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12. Chronology of the Adiabene Royalty in the Hellenistic and Parthian Periods

12.1. Introduction

The chronology of the Adiabene narrative has been researched a few times, most notably by N. Brüll¹³⁹⁰ and H. Graetz in the 19th c.¹³⁹¹, and more recently by J. Neusner¹³⁹² who essentially adopted Brüll's reconstruction which is often cited in modern scholarship that, at least in passing, refers to the 'dynasty of royal converts from Adiabene'¹³⁹³. However, if we take account of the fact that only two events from Izates' reign can be precisely dated (the famine in Jerusalem and the Meherdates campaign), and most of the other data can be fixed only approximately by Josephus' references to the contemporary Parthian rulers, it is then a little surprising to find so many exact dates in Neusner's publications. Therefore, the aim of this part is to reevaluate the evidence we have and next to reconstruct a basic chronology of the Adiabene royalty in the Parthian period. Of special interest to us are figures that show up in our analysis of sources. However, in order to give us a sense of continuity we also provide basic knowledge on the other rulers of Adiabene who are known to us before and after 'the dynasty of royal converts',¹³⁹⁴.

12.2. Abdissar and Artaxares

The first attested ruler of Adiabene is Αβδισσαρ[] who is known to us only through his coinage¹³⁹⁵. Based on stylistic features of his coins, his rule could have taken place any time from the end of 3rd c. BCE to the early 1st c. BCE¹³⁹⁶.

The next ruler of Adiabene known to us is Artaxares mentioned by Augustus in *Res Gestae* 32 (*Monumentum Ancyranum* 17.32). He is recalled by Augustus as a suppliant who came to him together with other kings: Parthian Tiridates and Phraates, the oldest son of Phraates IV, and Artavasdes, king of Media Atropatene. Unfortunately, the reference is of a very general nature, and nothing very specific can be said about Artaxares himself. However, some insight can be gleaned from the context since Artaxares' company appears to be less anonymous. Indeed, we again hear of Parthian kings, as well as of Artavasdes in other sources. Both Parthian princes were sent by their father Phraates IV (38-2 BCE) to Rome as hostages in 10/9 BCE¹³⁹⁷, and acted in 36 CE as pretenders to the Parthian throne against Artabanos II (*Tac., Ann.*, 6.32.36-37; *Cass. Dio*, 58.26)¹³⁹⁸. In turn, Artavasdes, king of Media (ca. 59 - before 20 BCE) is a well-known figure from Marc Antony's campaigns against the Parthian King Phraates IV (39 BCE

¹³⁹⁰ Brüll 1874: 65-72.

¹³⁹¹ Graetz 1877: 241-255.

¹³⁹² Neusner 1969: 64-65.

¹³⁹³ E.g. D.R. Schwartz 1992: 189-199 (esp. 192 and n. 45), 220-221, 236-237; Fowler 2010: 60-69.

¹³⁹⁴ The two terms used here as synonyms for the members of the Adiabene royalty deserve some explanation since they are not very clear-cut. First, 'Josephan rulers' is meant to include Izates I, Monobazos I, Izates II and Monobazos II, and the idea is that this phrase denotes rulers who are known to us *mainly* from Josephus. Of course, Izates II and Monobazos II show up *not only* in Josephus, but Josephus in fact remains our *main* source of knowledge. 'The dynasty of royal converts' in turn refers to the same group and so includes Izates I and Monobazos I, since they were akin to Izates II and Monobazos II, though they did not convert.

¹³⁹⁵ Lipiński 1982: 117-124; de Callataÿ 1996: 135-145.

¹³⁹⁶ De Callataÿ 1996: 142.

¹³⁹⁷ Debevoise 1938: 143-144; Ziegler 1964: 51; Frye 1984: 236; Hackl 2010: 68.

¹³⁹⁸ Bivar 1983: 67-68; Klapproth 1988: 31 and n. 1.

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and 33 BCE)¹³⁹⁹. After the battle at Actium in 31 BCE he took refuge in Rome with Augustus, and died shortly before 20 BCE¹⁴⁰⁰. How much can we then infer about Artaxares from the context of *Res Gestae* 32? To begin with, Artaxares holds the royal title which could suggest that he had reigned before coming to Rome. Here, however, one reservation has to be made. Namely, Phraates is also said to hold this title, although he had never reigned in Parthia, and had never been proclaimed king of Parthia. Therefore, it is possible that the text uses this term in a broad sense as a name pointing to one's royal background in general. Next, all royal figures that show up in *Res Gestae* 32 are in fact contenders who are forced by the political constellation to go into exile but, if possible, who seek help in regaining their lost positions. Further, Artaxares appears among those who came to Rome between 30 BCE and 10/9 BCE. All this, especially the timing of Artaxares' appearance in Rome, can be referred to what we otherwise know about the chronology of the Adiabene royalty in the 1st c. CE. Specifically, though we do not know the exact years of the reigns of Izates I and Monobazos I (see below pp. 186-188), it is very likely that the sum of their reigns (especially the reign of Izates I) spanned the last few decades of the 1st c. BCE. Thus, Artaxares apparently came to Augustus when Izates I was still in power in Adiabene. This would make Artaxares a contender to the Adiabene throne occupied by the earliest known member of the dynasty of royal converts. Thus, Artaxares would be either a member of the dynasty preceding the dynasty of royal converts, or someone of distant kinship to the lineage holding the succession in Adiabene in the 1st c. CE.

12.3. Izates I and Monobazos I

Another ruler of Adiabene is known to us only thanks to Josephus' brief remark in Bell. 5:147 where Helena is called *daughter of Izates*, king of Adiabene. Since we know from Ant. 20:18 that Helena and Monobazos Bazaïos were siblings, this Izates must be the father of Monobazos Bazaïos and his predecessor at the throne of Adiabene. Therefore, he can function in our list as Izates I¹⁴⁰¹. Likewise, Monobazos Bazaïos (or Monobazos I) is known to us only thanks to Josephus' description of his role in the up-bringing of Izates son of Helena. It is then possible to establish the dates of Monobazos I's reign only with regard to the data we have for Izates II, especially on the beginning of his reign.

12.4. Izates II and Monobazos II

Both sons of Helena, Izates II and Monobazos II are recalled not only in Josephus but also appear in other ancient sources. Let us examine each single reference that could help us establish the dates of their reigns.

1. Izates II is said to be sent by his father Monobazos I to the friendly ruler of Characene, Abennerigos. This reference can help us to approximately date the youth of Izates II (Ant. 20:23: Izates called *νεανίας*) and the reign of Monobazos I. There is only one ruler of Charakene with this name in the first c. CE and his reign is attested by coins whose legends contain a

¹³⁹⁹ Debevoise 1938: 121-135; 146; Frye 1984: 234-235.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Frye 1984: 235; Schmidt 1986: 653. By contrast, see Debevoise 1938: 121-135; 146, n. 15 who distinguishes two Arsacid kings bearing this name (Artavasdes, king of Media and "a certain Artavasdes II, perhaps a brother of Tigranes II") and thinks that only the second was installed by Augustus as king of Armenia.

¹⁴⁰¹ Barish 1983: 90, n. 85 is surely right in remarking that Bell. 5:147 is the only piece of evidence for the existence of Izates I and as such, it is not based on very solid grounds. However, as long as it is not proven to be Josephus' or a copyist's error, the evidence of Bell. 5:147 cannot be dismissed out of hand.

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fragmentarily preserved name - ABINHPTΓA[OY] or AΔINNPTΓAΘ[Y]¹⁴⁰². This is clearly a Semitic name connected with god Nergal: the first version would mean “Diener des Nergal”, and the second could be translated as “Nergal läßt richten, Recht schaffen”¹⁴⁰³. Abennerigos’ earliest coins come from 10/11 CE, and the next numismatic findings are dated to 11/12, 13/14 and 22/23 CE. The coins of his successor, Attambelos III appear only in 37/38 CE, so the reign of Abennerigos can be dated from ca. 10/11 CE to ca. 37/38 CE, the latter being the *terminus ante quem* for the end of Abennerigos’ reign. However, one important detail has yet to be included. During that period, there was a short interval when a different ruler was in power at Characene¹⁴⁰⁴. It was Orabazes I whose reign is attested by coins dated to 18/19 CE and by a short reference in the Palmyra inscription of Germanicus also dated to 18/19 CE. Orabazes could reign no longer than until 22/23 CE (the next emission of Abennerigos’ coins). Thus, Abennerigos’ reign can be divided into two periods – from 10/11 CE until ca. 18/19 CE, and again from 22/23 until ca. 37/38 CE. The second part of Abennerigos’ reign seems to be more suitable for Izates’ stay at Charakene¹⁴⁰⁵, since this period offers a longer span of time when Abennerigos’ power was firmly established and Charakene apparently started to prosper again. What is more, it may be hard to definitely determine the age of someone called νεανίας, since the use of this term may vary, but if we ask which age is most commonly implied by this term, it is an age beyond puberty and before marriage¹⁴⁰⁶, someone in his twenties¹⁴⁰⁷. This interpretation fits well the other data we have on Izates (especially his age at the moment of death – see below p. 191). Further, the reign of Abennerigos is relevant for dating of the reign of Monobazos I. However, the value of this clue is limited. All we can say is that Monobazos I reigned over Adiabene at some point when Abennerigos was king of Charakene, that is between 10/11 – 18/19 CE and/or 22/23 – 37/38, but the very beginning of the reign of Monobazos I in Adiabene, and its end, cannot be dated only on the basis of Ant. 20:22-23.

2. The beginning of Izates’ I reign in Adiabene is referred by Josephus (Ant. 20:37) to the reigns of the emperor Claudius in Rome (41-54 CE) and king Artabanos II in Parthia (10-38 CE) to whom Izates is said to have sent his rivals in Adiabene. This reference is, however, problematic in two ways. First, the periods of the reigns of Claudius and Artabanos do not seem to overlap. This difficulty could perhaps be alleviated: although Artabanos’ death is most frequently dated to 38 CE¹⁴⁰⁸ (at least since the contribution of Debevoise¹⁴⁰⁹), there is good reason to date it later, to 40 CE or even to early 41 CE¹⁴¹⁰. First, Artabanos is still mentioned in regard to the accusations against Herod Antipas in Rome in 39 CE (Ant. 18:250)¹⁴¹¹; secondly, the earliest coinage struck on behalf of Vardanes comes from October of 41 CE¹⁴¹². Nevertheless, this solution used for Ant. 20:37 still produces another problem – the narrative places the handover of hostages to Parthia (Ant. 20:37) before Izates II’s help to Artabanos

¹⁴⁰² Schuol 2000: 320.

¹⁴⁰³ Schuol 2000: 320.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Schuol 2000: 320-326.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Schuol 2000: 325-326.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Louw-Nida 1988: 108.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Thayer 1979: no. 3584.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Debevoise 1938: 166; Bihar 1983: 75; Karras-Klapproth 1988: 34; Thommen 2010: 233.

¹⁴⁰⁹ See Schottky 1991: 85 and n. 155.

¹⁴¹⁰ So Olbrycht 1997a: 82. Likewise Schottky 1991: 86-87.

¹⁴¹¹ Schottky 1991: 86.

¹⁴¹² Sellwood 1980: 207-212. The fact is also that before 41 CE Seleukeia was in rebellion and did not mint royal coinage.

during the coup d'etat in Parthia (Ant. 20:54-68). Thus, if the former takes place in 41 CE, there is no time left for Izates II's intervention for Artabanos. Another suggested solution is that Izates II sent hostages to Rome and Parthia in turns, first to Artabanos and then to Claudius. But this does not fit very well with the logic of the narrative of Ant. 20:37: Izates is said to arrive quickly, and to handle the problem once and for all. Therefore, the only plausible answer is that Josephus' reference in Ant. 20:37 is simply imprecise and as such does not allow us to date the very moment of Izates II's inauguration¹⁴¹³. It rather looks like Josephus gives us in Ant. 20:37 only the general timing of Izates II's early reign, or even refers to the reign of Izates II's at large by providing only the most general chronological context of his reign (that is, Izates II reigned at the time of both Artabanos II and Claudius).

3. The reign of Izates II is mentioned in reference to a few contemporary Parthian kings by Josephus. These are Artabanos II (10/1 - ca. 40/41 CE¹⁴¹⁴), Vardanes (41-45 CE), Gotarzes (45-51 CE)¹⁴¹⁵ and Vologases (51-76/80 CE)¹⁴¹⁶. Only Gotarzes is mentioned by Josephus in passing, all others are described in Ant. 20:17-96 by Josephus in more detail.

First, Artabanos is said to flee Parthia due to the plot of the satraps and to find shelter in Adiabene (Ant. 20:54-68). Moreover, only thanks to Izates II's diplomatic intervention could Artabanos regain his throne from the hands of a certain Kinnamos who had stepped aside for Artabanos. This event does not find any parallel in other ancient sources, and we do not know any coins struck on behalf of Kinnamos either¹⁴¹⁷. We do, however, know a similar episode from the reign of Artabanos in 35-36 CE (Tac., *Ann.* 6: 31-37, 41-44 and Josephus, Ant. 18:86-105 as main sources, as well as some references in Suetonius, *Tiberius* 66, *Vitellius* 2 and Cass. Dio, 58.26.1-4; 59.27.3-4) when Artabanos was forced to leave the kingdom because of the rebellion and the Roman intervention which led to the installment of Tiridates III, grandson of Phraates IV on the Parthian throne¹⁴¹⁸. By 37 CE Artabanos returned from exile in Hyrkania with a strong army of Dahan auxiliaries, regained his throne again, and came to an agreement with the Romans¹⁴¹⁹. The historicity of the episode in Ant. 20:54-68 is accepted by most scholars¹⁴²⁰. Most scholars include the episode as another case of a rebellion against Artabanos, and they date it after the first one, that is after 36 CE and before Artabanos' death¹⁴²¹. This dating is based mainly on Josephus' statement in Ant. 20:68 that "not long afterwards" Artabanos died and was

¹⁴¹³ So already Graetz 790.

¹⁴¹⁴ See Olbrycht 1997a: 81.

¹⁴¹⁵ The dates of Vardanes' and Gotarzes' reigns do not have to be seen as exclusive of each other, since in 44 and 45 the royal mint at Seleukeia simultaneously produced a series of coins on behalf of both Vardanes and Gotarzes; this fact cannot be explained in a different way than by assuming some kind of power sharing arrangement between both Arsacids – see Olbrycht 1997a: 86.

¹⁴¹⁶ Thommen 2010: 233-234.

¹⁴¹⁷ The lack of coins struck by a contender could be a strong, though not inarguable premise against the historicity of such an episode. On the other hand, we know another case when a pretender has not left any coins, and this case also refers to the reign of Artabanos II (Tiridates II). Furthermore, the name Kinnamos appears to be rare, but it is still attested. See McCown (1936: 2-4 and 1937: 19-20) on the name *Καννιμος* found in the Greek inscription on a basalt sarcophagus found at Marwa (Meru) in northern Transjordan. See also Wuthnow 1930: 64 on the form *Κινναμω* found in the Egyptian papyri of the 3rd c. CE.

¹⁴¹⁸ Karras-Klapproth 1988: 33-34, 176-178; Schottky 1991: 82 and n. 136.

¹⁴¹⁹ Karras-Klapproth 1988: 33-34, 176-178; Hackl 2010: 70.

¹⁴²⁰ See Kahrstedt 1950: 80 and Schottky 1991:102-103 (both acknowledging the historicity of Ant. 20:54-68) who suggest that Kinnamos should be interpreted as Gotarzes II.

¹⁴²¹ Debevoise 1938: 165-166; Kahrstedt 1950: 64-66; Schippman 1980:52-53; Dąbrowa 1983: 91; Bivar 1983: 74-75; Frye 1984: 238; Karras-Klapproth 1988: 33-34, 69-70; Schottky 1991: 83-87.

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succeeded by his son, Vardanes. Thus, the period between 37 CE and the death of Artabanos (tentatively dated to 40 or early 41 CE) is the most appropriate setting of Ant. 20:54-68.

Likewise, Izates II's conflict with Vardanes does not find any parallels in sources other than Josephus himself. However, Tacitus reports Vardanes' plans to recover Parthian control over Armenia. According to Tacitus, Vardanes had such plans but was forced to abandon them by the Roman governor of Syria, Vibius Marsus, who threatened Vardanes with war (*Ann.* 11.10). Vibius Marsus' tenure in Syria is dated to 41/42-44/45¹⁴²², and this is the most appropriate setting for Ant. 20:69-73¹⁴²³. Specifically, a political plan of such scale and difficulty could only be undertaken when one's power is secured at home. Therefore, it is only after Vardanes came to an agreement with Gotarzes, and after he regained control over Seleukeia, when he could think of any campaign against Armenia. Seleukeia was subjugated by June of 42¹⁴²⁴, so the summer of 42 is the earliest possible date of Vardanes' plans. At the same time, Vardanes' conflict with Gotarzes is again reported to be in full swing in 44 CE; to be precise, in 44 CE Vardanes took on a long-distance campaign against Gotarzes into the Trans-Caspian steppes¹⁴²⁵. Consequently, the period from the summer of 42 until the fall of 43 CE is most probable. What is more, we can infer from Josephus' testimony that Vardanes could not undertake any steps against Izates II due to internal problems. Thus, a date closer to Vardanes' campaign is highly likely, that is 43 CE. Finally, let us only add that Josephus (and Tacitus too) does not in fact speak of military activities between Vardanes and the Romans, or between Izates II and Vardanes, but presents everything in terms of Vardanes' plans¹⁴²⁶.

Finally, when it comes to the relationship between Izates II and Vologases II, we have the war *per se* in Ant. 20:81-91. Again, no other sources confirm the war between Adiabene and the Parthian king Vologases¹⁴²⁷. Therefore, Brüll suggested that the Dahae and the Sacae recalled in Ant. 20:91 (whose attack on Parthian soil forced Vologases to withdraw his forces from Adiabene) can be identified as Hyrcanian tribes¹⁴²⁸ and consequently the diversion that apparently saved Izates could match the rebellion in Hyrcania about which we are informed from Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.37.6; 14.25.2; 15.1.1) and whose beginning is dated to around 57 CE¹⁴²⁹. Yet, Brüll's interpretation contains a geographical misinterpretation. In fact, the Dahae tribes were settled on the northern border of Hyrcania, between the Usboi River and Parthiene, but the Sacae

¹⁴²² Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 263-264.

¹⁴²³ See Graetz 1887: 788; Ziegler 1964:64-65, n. 141; Karras-Kaproth 1988: 188, n. 3; Bivar 1983: 76; Schottky 1991: 107; Thommen 2010: 234.

¹⁴²⁴ McDowell 1935: 225-226; Schottky 1991: 105; Wiesehöfer 1994a: 196.

¹⁴²⁵ Kahrstedt 1950: 27, Schottky 1991: 107.

¹⁴²⁶ By contrast, Neusner 1969: 63 speaks of Vardanes' invasion of Adiabene, and says that a simultaneous campaign of Gotarzes against Vardanes prevented the invasion of Adiabene from being "a vigorous campaign". This interpretation probably goes back to Debevoise 1938: 170.

¹⁴²⁷ Boehmer/von Gall 1973 points to the rock relief in Batas-Herir and suggests that it depicts Izates II in commemoration of his victory over Vologases. Indeed, the worn-out monument portrays a single standing figure, probably in a religious context, but the relief has no inscription and therefore its interpretation must remain very tentative. In fact, it entirely rests on identifying the figure's headdress as a royal Parthian upright tiara (τιάρρα ὀρθή or κίδαρις) which, according to Ant. 20:66-67, was worn by Izates II due to the privilege received from Artabanos II. However, stylistic similarities between the Batas-Herir monument and the so-called *Mithridates relief* at Bisutun may suggest an earlier dating of the Batas-Herir relief at the turn of the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE (see Mathiesen 1992a: 23-24). For the Batas-Herir relief, see Edmonds 1931; Boehmer/von Gall 1973; Mathiesen 1992a: 23-24; Wiesehöfer 1994b: 103, n. 13, 131.

¹⁴²⁸ Brüll 1974: 71; Neusner 1969: 65.

¹⁴²⁹ Schottky 1991: 117, 119.

tribes were located in the West-Bactrian region¹⁴³⁰. Indeed, both the Dahae and the Sacae were allied with the Hyrcanian tribes during the 1st c. CE dynastic struggles in the Parthian Kingdom¹⁴³¹. But there is no good reason to identify each single case of the cooperation between the Dahae and Sacae with the rebellion in Hyrcania¹⁴³². Instead, the attack of the Dahae and the Sacae can be better understood as the first reaction of the anti-atropatenean coalition once supporting Gotarzes. Thus, the early years of the reign of Vologases, before Vologases' engagement in Armenia in 53¹⁴³³, the coup d'etat of Vardanis filius in 55 CE¹⁴³⁴ and the beginning of trouble in Hyrcania in 58 CE¹⁴³⁵, is the most appropriate dating of Vologases' campaign against Adiabene¹⁴³⁶. Therefore, the date for Vologases' campaign can be placed most likely in 52 CE¹⁴³⁷.

7. Izates II and Monobazos II also appear in Roman sources, especially in Tacitus. This fact is very helpful since Roman history has a relatively well-established chronology. Thus, Izates shows up in Tacitus' episode (*Ann.* 12.10-14) on the Roman expedition ordered in 48 CE by Emperor Claudius to install Meherdates on the Parthian throne instead of king Gotarzes¹⁴³⁸. The campaign started in winter of 49 CE¹⁴³⁹, and probably lasted into the first months of 50 CE¹⁴⁴⁰. In turn, Izates' II brother, Monobazos II appears in the context of the Roman-Parthian Wars of 58-63 (the *Corbulo wars*) over control of Armenia (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13:34-41, 14:23-26, 15:1-17, 15:24-31; and Cass. Dio 62:19-23)¹⁴⁴¹. He is particularly mentioned on the occasion of the Armenian incursion into Adiabene in 61 CE, the siege of Tigranokerta in 61 CE and the truce agreement between Paetus and Vasakes (winter 62 CE)¹⁴⁴². He is also briefly mentioned by Dio as sending "hostages" to the Romans during the peace talks at Rhandaia in 63 CE and on the occasion of the crowning ceremony of Tiridates as king of Armenia in Rome in 66 CE¹⁴⁴³.

¹⁴³⁰ Olbrycht 1997a: 84-85, 87-88; Olbrycht 1998b: 15-20 and 20, n. 70.

¹⁴³¹ Schottky 1991: 81-134; Olbrycht 1997a: 81-100.

¹⁴³² Kahrstedt 1950: 36 and 69, n. 46; Schottky 1991: 116-117; Olbrycht 1997a: 84-85, 87-88; Olbrycht 1998b: 15-20 and 20, n. 70.

¹⁴³³ See Dąbrowa 1983: 131-134; Olbrycht 1998a: 179-180.

¹⁴³⁴ Dąbrowa 1983: 134.

¹⁴³⁵ Dąbrowa 1983: 133-134; Dąbrowa 1984: 141-147; Schottky 1991: 117-119.

¹⁴³⁶ Another rebellion against Izates is Abias' invasion (*Ant.* 20:75-80). There are no clues in the text as to when precisely the invasion took place. Abias himself is hard to identify. He is called Ἀράβων βασιλεύς and his capital - Ἀρσαμον. The title of "king of Arab" or "king of the Arabs" (mlk' dy 'rb and mlk' d'rb) is known to be used by the kings of Hatra (but only from the second half of the 2nd c. CE on). Otherwise titles like Ἀραβαρχής ("ruler of the Arabs" or "of the Arab", the steppe) and ślyt' d'rb ("ruler of Arab") are attested in Dura Europos and Edessa. Generally speaking, Abias is believed to be either an anonymous local dynast from the north Mesopotamian desert region (see Strabo 16.1.8), or, more specifically, a ruler of Edessa. For the titles, see Teixidor 1967-68: 9; Frye 1984: 280-281; Millar 1993: 447-448, 497-498. For possible identifications, see Kahrstedt 1950: 70, n. 48 (who identifies Ἀρσαμον with Arzamon known the 6th c. CE Procopius of Caesarea, *Bellum Persicum*, 1.8.10); Fowler 2010: 68, n. 38.

¹⁴³⁷ So Hansman 1987: 277 and Olbrycht 1998a: 177-178; see also Debevoise 1938: 177-178 and 182; Kahrstedt 1950: 69, n. 46; Karras-Klapproth 1988: 192, n. 1; Schottky 1991: 116-117; Hackl 2010: 72.

¹⁴³⁸ Ziegler 1964: 65-66; Dąbrowa 1983: 121-124; Hackl 2010: 71.

¹⁴³⁹ Schippman 1980: 53; Dąbrowa 1983: 122; Bivar 1983: 77; Hackl 2010: 71.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Schottky 1991: 109.

¹⁴⁴¹ For the very complicated issue of the chronology of Corbulo's campaigns, see B.W. Henderson 1901a: 159-165; B.W. Henderson 1901b: 204-213; Schur 1925: 75-96; Schur 1926: 215-222; Ziegler 1964: 67-78. Especially B.W. Henderson and Schur laid foundations for two different interpretations of the chronology of Corbulo's campaigns. Here I follow Ziegler 1964: 67-78 and Dąbrowa 1983: 131-161.

¹⁴⁴² Ziegler 1964: 67-74; Bivar 1983: 81-85; Dąbrowa 1983: 131-153; Frye 1984: 239; Schottky 1991: 121.

¹⁴⁴³ Ziegler 1964: 67-74; Bivar 1983: 81-85; Dąbrowa 1983: 131-153; Frye 1984: 239-240; Schottky 1991: 121.

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8. Monobazos II is also indirectly mentioned by Josephus as the current king of Adiabene in the context of the Jewish-Roman War of 66-70 (Bell. 2:520, Bell. 2:525). The first reference concerns the very beginning of the Jewish uprising in 66 CE, while the second text refers to the final destruction of the Lower City of David that took place in the summer 70 CE¹⁴⁴⁴.

9. Last of all, in Ant. 20:92 we find a very interesting statement that can potentially be very useful for the dating of the chronology of the Adiabene dynasty, but, at the same time, is highly controversial. Namely, according to Josephus, by the moment of his death Izates II had lived fifty-five years and reigned for twenty-four. Some scholars take this data at face value and use it as a starting point for their reconstructions¹⁴⁴⁵. However, the problem is that we have here a round number, twenty-four, the significance of which many be purely symbolic, especially in the Biblical tradition (see that in the next sentence Izates is also said in Ant. 20:92 to have twenty-four sons and twenty-four daughters). On the other hand, the number fifty-five is not known to have any symbolic use whatsoever. Can one then use one number of symbolic significance (a twenty-four year reign, that is a long and fruitful reign) and the other one that conveys down-to-earth data within one sentence? It is not very likely. All in all, we think that we should not begin our reconstruction starting from such doubtful data. By contrast, it can be now taken into account after having settled all other reliable data and so its definite value can be decided in the light of other plausible premises. Thus, we could observe that Izates II was still king of Adiabene in the early 50s, most probably between 52 and 54 CE. The first appearance of Monobazos II as king of Adiabene can be dated to 61. Apparently, Izates II died between 55 and 60 CE, but if we take Josephus' remark literally that Izates II died not long after Vologases campaign, then it may be appropriate to narrow our range of possible choices down. Let us then assume that Izates died around 55 CE¹⁴⁴⁶.

If we use the information about his twenty-four years of reign, then the beginning of the reign of Izates II can be dated to ca. 30 CE¹⁴⁴⁷. Before 30 CE Izates II must also have ruled in Gordyene, and spent some time in Characene. How much time did he spend in Characene and Gordyene? There are two possibilities depending on which part of the reign of Abdenabos we assume as the time of Izates' residence there. If we assume that he went to Adiabene between 10/11 CE and 18/19 CE, and left Characene because of dynastic struggles there, then it must have happened in 18/19 CE at the latest. This means that Izates II was sent to Characene by his father after 10 CE and spent a few years there. After 18/19 CE and before 30 CE he ruled in Gordyene. However, as we have noted, the use of the term *νεανίας* suggests that he was in his twenties when he was sent to Characene. Since Izates II died around 55 CE at the age of fifty-five, then the dating of his stay in Characene in the 20s of the 1st c. CE fits very well. Consequently, we can date Izates II's stay in Characene and rule in Gordyene between 22/23 CE and 30 CE. Lastly, if Izates II died around 55 CE, then he would be born at the turn of the Christian era. Thus, we conclude that the reconstruction that includes the data from Ant. 20:92 seems very plausible.

The information on the length of Izates II's life bears upon the dating of Monobazos I's reign. Since Izates was born at the turn of the Christian era and is presented in Ant. 20:19 as a newly-born child of the current king who has already had other children, then Monobazos I must have started his reign before the 1st c. CE. The earliest possible date we can assume, then, is 5

¹⁴⁴⁴ Price 1992: 1-11, 170-172.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Brüll 1874: 71-72; Neusner 1969: 64-65.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Likewise Schottky 1991: 117 who dates it to 54 CE.

¹⁴⁴⁷ See Steinmann 2009: 5-6 on the difference between inclusive and actual dates.

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BCE, although it could be considerably earlier, too. If Izates II takes over power in Adiabene in ca. 30 CE, Monobazos' reign lasted at least 35 years. What is more, we know the name of the father and predecessor of Monobazos I, that is, Izates I. There is no way of establishing how long Izates I reigned and when his reign began. However, we can speculatively make use of the statistic data we have – Izates II reigned twenty-five years, Monobazos I at least thirty-five. Even if we refer the shorter amount of time (twenty-five years and not thirty-five) to the reign of Izates I, then we can at least state that it is likely that the reign of Izates I coincided with the appearance of Artaxares in Rome. This would mean that the dynasty of the royal converts probably came to power in Adiabene in the second half of the 1st c. BCE, more precisely between 30 BCE and 10 BCE.

10. Additionally, there is one episode in Ant. 20:17-96 that seems to be very approachable in terms of accurate dating¹⁴⁴⁸. It is the famine in Jerusalem during which Izates II and Helena helped the suffering inhabitants of Jerusalem (Ant. 20:51-53). The same fact is recorded in Ant. 20:101, though this time referred to Judea and not only to Jerusalem, and is said to occur during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (46-48 CE). An important question to be posed before we set out to date this event is whether the same famine is referred to in other sources. The answer given by most scholars is positive and refers to the following passages: Acts 11:28-30; Ant. 3:320-321 (being the most controversial¹⁴⁴⁹); Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 2.12.1; Orosius, *Historia*, 7.6.12. What is more, we have some papyrological evidence for a famine in Egypt from the 40s CE¹⁴⁵⁰. From all these references, the following clues for the dating of the famine in Jerusalem can be inferred: in Claudius' time, that is 41-54 CE (Acts 11:27-30); and in the fourth year of Claudius (according to Orosius, *Hist.* 7.6.9), that is 44 CE; during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander, thus 46-48 CE (Ant. 20:101), but it already started in the days of his predecessor¹⁴⁵¹, Fadus, that is 44-46 CE (Ant. 20:100-101), and *about* the time of Agrippa's death in 44 CE (Acts 11:27-30). Thus, the most general dating is between 44 and 48 CE and scholars tend to prefer either the first (44-46) or the second half of this period (46-48)¹⁴⁵². Josephus' data in Ant. 20:101 connects the famine most strongly with the tenure of Tiberius Alexander (46-48 CE) but even in Ant. 20:101 the connection with the time of Fadus' governance (44-46 CE) can also be acknowledged through the ἐπὶ τούτοις reading¹⁴⁵³. Further, the inclusion of Ant. 20:51-53 into the framework of Fadus' affairs again speaks in favor of this

¹⁴⁴⁸ Graetz 1906: 787; Torrey 1916: 20-22; Jeremias 1928: 98-103; Foakes-Jackson/Lake/Cadbury 1933: 452-455; Nairne 1934: 145; Gapp 1935: 258-265; Packer 1966: 93; Jeremias 1969: 145; Neil 1973: 145; Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 457, n. 8; Rajak 1983: 125: 47-49; Lüdemann 1984: 135; Pesch 1986: 357, n. 9; Goodman 1987: 142, n. 5; Conzelmann 1987: 90; Willimon 1988: 108; Hemer 1989: 164-165; D.R. Schwartz 1992: 220-221, 236-237; Pastor 1997: 151-156, 243-245; Pervo 2009: 295-298.

¹⁴⁴⁹ See what speaks against this identification in Rajak 1983: 125; and what may be in its favour in D.R. Schwartz 1992: 220. On the tenure of Ishmael ben Phiabi, the high priest and Judean chronology, see D.R. Schwartz 1992: 220-221, 366-367 and Goodman 1987: 142, n. 5.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Wilcken 1928: 48-65; Gapp 1935: 74-79, 110; Pastor 1997: 153.

¹⁴⁵¹ For this controversial reading, see Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 457, n. 8.

¹⁴⁵² Graetz 1906: 787: 46-48 CE; Jeremias 1928: 98-103: 47-49 CE; Foakes-Jackson/Lake/Cadbury 1933: 455: "started in 45 or 46" CE; Nairne 1934: 145: 45 CE; Gapp 1935: 258-265: 46 or 47 CE; Packer 1966: 93: "about 46 CE"; Jeremias 1969: 145: 47-49 CE; Neil 1973: 145: 46 CE; Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 457, n. 8: 44-46 CE but may have started as early as 44 CE; Rajak 1983: 125: 47-49 CE; Lüdemann 1984: 135: 46-48 CE; Willimon 1988: 108: 46-47 CE; Hemer 1989: 164-165 dates the mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to 46-47 CE and holds that it was probably earlier than Helena's action; D.R. Schwartz 1992: 220: "the late forties"; Pastor 1997: 154: "began in the spring of 44 CE and lasted two years".

¹⁴⁵³ See Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 457, n. 8.

connection. However, for a definite solution, the papyri from Egypt have to be consulted¹⁴⁵⁴. The famine in Egypt had a natural cause since it resulted from an unusually high level of water in the Nile (it rose to a height of eighteen cubits)¹⁴⁵⁵. The papyri record the highest prices for grain in Egypt in over a century starting from the fall of 45 until the spring of 47 CE¹⁴⁵⁶. It is highly unlikely that anyone from outside Egypt could buy grain there during a food crisis¹⁴⁵⁷. In such cases (Tacit., *Ann.* 2.59; Pliny the Younger, *Pan.* 30-32), even Roman authorities handed out grain stored in Egypt for Rome (Germanicus in 19 CE) or returned to Egypt grain already transported to Rome (Trajan in 99/100 CE)¹⁴⁵⁸. Thus, Helena must have bought grain in Egypt either before (fall 45 CE) or after (spring 47 being the earliest date) the food crisis in Egypt¹⁴⁵⁹. The early dating of the famine is more convenient since it can embrace both the moment of Agrippa's death (about 44 CE), the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Claudius (44 CE), and the procuratorship of Fadus (44-46). Thus, the famine seems to have begun in spring of 44, and lasted at least two years (thus at least into the first year of the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander). Since we can conclude from Ant. 20:51-53 that Jerusalem was already in the grip of famine, Helena could have arrived in Jerusalem between the summer of 44 and the spring 45, and the spring of 45 was indeed the last moment when she could buy grain in Egypt. Perhaps the fact that the ongoing famine in Jerusalem continued into 45 and 46 CE and so coincided with the food crisis in Egypt forced Helena to buy food in Cyprus too¹⁴⁶⁰. To conclude, Helena arrived in Jerusalem after the first strike of the famine (ca. 44-45 CE), and her contribution helped to relieve the pain of the famine that still lasted into the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (46-48 CE).

11. Lastly, we can now return to the very beginning of the Adiabene narrative - Ant. 20:17 where Josephus introduces the whole episode under the heading of the conversion of Helena and Izates using the temporal phrase *κατὰ τοῦτου δὲ τὸν καιρὸν* ("at about this time"). First, the temporal phrase refers to the broader context of Ant. 20 where Josephus speaks of the procuratorship of Fadus (44-46 CE)¹⁴⁶¹. The question arises as to whether Josephus referred in Ant. 20:17 to any specific event from the period of that procuratorship¹⁴⁶². The Adiabene account is placed after the story about the vestments of the high priests and before the story of Theudas. Emperor Claudius' decision on the vestments is dated to 28 June 45 CE¹⁴⁶³. Thus, our account can be understood as placed between summer 45 CE and the end of Fadus' tenure in 46 CE. Yet, it is even more important to ask what exactly Josephus thinks to have happened during that period: only the conversion or the whole account of Ant. 20:17-96? Of course, it is impossible to place a span of Izates' lifetime within a short period of the years 45-46 CE. Nevertheless, the alternative solution that the conversion of "Helena and Izates" took place in that period is also problematic. First, one of Josephus' few references that can be very precisely dated in Ant. 20:17-96 is the famine in Jerusalem (Ant. 20: 51-53), and Helena's trip to Jerusalem makes sense

¹⁴⁵⁴ See Pastor 1997: 151-156 whose interpretation of the data from Egypt is essentially followed here.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Gapp 1935: 258-259.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Gapp 1935: 258-260; Johnson 1936: 310-311.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Pastor 1997: 153.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Wilcken 1928: 48-65; Pastor 1997: 153.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Pastor 1997: 153.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Likewise Foakes-Jackson/Lake/Cadbury 1933: 455 and Hemer 1989: 165-166 and 166, n. 11; and especially Pastor 1997: 153.

¹⁴⁶¹ D.R. Schwartz 1992: 192.

¹⁴⁶² So Brüll 1874: 66.

¹⁴⁶³ Vermes/Millar/Black 1973: 456, n. 5.

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only after her conversion and that of Izates II. Further, we dated the famine to the period between the spring of 44 and 46 CE, and Helena's arrival in Jerusalem between the summer of 44 and the spring of 45. Next, Josephus' introduces the Adiabene narrative as a story about the conversion of Helena and Izates as during the tenure of Fadus (44-46, more specifically between 28 June 45 CE and 46 CE). Taking all this data into consideration, one could, seemingly, suggest the simple solution as follows: both the conversion and Helena's trip take place in rapid succession; let us say: Helena and Izates II convert in ca. 44 CE, and Helena arrives in Jerusalem in the spring of 45 CE. This solution, however, can hardly be reconciled with the chronology of Ant. 20:17-96. First, the conversion of Helena preceded that of Izates II, and the span of time between both conversions seems not to be immediate, to say the least. To be precise, according to Ant. 20:34-48 Helena converted, when Izates II was either in Charax Spasini or when he was summoned to visit Adiabene before Monobazos' death, thus between 22/23 CE and 30 CE¹⁴⁶⁴. Thus, Helena's conversion took place between 22/23 CE and 30 CE¹⁴⁶⁵. As for Izates II, following the course of the Adiabene narrative, his conversion is described before the unit presenting Artabanos II's exile which can be dated after 36 CE. Therefore, Izates II's conversion occurred before 36 CE. All in all, the simplest conclusion about the chronological value of the temporal phrase in Ant. 20:17 is that it did not serve Josephus to date any specific event, but to set the general context of the Adiabene narrative. Perhaps Josephus' starting point was Helena's presence in Jerusalem during the famine which began in the spring of 44 CE and lasted into the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (46-48 CE), perhaps being more severe than at the beginning. Yet, before Josephus was to report the episode of the famine during which Helena's benefactions made her famous in Jerusalem, he had to introduce Helena and her family into his narrative. He logically chose to do that during the tenure of the preceding procurator in Judea during which the famine had already begun. This, however, means that he did not know when exactly the conversion took place, and this event as such is undatable now.

12.5. The 2nd Century CE Chronology of the Adiabene Royalty

Beside the kings of Adiabene known to us mainly thanks to Josephus, there are three more rulers of Adiabene that appear in ancient sources during the Parthian period¹⁴⁶⁶.

First, Mebarsapes, king of Adiabene is mentioned by Cass. Dio 68.22 during Trajan's campaign in 114-116 CE against Parthia¹⁴⁶⁷. Secondly, an anonymous ruler of Adiabene belonged to Eastern supporters of Pescennius Niger, a pretender to the Roman throne in 192-194 CE (see Cass. Dio 75.1-2)¹⁴⁶⁸. Niger was, however, defeated by his main opponent Septimius Severus; the final battle took place in 194 CE at Issos, and while Niger was captured during his

¹⁴⁶⁴ Though we must remark that the sequence of themes introduced in Ant. 20:34-37 (Ananias and the women, Ananias and Izates, Izates goes with Ananias to Adiabene, Helena and Jewish traditions, Izates arrives in Adiabene for good) is very vague, and this is clearly a result of two narration flashbacks, probably connected with Josephus' switch from one source to the other.

¹⁴⁶⁵ So Brüll 1874: 67.

¹⁴⁶⁶ However, in the *Chronicle of Arbela*, which is a much later source (and that is why it is not included here) and whose authenticity is a matter of scholarly dispute, three other rulers of Adiabene are recalled, namely: Raqbakt, Narseh, and Sharat. See Fiey 1965: 41-42; Frye 1984: 279 and n. 24.

¹⁴⁶⁷ See Longden 1931: 1-35; Lepper 1948: 103; Isaac 1990: 30; Ziegler 1964: 100-104; Grousset 1973: 109-110; Magie 1950: 609-610, 1467-1468; Lightfoot 1990: 115-126; Bivar 1983: 87-89; Frye 1984: 242; Butcher 2003: 44-45.

¹⁴⁶⁸ See Magie 1950: 671-673, 1538-1542; Ziegler 1964: 129-132; Sommer 2005: 239-240, n. 58; Butcher 2003: 48.

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escape to Parthia and killed, his two Eastern supporters, the kings of Edessa and Adiabene, were taken prisoner¹⁴⁶⁹. Septimius Severus celebrated his victory with the issue of coins, some of which feature inscriptions like ARAB.ADIAB. and present two captives seated back to back, on round shields, with a trophy centrally placed between them¹⁴⁷⁰. Another king of Adiabene named 'Aṭlū is attested through the Hatra inscription no. 21. The inscription does not include a date (unlike some other Hatra inscriptions), the main clue as to the dating is the fact that the statue was placed in the temple of Baal Shamin which was erected in 138 CE (inscription no. 272)¹⁴⁷¹. This date can serve only as a *terminus post quem* for the attestation of 'Aṭlū, while the siege of Hatra by the Sassanids in 238 constitutes its *terminus ante quem*. Perhaps, the archaeological context could indicate the end of the 2nd c. or the beginning of the 3rd c. CE as the most suitable setting for 'Aṭlū's attestation¹⁴⁷².

12.6. A Chronological List

To sum up, the following list of rulers of Adiabene known to us by name in the Parthian period can be reconstructed:

- Abdissar[], between the late 3rd and early 1st c. BCE;
- Artaxares, 2nd half of the 1st c. BCE, went into exile between 30 and 10 BCE;
- Izates I, 2nd half of the 1st c. BCE, at power in Adiabene between 30 and 10 BCE;
- Monobazos I Bazaïos: the beginning of the reign before the Christian era, perhaps ca. 5 BCE, died ca. 30 CE;
- Izates II
 - born ca. 1BCE/1CE;
 - Izates' stayed at Charakene and Gordyene between 22/23 CE and 30 CE;
 - Helena's conversion between 22/23 CE and 30 CE;
 - the beginning of Izates' reign ca. 30 CE;
 - Izates helps Artabanos II – between 37 and 40/41 CE;
 - Izates' conflict with Vardanes – 43 CE;
 - Helena's arrival in Jerusalem - between summer 44 and spring 45 CE;
 - Izates' involvement in the Roman expedition against Gotarzes – 49-50 CE;
 - Vologases' campaign against Izates – between 52 and 54 CE;
 - Izates' death by 55 CE;
- Monobazos II¹⁴⁷³

¹⁴⁶⁹ See Magie 1950: 673; Ziegler 1964: 131; Butcher 2003: 48. For a different interpretation of the fate of the king of Edessa, see Sommer 2010: 222.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Mattingly/Sydenham 1936: 96-100, nos. 58, 62-63, 76, pl. 5.

¹⁴⁷¹ H.J.W. Drijvers 1977: 821.

¹⁴⁷² Teixidor 1967: 2.

¹⁴⁷³ We also need to take a stand on a frequently-repeated statement that the forebearers of the royal family of Monobazos II survived in Armenia (e.g. Teixidor 1967: 6; Schiffman 1987: 312, n. 61; Feldman 1993: 331). Namely, Neusner 1964b: 239-240 points to a passage in Moses Khorenatsi (2.57) who speaks of the Amaduni, a family of Jewish origin which came to Armenia during the reign of Ardases. As Khorenatsi reports, this family descended from "a certain Manue" and the Persians still called them the Manuyans, in the name of their ancestor. According to Neusner 1964b: 239, Manue is an Armenian form of the well-known name Monobazos, which also exists in Parthian as "M^aN^aW^aZ, and the Armenian is thus an imperfect representation of its consonantal form". However, it should be noted that the etymological connection between Manue and Manavaz is questionable (see Thomson 1978: 199, n. 2). Further, it is also possible that the family was not of Jewish origin but of Median descent (see Toumanoff 1963: 197-198).

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- the beginning of reign ca. 55 CE;
- the Corbulo Wars (61-63 CE);
- the Parthian embassy to Rome – 66 CE;
- the Jewish-Roman War (66-70 CE);
- Mebarsapes
 - Trajan's conquest of Nisibis and Adiabene in 114-115¹⁴⁷⁴ CE¹⁴⁷⁵;
- an anonymous ruler of Adiabene, one of the Eastern supporters of Pescennius Niger in 192-194 CE;
- 'Aṭīlū, attested through Hatra inscription no. 21, a donor to the cult of Baal Shaamin in Hatra, between 138 CE and 238 CE.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Alternatively, Adiabene could have been invaded as late as in 116 CE. For a complicated issue of the chronology of Trajan's campaigns, see Longden 1931; Lepper 1948; and Lighfoot 1990 (whose dating is followed here).

¹⁴⁷⁵ Trajan's invasion of Parthia raises the issue of the creation of the province of Assyria. Namely, Trajan is reported to arrange the conquered land into three provinces: Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria. Some scholars equate Trajan's province of Assyria with Adiabene (Fränkel 1894: 360; Longden 1931: 13-14; M.I. Henderson 1949: 125; Magie 1950: 608; Dillemann 1962: 288-289). This is not, however, certain. First, the evidence for this particular province is derived only from the two 5th c. CE historical epitomes of Eutropius and Festus (Lighfoot 1990: 121-125; Millar 1993: 101). Secondly, some scholars locate the province of Assyria, if historical, not in Adiabene but in Babylonia as a territory between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in central Iraq (Maricq 1959: 257-260; Millar 1970: 117; Lighfoot 1990: 121-126).