



OXYARTES

OXYARTES, Persian masculine name, attested only in this Greek form *Oxyártēs*, which in all probability is transformed by popular etymology (just like *Oxyáthrēs* [see [OXYATHRES](#)]) from OIr. **Huxšaθra-* (*Oxáthrēs*) ‘Of good reign’ (cf. M. Mayrhofer, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* I/1, Vienna, 1977, p. 87 no. 335). A connection with the Avestan name *Uxšiiat.ərata-* ‘Who makes Truth growing’ (reflecting its counterpart OPers. **Uxšiya-rta-*, as several scholars had preferred) is unlikely in view of the transformation and adaptation in Greek. In any case neither *Oxyártēs* (contrary to F. Grenet, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 107, 1983, p. 378) nor *Oxyáthrēs* can meaningfully be interpreted as containing the name of the Oxus River (OIr. **Vaxšu-*). This is the traditionally accepted form of the name of a Bactrian (explicitly so Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.18.4; 7.4.4; Dexippus F 8,5 J.; not: Sogdian) nobleman in the time of Alexander the Great; he was the father of three grown sons (Curtius Rufus 8.4.21f.) and several daughters (Arrian 4.18.4), the most famous of whom was Roxane. He was one of the confidants of Bessus, with whom he fled from Alexander in 329 B.C.E., after the death of Darius III Codomannus, by crossing the river Oxus and moving towards Nautaca in Sogdiana (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.28.9f.). He continued the struggle against the Macedonian king after Bessus’s death in Sogdiana and Bactria beyond the Oxus River, where Alexander conquered in 327 B.C.E. the fortress called ‘the Rock of Sogdiana’ (Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.18.4) or that of Sisimithres (Strabo 11.11.4), where Oxyartes’s wife and daughters had taken refuge (Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.18.4–19.5; Strabo 11.11.4). These women fell into Alexander’s power, who for his part fell in love with Roxane, “the loveliest woman in Asia next to Darius’ wife” (Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.19.5), and



married her (Arrian, *ibid.*; 7.4.4; Strabo 11.11.4; Curtius Rufus 8.4.29; 10.3.11).

Because of this, a reconciliation took place between Alexander and Oxyartes, who was honored by the king (Arrian 4.20.4), caused his sons to join the Macedonian army (Curtius Rufus 8.4.21f.; Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.6.4 on his son Histanes) and was engaged in intervening to quell the resistance of his fellow countrymen, especially that of Sisimithres, the commander of another fortress (Curtius Rufus 8.2.25–31 [here called *Oxartes*]; Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.21.6f. [where Sisimithres is called Chorienes]; Plutarch, *Alex.* 58.3–5). When Alexander stayed in India in 326 B.C.E., he appointed Oxyartes satrap of the Paropamisadae in the Hindu Kush (Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.15.3; cfr. Curtius Rufus 9.8.10). In this position he remained up to the reorganization of the empire after Alexander's death, agreed on at Babylon in 323 B.C.E. (Diodorus 18.3.3; Iustinus 13.4.21; Dexippus F 8.5 J.), and even after the new distribution of the satrapies, as decided in 321 B.C.E. at Triparadisus (Diodorus 18.39.6). A squadron of foot soldiers and cavalry under a certain Androbazus was detached by Oxyartes in 317 B.C.E. for the wars against Peithon (on the side of the satraps of eastern Iran) and Antigonus (on the side of Eumenes of Cardia) respectively (Diodorus 19.14.6; 27.5). Antigonus Monophthalmus, Alexander's successor in the east, left him his satrapy as it was before, since he saw that he would not be able to expel him without a long war and a large army (Diodorus 19.48.2). Further data, including the time of his death, are unknown.

Whether that legendary Bactrian king whose fortress was captured by the Assyrian king Ninus, according to Ctesias (in Diodorus 2. 6. 2 [with a number of variant readings]), was actually named Oxyartes too, is disputed (cf. P'yankov, pp. 154–8; Bonquet, pp. 65–8; Gnoli, pp. 43f.).

Bibliography (in addition to that given in the text):

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