



ARIOBARZANES

ARIOBARZANES, Greek form of an Old Iranian proper name *Ārya-br̥zāna-, perhaps signifying “exalting the Aryans;” the Old Persian form is seen in Elamite Har-ri-pir-tan, for *Āriya-br̥dāna- (see M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana*, Vienna, 1973, p. 156 no. 8.472, with references). The bearers of the name include:

1. The son of a Persian senior official named Mithridates. He was subsatrap of Hellespont Phrygia and in 387 B.C. succeeded Pharnabazos in this satrapy. In 367 B.C. he joined Datames, satrap of Cilicia and Cappadocia, who were in revolt against Artaxerxes II. Autophradates, satrap of Lydia, was ordered by Artaxerxes II to suppress the rebellion and managed to expel Ariobarzanes from the greater part of his satrapy. But in 365 B.C. Athens helped him with thirty ships and 8,000 mercenaries. He rewarded Athens with the gift of Sestos and Crithote, cities on the Thracian Chersonesus. In return he and his three sons were granted Athenian citizenship. In 364 B.C. Mithridates, one of the sons, occupied Heracleia, which was the most important Greek city on the Black Sea coast. Soon all Asia Minor revolted from Artaxerxes II, and in 362 B.C. even Autophradates was driven to join the rebels. Sparta and Tachos, pharaoh of Egypt, sent a substantial help to the rebels. But in 360 B.C. Ariobarzanes was betrayed by his son Mithridates and executed. In 359-58 B.C. the satrapal revolt was suppressed.

Greek sources in Judeich, “Ariobarzanes,” Pauly-Wissowa, II/1, 1895, pp. 832-33. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* V, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1913, pp. 454-59, 485-87.



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2. Son of the famous Artabazus and grandson of Pharnabazus, satrap of the Hellespontine Phrygia, and **Apamā**, daughter of Artaxerxes II (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.3, 23.7 with [J.] Kaerst in Pauly-Wissowa, II, col. 883, no. 4; K. J. Beloch in *Janus: Festschrift für Lehmann-Haupt*, Vienna, 1921, pp. 8f.; H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, Munich, 1926, II, pp. 60, 82-83). Artabazus married (ca. 363 B.C.) a sister of the two mercenary commanders of Artaxerxes III, Memnon and Mentor of Rhodos (Diodorus 16.52.4; Q. Curtius 6.5.4, Plutarch, *Alexander* 21; Beloch, loc. cit.; A. Brunt in *Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica* 103, 1975, pp. 26f.), and she bore him ten daughters and eleven sons, among them Ariobarzanes (Diodorus, loc. cit.; Curtius 6.5.4 with Beloch, op. cit., pp. 9f.; Berve, op. cit., p. 60). They were educated in both Persian and Hellenic culture (Plutarch, loc. cit.; Beloch, loc. cit.; Berve, p. 60; F. Schachermeyer, *Alexander der Grosse: das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens*, Vienna, 1973, p. 133). They also spent several years at the court of Philip II of Macedonia, where Artabazus had taken refuge after falling out with Artaxerxes III in 352 B.C. (Diodorus, loc. cit.; Curtius 5.9.1, 6.5.2), when Artabazus discovered Philip's designs to invade Persia, he returned there with his family, was pardoned and enrolled among the closest companions of the Great King (Berve, pp. 83f.). His sons were given "the most distinguished commands in the armed forces" by Mentor, general of Artaxerxes on the coastal regions of Asia Minor (Diodorus, loc. cit.). Ariobarzanes then became governor of a part of Persis (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.2, calls him "satrap" of Persis, but see below). His mother and an infant brother, Ilionus, were with the royal household at Damascus when Parmenion captured them just before the battle of Issus (Curtius 3.13.13; Berve, pp. 83f.).

At the battle of Gaugamela some Persian units were led by Ariobarzanes; others, together with contingents from the neighboring Persian Gulf area were under Orontabates; the overall command of Persian troops was with Orxines, a descendant of Cyrus the Great (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.8.5; Curtius 4.12.8), presumably the satrap of the province (cf. Arrian 6.30.1; Curtius 10.1.37). The Persian troops were stationed in the center of the army, near Darius, and suffered heavily in the ensuing battle (details in E. W. Marsden, *The Campaign of Gaugamela*, Liverpool, 1964). The total strength of the forces from Persis is estimated at 5,000 horsemen, 1,000 infantry and 1,000 Mardian archers (ibid., p. 36 and diagram II, col. 2, nos. 6 and 9). The units under Ariobarzanes, therefore, could not have comprised more than 2,000 men. After the defeat at



Gaugamela, Darius fled eastwards and the defense of each province was left to its governor. Alexander seized Babylon and Susa, and having gathered intelligence on Persis, its roads, resources and climate, he set out with a picked force of 17,000 men for Persepolis, the national and dynastic center of the empire (D. W. Engles, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, Berkeley and London, 1978, pp. 70ff.).

Seeing that the Macedonian army was unbeatable on the plain, Ariobarzanes blocked its path on the way to Persepolis in a gorge in order to deprive it of battle formation, diverse arms, and superior numbers (see below). On entering the Persis plateau, the Susa-Persepolis road forked below the present-day town of Fahlīān (Fahlīūn). The main branch passed through the plain to the south and the higher valleys of Šāpūr and Shiraz to the east, and then turned northeast, crossed the Araxes (Polvār/Kor) river and reached Persepolis. The other much shorter but more difficult tract went through the Ardakān plateau, passed within narrow defiles and entered the Dašt-e Bayzā (ancient [Anshan](#)) and thence the Marvdašt plain where it joined the main road below the Araxes ford (details in E. Herzfeld, "Eine Reise durch Luristan, Arabistan and Fars," in *Petersmanns Mitteilungen*, 1907, pp. 85ff.; A. Stein, *Old Routes of Western Iran*, London, 1940, pp. 5ff.; J. Hansman in *Iran* 10, 1972, pp. 117ff.).

The defensive position selected by Ariobarzanes lay on the shorter mountainous track, and was called the Persian Gate (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.2; Strabo, *Geography* 15.3.6) or (if one approached it from Persis) the Susian Gate/Rock (Curtius 5.3.17; Diodorus 17.68.1). The site is generally sought at the Tang-e Kāš, a narrow defile flanked by parallel ridges which links the Dašt-e Bayzā with a little valley sixteen km from the Šūl river in East Ardakān (Stein, *op. cit.*, 23ff.). Alexander historians give Ariobarzanes a large army (40,000 infantry and 700 cavalry in Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.2; 25,000 infantry in Curtius 5.3.17 and Diodorus 17.68.1; the latter adds 300 horsemen), and their modern successors follow them unreservedly (e.g., Th. Doge, *Alexander*, Boston and New York, 1890, p. 401; J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great*, London, 1958, pp. 228ff.; N. G. L. Hammond, *Alexander the Great: King, Commander and Statesman*, London, 1981, p. 185). However, Greek estimates for Persian infantries were generally valueless (C. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 350f.), and Ariobarzanes could hardly have mustered more troops than he had taken to Gaugamela. Arrian's 700 can thus be interpreted as indicating the total strength of Ariobarzanes. Against them Alexander led an army of well over 10,000 men, for having sent Parmenion



with the baggage train and heavier-armed troops down the carriage road, he himself took the Macedonian infantry, the lancers and archers through the mountainous track (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.1; Curtius 5.3.16f.; Diodorus 17.68.1; Stein, op. cit., pp. 19f.). On the fifth day he encamped in an open space 30 stadia (3^v miles) from the Persian Gate, which Stein identified (op. cit., pp. 20ff.) with Mollā Sūsan, a gently descending plateau girt by wooded slopes and linked by a fairly easy gradient track to a narrow defile which attains the Tang-e Kāş at a height of 7,600 feet about 3^v miles further. At this point, where precipitous flanking slopes enable a force holding the pass and its adjacent heights to check an enemy advance, Stein sought the Persian Gate (op. cit., pp. 23-25). Ariobarzanes closed the gate with a wall (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.2), probably “a defensive line of roughly heaped up stones” (Stein, op. cit., p. 25), prepared outworks in front of it and camped behind the barrier at a wider spot.

Alexander assaulted the gate with his usual confidence. Ariobarzanes allowed him to march 30 stadia (3^v miles) forward, and attacked only when the outworks were reached. The defenders holding the steep flanking slopes hurled javelins and rocks at the Macedonians, killing and wounding a number of them without losing a single man themselves. Unable to engage the Persians or to protect his men, Alexander retreated to his camp (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.18.3; Curtius 5.3.17-23; Diodorus 17.68.1-2). His position seemed endangered first by the anti-Macedonian revolt of King Agis III of Sparta in Greece (of whose defeat he was as yet uninformed, E. Badian in *Hermes* 95, 1967, pp. 170ff.), and now by this reverse, “the most serious challenge” to his conquest in Iran (Berve, *Das Alexanderreich* II, p. 61; see also A. B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian’s History of Alexander I*, Oxford, 1980, p. 326). But for rich rewards, his prisoners, led him at night through unobserved roundabouts to the rear of the Persian position while Craterus remained with a force in the camp (Arrian 3.18.5-6; Curtius 5.4.29; see also W. Heckel, “Alexander at the Persian Gates,” *Athenaeum* 58, 1980, pp. 168ff.; attempted reconstruction of the route in Stein, op. cit., pp. 23ff.). At dawn Alexander fell on the Persian outposts, destroyed them and attacked Ariobarzanes while Craterus assaulted the gate from the front. Surrounded, the Persians “fought a memorable fight . . . Unarmed as they were, they seized the armed men in their embrace, and dragging them down to the ground . . . stabbed most of them with their own weapons” (Curtius 5.3.31-2; see also Arrian 3.18.3-8; Diodorus 17.68-9; Plutarch, *Alexander* 35.1). The defenders were mostly cut down. According to one tradition (Arrian 3.18.3-8 confirmed by 3.23.7),



Ariobarzanes escaped with a few men to the hills, but according to another (Curtius 5.4.33-4 accepted by Th. Nöldeke, *Aufsätze zur persischen Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 141 and Bosworth, op. cit., p. 325), he burst through the Macedonians' line hoping to reach and hold Persepolis, but was barred by its garrison, so he returned and fought to the end. The similarity between the battles fought at Thermopylae and the Persian Gates has been recognized by ancient and modern authors (Heckel, op. cit., p. 171). The Persian Gates played the role “of a Persian Thermopylae and like Thermopylae it fell,” (A. R. Burn, *Alexander the Great and the Middle East*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 121).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text.

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3. *Ariobarzanes I*, King of Cappadocia about 96-63/2 B.C., surnamed “Friend to the Romans” (Philo-rómaios), was originally a Cappadocian aristocrat, who carried on his candidature for the Cappadocian throne vacant after the death of king Ariarathes VIII (ca. 96 B.C.), with whom the Cappadocian royal dynasty was dying out. With the permission of the Roman Senate, which was about to concede freedom to the Cappadocians, Ariobarzanes was chosen king against his rival Gordius and authorized in that appointment by the Romans (Strabo 12.2.11; Justin 38.2.8). However, he was dispossessed of his territory and exiled from it by Mithridates VI Eupator, king of Pontus, and his generals and confederates like Tigranes of Armenia repeatedly (at least six times and partly for several years). His position in relation to his powerful neighbor was also weakened by the fact that at no time did he enjoy the full support of his people. But each time Ariobarzanes was brought back to rule and authority by the Romans (in 92 and 85 B.C. by L. Cornelius Sulla, in 90 B.C. by L. Crassus etc.; see Justin 38.3.2f.; Plutarch, *Sulla* 5.6f., 22.9, 24.1-5; Appian, *Mithridatic wars* 10-11, 15, 56-58, 64, 66-67, 91, 105, 114; Livy, *Periochae* 70, 74, 76; Eutropius 5.3; Florus 1.40.12). At the end of the Second Mithridatic War there was a meeting of Ariobarzanes and Mithridates, in the course of which the Pontic king promised Ariobarzanes (or, according to the supposition of Reinach, rather to



his son Ariobarzanes II?) his four-year-old daughter in marriage (Appian, op. cit., 66): whether this was his wife Athenais Philostorgus, of whom we hear in the Athenian honorary inscriptions OGIS nos. 354-355 (*Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, ed. W. Dittenberger, Leipzig, 1903-05), is an open question.

Cappadocia was then occupied and devastated for decades until the situation stabilized after the end of the Third Mithridatic War. Ariobarzanes was then put back in power by Cn. Pompeius and as a Roman confederate of old he was rewarded in 64 B.C. by having his kingdom enlarged by the Armenian districts Sophene and Gordyene, the town Castabala and others (Appian, op. cit., 105, 114). He resigned in 63/2 B.C. in favor of his son Ariobarzanes II (Appian, op. cit., 105; Valerius Maximus 5.7, ext. 2).

For coins of Ariobarzanes I with the king's portrait see G. M. A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* III, London, 1965, fig. 1945; B. Simonetta, "Notes on the Coinage of the Cappadocian Kings," *NC* 7/1, 1961, pp. 9-50, esp. pp. 41-44 and pl. IV no. 31-32.

4. *Ariobarzanes* II, king of Cappadocia from 63/2 to about 52 B.C., surnamed "Loving his father" (Philopátōr); son of Ariobarzanes I and Athenais Philostorgus (OGIS no. 354-55). By his wife, who bore the same name and surname (perhaps the daughter of Mithridates VI of Pontus: see above no. 3), he had at least two sons, the older one and his successor Ariobarzanes III (OGIS no. 356) and the younger Ariarathes (Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 15.2.6; Caesar, *Bellum Alexandrinum* 66.5). Of Ariobarzanes II's reign practically nothing is known except that he made away with some enemies in 57 B.C. by bribing A. Gabinius (Cicero, *De Provinciis consularibus* 9) and that only a few years later he was murdered by internal, perhaps anti-Roman opponents (Cicero, *Ad familiares* 15.2.6).

For coins see G. M.A. Richter, op. cit., fig. 1946; B. Simonetta, op. cit., esp. p. 45 and pl. IV no. 33.

5. *Ariobarzanes* III, king of Cappadocia ca. 52-42 B.C., surnamed "Pious" and "Friend to the Romans" (Eusebēžs Philorómaios). Ariobarzanes III became king after the violent death of his father; the official acknowledgment by the Roman Senate was delivered by M. Tullius Cicero, who in 51 B.C. went to his province Cilicia as proconsul and afterwards boasted of having consolidated the king's throne by protecting him and doing away with his internal enemies,



especially the priest of the temple at Comana, the most powerful man after the king himself (Cicero, *Ad familiares* 2.17.7, 15.2.4f., 15.4.6; *Ad Atticum* 5.20.6; Plutarch, *Cicero* 36.1). Enormously indebted to Brutus and Pompeius (Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 6.1.3, 2.7, 3.5), he followed the latter in the Civil War (Caesar, *Bellum Civile* 3.4.3; Florus 2.13.5), but was pardoned by Caesar, who authorized and even enlarged his rule (Caesar, *Bellum Alexandrinum* 34. 1.4, 66.5; Dio Cassius 41.63.3, 42.45f., 42.48.4). Apparently refusing to make common cause with the murderers of Caesar, he was himself killed by C. Cassius Longinus (Appian, *Bella Civilia* 4.63; Dio Cassius 47.33.4).

For coins see G. M. A. Richter, *op. cit.*, fig. 1947; B. Simonetta, *op. cit.*, esp. p. 46f. and pl. IV no. 34.

See also [B.] Niese, "Ariobarzanes. 5-7," in Pauly-Wissowa, II/1, cols. 833-35.

F. Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 26.

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