



## APARNA

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**APARNA** (Gk. Aparnoi/Parnoi, Lat. Aparni or Parni), an east Iranian tribe established on the Ochos (modern Taĵen, Teĵend) and one of the three tribes in the confederation of the **Dahae** (Dahā in the inscription of Xerxes, Ph 26, see Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 151). Their original homeland may have been southern Russia from where they emigrated with other Scythian tribes into the Dahestān, south-east of the Caspian sea. Led by Arsaces I, they invaded Parthia around 240 B.C., defeated its satrap **Andragoras**, and destroyed several towns. From then on they shared, as a leading aristocracy, the history of the Parthian people. There is some difficulty in exactly identifying the tribes settled in Dahestān. The Aparnoi of Dahestān mentioned by Strabo (11.7.1) should be considered as Sparnoi (Aparnoi is a conjectural emendation of Xylander and Casaubonus). The real Dahestān Aparnoi (var. Eparnoi, Asparioi) should also be distinguished from the Ochos Parnoi (Strabo 10.9.2; see Altheim, *Weltgeschichte* II, p. 15). The same doubt may arise about Justin's (41.1.10) Parni or Sparni or Apartani (J. Wolski, *Der Zusammenbruch*, p. 206 and note 36).

Some identifications of the Aparna have been tentatively made in Iranian sources. Markwart, quoting a passage in the *Bundahišn* (p. 233.14-15), concluded that the name **Abāršahr** (i.e., Nīšāpūr) meant "not the Upper Country but the country of the Aparnak, i.e., the Aparnoi" (*Provincial Capitals*, p. 52; see also E. Herzfeld, "Zarathustra," *AMI* 1, 1929, p. 82 n. 1, p. 108 n. 1; Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 220; W. Eilers, "Demawend," *Archiv Orientalni* 22, 1954, p. 373). But, besides a possible different reading of the key word *'plnk* (cf.



*Bundahišn*, tr. p. 299), it should also be noted that the involved passage in the *Bundahišn* concerns a person and has little to do with the name of a long forgotten people. M. Sprengling (“Shahpuhr I the Great on the Kaabah of Zoroaster,” *AJSLL* 57, 1940, p. 399) identified the word Aparna in the inscription of Šāpūr I on the Ka’ba-ye Zardošt (Pers. 28, *ḥlynk*, Parth. 23, *ḥrynk*, Gk. Abrēnach, see also Eilers, *ibid.*; M. L. Chaumont, in *Acta Iranica* 4, 1975, pp. 118-19); but this has been rightly rejected (Henning, *Mitteliranisch*, p. 95, n. 1; Ph. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions Pehlevies et Parthes*, London, 1972, s.v.; *idem*, in *Stud. Ir.* 5, 1976, p. 308).

The Aparna originally spoke an East Iranian language, the traces of which survive in some Parthian loan-words in Armenian such as *kari* (very, cf. Sogd. *k’y*), *margarē* (sorcerer, cf. Sogd. *m’rkry*, Parth. *m’rygr*; cf. W. Henning, “A List of Middle Persian and Parthian Words,” *BSOAS* 9, 1937, p. 85, repr. *Acta Iranica* 14, p. 565; R. Gauthiot, in *MSL* 19, 1915, pp. 125-29). More Aparna words may be traced in Manichaean Parthian; e.g., *hnd* (blind, cf. Western Iranian *kwr*; for other examples see Henning, *Mitteliranisch*, pp. 93-94). Their language, however, was eventually replaced by Parthian, a Northwestern Iranian language.

No convincing etymology has been yet proposed for the word Aparna. Tomaschek’s derivation from *apārānāyu-*, Pahl. *apurnāy* is untenable (Pauly-Wissowa, I, 2, col. 2669).

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- (P. Lecoq)