



CARUS

CARUS, Imperator Caesar MARCUS AURELIUS (Augustus), Roman emperor (r. 282-83). A professional soldier, probably from Narbo (Narbona) in southern Gaul (rather than from Narona in Illyricum, a tradition found in *Historia Augusta: Vita Cari* 4.5), Carus was appointed pretorian prefect in 276 by Emperor Probus. After the murder of Probus by his army at Sirmium in the autumn of 282, Carus was pressed to assume the purple. The main object of his reign was the Persian war which had been prepared by his predecessor. Having defeated the Sarmatians and the Quadi, a Germanic people on the Danube, he marched against the Persians in early 283. The Persian king, Wahrām II was vanquished and Ctesiphon and Seleucia captured. Further advances to the east were not successful. At the end of July 283 Carus suddenly died after about ten months' rule, and the Romans retreated. Officially it was said he was killed by a stroke of lightning, but more probably he was assassinated. Peace was concluded, and Wahrām, who was away quelling a revolt in the eastern provinces, surrendered the supremacy of Armenia and Mesopotamia to the Romans.

After the death of Carus his two sons were acknowledged as Roman emperors: the younger, Numerianus, as ruler of the east, and the elder, Carinus, of the west. Numerianus died after a short time and was succeeded by Diocletian, who in turn defeated Carinus (285) and became absolute ruler of the entire empire.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the ancient sources, see “M. Aurelius Carus” (no. 77), in Pauly-Wissowa, II, cols. 2456-57, and *Der kleine Pauly* I, Stuttgart, 1964, cols. 766-67.

Other: *CAH* XII, pp. 321-324.

Camb. Hist. Iran III/1, pp. 128-29.

Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 227.

E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* I, chap. XII, London 1776.

(Fridrik Thordarson)