

ALEXANDER AND ARMENIA

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WHEN DID ARMENIA BECOME A SATRAPY?

OPINIONS ARE SHARPLY DIVIDED on the question of whether Alexander possessed Armenia as a satrapy. Berve claimed that Alexander “never touched on Armenia,”¹ and his view was followed by Tarn (1948: 398, “the fiction of an Armenian satrapy”), and Bradford Welles (“Armenia had not been and was not to be conquered at this time,” writing of 331 B.C.),² and Anson (1990: 45, “it is likely that he (Mithrenes) died in his attempt to acquire the satrapy”). On the other hand, S. Sherwin-White and A. Kuhrt, interpreting Strabo 11.15.1, made the deduction that “Alexander ruled it (Armenia) after the Achaemenids”; but their deduction was rather tentative, for they referred to the Macedonian “conquest” in inverted commas as if it were not an actual conquest (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 191). There is therefore a case for reviewing the ancient testimonia.

That Alexander in 331 at Babylon “sent to Armenia as satrap” the Persian Mithrenes, whom he had held in honour at his court (Arr. *Anab.* 1.17.4), was stated by Arrian (3.16.5, κατέπεμψε).³ Since Arrian’s sources were Ptolemy and Aristobulus,⁴ the statement is not to be doubted. Diodorus had Alexander “give Armenia to the surrenderer of the citadel of Sardis, Mithrenes” (17.64.6, ἔδωκεν),⁵ and Curtius likewise had “Armenia given to Mithrenes” (5.1.44, *Armenia Mithreni, Sardium proditori, data est*). The simple meaning of these passages is that Mithrenes was “sent” to take over an area already in submission (for there was no mention of troops), and that the “giving” was of an area already in Alexander’s possession.⁶ This meaning is supported by a remark in a speech of 330, which Curtius attributed to Alexander at Hecatompylus, that “we have in our power Armenia, Persis, Media, Parthiene” (6.3.3); for although Curtius

I express my gratitude to the anonymous readers of the journal for the comments which were made on a first draft. References to Arrian are to the *Anabasis* unless otherwise specified.

¹ Berve 1926: 1.262 “Armenien kann nur nominell, nicht faktisch als Satrapie gelten,” and 2.295 “Alexander Armenien gar nicht berührt.”

² C. Bradford Welles in the Loeb edition of Diodorus 17 (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1963) 302, n. 1.

³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt’s wording (1993: 191), “Alexander appointed . . . Mithrenes as satrap,” mistranslates the Greek. Arrian’s word for “appointing” was καθίστημι as in 1.17.1 and 3.16.4 or ἀποδείκνυμι as in 1.29.3 and 2.12.2.

⁴ Arr. *Anab.* Preface, with comment in Hammond 1993: 189–195, 221–223, 258–260, and 288–292.

⁵ Arguments for this are in Hammond 1983: 54–55 and 129.

⁶ “Spear-won land” was the possession of the king, who “gave” it to whomever he wished: examples of δίδωμι so used are cited in Hammond 1988b: 388–389.

composed much of the speech out of his own head, he was usually accurate in a speech's facts.⁷

Strabo gave a summary account of the history of Armenia from the Persian period down to his own time (11.14.15 *init.*). He derived it from Theophanes of Mitylene, whom he cited by name for the size of Armenia at 11.14.11 and for adjacent areas at 11.2.2 *fin.*, 11.5.1, and 11.14.4 *fin.* Most of Strabo's account concerns Armenia in and after the time of Rome's defeat of Antiochus III. This imbalance agrees with the attribution of the account to Theophanes, who wrote of the achievements of Pompey, with whom he served (11.5.1), and made a comparison with those of Alexander (McDonald 1970: 1058). His account is likely to be accurate. The interesting sentence runs thus: "Persians and Macedonians were in occupation of Armenia, and afterwards those who held Syria and Media" (11.14.15, κατεῖχον). Since Persian occupation ended in 331 and Seleucus took control ca 312, the occupation by the Macedonians ran for some twenty years, of which half were in Alexander's lifetime. While the passage does not exclude the possibility of a gap between Persian occupation and Macedonian occupation,⁸ it does not permit a gap of half the time. In other words Alexander's Macedonians were there in his time.

When we review the evidence in this paragraph, we must conclude that Alexander claimed Armenia in the first place, then sent Mithrenes to take it over as satrap in 331, and included it in 330 in his list of conquests.

The testimonia for the period immediately after Alexander's death are in need of some interpretation. The consecutive account is in Diodorus 18.2–7. The narrative of events was probably derived from the lost account of Hieronymus, a contemporary and reliable writer;⁹ but that account was drastically abbreviated by Diodorus. Thus when Diodorus reported the allocation of satrapies to "the most important of the Friends and Bodyguards," he named only some of the satrapies in Asia and he remarked that the other satrapies there were left under the rule of "the same officers" (18.3.2). However, he thought fit to make good the omissions by adding under the year 323 a full list of satrapies in Asia with "their sizes and characteristics" (18.6.4). With this repeated phrase, "the most important" men, Diodorus indicated that he had completed the theme of the satrapies and was about to turn to another theme. It is certain that Diodorus drew his first list from one source and his full list from another source; for in his full list the

⁷ This passage was not mentioned by Tarn 1948: 398 or Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 191.

⁸ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 191 did not envisage any gap in interpreting this text.

⁹ I argued in Hammond 1988a: 96 that this was so. Moreover, the list of satrapies from Egypt to Hellespontine Phrygia is the same in Diodorus and in Arr. *Succ.* 1a and 1b, so that they were probably drawn from a common source; and it is generally agreed that Arrian in *Succ.* was following Hieronymus (so Stadter 1980: 148 and Simpson 1959: 376). It is important to note that the list is only of those which were "distributed" (Arr. *Succ.* 1a5–8, ἡ μὲν νέμεισις and 1b2, διανεμήθη), and that it left "many" others under the men appointed by Alexander (1a8, ἀδιανεμήτα). Thus Tarn was mistaken when he said that "no satrap of Armenia was appointed at Babylon" (in 323) and that therefore "the fiction of a satrap of Armenia was abandoned" (Tarn 1948: 2.398 with n. 3).

satrapies are arranged in an entirely different manner. The source behind the first list was probably Hieronymus, since the list is related to the narrative. The full list then was not from Hieronymus¹⁰ but perhaps from some official document, presumably accurate. The full list included Armenia, Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Coele Syria; these four were not named in the first list, no doubt because they were left under the rule of "the same officers" and were not distributed to "the most important of the Friends and Bodyguards."¹¹ Our conclusion is that Armenia was a satrapy in 323, that it was left then either under Mithrenes or under his successor, if Mithrenes had been superseded,¹² and that it was one of Alexander's satrapies in 323.

Two other candidates have been proposed as satraps of Armenia in and after 323. One was presented in an addition to the text of Arr. *Succ.* 1b6, as proposed by Ausfeld (1901: 537) and adopted by Roos: καὶ Νεοπτολέμου <Ἀρμενία, Τληπολέμου> Καρμανία. Support for Neoptolemus being satrap of Armenia was sought in Plutarch, *Eumenes* 4.1, where Armenia was said to have been "thrown into confusion by Neoptolemus" (τεταραγμένην). However, in Diodorus 18.53.3 Craterus and Neoptolemus were not named as satraps but said to be "renowned as commanders of forces of Macedonians who had never been defeated." Thus there is little doubt that "the confusion in Armenia" was caused by Neoptolemus with some of these unruly troops.¹³ The other candidate was Orontes, who bore the name of a famous Persian family. It was proposed by Berve (1926: 1.261) that during and after Alexander's lifetime Armenia was independent of the Macedonians and was ruled by a Persian, Orontes, who may have been the Orontes in command of Armenians at Gaugamela in 331 (Arr. 3.8.5).¹⁴ Berve's proposal is incompatible with the testimonia we have cited in paragraphs two and three above, and on those grounds alone should be rejected. But Berve sought support for his proposal from a passage in Diodorus 19.23.3, where Orontes was said to hold the satrapy of Armenia and be a friend of Peucestes, the satrap of Persis, in 317. The fact that this information was in a letter forged by Eumenes did not impair the truth of the statement; for Eumenes intended his letter to be convincing. But the friendship with Peucestes is understandable only if both

¹⁰ *Pace* Tarn 1948: 2.309. He discussed the full list which he called "the Gazetteer" in 2.7 and 2.309–18. He asserted that "it represents an official document."

¹¹ The inclusion of Armenia in the list seems to have been overlooked. For instance Bosworth 1980: 315–316 did not mention it, nor did Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 191. Bosworth even wrote, "all that seems certain is that Armenia was out of royal control by 323."

¹² Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 191 asserted that Mithrenes had been "replaced, or succeeded, by a Macedonian (Diod. 17.64.6)." But they made a mistake, since Diodorus at that place simply said that he "gave Armenia to Mithrines."

¹³ I disagree with Bosworth 1980: 1.316, "his (Neoptolemus') commission can only have been the recovery of Armenia"; for that is not the implication of τεταραγμένην.

¹⁴ Bosworth 1980: 1.315 inclined towards the view of Berve, "He (Orontes) may have retired home after the battle, repelled by Mithrenes' efforts to take control and maintain power throughout Alexander's reign."

men were satraps, and not if Orontes was an anti-Macedonian ruler. All that we can deduce is that an Orontes was satrap of Armenia in 317. It is possible that he had been appointed in the meeting at Triparadeisus in 321; for the list of appointments then to satrapies at Diod. 18.39.3–6 is incomplete (Arachosia, Hyrcania, Armenia, Lycaonia, Pisidia, Gedrosia, Pamphylia, and Coele Syria were not mentioned).¹⁵

In brief, then, Armenia was already in submission when Mithrenes was sent there from Babylon late in 331. Armenia was under Macedonian control in 330 (Curt. 6.3.3). It figured in the list of satrapies in Diodorus 18.5.4 under the year 323. Mithrenes was left as satrap in 323 when Perdikkas let some satrapies remain under the existing satraps (Diod. 18.3.2). In 317 he was no longer satrap but had been replaced by Orontes (Diod. 19.23.3). We may add that the satrapy "Armenia" was described as "small" as compared with its size under Antiochus III (Strabo 11.14.5 *init.*). Mithrenes' rule may not have extended as far as Lake Van.

WHEN DID THE ACQUISITION OF ARMENIA FIT INTO ALEXANDER'S MOVEMENTS?

The general view is perhaps that of Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 191): "Alexander did not in person conduct any campaigns in Armenia, which lay remote from his main objectives." The words "in person" may be important here. For Armenia might have submitted after the defeat of Darius at Gaugamela, or it might have been forced to submit by a force under the command of a general of Alexander; and if so, it might have become a satrapy without Alexander "in person" conducting any campaign there. However, the idea that Armenia lay "remote" from Alexander's main objectives is not acceptable; for Arr. 3.7.3 reported that on crossing the Euphrates in 331 Alexander went from there "upwards" (ἄνω),¹⁶ keeping on his left the river Euphrates and the mountains of Armenia, through the territory called Mesopotamia." Arrian gave the reasons for Alexander's choice of this route rather than that down the Euphrates valley: "everything was better provided (εὐπορώτερον) for the army, and there was fresh fodder for the horses, and it was possible to take the necessities from the country, and the heat was not so burning." Such better conditions could have been found only on the northernmost fringe of Mesopotamia, where the land rises up to the ridge of the Armenian mountain which was named Mt Masion in antiquity and now consists

¹⁵ It is unreasonable to infer from the lack of any mention of Armenia that there was therefore no satrapy of Armenia, as was done, for instance, by Tarn 1948: 2.398 and Bosworth 1980: 1.315.

¹⁶ Arrian was here contrasting Alexander's route up the Euphrates valley with the expected route down the valley, and he added for emphasis, "keeping the Euphrates on his left." For a similar emphasis we may compare Polyaeus 4.3.16, where Alexander took his men to the right upstream at the Granicus river: ἐπὶ δόρυ τοῦς Μακεδόνας ἀναγαγών. For "the Armenian mountains," beginning with Mt Masion (Strabo 11.12.4), we may compare the route taken by Darius after the battle of Gaugamela, "past the mountains of the Armenians towards Media" (Arr. 3.16.1).

of Mts Urfa and Mardin.¹⁷ The ridge runs from west to east, and it formed the natural frontier between Mesopotamia and Armenia. Thus it is clear that for Alexander in 331 Armenia was not "remote" but immediately adjacent.

The remarkable feature of Alexander's movement is that he crossed the Euphrates in the month Hecatombaeon, ca 10 July to 8 August (Arr. 3.6.7), and the Tigris just before the eclipse of the moon on the night of September 20–21 (Arr. 3.7.6). Thus he took some two months to cover a distance of some 500 kilometres. It was not possible for him en route to supply from local resources a force which consisted of at least 47,000 armed men, their subsidiary services, and anything up to 20,000 horses and mules.¹⁸ Moreover, he had to build up a large reserve of supplies, in order to feed the army if it should advance into enemy-controlled territory and fight a set battle. In order to meet these needs he must have widened his basis of supply by drawing extensively on southern Armenia. This was especially so in the matter of "fresh fodder for the horses" (especially the mounts and remounts for his 7,000 cavalry), which was not available in sun-scorched Mesopotamia, whereas Armenia was famous for its excellent pastures and very numerous horses.¹⁹

That Alexander did send some troops into Armenia was reported by Strabo in his description of Armenia: "In Syspiritis there are gold mines by Kaballa, to which Alexander sent Menon with soldiers, and he was carried off by the local people" (11.14.9). The circumstances were presumably that Alexander claimed possession of mineral resources within the satrapy, there as elsewhere, and that in anticipation of possible resistance he sent Menon with troops. In fact Menon was kidnapped. The implication is not that he was killed but that he was recovered. And so indeed he was; for in 329 he was appointed satrap of Arachosia (Arr. 20).²⁰ Syspiritis, the region to which Menon was sent before 329, was in the southeastern part of Armenia, since it was next to Adiabene, which itself extended eastward beyond Armenia's southern border (11.4.8 and 11.14.12). Alexander then was on his way through northernmost Mesopotamia in 331, when he sent Menon to Syspiritis. Thereafter he was never near Armenia. Strabo may have

¹⁷ Bosworth 1980: 1.286 described Northern Mesopotamia as "a barren undulating plain with limited water-supply, confined to a few water courses and occasional wells," of which the former were probably dry in late summer; and he added, "Nor is the heat much less oppressive than along the Euphrates."

¹⁸ For the numbers see Arr. 3.12.5, "up to 7,000 cavalry and about 40,000 infantry" and *Itin. Alex.* 23, "7,000 cavalry"; in addition he hoped for the arrival of reinforcements numbering 930 cavalry and 5,000 infantry.

¹⁹ See Strabo 11.14.4 and 11.14.9. The importance of fresh fodder for cavalry mounts is clear from Arr. 4.5.5.

²⁰ He was mentioned without a patronymic by Arrian and Curtius, and he was probably different from "Menon, son of Cerdimmas" (Arr. 2.13.7) who was appointed satrap of Coele-Syria in 332. The subsequent career of the latter is in doubt; see Bosworth 1980: 1.225, proposing to emend "Memnona" to "Menona" in Curt. 4.8.11.

derived this information from Aristobulus, on whom he drew frequently, e.g., for Hyrcania at 509.

"Men who have campaigned with Alexander" provided some information about Armenia which was reported by Strabo. They were led by Cyrsilus of Pharsalus and Medius of Larisa (11.14.12). Being Thessalians, they were no doubt officers in the Thessalian cavalry which fought at Gaugamela on the left wing under the general command of Parmenion (Arr. 3.11.10), and it is virtually certain that they entered Armenia with Thessalian cavalry in the months before the battle. They believed that Armenia was named after Armenus, a follower of Jason, and that his followers colonised parts of southern Armenia, including Syspiritis (Strabo 11.14.12). The same belief had been reported by Strabo at 11.4.8 without naming the source of his information. "The men who have campaigned with Alexander" derived from this Thessalian influence some features of Armenian dress, the Armenian love of horses, and the name of the river Araxes because it resembled the Peneus.²¹ As regards Jason, a festival called "Jasonia" was said to resemble the ceremony which was organised at Abdera (in Thrace) by Parmenion (11.14.12, cf. 11.4.8). This mention of Parmenion is likely to have been considered apposite before or soon after his death in 330. The Thessalian officers were in Armenia probably before 327, because Alexander sent members of the Thessalian cavalry home on three occasions up to then (Arr. 3.19.5; 3.29.5; and 5.27.5). Medius was exceptional in staying with Alexander as a most trusted Companion (7.24.4; *Ind.* 18.2 as a trierarch).

From these testimonia we conclude that a part at least of Alexander's army and in particular his Thessalian cavalry operated in southern Armenia in 331, that Alexander claimed it as a satrapy in 331, that he "sent" Mithrenes to be satrap in 331, and that he "sent Menon with troops" to take control of gold mines in southeastern Armenia in or before 329.

A RECONSTRUCTION OF ALEXANDER'S MOVEMENTS

When Alexander crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus, he knew that he would need to find supplies locally during his advance, because the two bridges would be a tight bottleneck for transport from Syria. It was also apparent that his line of communications would become exposed to attacks by the famous cavalry of Armenia, if he should advance eastwards. As we have seen, he moved not southwards but northwards, keeping on his left the Euphrates, then the mountains of Armenia, i.e., Mt Masion, and from there he proceeded through northernmost Mesopotamia. This was not, of course, the shortest route from Thapsacus to the

²¹ Herodotus 1.202 had given a puzzling account of the Araxes, which, he wrote, had forty mouths, and the scientists who accompanied Alexander will have been eager to learn more about that river. It is unlikely that the Thessalians got as far north as the river Araxes; but they could have been told of a defile on the lower Araxes which reminded them of the Tempe defile of the Peneus.

place where Alexander eventually crossed the Tigris, reckoned at 2,400 stades by Strabo (2.1.38), i.e., some 445 kilometres.²²

E. W. Marsden (1964: 18–20) wrote of Alexander's army marching from Thapsacus to the Tigris at a rate of between 7.9 and 9 miles a day. R. Lane Fox (1973: 228) wrote similarly that "Alexander lingered on a journey which could have been finished in a fortnight." Bosworth (1980: 285–286), boldly stating that Alexander took Strabo's short route of 2,400 stades, expressed the view that Arrian "may be a month too early" in naming Hecatombaeon as the month of the crossing of the Euphrates; he therefore reduced the time of Alexander's passage to the Tigris to "thirty days at most." The weakness of these calculations is that they are made on the assumption that Alexander's army advanced en masse on one route. But the practice of Alexander was to advance not in that way but with detachments operating on the flanks or ahead of his slowest infantry and his baggage-train.²³ In this case the detachments operated for perhaps a month in northern Mesopotamia and in southern Armenia, and they covered the ground as far as Syspiritis in southeastern Armenia. Meanwhile what we may call the heavy column marched slowly and camped at leisure as it moved eastwards along the fringe of Mesopotamia.²⁴ Alexander's aims during that month or so were to acquire an extensive base of supplies, provide pasture for his horses and obtain more horses in Armenia, and have a surplus of supplies for an advance southwards, if this should be necessary. Meanwhile the large reinforcements from Europe which he expected might arrive, and Darius might be tempted to bring his army north into the foothills of Mt Masion. When Alexander learned from some Persian scouts that Darius' army "was stationed on the Tigris" (Arr. 374), he moved rapidly to that river,²⁵ forded it with difficulty, and carried sufficient supplies to feed his army on the march and for four days of rest before going into

²² It has sometimes been assumed that Strabo was referring to Alexander's line of march, e.g., by Bosworth 1988: 79, "his route from Thapsacus to the Tigris was estimated at 2,400 stades (Strabo 90)." That is not what Strabo wrote; his context was his discussion of distances given by Eratosthenes and the criticism of them by Hipparchus (*floruit* ca 150 B.C.). The scientists with Alexander were measuring distances not so much for a line of march as for the geography of Asia.

²³ See, for instance, Arr. 33.23.2.

²⁴ This column will have halted at good water-points, such as the oases noted by Bosworth 1980: 1.286.

²⁵ It was only after hearing this report that Alexander advanced at speed (σπουδῇ). Curtius 4.9.13–14 gave a different account. He had Alexander pause for some days after crossing the Euphrates "not to rest but to build up the army's resolve," whereas Arrian 3.7.6 had Alexander pause after crossing not the Euphrates but the Tigris. Then after those few days Curtius had Alexander "begin to pursue the enemy vigorously (*strenue hostem insequi*) because he was afraid that Darius was withdrawing into the interior of his kingdom." His version is entirely incompatible with that of Arrian. The next sentence in Curtius brought Alexander "on the fourth day past Arbela to the Tigris" (a text sometimes emended), and the army's crossing of the Tigris followed in a sensational passage, 4.9.14–21. It is obvious that Arrian and Curtius followed different sources. Because Arrian was following Ptolemy and Aristobulus, as stated in Arrian's Preface and argued in Hammond 1993: 228–235, his account is to be preferred. For that of Curtius bears the marks of Cleitarchus, especially in the sensational details

the attack. His army and in particular his cavalry were in fine form for the decisive battle of Gaugamela.

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of the crossing of the Tigris, which has much in common with Diodorus 17.55.3–6, who was at that place following Cleitarchus (as argued in Hammond 1983: 45.)