

On an Account of Arrian concerning Armenia in the Achaemenid Period

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Abstract: The history of Armenia during the destruction of the Achaemenid Kingdom is fragmentarily presented in extant sources, which do not allow forming a complete picture of the history of Armenia. In this regard, Arrian's account of the 2nd century AD refers to the participation of Armenians in the Battle of Gaugamela, which took place in 331 BC. This data has sparked controversy in Armenology, and it is not an isolated exception. The mention of Armenian involvement in the Battle of Gaugamela is important in the sense that after two hundred years of Achaemenid rule, Armenia regained its independence and conducted independent politics in international relations. The Arrian's account is also important in identifying Orontes and Mithraustes, who led the Armenians.

Keywords: Arrian, Achaemenids, Curtius, Battle of Gaugamela, Armenia, Orontes, Mithraustes

Introduction

Arrian writes that “of the Armenians, Orontes and Mithraustes were commanders” (Arrian 1967, 246) in the Battle of Gaugamela. From Arrian's account, it can be assumed that the military units (see also Diodorus Siculus 1826, 161) of other tribes and peoples, who came to the aid of the Persian army in the Battle of Gaugamela, were mainly led by respective Satraps, and except for one case, in all other instances, this or that military unit was led by one person, that is, by the Satrap of the given people or the country. Consequently, the commander of the Indians, Bactrians and Sogdians was the Satrap of Bactria, Bessus, the leader of the Sacae was Mauaces, Arachotians and the so-called Indian hillmen were led by

Barsaentes, the Satrap of Arachosia, the Areians were led by Satibarzanes, Satrap of Areia, the Parthyaean, the Hyrcanians and the Tapurians were led by Phrataphernes, the commander of the Medes was Atropates (whose army also included Cadusians, Albanians, and Sacesinians), the tribes bordering on the Red Sea were marshaled by Ocondobates, Ariobarzanes and Orxines, the Uxians and Sousianians acknowledged the leadership of Oxathres, Bupares was in command of the Babylonians, with whom were the “exiles” - the Carians and the Sitacenians, the Cappadocians were led by Ariaces, while the Syrian forces from Lowland-Syria and Mesopotamian Syria were under the leadership of Mazaeus (Arrian 1967, 244, 246).

As it can be seen, the commanders of the military units of the Persian army, according to the principle of tribal division, were the Satraps, and the tribal division of the army, in turn, corresponded to the administrative division of the Achaemenid Kingdom. The study of the composition of the Persian army shows that, surprisingly, only the Armenians had two leaders. How can this circumstance be explained? In another case, we noted that the tribes bordering on the Red Sea were led by Ocondobates, Ariobarzanes and Orxines, which means that each of them was the Satrap of their tribe or land; however, the historian does not mention by name the tribes and peoples under their subordination.

In another place, Arrian mentions that in the Battle of Gaugamela, the Armenian and Cappadocian military units were side by side on the right wing of the Persian army, which showed a strong resistance against the Macedonian army, and it was only through the intervention of Alexander the Great the latter defeated the right wing (Arrian 1967, 256, 268, 270).

Curtius on the Participation of Armenians in the Battle of Gaugamela

The 1st century AD historian Curtius mentions the participation of the Armenians of Armenia Minor (or Lesser Armenia) and Greater Armenia with 40,000 foot-soldiers and 7,000 cavalry¹ in the Battle of Gaugamela, without mentioning the leaders of the Armenians (Curtius 1971, 72, 272). In fact, Curtius does not mention Orontes and Mithraustes (Mihrvahišt); however, he divides the undifferentiated Armenians, mentioned by Arrian, into two parts: Armenians of Armenia Minor and Greater Armenia. It turns out that Orontes-Yervand III was considered the ruler of Greater Armenia, and Mithraustes the ruler of Armenia Minor (Krkyasharyan 2005, 73; see also Movsisyan 2014, 86-87). Once S. Krkyasharyan expressed the idea that one of the mentioned military commanders led the 7,000 Armenian cavalry, and the other led the 40,000 foot-soldiers (Krkyasharyan 2005, 74). Of course, such an opinion is possible, but Orontes and Mithraustes were not just generals and, comparing with the status of the other generals mentioned above, they should also have been Satraps.

¹ It is possible that the number of the Armenian army refers to the Battle of Issus (see Hovhannisyan Movsisyan 2007, 262).

Who Were Orontes and Mithraustes?

Xenophon's information is close to Arrian's statement that "the Armenians were led by Orontes and Mithraustes", when Xenophon reports that the Armenians, Mardians and Chaldaean mercenaries of Orontas and Artuchas were trying to prevent the entry of the Greek army into Armenia (Xenophon 1980, 278). The issue of Mardians and Chaldaeans has already been discussed (see Khorikyan 2014, 54-55), so it is necessary for us to find out who Artuchas was. Orontas was the Satrap of Armenia, and Tiribazus was the Hyparch of the administrative unit of Western Armenia (Xenophon 1980, 250, 292, 624; Tuplin 2017, 625). Artuchas, who is mentioned next to Orontas-Yervand, the Satrap of Armenia, and at the same time the King (Khorikyan 2014, 58-59), must have been a famous person. In our opinion, the very mention of the Western Armenia Hyparchy automatically implies the existence of the Eastern Armenia Hyparchy, whose Hyparch was Artuchas. Therefore, Arrian's statement "the Armenians were led by Orontes and Mithraustes" and Xenophon's "the Armenians of Orontas and Artuchas" show that in both cases we are dealing with the reality caused by the existence of administrative management, when the Armenian military units were led by the Satrap and their subordinate Hyparch.

Curtius's mention of Armenia Minor is significant. Even though the area west of the Euphrates was referred to as Armenia Minor by the historian of the 1st century AD, that area had been part of the XIII Satrapy under the name of Pactyica since the time of Darius I (Herodotus 1928, 120). The area west of the Euphrates, known under the name of people of Milidu - Melitenians at the end of the 5th century BC, according to a Babylonian document - was part of the Armenian Satrapy (Khorikyan 2017, 174-180).

The passage of Arrian quoted above is also interesting in the sense that the comparison of the historian's information concerning the Armenians and the tribes, bordering on the Red Sea, does show that the simultaneously mentioned Satraps were satraps of different peoples or administrative units. We have already mentioned that the Satraps of the tribes bordering on the Red Sea were Ocondobates, Ariobarzanes and Orxines, that is, the fact that the latter were Satraps without a certain name designation is comparable to the mention of Orontes and Mithraustes being the Satraps of the Armenians. Moreover, we should also note that the first mention of Ocondobates and Orontes is about their being Satraps, while Ariobarzanes, Orxines and Mithraustes were the subordinates of the Satraps, the Hyparchs.

For comparison, let's note that Herodotus also mentions Armenians in the XIII Satrapy in a general way (Herodotus 1928, 120). Moreover, Ἀρμενίων of the Greek original is also translated as "Armenia", or rather "Armenias", which is possible if we consider the mention of Greater and Lesser Armenias later. However, in our opinion, at the end of the 6th century BC, the idea of Armenia Minor (Lesser Armenia) did not exist yet. In the given context of Herodotus, the translation of "Armenians" is more accurate in the sense that the Greek historian, or his source, mentions the list of satrapies mainly according

to the composition of tribes and peoples. In any case, Armenia is one entire country for Herodotus (Herodotus 1938, 58; Herodotus 1975, 224, 244), which is also evident from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (Xenophon 1980, 250) and *Cyropaedia* (Xenophon 1960, 258, 262).

Conclusion

The comparison of Arrian's passage with those of other ancient authors' show that Orontes mentioned in the Battle of Gaugamela was the Satrap of Armenia, and Mithraustes was the Hyparch of Pactyica, a land to the west of the Euphrates.

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