



PHRATAPHERNES

PHRATAPHERNES (Old Ir. *Frāda-farnah, Avestan Frādat₂xvarənah, *Yt.* 13.128 “furthering *Farrah*” [see Schmitt]), a member of the highest Persian aristocracy at the end of the *Achaemenid* period. He probably belonged to one of the Six Families that had helped *Darius I* gain the throne. Perhaps he was a descendant of Intaphernes (Viⁿdafarnah, son of Vayaspara: *DB* IV 83), one of whose sons survived when Darius executed the rest of the family on suspicion of treason (*Hdt.*, 3.118-119).

His status is confirmed later by the admission of his sons to *Alexander's* Companions (see below): *Arrian* (7.6.4) mentions in this connection the sons of Artabazus (a grandson of *Artaxerxes II*), the sons of *Mazaeus* (a descendant of *Hydarnes*), the brother of Alexander's Bactrian wife Roxane (who was probably of Achaemenid blood), and two men whose names do not appear anywhere else and who must have been selected only on account of their noble descent. It is possible that all these men had some Achaemenid blood, as one certainly and one probably did.

Phrataphernes first appears in our sources as commander of the forces of *Parthia*, *Hyrkania*, and *Tapuria* at the battle of *Gaugamela*, 331 BCE, and he was therefore the satrap of those areas (*Arr.*, *Anab.* 3.8.4; *Curt.*, 4.12 is confused). We do not know whether he was appointed by *Darius III* or earlier. He stayed with Darius on his flight to the east until the king's death, then made his way with some other loyalists to surrender to Alexander, who gave them a friendly reception. However, the satrapies of Parthia and Hyrcania had been given to Amminapes, who had aided Alexander in the



conquest of [Egypt](#) (Arr., 3.22.1; Curt., 6.4.25, mentioning only Hyrcania and, as often, getting the name wrong). Arrian's statement (3.28.3) that, as satrap of Parthia, he was ordered to join Artabazus and two Macedonian officers in attacking Satibarzanes, who had rebelled in [Areia](#), shows that he soon received one of his old provinces back. (Amminapes disappears from our record.) [Autophradates](#) (no. 3), who had joined Alexander soon after Phrataphernes, received Tapuria (Arr., 3.23.7, stating that Autophradates was already satrap of Tapuria under Darius III, must be a mistake) and, as soon as it was conquered, Mardia (3.24.3). Hyrcania seems at some time to have been added (see Curt., 8.3.17). Autophradates, as, evidently, an Achaemenid (see below for his aspiration to kingship) who had been loyal to Darius III, was must have been judged worthy of major offices.

In the spring of 328, Phrataphernes (still described as satrap of Parthia) and Stasanor, a Cypriot Greek marked out to be satrap of Areia, arrived at Alexander's winter court at [Bactra](#), delivering to him various officers appointed by [Bessus](#), who now called himself Artaxerxes and claimed to be the rightful successor of Darius, whom he had killed (Arr. 4.7.1; on Bessus's claim to be king, see Arr., 3.25.3; Diod., 17.74.2; Curt., 6.6.13). In the following winter, they were again called to Alexander's winter residence at Nautaca in [Sogdiana](#), along with other officers, and given various instructions. Several scholars (Berve chief among them) regard the two visits of Phrataphernes to Alexander in successive winters as a doublet (Arr. 4.7.1, omitted by [Curtius](#), 4.18.2; Curt., 8.3.17). They are likely to be authentic. (Curtius's omission of one would not be the only omission in his account.)

It was probably Phrataphernes' quick success in his first mission that made Alexander summon him again and entrust to him a more difficult and confidential task that was not one to be communicated by a mere messenger. He was sent to supersede and arrest Autophradates, who had not only rebelled, but aimed to make himself king; Phrataphernes was to take over his provinces of Hyrcania, Tapuria, and Mardia—a greater accumulation of satrapies than he had held under Darius III (Arr., 4.18.2; Curt., 8.3.17). That task was obviously not yet completed when, in 326, Phrataphernes was ordered to report to Alexander in [India](#) and bring with him the Thracian troops, which he was apparently considered not to need any longer. He met with Alexander soon after the battle of the Hydaspes. If Alexander had expected him to bring Autophradates with him for punishment, he was disappointed. Phrataphernes returned to his satrapy and continued with that



mission. We do not know when that task was concluded, but Autophradates was executed only when Alexander reached *Pasargadae* (Curt., 10.1.39), along with others accused of rebellion. Phrataphernes had, in the end, justified Alexander's confidence and was rewarded with the admission of his two sons, Phradasmanes and Sisines, into the select corps (*agēma*) of the Companion cavalry (Arr., 7.6.4).

Phrataphernes survived Alexander and, at Perdikkas's distribution of satrapies in 323, is recorded as being left in charge of Parthia and Hyrcania (Diod., 18.3.3). Mardia and Tapuria are not mentioned. At the redistribution at Triparadisus (321), Phrataphernes is not mentioned. Parthia (and no doubt the other territories that had been governed by Phrataphernes) was assigned to one Phillip (Diod., 18.39.5-6). Mardia and Tapuria and even Hyrcania are not mentioned here by *Diodorus* (our only source). In the age of the Macedonian barons, it is unlikely that Phrataphernes had come to a peaceful end.

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