



ATROPATES

ATROPATES (Āturpāt, lit., “protected by the fire,” cf. Av. Atərəpāta), the satrap of Media, commander of the troops from Media, Albania, and Sacasene at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 B.C. (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.8.4). He remained faithful to Darius III until the latter’s death in 330, after which he went over to the Macedonian camp. Alexander, when passing through Ecbatana (Hamadān) earlier in the same year, had already transferred the governorship of Media to Oxydates (ibid., 3.20.3; Quintus Curtius, *Historiae* 6.2.11); but in 328-27 B.C. Alexander dismissed Oxydates, whose loyalty he no longer trusted, and reinstated Atropates (Arrian, 4.18.3; Quintus Curtius, 8.3.17, where Atropates is erroneously named Arsaces). As satrap of Media, Atropates delivered Baryaxes, a defeated rebel from that province, to Alexander at Pasargadae in 325-324 (Arrian, 6.29.3). He rose so high in the conqueror’s esteem that his daughter was soon afterward married to Alexander’s confidant Perdikkas (Arrian, 7.4.5; Justin, *Historiae* 13.4.13). He had a last interview with Alexander in Media in 324-323 (Arrian, 7.13.2, 6).

Under the territorial dispensation arranged at Babylon after Alexander’s death in 323, the satrapy of Media was divided into two parts, of which only Little Media (the northwestern part) was left to Atropates while Great Media (the eastern part) was assigned to Pytho (Diodorus Siculus, 18.3.3; Justin, 13.4.13). Eventually Atropates refused allegiance to any of the Macedonian generals and made his satrapy an independent kingdom (Strabo, *Geography* 11.13.1). Thereafter this part of Media was known to the Greeks as Media Atropatene or simply Atropatene, like Parthian and Middle Persian Āturpātakān (whence



Armenian Atrpatakan), later Ādurbādagān, NPers. Ādarbāyjān.

Atropates founded a dynasty which was to rule in Atropatene for several centuries (cf. Strabo, 11.13.1).

See also [Azarbaijan](#).

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