

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/20137> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Marciak, Michał

**Title:** Izates and Helena of Adiabene : a study on literary traditions and history

**Date:** 2012-11-20

### Conclusions to Part 3

1. In terms of regional similarities and differences, the region under discussion (Adiabene proper plus three great Assyrian cities) features a distinctive culture typical of Northern Mesopotamia that is set apart from Southern Mesopotamia and Eastern parts of what used to be the Seleucid empire. This conclusion is primarily based on the analysis of pottery finds from Nimrud, Abu Sheetha, Nineveh, and Arbela, as well as on the analysis of coins from Nimrud and coffins from Arbela and Assur. Furthermore, in terms of material culture, there is no good reason to sharply distinguish between Adiabene proper and the three Assyrian cities. Pottery types found in Arbela and especially Abu Sheetha are the same ones as those found in Nimrud and Nineveh, coffins from Kilizu strikingly use the same forms as those from Assur (unlike Babylonian coffins).

2. A number of deities worshiped in Adiabene can be named. We have evidence for the cult of Ishtar from Kilizu. In addition, Ishtar also appears in inscriptions in Assur and Hatra. What is more, the first attested king of Adiabene had a name connected with the cult of Ishtar. Further, the city of Assur abounded in the cult of many other local deities, being a continuation of old Babylonian and Assyrian divinities, especially Assur, Seru, Bel and Nanaia. Furthermore, statues of Herakles were discovered both in Assur and Nineveh. The cult of Herakles in Adiabene is also mentioned by Tacitus in his *Ann.* 12.13. In the Greek city of Nineveh, inhabitants worshiped Hermes and Tyche (statues), and *possibly* (as attested by personal names and coins) Apollo, Asklepios, Demeter, Serapis, Isis, Victory.

3. As far as the coins of Adiabene are concerned, two things can be said. First, “the Natunisarokerta coins” are local issues of a city located on the Little Zab in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE (before 32/31 BCE), and are not directly connected with the kingdom of Adiabene. Secondly, a few coins of Adiabene are known from the Hellenistic period, struck on behalf of king Abdissar[], and the fact that these coins were previously attributed to Sophene or Armenia suggests that the coinage of these two countries requires further research to examine the possibility of reattributing some coins to Adiabene.

4. The material culture of Adiabene in the Seleucid and Parthian periods can be rightly called an amalgam of cultures, a result of “the confrontation and fusion of cultural traditions from East and West”<sup>1573</sup>. In detail, its material culture includes at least three distinctive elements – Semitic, Greek and Iranian that did not, however, live in isolation but interacted. What is more, we also examined the presence of some Jewish elements in Adiabene. The cultural environment of the Adiabene region was typically polytheistic, old local traditions were kept, but new trends were also received. As a result, old traditions were transformed, and new traditions - assimilated, forming together an interesting case of fusion.

5. The conversion of the royal house of Adiabene must have created a convenient environment for the dissimilation of Jewish traditions in Adiabene. For instance, Izates II’s progeny was raised in Jewish culture, likewise Jewish traditions spread among Adiabene elites belonging to the court of both Izates II and Monobazos II, and many other Adiabeneans, anonymous to us, could follow suit. What is more, the conversion of the royal house led to a systematic social and economic investment of Adiabene elites in Jerusalem which in turn only deepened their integration into the Jewish society. What we can see in Josephus’ incidental remarks about the Adiabeneans in Jerusalem is already a long-term result of gradual process of successful assimilation – the Adiabeneans do not stand out among other Jews as novices; quite to

---

<sup>1573</sup> Reade 2001: 198.

### Conclusions to Part 3

the contrary, they put their life at risk, belong to most bravery soldiers, and fight until the very last. In this way, they appear to act as national heroes in times of national cause.

6. A deep integration of many Jews from Adiabene into the Jewish society in times of peace and their excellent performance of national duties in times of war must have appealed to all Jewish fighters in Jerusalem. This could lead many of them to develop or strengthen some eschatological idea about lost tribes of Israel beyond Euphrates and hope to receive more help from Jews of Adiabene.

7. For the Romans, the Parthians were barbarians, and so were the Adiabeneans in the eyes of Roman writers. Consequently, the presence of Jews from Adiabene in Jerusalem during the uprising against Rome, especially their fierce resistance, could only strengthen their negative stereotypes about both Jewish and Parthian barbarians. This is actually a kind of stereotype that Josephus seems to counter in Ant. 20:17-96 picturing Izates both as a good Jew and a good Parthian.