



AMORGES

AMORGES, Greek form of the name of several notable Iranians of the Achaemenid period. This, and the Lycian Humrkhkha (variant Umrgga) attested in a text from around 400 B.C. on the “Inscribed Pillar” at Xanthus, render an Old Iranian *Humarga “having excellent meadows” (cf. Av. “*marəga*; Sogd. *mrĪ*³ and NPers. *marġ* “meadow;” see Justi, *Namenbuch*, pp. 14-15; E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en Iranien ancien*, Paris, 1966, p. 101; W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen*, Wiesbaden, 1975, p. 125; M. Mayrhofer and R. Schmitt, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, Vienna, 1977ff., V/4, no. 13). The personages known under this name are as follows: 1. A king of the east Iranian Sakas, probably fictional, contemporary with Cyrus the Great. According to Ctesias (*Persica*, ed. R. Henry, *La Perse, l’Inde. Les Sommaires de Photius*, Brussels, 1947, epitome 3), Cyrus subjugated the Medes, received the submission of the Bactrians and then waged a campaign against the eastern Sakas in about 548 B.C. He defeated them and captured their king, Amorges. But the latter’s wife, Sparethra, rallied the Sakas, collected an army of 300,000 men and 200,000 women (!), and routed the Persians, taking so many of Cyrus’ men captive, including three of his cousins, that he was only too happy to arrange for an exchange of prisoners. Amorges, once freed, became a friend of Cyrus. Ctesias adds that the Saka king even participated, as an ally of Persia, in Cyrus’ expedition against Lydia (epitome 4). Later, Cyrus made war upon the Derbicians (a Saka tribe of Central Asia), who were aided by an army from India. Upon engagement, Indian elephants frightened the Persian horses, causing them to stampede; the Persians were defeated, and Cyrus was mortally wounded by an Indian



javelin. Summoned to help, Amorges arrived with 20,000 men at the crucial moment and with the Persians annihilated the Derbicians and their Indian allies. Before his death, Cyrus divided his empire between his two sons and urged them to respect above all their mother and Amorges (epitomes 6-8). There are so many historical inaccuracies in the Ctesian narrative (for an evaluation see J. Marquart, "Die Assyriaka des Ctesias," *Philologus*, Suppl. Bd. 6, 1895, pp. 609ff.) that it borders on fiction. Most probably, Ctesias invented this Amorges by confusing *Humarga with Haumavarga (Gk. Amorgioi), a Saka tribe allied to the Persians (cf. A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Cyrus the Great*, Shiraz, 1970, pp. 262, 371ff.).

2. An eastern Saka king conquered by Darius the Great. According to Polyaeus (*Strategica* 7.11.6), Darius early in his reign waged a campaign against the eastern Sakas, who opposed him with three armies led by three kings, one of them Amorges. Darius engaged them separately, defeated one group, annihilated the second, and captured the third. In Darius' own account of his expedition of 520-19 B.C. against the "Pointed-hat Sakas" (Saka Tigraxauda) of Central Asia (Behistun, 5.22ff.), the enemy leader he captured is named Skunxa. The two versions agree sufficiently, however, to warrant the conclusion that Polyaeus' source was based on a sound Persian authority (Shahbazi, "Darius in Scythia and Scythians in Persepolis," *AMI* 15, 1982, pp. 189-235, esp. pp. 215ff.).

3. A Persian general under Darius the Great. When a group of the Carians joined the Ionian Revolt (498 B.C.), Darius sent against them one of his sons-in-law with several other commanders, among them Amorges. The Persians twice defeated the Carian rebels, but the latter ambushed them on the road to Pedasus and succeeded in destroying the whole force (Herodotus 5.118-21).

4. The natural son of an Achaemenid prince named Pissuthnes who was satrap of Lydia but rebelled against Darius II and was vanquished by Tissaphernes (Thucydides 3.31; Plutarch *Pericles* 25; Diodorus 12.27.3). Amorges continued the rebellion, gathering a force of Greek mercenaries, and occupied Iasus, an old, rich, and strongly fortified town on the north coast of Caria (413 B.C.). Despite their treaty of friendship with Darius II, the Athenians supported Amorges, and Tissaphernes was ordered to crush the rebellion (Thucydides 8.5.5; 54.3). He enlisted the help of some Peloponnesians with their fleet. The inhabitants took the ships for their own and were surprised. The Peloponnesians captured Iasus and plundered its treasure; Amorges and his supporters were taken prisoner. "The town they delivered to Tissaphernes,



together with all the captives, both bond and free, agreeing to accept from him a Daric stater for each one of them” (Thucydides 8.23.2-4; for historical analysis see D. M. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, Leiden, 1977, pp. 81, 85ff., 90ff.). Amorges’ fate is not recorded, but rebels were usually punished with death.

Among the 5th-4th century B.C. “Xanthian marbles,” which reveal strong Iranian influence (see in general A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Irano-Lycian Monuments*, Tehran, 1975; and W. A. P. Childs, “Lycian Relations with Persians and Greeks in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries Re-examined,” *Anatolian Studies* 31, 1981, pp. 55-80), one is the pillar (originally surmounted by a statue) inscribed with a long Lycian text which, although not fully deciphered, certainly relates in its last part (2.50-55) the history of Amorges. This is shown by the fact that some Iranians—including Tissaphernes—are here named in close proximity to Iasus and Amorges (Shahbazi, *Irano-Lycian Monuments*, pp. 64ff, 107). Another Xanthian memorial is the so-called Nereid monument, which is adorned with long, sculptured friezes (*ibid.*, pp. 75ff.). One of these shows the siege and capture of a city and the seizure of its notables by a Greco-Persian force led by an Iranian senior general (*ibid.*, pls. XLIV-LVIII). It is suggested that the monument was the mausoleum of Keriga, a Xanthian prince who served as an ally of Tissaphernes (*ibid.*, pp. 108-09). Since the “Inscribed Pillar” also recorded the exploits of Keriga and his close relatives (*ibid.*, pp. 57ff.), it is concluded that the sculptured narrative depicted the story of Tissaphernes’ capture of Amorges at Iasus (*ibid.*, pp. 104ff.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text.

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