



AMYTIS

AMYTIS, Median and Persian female name, attested only in the Greek form *Ámytis*, which perhaps may reflect (with vowel metathesis) an old Persian **Umati*—equivalent to Avestan *humaiti*—“having good thought” (see W. Eilers, *Semiramis*, Vienna, 1971, pp. 17 and 57, n. 101). The most famous bearers of this name are:

(1) A Persian queen, daughter of the Median king Astyages, married to Spitamas, a Median grandee, who thus became the presumptive successor of his father-in-law. Having subdued the Medes and killed Spitamas as a potential rival, Cyrus II the Great married Amytis to obtain legitimacy (Ctesias F 9). The authenticity of Ctesias’ account may be questioned, but that Cyrus took a daughter of the Median king in his harem is very likely. Having been told of the murder of Tanyoxarces and having asked king Cambyses for the murderer’s extradition in vain, she committed suicide by poison (Ctesias F 13).

(2) Daughter of the Achaemenid king Xerxes I and Amestris, sister of Artaxerxes I, married to the satrap Megabyzus, son of Zopyrus. She was accused of adultery and unchastity by her husband, but brought to her senses by her father (Ctesias F 13); after Megabyzus’ death she again indulged in sexual intercourse (Ctesias F 14), with, among others, her Greek physician, Apollonides of Cos. Together with her mother she had some influence on Artaxerxes I, this being of importance in connection with Megabyzus’ quarrels and intrigues. Dino (F 1; *apud* Athenaeus 13.89, ed. G. Kaibel, Leipzig, 1890, p. 609A, where the name is corrupted to *Anoûtis*) calls her the most beautiful and licentious woman of Asia.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 15.

Fragments of Greek historians are cited according to F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin, 1923-58.