



## ABDAGASES

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**ABDAGASES** (Pkt. Avadagaša), “great king” of the Pahlava dynasty in Drangiana, Arachosia, Gandhāra, and perhaps loosely over the Indus region. He was a “nephew of Gondophares” (Pkt. *gadaphara-bhrataputra*), whom he succeeded, ruling ca. 50-60 A.D. Abdagases’ existence is attested solely by his coinage in copper and billon; it imitates Gondophares’ principal coin types and also bears that king’s *tamga* (perhaps a clan device). Part of his coinage bearing the obverse image of the king on horseback describes him as “ruling over kings” (Gr. *basileuontos basileōn*), perhaps implying some loosening of the central authority held by Gondophares. Abdagases was not able to hold Gandhāra, which was conquered by the Kushan Soter Megas; the latter was in the process of unifying the Vüeh-chih territories. The conqueror maintained, however, the standard of the Pahlava tetradrachm in his newly acquired province.

The influence of Arsacid coinage on the Pahlavas appears in Abdagases’ placing the initial letters of his name, in Aramaic script, next to his bust on certain *drahm* obverses. He thus imitated the distinctive practice of Walgaši (Vologeses) I (ca. 51-78 A.D.). The possible relationship of his clan to the Partian Sūrēn family, however, remains uncertain. He might conceivably have been a grandson or other relation to Tacitus’ Abdagaeses (*Annals* 6.36, etc.). The latter’s son, Sinnaces, plotted to install Tiridates III on the Parthian throne (35-36 A.D.). This Abdagaeses (possibly the very Sūrēn who had crowned the pretender) subsequently advised the unsuccessful Tiridates to leave Seleucia.

The Pahlava Abdagases was succeeded either by Pakores or Orthagnes. These



and the following dynasts oriented their coin portraits to the left, in Arsacid fashion, and assumed the inflated title “great king of kings.” Their actual rule, however, became increasingly restricted within Sagastān.

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