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## Summary and General Conclusions

The aim of this study was to deliver the first ever monographic study on the family of royal converts from Adiabene in the broader perspective of the material and political environment of Hellenistic and Parthian Adiabene. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to collect, arrange and discuss all available sources on the topic. Our discussion of sources has been arranged into three parts.

The aim of part 1 was to read Ant. 20:17-96, the most comprehensive account on the Adiabene royalty in ancient literature, as a consciously planned literary product. First, we have examined the formal and thematic composition of Ant. 20:17-96 (chapter 1) and concluded that the Adiabene narrative at large is arranged as a biography (ancient βίος) for Izates. Further, the guiding thematic thread lying behind the bulk of the narrative of Ant. 20:17-96 is the theme of God's providence and human piety in Izates' *life* as a king. Izates' conversion is presented as the climax of such an interaction of human piety and divine providence. Following the results of this analysis, we have devoted the rest of part 1 to the discussion of the four most important aspects of Josephus' narrative in more detail: the narrative elements of his birth and death (chapter 2); the picture of Izates as a model king (chapter 3); the understanding of Izates' conversion (chapter 4); and finally, Josephus' notion of providence and piety (chapter 5).

As far as the narrative elements of Izates' birth and death are concerned (chapter 2), their presence in the narrative is essentially related to Josephus' choice to present Ant. 20:17-96 as a βίος. In this light, Ant. 20:18-33 belongs to a long literary tradition present throughout ancient cultures that concern the birth and childhood of great heroes (*Kindheitsgeschichten*), though we should rather speak about its great deal of affinity to this tradition than about its strict conformity to any pattern. Ant. 20:18-33 indicates that Izates is a great hero chosen by God already before his birth who will be shielded by God's providence from all dangers throughout his life. This perspective in Ant. 20:18-33 sets the agenda for the rest of the narrative built on the theme of danger and salvation. In turn, the report on Izates' death and burial fits well into the literary standard of closing ancient biographies with summaries recapitulating the greatest achievements of the protagonist and emphasizing his lasting legacy. In this context, Izates is presented as a most pious man, a good statesman, and a good family-member whose memory will be proclaimed for future generations by both his deeds and his magnificent tomb.

Writing an ancient βίος devoted to a political leader implies that the author wants to convey moral and political ideas. Such is the case with Josephus in Ant. 20:17-96 whose portrayal of Izates as a model king has been analysed in the light of ancient political ideology (chapter 3). Josephus pictures Izates as an ideal king who abounds in many positive qualities: wisdom, courage, military skills, self-control, justice, clemency, kindness, foresight, and modesty in social conduct. Above all, Izates is a most pious king, and it is piety that seems to be the source of all his other virtues. Further, through his portrait of Izates as an ideal king Josephus conveys to his readers/listeners some thoughts on the political arrangements of the monarchy: political succession should be passed by the ruler before his death to his chosen successor, all conspiracy has to be warded off, and equal rulers should help each other against rebellions. However, being a king is not equal to being a despot. Therefore, blessed is the ruler who receives his power with the consent of the many, who is chosen because he deserves it. Further, an earthly ruler like Izates should be pious and restrict his use of power in accordance to the ancestral laws.

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Consequently, he is supposed to be a righteous judge, and to care about his people. If he does so, his reign is promised to be successful. Additionally, in Ant. 20:17-96 as in many other places of his writings, Josephus proclaims his faith in the divine as the source of the success of the Roman rule over the world. Consequently, all conspiracy against the Romans is not only unreasonable according to human standards, but not permitted under divine jurisdiction.

It was clearly the conversion of the royal house of Adiabene that prompted Josephus to write Ant. 20:17-96, and the topic of conversion is placed as the climax of the Adiabene narrative. This was the subject of our analysis in chapter 4. Josephus clearly understands conversion as a deep change in the lifestyle of an individual that lies in joining the other ἔθνος. This can only take place through breaking away from one's previous associations and adopting all the distinctive laws and customs of the ἔθνος one joins. In the case of the Jewish ἔθνος, a male could join the Jews only by adopting all Jewish customs and laws including circumcision, and a female likewise joins the Jewish ἔθνος by fully immersing herself into its culture. At the same time, Josephus presents the phenomenon of conversion in Ant. 20:17-96 in the broad context of human piety. Namely, Josephus recognizes that piety also exists among non-Jews. However, human piety at its height leads to contact with Jewish traditions in many forms. Consequently, Josephus approves of every form of sympathization on the part of non-Jews, and conversion is not absolutely required. However, if someone like Izates, driven by human piety towards the Divine, decides to convert despite all social dangers attached to this move, it is for Josephus most praiseworthy. Josephus foresees that pious converts will be shielded by God's providence.

As far as the theme of God's providence and human piety is concerned (chapter 5), Josephus used it as the main *thematic* thread for the Adiabene narrative arranged *formally* as Izates' βίος. This enabled him to convey some moralistic ideas about God's providence and human piety through the example of Izates' *life*. Josephus' notion of piety in Ant. 20:17-96 includes strict observance of laws and trust in God's providential care, as well as filial reverence. Notably, taking on piety is a process - one cannot even start his practice of human perfection in piety without God's antecedent providence, but God's providence is not given once and for all. Having assumed a certain stage of piety, one still has to undertake moral effort and act piously since impiety runs contrary to God's providence and disables humans from profiting from it. A pious man is guaranteed to stand above uncertainties of fortune so common to most humans.

All in all, in contrast to previous scholarship, preoccupied with the search for Josephus' sources (see *conclusions to part I*), we have treated the Adiabene narrative as a conscious literary product, and placed in this context, Ant. 20:17-96 turns out to be a fascinating read. It is a compelling story about human desire for piety and God's accompanying providence, about non-Jews approaching Jewish traditions, as well as a political treaty on how to be a good ruler. All these ideas have been presented by Josephus on the example of Izates' *life*.

The aim of part 2 was to analyse the sources that convey the picture of the Adiabene dynasty as good royalty for the Jewish people. The sources have been arranged into two groups – first, Josephus' Ant. 20:101 and Rabbinic accounts as texts that picture the royal Adiabeneans as benefactors and models of piety (chapter 6); secondly, Josephus and non-Jewish sources (Pausanias, Eusebius, Jerome) which refer to monumental structures in Jerusalem owned by members of the Adiabene royalty (chapter 7).

In chapter 6 neither Josephus' Ant. 20:101 nor the Rabbinic accounts have been treated simply as repositories of historical or chronological information, but as witnesses of the cultural importance of the Adiabene dynasty for their contemporaries and subsequent generations.

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Indeed, the very fact that Josephus uses the example of Helena's activity in Jerusalem as a reference point to characterize other events (such as the tenure of Tiberius Alexander), shows that Helena's help to the starving people of Jerusalem must have left a great impression on him. Accordingly, euergetism is one of the most frequently recurring attributes of Queen Helena in Josephus' texts. Interestingly, the picture of Helena and of her son, Munbaz, as benefactors of the Jewish people appears again in tannaitic traditions. Even more, both royals, but Helena in particular, are presented as exemplary models of religious observance in Rabbinic stories, whose practice can be recalled as authority in the dispute between the two competing schools of Hillel and Shammai. Indeed, the Adiabene royalty, especially Helena, must have won over the hearts and minds of their contemporaries from across all sections of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Judea, and their memory has been successfully passed to subsequent generations.

Chapter 7 has been divided into two parts devoted to the discussion of sources referring to Helena's mausoleum and the palaces of the Adiabene royalty respectively. The aim of the discussion of literary sources has been two-fold. First, the sources have been discussed in their literary and historical context; only secondly, they have been looked upon as a repository of archaeologically relevant information. Finally, archaeologically relevant information gleaned from literary sources has been confronted with archaeological data from sites suggested by scholars as "physical remains" (or "archaeological remains")<sup>1574</sup> of the Adiabene royalty.

In light of ancient royal ideology and practice, the monumental buildings of the Adiabene royalty in Jerusalem are of great significance and reflect a deep integration of the Adiabene royalty in the religious (tombs as pilgrimage destinations) and social (palace as a place to exercise royal duties and as a symbol of one's political leadership) life of 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Judea.

As for archaeological data, ancient sources give us only an approximate location for Helena's mausoleum - it was located at some distance north of the city of Jerusalem (circa 3 stadia) and east of the main road leading to Jerusalem. Likewise, the three palaces of the Adiabene royalty can be located only approximately in the City of David: Helena's palace in the midst of the Lower City of David, the palace of Monobazos somewhere alongside and close to the old wall, and finally, the palace of Grapte the nearest to the Temple mount, south of it and close to the eastern slope of the Ophel.

Concerning the archaeological identifications of the "physical remains" of the Adiabene royalty, we have concluded the following. *Le Tombeau des Rois* can be identified as the mausoleum of Helena with a great deal of likelihood. However, there is no reason to believe that the only intact sarcophagus is that of Helena. What is more, from what we know about Semitic forms of the Greek name Ἑλένη, we rather have negative evidence so that the only intact sarcophagus can not belong to Helena; instead, it may well belong to any other female member of the Adiabene royalty. As for the previous attempts to identify the palaces of the Adiabene royal house (B. Mazar, Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz), none of them is based on solid grounds.

The aim of part 3 was to gain insight into the material and political environment of Adiabene from the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE, and this has been achieved through collecting, arranging and discussing a number of available sources: geographical and ethnographical texts (chapter 8), archaeological data (chapter 9), numismatic and epigraphic evidence (chapter 10), and onomastic evidence (chapter 11). Furthermore, we have also sketched a basic chronology of the Adiabene royalty in the Hellenistic and Parthian periods (chapter 12) and the political setting of Adiabene and Judea in the context of the relations between Rome and Parthia (chapter 13).

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<sup>1574</sup> Barish 1983: 4, 159.

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Geographical and ethnographical sources on Adiabene enable us to sketch basic geopolitical developments in the region of Adiabene (chapter 8). In this light, Adiabene originated as a relatively small province between the Lykos and Kapros Rivers, perhaps including the Arrapachitis region. In the early Seleucid period, Adiabene was politically dependent on the mighty province of Babylonia. At some point in its Parthian history (between the mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE and the mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. CE) Adiabene started to expand its territory northwest. From then on, it included Assur and Nineveh, and extended along the eastern bank of the Tigris river to include Gordyene. Adiabene's influence is also recorded on the western bank of the Tigris. In the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Nisibis belonged to Adiabene. Its influence on the western bank of the Tigris is also attested throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE.

Adiabene's material culture, as revealed through artifacts coming from select sites within the Assyrian triangle (chapter 9), has distinctive features of Northern Mesopotamia that should therefore not be confused with the Babylonian culture. Further, it presents a great deal of diversity including co-existing Iranian, Greek and Semitic elements. In terms of religion, Adiabene seems to be a typically polytheistic environment. In this regard, we are able to name a number of deities worshipped in Seleucid-Parthian Adiabene: Ishtar, Herakles, Hermes, Tyche, Assur, Seru, Bel, Nanaia, and *possibly* (attested through personal names and coins): Apollo, Asklepios, Demeter, Serapis, Isis and Victory.

Numismatic evidence from Adiabene (chapter 10) is scarce, but coins of at least one ruler of Adiabene, Abdissar[], are known. However, the so-called *Natounia coins* are only local issues (dated to before 32/31 BCE) of a city located on the Kapros and as such are not directly connected with the kingdom of Adiabene. What is more, the very name *Natounia* probably results from a mistaken reading of a fuller name, Νατουμισ(σ)αροκερτα, and consequently its usage should be dropped. In turn, numismatic and epigraphic evidence (chapter 10) shows that the country of Adiabene was known under a number of names of different provenance: while Adiabene is a name known from Greek sources (and it is most likely a Greek adaptation of the Aramaic אדיבני), it was also known to the Greeks as Assyria and as *ntwn'šry'* in Hatrene Aramaic. This Semitic name has also been rendered as “*ntwšrkn*” in the Parthian language and as “*nwthštrkn*” in the Middle-Persian language. Such a phenomenon is not unusual for a region that has always featured a great deal of multilingualism.

The results of the analysis of the Adiabene onomasticon (chapter 11) are perfectly in line with the image of considerable cultural diversity in the region of Adiabene as attested by other sources (geographical and ethnographical texts, archaeological sites, numismatic and epigraphic evidence). In the present state of research, the Adiabene onomasticon includes eighteen individuals and sixteen names. In terms of the provenance of the names, we have six Iranian names, two Greek names, and six Semitic names (the provenance of two other names is not clear – Semitic or Iranian). In addition to a great deal of cultural diversity, we can also infer from this data that the members of the dynasty of royal converts preferred Iranian names for their males and Greek names for their females. This shows that, regardless of their ethnicity, they chose to express themselves as members of the Parthian commonwealth and also testifies to some degree of Hellenization among its elites. Secondly, the presence of many Semitic names among non-royal Adiabeneans, as well as among rulers of Adiabene before and after “the dynasty of royal converts” can indicate that a considerable number of the Adiabene population was Semitic in origin.

Thanks to both literary sources and numismatic-epigraphic evidence, we can list a number of rulers of Adiabene (some of them known to us by name: Abdissar[], Artaxares, Izates I,

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Monobazos I, Izates II, Monobazos II, Mebarsapes, 'Aṭlū), order them chronologically and in many cases relate them to historical events (chapter 12).

The conversion of the Adiabene royalty touches on a number of issues connected with the political setting of those days, especially on the situation of Adiabene and Judea in the context of the relations between two great empires – Rome and Parthia (chapter 13). Namely, the conversion must have created a convenient environment for the dissemination of Jewish traditions in Adiabene itself (chapter 13.2). What is more, it also led to the development of deep ties between Jews from Adiabene and Judea (chapter 13.3). All this was a factor whose role in the relations between Rome and Parthia can be neither underestimated nor exaggerated. For instance, according to J. Neusner, Izates hoped to create a Jewish empire based on Adiabene but also including Palestine to the west and Jewish Babylonia to the East<sup>1575</sup>. By contrast, our sources reveal that the political constellation created by the conversion had some weight, but to a much smaller extent than that suggested by Neusner. To be more precise, from the Roman perspective, the Adiabeneans as a people belonging to the Parthian world were barbarians, not worthy of trust, unpredictable and sometimes dangerous (see chapter 13.1.). In turn, Josephus' brief references to the Adiabeneans taking part in the uprising against Rome present them as deeply integrated into Jewish society, as most engaged for the national course, even as national heroes (see chapter 13.3.). In this light, the Jewish Adiabeneans must have been seen by the Romans as a dangerous combination of two types of barbarisms. At the same time, to the Jewish fighters in Jerusalem the same picture of the Jewish Adiabeneans engaging in the uprising had a very different flavor (see chapter 13.4.). First of all, it led them to hope for receiving more engagement from the Jews beyond the Euphrates. Perhaps it could also reinforce some eschatological hopes for the return of the "lost tribes of Israel". Thus, the dissemination of Jewish traditions in Adiabene was a factor not to be ignored, neither from the Judean perspective nor the Roman one, but it is still a much more modest picture than that suggested by Neusner.

Let us suggest a few tentative connections between our sketch of the material and political environment of Adiabene and the sources discussed in parts 1 and 2. As we have seen (chapter 13.1.), for the Romans, both the Jews and the Parthians were dangerous barbarians. In this light, 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. At the same time, it is exactly the kind of stereotype that Josephus seems to counter in Ant. 20:17-96 picturing Izates both as a good Jew and a good Parthian.

Another example refers to Josephus' ideas on the motivation of the rebellion of Adiabene elites against their king, Izates II. On the one hand, Josephus implies the existence of the Adiabene population's ancestral customs (Ant. 20:39, 47, 77, 81). On the other, in the light of our knowledge of Adiabene's material culture, it represents a typically polytheistic environment that does not make for a fertile soil for religious intolerance. Therefore, we conclude that Josephus' statement seems to be only a literary topos of the resentment against foreign customs that serves in the narrative to emphasize the greatness of Izates' commitment.

Some scholars have been searching for evidence of the presence of Aramaic or Parthian as the *Vorlage* languages of Ant. 20:17-96 since such evidence would apparently indicate that the sources of Ant. 20:17-96 came directly from the Parthian kingdom. However, Greek culture was widespread in Adiabene, and consequently the Greek language of Ant. 20:17-96 cannot be

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<sup>1575</sup> Neusner 1964a: 60-66; Neusner 1969: 66-67.

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treated as something alien to the Adiabene milieu. In other words, Parthian sources could be composed in Greek too.

Next, the considerable appearance of the Tyche language in Ant. 20:17-96 is parallel not only to the repertoire of coins found in Nisibis, but the motif of Tyche as a patron deity of cities is widespread in the material culture of the North-Mesopotamian region. Again, Josephus' picture of Jewish travelers and merchants appearing in Adiabene can be well understood if we take account of the fact that Adiabene straddled one of two main trade routes between the West and East.

Turning attention to the character of the sources about the Adiabene royalty and to its cultural background has been an important task. It can be also treated as a starting point for further research. Let us suggest two further research perspectives. First, our understanding of Adiabene's material and political environment requires further studies. In this regard, it is hoped that new archaeological excavations in the region will shed more light on Adiabene and the region<sup>1576</sup>. Likewise, studying geopolitical processes and the material culture of Adiabene's closest neighbors (Gordyene, the region south of the Little Zab (Arrapha, Sittacene), the western frontier of Media Atropatene) could help us better understand the cultural profile of the region (including all its similarities and differences), as well as the geopolitical processes around Adiabene. Secondly, the adoption of Jewish customs by the Adiabene royalty also touches on a broad range of highly-disputed questions concerning the history of Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Who was considered to be a Jew (and consequently how to translate the term Ἰουδαῖος)? What can be said about the process of conversion to "Judaism" (and can we speak of one or many "Judaism(s)" or possibly, is the term not relevant at all)? In all these cases, we can at least start with Josephus' evidence and later relate it to other historical sources and the scholarly discussion. Josephus' evidence for all these issues is certainly an important one; after all, Josephus is our main source for most of the history between 164 BCE and 70 CE, and, what is more, the story about the Adiabene royalty handed down to us by Josephus is "the most fully narrated incident of conversion to Judaism in the ancient world"<sup>1577</sup>.

All told, then, the conversion of the royal family from Adiabene has been illuminated by quite a number of ancient sources, both literary and archaeological, that show a deep integration of this family into the Jewish society of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE and its importance on the international scene of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Middle East. Indeed, Adiabene as a country located at the crossroads of cultures between East and West was a convenient place for exchanging ideas and traditions, a typically ancient *marketplace of religions*<sup>1578</sup>, where Jewish traditions could take root and find some popularity.

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<sup>1576</sup> Some excavations have already begun, e.g.: French excavations in Bazyan conducted by the University of Poitiers; surveys in the Shahrizor Plain by the University of Heidelberg and University College London.

<sup>1577</sup> Goodman 1989b: 11.

<sup>1578</sup> See North 1992: 154-193.