



## BALĀŠ III. BALĀŠ II

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**Balāš II**, a son or grandson of Balāš I, appears to have reigned, with some interruptions, from 77/8 to 89/90. The question again depends on coin attribution. His accession took place some time after the death of Balāš I. As mentioned above, coins from the end of Balāš I's reign also bear the figure of Pacorus II. The latter was soon challenged, however, by rival throne claimants, namely Balāš II and Osroes, a brother or brother-in-law of Pacorus II. It has not been possible to determine the attributions of coins from this period, and so the surmises offered by scholars differ widely. Sellwood (pp. 226, 229) thinks that Balāš II first appeared as a rival of Pacorus II, but McDowell (pp. 119ff.) thinks that the coins attributed to Balāš II are coins of Balāš I and that Balāš II's reign did not begin until 105/06. Hanslik (col. 1847) places Balāš II's reign as late as 128-47. Le Rider (p. 174) has proposed a different solution to the problem of the apparent great length of Balāš II's reign, which on the evidence of certain coins could have lasted from 77/8 to 146/7; he postulates the existence of a third king named Balāš and attributes the coins minted in 77/8, 89/90 and 106-8 to Balāš II, making Balāš III king from 111/2 onward (instead of Balāš II as previously supposed). The present writer finds this hypothesis acceptable.

It is not known whether the three rival throne claimants had operational bases in particular regions, but the fact that the coins of all three were minted at Seleucia indicates that the city frequently changed hands. Balāš II was apparently driven out first, as no coins of his later than 89/90 are known. Thereafter only two contestants were in the field; if Le Rider's hypothesis is



accepted, they were Osroes and Balāš III. At the start of Trajan's Parthian war, the Parthian throne was probably held by Osroes, as it is he who is mentioned as the adversary of the Romans.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also *Camb. Hist. Iran* III, pp. 87-88, 94, 295-96, 692.