

Map 90 Media Atropatene

Compiled by S.E. Kroll, 1994

Introduction

The map approximates the region called by Greek authors Media Atropatene after Atropates, the satrap of Alexander who governed there and later became an independent ruler. The modern name Azerbaijan derives from Atropatene. Originally, Media Atropatene was the northern part of greater Media. To the north, it was separated from Armenia by the R. Araxes. To the east, it extended as far as the mountains along the Caspian Sea, and to the west as far as Lake Urmia (ancient Matiane Limne) and the mountains of present-day Kurdistan. The R. Amardos may have been the southern border.

Research in this region has always been hampered by national boundaries. Most of the area covered by the map belongs to Iran, but the northern parts belong to (former Soviet) Azerbaijan, to Armenia, and to the autonomous but disputed regions of Nakhichevan and Nagorno Karabakh. Apart from reports from travelers, no scientific research was undertaken in this part of Iran before 1945, nor has any comprehensive survey of ancient sites yet been carried out. As a result, many of the sites marked here have been discovered by chance, and not by intensive research. Because of the border situation, almost no topographic research has been possible in Armenia, northern Azerbaijan and the autonomous regions.

The state of historical and archaeological research, and the fundamental difficulties in identifying ancient settlements, are discussed most recently by Schottky (1989). It is still impossible to distinguish clearly between Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Parthian and Sasanian remains. As no coins were minted in Atropatene during Greek and Roman times (Schottky 1990), it is hardly surprising that coins are seldom found on sites there. Important contributions to the research on the region were written several decades ago, for example by Kiessling (RE Hyrkania) and Minorsky (1964 [1944]); these are still valuable for interpreting its ancient geography.

In antiquity, most of the region was lightly forested, but today hardly any forests can be found except near the Caspian. Deforestation began in the Bronze Age, and by medieval times the landscape must have been similar to that of the present. Most rivers, such as the Araxes, Kyros and Amardos, flow towards the Caspian Sea, though some drain towards Lake Urmia with its high degree of salination. The sparse scientific and historical evidence currently available suggests that the water-levels of both the Caspian Sea and Lake Urmia were higher in the past. The exact levels are not known, and changes occurred intermittently in any case. The shorelines shown are therefore approximate. The Caspian is shown with two. The lower corresponds to the approximate shoreline in c. 150 B.C., A.D. 200 and A.D. 600; the higher to the approximate shoreline in c. 400 B.C., A.D. 50 and A.D. 400 (see further EncIran 5, 488). Lake Urmia was possibly six feet higher in c. 300 B.C., and this level may have been maintained into the Islamic period.

Agriculture was possible where enough water was available, as around Lake Urmia and near the rivers. Even today, large-scale irrigation canals are unknown except in the lower Kyros and Araxes area, and there is no evidence that they already existed in antiquity. In the other parts of the region, pastoral herding was, and still is, the normal way of life. Roads and bridges were first built in medieval times. In winter and spring, rain and snow make even local travel here difficult. Thus in antiquity movement was largely confined to summer and fall.

Before Alexander, the area was virtually unknown to the Greek world, and so sites only occupied before the Achaemenid period are omitted. With the exception of some Greek (Parmenion possibly) and Roman military campaigns (in particular the famous siege of Phraaspa by Antony), few Greeks or Romans entered this area, and their geographers had no further knowledge of it. So it is hardly surprising that none of the few places, tribes or regions mentioned by Greek and Roman authors can be identified with certainty. Some major tribes have been marked, reflecting the situation as it may have been in Hellenistic times. Where tribes should be placed in other periods remains a matter for discussion (RE Hyrkania; Minorsky 1964; TAVO B V 1; Schottky 1989; 1991).

While the ancient city of Ganzak can be identified with the enormous ruins of Leilan with a high degree of probability (Minorsky 1964; Schwarz 1969, 1098-1100), the location of Phraaspa is more difficult and can only be guessed. I follow Minorsky, who separates Ganzak from Phraaspa (in line with Ptolemy, against Strabo). If Phraaspa is identified with the ruins at Zohak Qal'eh, the widely separated coordinates given by Ptolemy (Minorsky 1964, 104) can be accounted for. There is at least no dispute that the two archaeological sites with which Ganzak and Phraaspa are identified here stand out as the largest in the whole region, and that both were heavily fortified in antiquity. Another important site (but not as large as the places just noted) is the famous fire-temple Adur Gushnasp, situated high in the Kurdish mountains at the holy lake of Takht-i Suleiman, and never mentioned by any ancient western source. It is possible, however, that Heraclius during his campaign in A.D. 624 reached this temple and destroyed it (Minorsky 1964).

Directory

All place names are in Iran unless otherwise noted

Abbreviation

SAE *Hayastani sovetakan hanragitaran (Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia)*, 12 vols., Erevan, 1974-88

Names

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
D4	<i>Aba</i>	R		Swiny 1975, 92-96 (T61)
B4	<i>Adjalu</i>	R	near Keshavar	Kleiss 1973, 12-13
C4	Adur Gushnasp/ [Shiz] § Thebarmais	CHRL	Takht-i Suleiman	Minorsky 1964; Naumann 1977
D4	Aganzana	RL	Zenjan?	Minorsky 1964
C2	Aharawan § [Ahar]	L	Ahar?	Le Strange 1905, 168-69
B1	Aluan fl.	L	Akera	Eremyan 1961, 34, 37
C1	Amaras	L	Martum ARM	Hübschmann 1904, 267
D4	(A)Mardoï	CHR		RE Amardoï; KIPauly Mardoï
C4	Amardos fl.	CHRL	Safid Rud	KIPauly
H4	Amol	L	Amol?	Gyselen 1989, 84
E3	Anariakai?	HR		RE
B2	Araxes fl. § Erash fl.	CHRL	Aras / Arax	RE 2; KIPauly
D2	[Ardabil] § Adurbadagan § Badhan Firuz	L	Ardabil	EncIran
B1	Armenia	CHRL		KIPauly
B2	<i>Arvandj</i>	H		Kroll 1984, 91-92
H4	<i>Baboll</i> Chindrum?/ Erindes?/ Charinda(s)? fl.			See Map 96
B1	Balaberd	L	W Kafan ARM	Eremyan 1961, 43, 67
D1	Balanrot	L	Pushkino? AZE	Eremyan 1961, 43-44, 68
B4	Balarath? fl. § Barasrot fl.	L	Zarina Rud, near Ganzak	Minorsky 1964, 88-89
B2	Basoropeda	L		Hewsen 1984, 353
B3	<i>Bonab Qal'eh</i>	R	S Bonab	Swiny 1975, 91 EncIran
F2	Caspium/ Hyrceanium Mare	CHRL	Caspian Sea	RE Kaspisches Meer; KIPauly 3, 144-45; EncIran Caspian

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
C4	<i>Chahar Taq</i>	L	near Takht-i Suleiman	Huff 1974, 209-13
C2	<i>Chaharla</i>	R		Kleiss 1992, 34-36
B2	<i>Chaldagh</i>	R		Kroll 1984, 81
	Charinda(s)? fl. = <i>Babol R.</i>			
	Chindrum? fl. = <i>Babol R.</i>			
A2	<i>Darman</i>	L		Kleiss 1977, 32-34
B4	<i>Dashband</i>	R		Kroll 2000, MY 13
B2	<i>Dashkasen</i>	L		Kroll 1984, 109-11
D3	Delaman	L		Gyselen 1989, 45, 82
	§ Delam			
	§ Daylam			
C2	<i>Dish</i>	HR		Kroll 1984, 75-77
B2	<i>Dizli</i>	RL		Kroll 1984, 87-90
D2	<i>Djönü</i>	H	SW Lenkoran	Haerinck 1978, 80-82
E4	<i>Djouban</i>	HRL	Djouban	Haerinck 1983, 150-51
	Erindes? fl. = <i>Babol R.</i>			
B3	Ganzak?/ Gazaca?/ Gazae? § Ganzag-i Shizigan § Phisganzaga	RL	Leilan	RE; Minorsky 1964; Schottky 1989, 27
C1	Gargar fl.	L	Gargar	Eremyan 1961, 46, 71
C1	Garrah fl.	L	Qareh Su	Eremyan 1961, 46, 57
	Gazaca? = Ganzak? Gazae? = Ganzak?			
D3	Gelai? § Geloi § Gelani	HRL	SW shore of Caspian Sea	RE Geli; RE Hyrkania, col. 466
A2	<i>Gavur Qal'eh</i>	ACH	E Djulfa	Kleiss 1976
D1	<i>Germi</i>	HR		Haerinck 1978, 89-90
E4	<i>Ghalekuti</i>	C	near Dailaman	Haerinck 1989, 455-61
C4	<i>Giaur</i>	L	near Takht-i Suleiman	Huff 1974, 204-209
B3	<i>Godjer</i>	R	near Istgan-e Samand	Kleiss 1973, 31-36
B3	<i>Gurqal'eh</i>	L	near Basmandj	Kleiss 1977, 41
B4	<i>Haidar Khan</i>	R	E Bukan	Kleiss 1977, 27-29
E4	<i>Hassan Mahale</i> Hyrcaunium Mare = Caspium Mare	R	near Dailaman	Haerinck 1983, 159-64
D2	Kadousioi	CH		KIPauly
B1	Kapan *Kapauta Limne = Matiane Limne	L	Kafan ARM	Hübschmann 1904, 368, 438
B4	<i>Karaftu</i>	H		Gall 1978
C1	Kaspiane/ Paytakaran § Kaspioi	HRL/ L	AZE	RE; Hewsens 1983, 138
E4	<i>Khoramrud</i>	R	near Dailaman	Haerinck 1983, 159-64
C2	<i>Kuh-i Bolagh</i>	R	near Tazekand	Kroll 1984, 80
C4	<i>Kul tepe</i>	R	E Jaffarabad	Swiny 1975, 92, fig. 5
D1	Kyros fl.	HRL	Mtkvari / Kura AZE / GEO	Lordkipanidze 1996, 110
B4	<i>Laclac Gaisi</i>	L	near Hoseyn Mame	Kleiss 1977, 36-37
H4	Mandros fl. Mardoï = (A)Mardoï	RL	Amul	RE Hyrkania, col. 468

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
B4	Matiane § Mantiane § Matienoi	CHRL		RE
A3	Matiane/ *Kapauta Limne			See Map 89
B3	Media Atropatene § Media Minor § Adurbadagan	HRL/ L		See Map 89
C2	<i>Mish</i>	RL		Kroll 1984, 77
C2	<i>Mishkinshahr</i> § [Miskin] § Varavi?	L		Gropp 1968
D4	<i>Molla Piri</i>	R		Swiny 1975, 92, fig. 5
B1	Nakorzan	L	near Soltanli ARM	Eremyan 1961, 50, 73
E4	<i>Nauruz Mahale</i>	R	near Dailaman	Haerinck 1983, 159-64
B1	Orotan fl.	L	Bargyushad	Hübschmann 1904, 462
A1	Parakan Paytakaran = Kaspiane	L	N Yaidzhi ARM	Hübschmann 1904, 379
C3	Phraaspa?/ Phraata?/ Vera?	HR	Zohak Qal'eh, S Hashtrud	KIPauly; Kleiss 1973a
D2	<i>Piri</i>	RL	near Masumabad	Kroll 1984, 52
D4	<i>Qara Bolagh</i>	R		Swiny 1975, 92, fig. 5
B3	<i>Qara Sheshen</i>	RL		Kleiss 1977, 32-33
D2	<i>Ruyan Duyah Qal'eh</i>	CH		Kroll 1984, 61-66
C2	[Sabalan] M.	L	Sabalan	Schwarz 1969, 966-68
B2	<i>Sang-e Molk</i>	L		Kroll 1984, 86-99
B2	<i>Seqindel</i>	L		Kleiss 1980
F4	Shad Shapur	L	Qazvin?	Schwarz 1969, 706; CHI 3(2), 748
E4	<i>Shah Pir</i>	H	N Rudbar	Haerinck 1983, 150
B3	<i>Shah tepe</i>	AC	N Miyandoab	Kroll 2000, MY 7
A1	Shalat	L	near Angekhakot ARM	SAE VIII, 487
B3	<i>Shebli</i>	AC	N shore Lake Shebli	Kleiss 1992, 12-13, 37-38
E4	<i>Shiman</i> [Shiz] = Adur Gushnasp	H	Rudbar	Haerinck 1983, 149-50
C2	<i>Shorbulaq</i>	CH		Kroll 1984, 60-61
B1	Sigan § Siwnik § [Sauene]	L		Hewsen 1985, 73
B1	Siwnik	L	Sisian ARM	Hewsen 1984, 353
B3	Sohund M.	L	Sahand	Eremyan 1961, 81
D1	Spandaran	L	Davud Qeshlagi?	Hübschmann 1904, 468
G4	Straton fl.	RL	Chalus	RE Hyrkania, col. 468
C4	<i>Takht-i Bilqis</i>	L	near Takht-i Suleiman	Naumann 1977, 116-19
G4	Tapouroi	CH	SE Caspian Sea	RE Hyrkania, cols. 479-81; Seibert 1985, 227
G4	<i>Tomadjan</i>	C		Haerinck 1989, 460-61

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
	Vera? = Phraaspa?			
C1	Warthan § Vardanakert	L	Sar Band?	Schwarz 1969, 1047-53; CHI 3.2, 748
B3	<i>Yanik tepe</i>	HL	near Tazekand	Burney 1962, 149
C4	<i>Yengikand</i>	R		Swiny 1975, 92, fig. 5
B3	<i>Yukari Dagh</i>	AC	S Lake Shebli	Kleiss 1992, 5-7, 32-34
B4	<i>Ziwiye</i>	AC		Dyson 1999, 134-38

Unlocated Toponyms

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Ad Tomenta	L		ItMiller 782
Akola	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.2
Alouaka	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Amana	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.2
Arabum	L		ItMiller 782
Azaga	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.9
Balasakan/ Balasakan	L	probably N Caucasus M.	Gyselen 1989, 80-81
Bustica	L		ItMiller 655
Caspia = Kaspioi			
Dazan	L	region in Delam province	Gyselen 1989, 45, 82
(D)Elymaioi	HR	people in Delaman	RE Hyrkania, cols. 505, 526
Drybikes/ Drebices	HR	people in N Media	RE Hyrkania, col. 474; CHI 3.2, 67
Eneca	L		ItMiller 782
Gabale	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8
Gabris	R	in N Media, Tabriz?	Ptol. 6.2.8; RE Varna
Gauzania	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Gelan	L	SW shore of Caspian Sea	Gyselen 1989, 81-82
Gelan-Xvast-Abarvez- Husro	L	SW corner of Caspian Sea?	Gyselen 1989, 94, 143
Kandys	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8; RE Varna
Kaspioi/ Caspia	CH	Kaspiane	RE; KIPauly; Hewsens 1983, 138
Kourna	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Kyropolis	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.2
Lazo	L		ItMiller 655
Morounda	R	in N Media (Marand?)	Ptol. 6.2.9
Nande	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Naucanio	L		ItMiller 782
Nicea Nialia/ [Barsa]	RL	Boukan or Saqqiz?	ItMiller 782; Minorsky 1964, 96-97; CHI 3.2, 762
Otene	RL	region in Armenia, in lower Kura-Araxes plain?	RE Atropatene, col. 2149; Hewsens 1984, 363

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Ouitioi/ Vitii	HR	near Amardoï	RE Hyrkania, cols. 504, 525
Ouarna/ Ourna	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8; RE Varna
Ouka Ourna = Ouarna	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8; RE Varna
Parachoatras/ Choatras M./ Padishxvargar	R L	Alburz and Talish Mts.?	Gyselen 1989, 81-82
Paresaca	L		ItMiller 782
Pharambara	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.9
Phazaba	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Rhasum	L		ItMiller 782
Royan et Zalexan	L	SW Amardos fl.?	Gyselen 1989, 58-59, 90
Sabaioi Bomoi	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.1
San(n)ina	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.1
Sanora	L		ItMiller 655
Saraka	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10
Satara	L		ItMiller 655
Skabina	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8; RE Varna
Sozoa	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.8
Staures	R	S shore of Caspian Sea?	RE Hyrkania, col. 484
Tachasara	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.9
Tazeina/ Takeina	R	shore of Caspian Sea	Ptol. 6.2.1
Tigrana	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.9
Tonzarma	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.9
Zalake	R	in N Media	Ptol. 6.2.10

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