



OTANES

OTANES, Greek form (*Otánēs*) of the name OPers. *Utāna* (DB IV 83 u-t-a-n, rendered as Elam. *Hu-ud-da-na*, Bab. *Ú-mi-it-ta-na-na-'*), which often is interpreted as “having good descendants”; since by that etymology the long vowel is not explained sufficiently, this interpretation is no more than a possibility (cf. recently Schmitt, 2011, pp. 285 f.). In Greek sources, at least four bearers of this name seem to be attested:

1. A Persian nobleman, the son of the Achaemenid Pharnaspēs according to Herodotus, 3.68.1 (in contradiction to DB; see below), the father of Phaidymē, who in turn married Cambyses, Gaumāta the magus alias Smerdis, and Darius (Herodotus, 3.68.3, 3.69.6); he was one of Darius I’s co-conspirators and corresponds to *Utāna* in Darius’s own list of his helpers at the elimination of Gaumāta (DB IV 83), even if *Utāna* is called there the son of Thukhra (OPers. *Θuxra-*). Since, according to the more trustworthy report of DB, he was the son of Thukhra and not of Pharnaspes, he cannot have been a brother of Kassandanē (who is said to have been the daughter of Pharnaspes in Herodotus, 2.1.1, 3.2.2; see [CASSANDANE](#)) and brother-in-law of Cyrus II; thus the intricate network of marriage alliances described by Herodotus is rightly questioned by M. Brosius (pp. 54 f.). Evidently there were several homonymous figures with the name Otanes, so that Herodotus confused some of them and thus erroneously named the conspirator Otanes to be the son of Pharnaspes (cf. also Waters, p. 96b). The solution proposed by Herrenschildt, pp. 63f., to resolve the contradiction between the two father’s names, namely that Herodotus’ Pharnaspes was the real name of Otanes’ father, whereas DB’s



Thukhra is a nickname, is completely unbelievable from both the historical and the onomastic point of view.

According to Herodotus (3.68.2 and 3.70, respectively), who probably had learned that from hearsay, it was he who first suspected the magus of not being the son of Cyrus and who, as one of the older people in this group, took the initiative in the conspiracy; and in the debate about the best constitution he, as the most respected figure and therefore the first speaker, argued in favor of democracy and the principle of equality before the law (Gk. *isonomíē*; Herodotus, 3.80.2, 3.83.1, 6.43.3). He was given special privileges for himself and his progeny (Herodotus, 3.83 f.); this information agrees with the request of Darius (DB IV 87 f.) to care for the families of his fellow-conspirators and is a clear sign of his significant position. A few years later, it was under Otanes' command that the Persians recaptured Samos for Syloson, the brother of Polycrates (Herodotus, 3.139-149). Iustinus has the name in the erroneous form *Ostanes*, and in the quite unreliable list of the 'Seven Persians' given by Ctesias (fragm. 13 §16) we find, instead of him, one "Onophas."

The Old Persian cuneiform inscription on a silver plaque, purportedly written by "Otanes ... one of the men in Persia"(sic), which A. Soudavar (pp. 126 f.) presented as an important text, without any doubt is a modern forgery (see Schmitt, in press); grammatical and syntactical mistakes are unambiguous proof of this.

2. Another Persian, the son of Sisamnēs (Herodotus, 5.25.1); he was married to one of Darius's daughters (Herodotus, 5.116), first held the office of a judge (already under Cambyses II), and after Darius I's expedition against the Scythians was appointed the supreme commander of the forces of the people of the Aegean coast in succession to Megabazus (Herodotus, 5.25.1). During the Ionian Revolt (500-494 B.C.; q.v.) he subjugated Byzantium, Calchedon, and other towns, later also Clazomenae and the Aeolian Cyme.

3. Yet another Persian, the father of Xerxes' otherwise unknown charioteer Patiramphēs (Herodotus, 7.40.4).

4. A Persian nobleman somehow related to no. 1, above (cf. esp. Brosius, pp. 53 f.), who commanded the forces of the Persis in Xerxes' army marching against Greece in 480 BCE (Herodotus, 7.61.2); he was the father of Xerxes' wife Amēstris (ibid.) as well as of Anaphēs, the commander of the Cissians (qq.v.), and Smerdomenēs, one of the six commanders over all the infantry

(Herodotus, 7.62.2 and 7.82, respectively). It remains unclear, however, whether or not the same man is meant by all three of these references, the more so, as the last-mentioned one (saying that he was Darius's brother, thus a son of Hystaspes/Vištāspa) is liable to be misunderstood. It cannot be excluded that Herodotus misunderstood his source or mistook something he heard. It would be much more plausible that Amestris' father was in fact Darius' fellow-conspirator (above no. 1), because that bond of marriage between both families would be an excellent confirmation of the former alliance (cf. Schmitt, 2006, pp. 175 f.).

The reference to one further Otanes (given, e.g., in Justi, p. 139) attested in Arrianus (*Anabasis* 3.8.5) as one of the leaders of the forces supplied by the people living at the Persian Gulf coast in the battle at Gaugamela has to be canceled; the correct reading of the name is *Orxínēs*or (better) *Orzínēs*.

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