of self-restraint of the de facto absolute power of Roman emperors³¹². As for justice, it was for many ancient Greeks and Romans the most important virtue. In Plato, justice is the crown of all virtues in the ideal state and its exercise is the first duty of the philosopher-king who, being the embodiment of reason, prescribes what the common interest is. Likewise many other ancient writers (like Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.9.1366.B5-6; Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 44.8, *Aristides* 6.2, *Demetrius* 42.5-9) considered it to be the most royal and divine of virtues. It is therefore surprising that justice has never been explicitly named in Ant. 20:17-96. Yet, Ant. 20:37 helps us tentatively suggest at least one reason for this situation. Namely, justice can be included by the performance of piety that seems to help avoid injustice and consequently leads to justice. Yet, a definite solution of this problem has to wait until we deal with Josephus' presentation of piety - the virtue most frequently recalled in Ant. 20:17-96.

The fact that the idea of justice is present in Josephus' portrayal of Izates as a good king is enhanced by another observation. A strong connection between Izates' moral qualities and the virtue of justice seems to be implied by his adoption of Jewish laws. Many ancients saw the connection between justice and laws. According to Xenophon, Socrates even equated being just with being lawful (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.412). The reverse is *παρανομία*, *lawlessness* which leads to impiety, the mark of a tyrant, who "rules not according to laws but according to his own wishes" (Socrates in Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.6.12). This kind of approach can be easily found in Josephus (Ant. 16:176) who remarks that the laws of the Jews have the greatest sense of justice. Similarly, in *Contra Apionem* 2:293 Josephus sees the highest justice in the obedience to the laws. Let us remark that although Izates seeks after τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθη ("Jewish customs"), Josephus holds the view that the Biblical laws mirror nature (Ant. 1:19-21 and Ant. 19:25, as does Philo in *De opificio mundi* 1-3) and so seeks to downplay their particularism. Consequently, Josephus points out the universal appeal of Jewish laws³¹³. Therefore, if Izates' piety leads him to adopt and strictly observe Jewish laws that are presented as mirroring divine nature, consequently one can be sure that such a pious king is going to be just to his subjects. This approach must have struck a responsive chord in the Romans who possessed a notion of ancient ancestral laws (Ennius, *Annales* 18: *moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*) and believed that their state and its strength depended upon allegiance to these laws³¹⁴. At the same time, they suffered from the increasing arbitrariness of their emperors' judgments. In fact, emperors started to stay above ancestral laws, and the Romans welcomed Trajan's decision to restrict oneself to these laws again as a welcome relief from previous imperial practices³¹⁵. Thus, Josephus' portrayal of Izates fits very well an ancient ideal of a just and clement ruler. Izates' clemency would appeal particularly to a Roman audience whose background inclined them to understand the necessity of clemency on the side of their emperors. It would also counter some preconceptions of the Roman elites about the cruelty of Parthian rulers towards their relatives. Likewise, the idea of a just ruler who conforms his power to ancestral laws would appeal to the highest ideals of Republican Rome.

³¹¹ A remarkable overlap between *clementia* and *iustitia* should not surprise us a lot, since, as we have already remarked, many virtues overlap in basic meaning, share only some nuances, some Greek and Roman virtues rendered with one English word do not match each other at all, and finally virtues change their meaning through time. See Norena 2001: 152 and n. 32; Braund 2009: 31; Roche 2011: 8 (a good list of examples taken from Pliny the Younger).

³¹² Braund 2009: 32.

³¹³ Attridge 1976: 42.

³¹⁴ Braund 2009: 40-41.

³¹⁵ Braund 2009: 40-41.

3.4.4. Izates' Kindness, Modesty, Foresight, and Benefactions

In Ant. 20:54-68 Josephus presents many of Izates' positive qualities as a king including kindness, modesty, foresight and benefactions. In fact, the whole episode of the meeting between Izates and Artabanos is saturated with pictures of Izates' kindness and modesty. First, we learn of Izates' reaction to Artabanos' words and humble bearing. The first reaction lies in the fact that Izates leaps down from his horse (Ant. 20:58). The posture that one assumes, especially whether one sits upon the horse or stands dismounted, expresses political status and relations to other rulers. The posture assumed by Izates shows his modesty. Further, one may wonder if Izates does something which he has been expected to do towards his sovereign or if we can treat Izates' behavior as completely voluntary. In favor of the first supposition speaks the fact that Izates is said to deem Artabanos a greater king (Ant. 20:60). However, Izates' behaviour seems to be (at least) unusual to Artabanos since he tries to talk Izates out of it by asking him to mount the horse (Ant. 20:60). Again, describing in detail Izates' subsequent hospitality towards Artabanos at the Adiabene court (Ant. 20:61), the text gives a precise explanation of Izates' motivation. It might be so because the narrative just wants to emphasis its message, or because Izates' behaviour needs more explanation on account of its unusualness. In Ant. 20:61, Izates is said to act in favor of Artabanos since he is aware of Artabanos' former dignity and changes of fortune common to all men. Thus, what the text does stress are not Izates' formal obligations still pending on him (because Artabanos' dignity is now gone, and, as he admits himself, he is now a private citizen: Ant. 20:56), but his kindness to help someone who was struck by misfortune. In fact, Izates' gesture of dismounting the horse is explicitly said to result from his seeing of Artabanos' humble behavior marked by such eye-catching gestures as weeping and bowing his head. As a result, Izates identifies so strongly with Artabanos' misfortune that in his following speech in Ant. 20: 59 he promises to regain Artabanos' throne or to lose his own.

There is another important issue that shows up in Ant. 20:54-68, namely, a conviction that changes of fortune are common to all men. That we hear such an idea from Artabanos who has just experienced misfortune does not surprise us at all (Ant. 20:57). However, Izates has no such experience to date, as far as we can see from the course of the narrative until that point. Despite this, he is aware of that idea (Ant. 20:61) and apparently knows that he too has a share in that aspect of human weakness. This all shows us his maturity in the experience of life.

Izates is also called by Artabanos to exercise *πρόνοια* (*foresight*) towards the Parthian king in Ant. 20:57 and when he has secured Artabanos' return to Parthia, this support is called *εὐεργεσία* (*benefaction*) in Ant. 20:66. In this way, Artabanos' primary plan was fulfilled, since his intention to escape from plotters to Izates was to obtain *σωτηρία* (*salvation* in Ant. 20:54). This is interesting because it is the only explicit reference to *πρόνοια* in Ant. 20:54-68 that is not God's *πρόνοια*. Instead, we can now see that *πρόνοια* can be used of men helping other men, but it is about only men of royal background. In this case, it is one king that asks another for *πρόνοια* and indeed receives his *εὐεργεσία*. As a result, the aiding king becomes a *σωτήρ*. Such notion of royal *πρόνοια* can be traced elsewhere beyond Ant. 20:54-68, especially in Ant. 20:18-23, and even the term *σωτηρία* appears again in Ant. 20:22 (coupled with *εὐνοια*, *good will* in Ant. 20:22 and 23 shown by Monobazos and Abennerigos to Izates). As Izates now exercises his *πρόνοια* towards Artabanos, in fact he himself was earlier supported by Abennerigos (Ant. 20:23), as well as by his royal parents on behalf of God's *πρόνοια*. One could sense here social conservatism that lies in promoting solidarity between rulers and dislike for subjects' plots against legitimate authority (see Ant. 20:54 and 57 negatively on Artabanos' subjects; Ant. 20:76-77 and 81 on plotters against Izates). On the other hand, Josephus approves the subjects' overthrow of Vardanes, apparently because at this step, God's retributive providence was at work. Thus, Josephus' ideals include respect towards legitimate authority, but there is also room for the idea of the divine punishment of tyrants.

How does Josephus' portrayal of Izates' helping Artabanos relate to the ancient concept of a good king? In fact, it does match a number of qualities expected from a good ruler. Kindness (φιλανθρωπία) and good will (εὐνοία) as well as all strains of modesty (σωφροσύνη, ταπεινότης, *temperantia*, *moderatio*) in social contact were recommended to kings as welcome virtues³¹⁶. The Greeks approved of rulers who exhibited modesty in personal conduct. Particularly Spartan kings like Agesilaus and Cleomenes who, despite their power, were approachable and conducted a simple unpretentious way of life, deserved a lot of praiseful attention in literature (Xenophon in *Agesilaus* 9 who calls it ταπεινότης, *humility* and Plut. *Cleomenes* 13). The opposite of such modesty was arrogance – ὑπερηφανία (in social contact) or tyranny (in abuse of power)³¹⁷. Such danger was particularly present among Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors who “occupied a place of ambiguity between humanity and divinity”³¹⁸. Thus, the *Letter of Aristeas* advises the king to remember that “he is a man as well as a leader of men. And God humbles the proud, and the gentle and humble He exalts” (*Let. Aris.* 263)³¹⁹. Likewise, ὑπερηφανία seems to be presented as a typically royal vice in the Greek Bible, especially in *Sirach* 10:6-18. Similarly, the *Wisdom of Solomon* 7:7-14 makes it clear that recognition of one's own weakness intrinsic to human nature is a precondition to gaining wisdom. Modest social contact also became an issue in Rome as the power of emperors grew and elevated them over other citizens. Especially Trajan is said to strike his contemporaries with modesty in his daily conduct. Trajan's adventus at Rome as emperor was a revelation of imperial *moderatio*³²⁰. While his predecessors used to be carried, Trajan entered on foot showing *moderatio* in the modesty of that bearing³²¹. Yet, Trajan's adventus was only the beginning. In Pliny's eyes, all Trajan's social conduct was marked by his *moderatio* and other closely allied qualities like *humanitas* (willingness to act as if a fellow-mortal), *comitas* (friendly treatment of inferiors), *civilitas* (to act as a citizen in a society of citizens) and others³²².

Highly interesting is the reference in Ant. 20:54-68 to πρόνοια alongside εὐεργεσία and σωτηρία both resulting from the former (and a similar situation in Ant. 20:18-23 where εὐνοία leads to σωτηρία). Ancient rulers were expected to love all mankind and have a good will towards all people. However, their φιλανθρωπία and εὐνοία were directed primarily towards their subjects who were consequently the first beneficiaries of their king's εὐεργεσία and σωτηρία. So does Izates and her mother, Helena in Ant. 20:49-53. Though there Izates plays second fiddle to Helena's benefactions (for Josephus' portrayal of Helena as a good queen see chapters 6.2. and 6.3.) to the suffering Jerusalemites, he has his share too. In this way, both Helena and Izates are presented by Josephus as exercising the royal euergetism towards the Jewish people and so this strain of royal euergetism is present in Josephus' portrayal of Izates in Ant. 20:49-53.

However, the fact is that the only explicit reference to any other kind of πρόνοια than θεοῦ πρόνοια and to σωτηρία coupled with εὐεργεσία does not occur in Ant. 20:49-53, but only in Ant. 20:54-68 and has there a strong royal streak, because it is explicitly referred to royal figures. Such an undertone seems to be particularly Roman. In fact, Artabanos, who in Ant. 20:57 draws a common line between his and Izates' πρόνοια and contrasts it with the subjects' inclination, sounds like a theorist of the Roman imperial ideology³²³. Namely, the Roman *providentia* like the Greek πρόνοια aimed at the welfare of royal subjects, but additionally developed the meaning of acting against conspiracy and securing the emperor's power³²⁴. Of course, according to this ideology,

³¹⁶ Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 32-48.

³¹⁷ Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 34-35, 41.

³¹⁸ Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 315.

³¹⁹ Hadas 1951: 203.

³²⁰ Fears 1981: 914.

³²¹ Fears 1981: 914.

³²² Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 42-43.

³²³ Charlesworth 1935: 15-25; Charlesworth 1936: 107-132.

³²⁴ Charlesworth 1936: 110, 122, 131-132.

securing the emperor's power served the Roman people too and consequently the *aeternitas* of Rome³²⁵. Further, 'Josephus' touch' in such places reflects his own social position within Jewish society prior to 66 CE, as well as of his fragile position in Rome dependent on the Roman authority socially formed out of the upper class.

To sum up, we can infer two of Izates' characteristics from the scene describing his meeting with Artabanos that perfectly echo important virtues expected from good kings. Namely, Izates is a person who has sympathy towards people struck by misfortune, who can be moved by others' suffering and can help unselfishly. In this way, Josephus presents to us Izates' kindness. At the same time, Izates is a typical member of his social class; he knows that he is expected to exercise *πρόνοια* towards other members of the royal class unless they justly suffer under God's punishment.

3.5. Conclusions

1. Josephus depicts Izates as an ideal king. There is no speck whatsoever on his portrait, he instead abounds in many positive qualities. Josephus' portrayal of Izates conforms well to the standards of the ancient royal ideology of Greek-Roman sources, as well as the Biblical tradition.

2. Izates is presented as abounding in many positive qualities; however, a few virtues are *explicitly* named. First of all, it is piety that is positively or negatively mentioned four times in Izates' portrait. Further, once human *πρόνοια*, *σωτηρία* and *εὐεργεσία* are referred to Izates' behaviour. Remarkably, these *social* virtues are not used for the description of Izates' bearing towards his subjects, but towards his Parthian counterpart, Artabanos. Next, another virtue, courage, is only mentioned by negation twice (as lack of fear). Many other virtues are indeed present in Josephus' portrayal, but never explicitly named. This situation is surprising since Josephus' biblical figures abound in distinctive Greek terminology³²⁶. The only reason we can give for such a method is that it helps stress the importance of other virtues explicitly named, especially piety. There is also another consequence. Such treatment of virtues may suggest that "if someone has one virtue, then he has them all" (Pliny the Younger, *Pan.* 59). Thus, piety is indeed Izates' key quality and apparently in Josephus' eyes, the source of all other virtues in which Izates obviously abounds (for more on Izates' piety, see chapter 5.3.1.).

3. There are also other positive qualities that are present in Josephus' portrayal of Izates, though they are never explicitly named; they are as follows: wisdom (as political understanding of foreign policy, as open-mindedness and willingness to listen to good council, appreciation of study and education), courage and military skills, self-control (as lack of negative emotions that might blur one's judgment and activity), justice and clemency in judgment and justice as attachment to ancestral laws. Again, many other prominent virtues, especially kindness and all strains of modesty in social conduct towards fellow kings and the needy are present in Ant. 20:17-96.

4. Josephus' portrayal of Izates shows that Josephus could accept political leadership in the form of monarchy under certain conditions. First, a ruler must be a man of virtues. If he is so, he will certainly come to power with the consent of many who will see him as deserving it. Secondly, he must restrain his power and follow ancestral laws which themselves should mirror nature (as Jewish laws as the highest form of human constitution do). Josephus clearly believes that bad rulers will meet God's penalty, even through popular rebellion, but in general he is not in favor of the rule of fickle masses. Otherwise, Josephus recommends rulers to show solidarity to each other and to fight popular unrest and rebellion.

³²⁵ Charlesworth 1936: 110, 122, 131-132.

³²⁶ Feldman 1998a: 74-131; Feldman 1998b: 546-554.