



ABGAR I. GENERAL

i. General

When the Seleucids withdrew from Mesopotamia in 130-29 B.C., Parthian hegemony there was virtually unchallenged. It was, however, exercised loosely; and a small number of principalities were able to acquire a fair degree of autonomy. The most important of these was Edessa.

The list of the kings of the dynasty may be reconstructed as follows (the early names and dates should be regarded with caution): Aryu, 132-127 B.C.; 'Abdu, son of Maz'ur, 127-120; Fradašt, son of Gebar'u, 120-115; Bakru I, son of Fradašt, 115-112; Bakru II, son of Bakru, alone, 112-94; Bakru II and Ma'nu I, 94; Bakru II and Abgar I Piqa, 94-92; Abgar I, alone, 92-68; Abgar II, son of Abgar, 68-53; interregnum, 53-52; Ma'nu II, 52-34; Paqor, 34-29; Abgar III, 29-26; Abgar IV Sumaqa, 26-23; Ma'nu III Saflul, 23-4; Abgar V Ukkama, son of Ma'nu, 4 B.C.-A.D. 7; Ma'nu IV, son of Ma'nu, 7-13; Abgar V (second time), 13-50; Ma'nu V, son of Abgar, 50-57; Ma'nu VI, son of Abgar, 57-71; Abgar VI, son of Ma'nu, 71-91; interregnum, 91-109; Abgar VII, son of Ezad, 109-16; interregnum, 116-18; Yalur (or Yalud) and Parthamaspat, 118-22; Parthamaspat alone, 122-23; Ma'nu VII, son of Ezad, 123-39; Ma'nu VIII, son of Ma'nu, 139-63; Wa'el, son of Sahrū, 163-65; Ma'nu VIII (second time), 165-77; Abgar VIII the Great, son of Ma'nu, 177-212; Abgar IX Severus, son of Abgar, 212-14; Ma'nu IX, son of Abgar, 214-40; Abgar X Frahad, son of Ma'nu, 240-42.

The term "Abgar dynasty" is justified by the frequency of the name Abgar among the kings and by the special importance of the Abgar of the first and



second centuries A.D. Armenian writers claim the rulers of Edessa as the Armenian successors of Abgar, son of Aršam, who transferred his capital to Edessa from Metsbin (Nisibis). There is little onomastic support for this theory. Some of the names are Iranian, others Arab (including Abgar itself; Moses of Xorene's Armenian etymology as *awagayr*, "great man," [tr. Da N. Tomaséo, *Storia de Mosè Corenese*, Venice, 1841, p. 146] is improbable). But most striking are the names terminating in -u; these are undoubtedly Nabatean. Many of the dynasty were therefore ethnically Arab, speaking a form of Aramaic (like the rulers of Hatra, Singara, and Mesene at this time).

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