



## GOBRYAS

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**GOBRYAS**, the most widely known (Greek) form of the Old Persian name Gaub(a)ruva (q.v.). Several bearers of this name, who cannot always be kept separate from one another with complete certainty, are historical persons:

1. Ug-ba-ru, governor (*paḥātu*) of the land of Gutium (i.e., some part of western Media and northeastern Assyria in the Zagros mountains) and a senior officer of Cyrus II the Great. As the leader of the Medo-Persian army of Cyrus, Gobryas took Babylon without battle on 12 October 539 B.C.E. (16th day of month Tašrītu), according to the *Nabonidus Chronicle* 3.15 (cf. Grayson, pp. 109-10). After his triumphant entrance in the city on October 29 (3rd day of month Araḥsamnu) Cyrus appointed Gobryas governor of Babylon, who himself installed the district officials in Babylon (*ibid.*, III 20, where one reads the spelling variant Gu-ba-ru); thus this man seems to have been the first Persian ruler over Babylon. He, however, died soon afterwards on the 11th day of month Araḥsamnu (*ibid.*, 3.22) either in the same year (i.e., 6 November 539 B.C.E.) or, according to Shea (pp. 240-43), in the following year (i.e., 27 October 538 B.C.E.). It seems quite probable that there is some connection between this person and the “Assyrian” (i.e., Babylonian) Gobryas described in great detail and in novella form (although including some more or less reliable information) by Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 4.6.1-11 and *passim*), who calls him an old man (4.6.1) already for the time before the fall of Babylon, as well as to the so-called “Darius the Mede,” king of Babylon in the Book of Daniel 5:31, 6:1-2 etc. (cf. especially Shea).

2. Gu-ba(r)-ru, governor (*paḥātu*) of Babylon and Transpotamia (i.e., Eber-nāri,



q.v.) under Cyrus II the Great and Cambyses, appointed in the fourth regnal year of Cyrus II (535/4 B.C.E.), when the king merged these two countries into one single province (cf. San Nicolò, pp. 61-62). He is mentioned as such in a series of Babylonian documents dated between 535/4 (4th year of Cyrus) and 525/4 B.C.E. (5th year of Cambyses), but he presumably held his office several years longer (see San Nicolò, pp. 57-59), until after Cambyses' death and, in all probability, until the Babylonian revolts following the accession of Darius I or even until the reorganization of the Achaemenid empire at the beginning of Darius' rule, when one Uš-ta-nu apparently became Gobryas' successor.

Most of the evidence available is from legal documents found at Uruk (for a survey see San Nicolò, p. 56 n.1; Dandamayev, pp. 74-78). It shows not only that Gobryas wielded both the civilian and the military authority from his residence in Babylon, but also that he had special powers in so far as he played an active role in legal procedures and was in a position to intervene directly (on pain of "the punishment of Gobryas") in administrative affairs of the Eanna temple at Uruk, whereas in former times the Babylonian temples had enjoyed self-government. In these documents there is mention also of Gobryas' scribes, interpreters, messengers, and of the manager and commissioner of his property. Furthermore, documents from Sippar speak of "the canal of Gobryas" and of "Gobryas' harbour (*kāru*)," and in Babylon itself we find a locality called "Reeds of Gobryas." Gobryas seems to have been assisted in some way by his son Na-bu-(ú-)gu, who must have held a higher administrative position (impossible to ascertain precisely) and is mentioned for the period between 527/6 and 523/2 B.C.E. (i.e., until Cambyses' 7th year).

It seems out of the question that this person could be identical with the general who occupied Babylon in 539 B.C.E. (above no. 1) and died at the latest in the following year. And it does not seem probable (cf. Leuze, pp. 34-35) that he is the same person as King Darius I's brother-in-law and father-in-law Gobryas (below no. 3), even though it has been maintained, particularly by Schwenzner, that nos. 1, 2, and 3 are all one and the same person.

3. Gaub(a)ruva, son of Mṛduniya/Mardónios (DB 4.84), one of those "six Persians" who in 522 B.C.E., together with Darius, had conspired against the rule of Gaumāta the magus (q.v.). It was this Gobryas who married Darius' sister (Herodotus 7.5.1), who bore him Mardónios (ibid., 6.43.1, 7.5.1, 7.82), the later well-known generalissimo of Darius and Xerxes, who was named after his grandfather and died in the battle of Plataeae in 479 B.C.E. Darius also married a daughter of Gobryas (ibid., 7.2.2, 7.97), who bore him three sons



before his accession to the throne, including Artobazánēs, who, as the eldest son, could be expected to succeed his father (ibid., 7.2.2-3), and Ariabígnēs (q.v.; ibid., 7.97). Thus, Gobryas was both the brother-in-law and father-in-law of Darius.

After the revolts during Darius' first regnal year, in the second or third year (DB 5.2-3), he put an end to the third Elamite rebellion under Athamaita (DB 5.4-14; the leader's name has to be read thus instead of Atamaita according to Schmitt, pp. 46, 75). Since the Babylonian version of DB 4.84 adds to the name of Gu-ba-ru-' (l.111) the tribal name "Patischorian" (*pa-di-iš-ú-ma-riš*; von Voigtlander, p. 47), there can be no doubt that this person is identical with Darius' "spear-bearer" (*rštibara*), who is depicted on the front of Darius' tomb at Naqš-e Rostam to the left of the king's throne and is identified by the accompanying caption DNc as "Gaub(a)ruva [Babylonian Ku-bar-ra] the Patischorian [Pātišuváriš]."

At the assassination of Gaumāta the magus or the so-called "false Smerdis," as it is told by Herodotus (3.78, esp. 3.78.4-5), Gobryas risked his life when he, struggling with the magus in the dark room, called upon Darius (first being afraid that he would strike his friend) to stab anyway (cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 50 F; Iustinus 1.9.22). Gobryas' close family ties with Darius and his active involvement in the latter's seizure of power (given in great detail by Herodotus 3.70-78) explain why he held such an outstanding position as the royal spear-bearer and was entrusted with the suppression of Elam, and why his son Mardonius, being the king's nephew, brother-in-law, and son-in-law (see below), made such a career. It is this same person, too, who is mentioned several times in the Persepolis tablets, to one of which (Hallock, 1969, PF 688) there is also attached Gobryas' seal showing a hunting scene. Gobryas received particularly high rations (10 *marriš* of beer a day, cf. PF 688) and is mentioned as performing libations to the "great god," i.e., Ahura Mazdā (PF 353); according to the combined evidence of PF 688 and PFa 5 (cf. Hallock, 1978, pp. 109-36, esp. pp. 110, 118), he seems to have journeyed together with (his son) "Mardonius' wife, the king's daughter," Artazóstrē (q.v.) by name, already in the twelfth month of Darius' twenty-third regnal year, i.e., in March 498 B.C.E. (whereas Herodotus 6.43.1 calls Mardonius "newly married" at the time of his first European expedition in 492 B.C.E.). There can be no doubt that all this evidence is related to one and the same person, as may be the case also with the fairy-stories of Herodotus (4.132.2, 134.2-3) about events during Darius' Scythian campaign. But that this same person is identical with the governor of



Babylon and Eber-nāri (above no. 2) cannot be proved and seems rather improbable.

4. Son of King Darius I and Artystōnē (q.v.), the leader of the Mariandynians, Ligyans, and Syrians in the expeditionary army of Xerxes (Herodotus 7.72.2); it remains unclear whether Gobryas really was sent to the isle of Delos during this campaign, though that is claimed by his grandson with the same name, a magus (ps.-Plato, *Axiochus* 371a). Presumably it is this person (and not the one listed as no. 3) who was the father of a certain Ariomándēs, the leader of the Persian forces in the battle at the Eurymedon river (Callisthenes apud Plutarch, *Cimon* 12.5).

5. An unidentifiable person named in the Aramaic inscription (no. 69) of one of the Persepolitan pestles dated in the 10th year of Xerxes I or Artaxerxes I (see Bowman, pp. 133 ff.).

6. One of the four commanders-in-chief of the army of Artaxerxes II in the battle of Cunaxa in 401 B.C.E. (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.7.12); in all probability he is identical with the governor (*paḥātu*) of Babylonia, who is named in several documents from the Murašû archive in Nippur dated in the years 421/0 to 417/6 B.C.E. (3rd to 7th year of Darius II) and probably was in office until the accession of Artaxerxes II (Dandamayev, p. 79; Stolper, pp. 396-98).

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