By integrating the methods and theories of the discipline of Cultural Studies recent research on cultural contacts in the ancient world has illustrated the complexity of these processes and showed, as Friedman rightly stresses, that ‘cultures, as such, don’t interact’.¹ ‘Culture’—understood in a holistic way—is basically a construct, ‘the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from the totality of social existence and endowed with a particular symbolic signification for the purposes of creating exclusionary distinctiveness’ by different groups within a society.² Thus, it is neither an autonomous nor a static entity and ‘has no historical reality’ but exists only through the diverse practices and artefacts of cultural actors.³ Concerning the analysis of cultural transfer processes it is, therefore, essential to search for the concrete channels of contact, i.e. its agents and its historical context, if one seeks to understand which meanings were attached to new ideas or objects that were appropriated by the receiving societies.⁴ Although specific social groups and especially their self-perception—their ‘social imaginaries’—often elude us due to the scarcity of sources, the basic conception of the framework of culture contact, that is, the interrelations between producers, transmitters and recipients, as well as the possible use of power in this context, is of the greatest importance for the evaluation of cultural exchange.⁵

As far as the Hellenistic world is concerned, for a long time the view of an intentional policy of Hellenization pursued by the large royal houses and their Graeco-Macedonian ruling class in succession to the alleged plans of

¹ Friedman 1996, 24.
² Hall 2004, 45–46.
³ Ulf 2009, 84; cf. Kistler and Ulf 2012 on the concept of ‘kulturelle(r) AkteurIn’.
⁵ Ulf 2009, 83, cf. also the model on p. 87.
Alexander the Great predominated as an explanatory framework for the ‘Hellenization of the East’. However, on the basis of new sources and more sophisticated methods for analyzing cultural change taking into account the agencies of the indigenous actors as well as critically reflecting on the potentials and limits of investigating the textual and material evidence, this picture has shifted significantly over the last decades. Recent studies point rather to the active role of the non-Greek populations in the cultural transfer processes, and, instead of claiming a general ‘Verschmelzung’ of West and East, emphasize the heterogeneity of the Hellenistic world visible not the least in its material culture. It is of interest why and under what specific circumstances non-Greeks adopted certain elements of Hellenic culture (which, of course, itself underwent significant changes in this period), especially in those parts of the Hellenistic world where no Macedonians ruled. For in such areas, there was—at least in the beginning—no Graeco-Macedonian ‘Leitkultur’ which could have urged itself on ambitious or even reluctant natives. This was also the case for the kingdom of Cappadocia on which this paper concentrates.

Like its northern neighbour, the kingdom of Pontos, Cappadocia emerged from the Persian satrapy Katpatuka. Having come under Macedonian rule in the time of the Diadochi, parts of Cappadocia were ruled first by the Antigonids, then by the Seleukids. By the middle of the third century, however, the descendants of the erstwhile satraps had managed to establish themselves in Cappadocia as increasingly independent rulers. Eventually, the Seleukids recognized them, and Ariarathes III was the first member of the dynasty to assume the title of basileus. Although the Ariarathids

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7 Cf., for example, the collection of essays in Weber 2010.