



MEGABATES

MEGABATES, Greek rendering of the well-known name OIran. **Baga-pāta-* “protected by the gods” (which is attested in El. *Ba-qa-ba-(ad-/ud-)da*, Bab. *Ba-ga-pa-a-ta/tu₄*, *Ba-ga-(‘)-pa-a-tú*, etc., Aram. *bgpt*, Lyc. *Magabata*). Whereas the variant form Gk. *Bagapátēs* (Ctesias, frag. 13 §§ 9–23, F 16 § 66) has remained unchanged, the more common and widespread form *Megabátēs* has taken the shape of a genuine Greek name, since the first element, OIran. **Baga-* “god,” appears as Gk. *Mega-* (cf. Gk. *mégas* “big, great” and many proper names with *Mega-*), and the second element, OIran. **-pāta-* “protected,” resembles one of the Greek verbal nouns in *-bátēs* (cf. most recently Schmitt, 2006, pp. 156 f.; 2011, pp. 155, 251). As among the Elamite and Babylonian attestations, there must be distinguished various bearers of this name also in the Greek literary sources:

1. An Achaemenid prince, the cousin of both Darius I and his brother *Artaphrénēs* ([Herodotus](#) 5.32); his expedition against the island of Naxos during the [Ionian Revolt](#) and his quarrel with Aristagoras of Miletus are described in [Herodotus](#) 5.32–35. According to [Herodotus](#), 5.32 (who himself has some doubt about the matter) in later years Pausanias, the victor of Plataea, was said to have courted one of his daughters. There can scarcely be any doubt that he is identical with the satrap of the Daskylitis (see [DASCYLIUM](#)), who in 477 BCE was replaced by Artabazus, son of Pharnaces ([Thucydides](#) 1.129.1; q.v.).

2. The father of Megabazus, who was one of the admirals of Xerxes’ fleet during the expedition in 480 BCE ([Herodotus](#) 7.97). Perhaps he is the same as



no. 1 above.

3. The commander of the Persian fleet, whom in 480 BCE Xerxes caused to sail from Macedonia against the Greeks who had gathered on the island of Euboea (Diodorus 11.12.2–3; Strabo 9.2.9). It is quite possible that he is the same man as that Persian commander (Gk. *tagós*), who died in the battle at Salamis according to Aeschylus, *Persians* 22, 983 (cf. Schmitt, 1978, pp. 41 f.) and whose name the eyewitness Aeschylus may actually have heard of somewhere. In all probability he is the same as the “fleet commander” (El.) *Ba-ga-ba-da* mentioned for Darius’s reign in *PT* 8:5 f. (see Cameron, pp. 94 f.).

4. One of the sons of Pharnabazus’s disloyal general Spithridates, who in 396 B.C.E. joined the Spartan king Agesilaos with his sons and all his troops (Xenophon, *Agesilaos* 5.4–5 and *Hellenika* 4.1.28; cf. *ibid.*, 4.1.6 and *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* [cf. Chambers, p. 46, l. 706]); owing to his beautiful figure, the young Megabates became Agesilaos’s lover (Plutarch, *Agesilaos* 11.2, 11.6–10).

5. The commander of the Armenian troops which the Armenian king Artapates, during the Roman civil war, sent to Pompey’s assistance in Greece before the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE (Appian, *Bellum civile* 2.71).

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