



## ARTABANUS (OLD PERSIAN PROPER NAME)

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**ARTABANUS** (Achaemenid personal name, Greek Artábanos, Akkadian Atarbanuš, Elamite Irtabanuš, Aramac ʿrtbnw, Lydian Artabāna, Mid. Pers. Ardawān), Latinized form of an Old Persian proper name \*Arta-bānu “the glory of Arta.” (On the etymology of the name see E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en iranien ancien*, Paris, 1966, pp. 107-08.) The Achaemenid bearers of this name include:

1. Son of Hystaspes, brother of Darius I, and uncle of Xerxes. According to Herodotus, he was the trusted adviser of his brother and nephew. For example, he warned Darius not to invade Scythia and deprecated Xerxes’ invasion of Greece as a hazardous adventure. During his Greek campaign Xerxes sent him home from Abydos to govern the empire. According to Plutarch, when Ariamenes, the eldest son of Darius I, contested the throne, Artabanus decided the matter in favor of Xerxes (Herodotus 4.83; 7.10-12, 52, 53, etc.; Plutarch, *De fraterno amore* 18).

2. A Hyrcanian by birth, favorite of Xerxes, and the commander of his guard. In the last years of his reign Xerxes was under his strong influence. In August, 465 B.C., with the help of the eunuch chamberlain Aspamitres, he assassinated Xerxes. According to Ctesias, he killed Xerxes and then accused the crown prince Darius (Xerxes’ eldest son) of the murder; he instigated Artaxerxes, one of the sons of the king, to avenge the parricide. According to Aristotle,



Artabanus killed Darius first and then the king himself. When Artaxerxes I became king, the real power was in Artabanus's hand, and the chronographers even reckoned him as a king who ruled for seven months. He decided to remove Artaxerxes from the throne and seize the royal power, but was discovered and killed together with his sons (Aristotle, *Politics* 5.1311b; Ctesias, *Persica* 20; Diodorus 11.69; Plutarch, *Themistocles* 27).

3. A satrap of Bactria during the reign of Artaxerxes I. He revolted and was defeated in two battles (Ctesias, *Persica* 31 ).

4. Son of Bagadātu, a Persian judge at Babylon during the reign of Darius I (Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités, *Textes cunéiformes* 13, Paris, 1929, no. 193).

5. A Persian commander at Elephantine, in Egypt, in 486 B.C. (W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, Munich, 1931, pp. 1ff.).

6. A Persian officer of the military colony at Elephantine in 465 B.C. He may be the same person as no. 5 (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1923, pp. 15-16, no. 6).

7. An official of the royal economy in southwest Iran during the reign of Darius I (R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, Chicago, 1969, p. 703).

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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See also M. Mayrhofer and R. Schmitt, eds., *Iranisches Personennamenbuch V/4*, Vienna, 1982, p. 29 no. 2, on Lydian Artabāna (which R. Schmitt derives from \*Ṛtapāna-).