



ARIA

ARIA, name of a region in the eastern part of the Persian empire, several times confused with Ariane (see below) in the classical sources.

1. Aria (Greek Areia/Aria, Latin Arīa, representing Old Pers. Haraiva, Avestan Haraēuua), Old Persian satrapy, which enclosed chiefly the valley of the river Harī Rūd (Greek Areios, this being eponymous to the whole land according to Arrian (*Anabasis* 4.6.6) and which in antiquity was considered as particularly fertile and, above all, rich in wine; its capital was Alexandria (probably since 330 B.C.), the modern Herāt (northwest Afghanistan). The land south of Margiana and Bactria, in the east of Parthia and the Carmanian desert, north of Drangiana and in the west of the Paropamisadae is described in a very detailed manner by Ptolemy (6.17; cf. Strabo 11.10.1) and corresponds, according to that, almost to the province Herat of today's Afghanistan. In this sense the term is used correctly by some writers, e.g. Herodotus (3.93.3, where the Areioi are mentioned together with the Parthians, Chorasmians, and Sogdians); Diodorus (17.105.7; 18.39.6); Strabo (2.1.14; 11.10.1, cf. also 11.8.1 and 8; 15.2.8 and 9); Arrian (*Anabasis* 3.25.1); Pomponius Mela (1.12, where we read that "nearest to India is Ariane, then Aria").

2. Ariane (Greek Arianē, Latin Arianē [see below], Latinized Ariana), designation of the eastern countries of Iran, next to India, which were in possession of the Persians, the Macedonians, but later partly also the Indians (Strabo 15.1.10; 2.9). Because of this political change later authors like Aelianus, (*De natura animalium* 16.16) speak of "Indian Arianians;" as a geographical term Ariana was introduced by Eratosthenes (apud Strabo



2.1.22f.) and as such it was defined by a border-line comprising the Indus river in the east, the sea in the south, a line from Carmania to the Caspian Gates in the west, and the so-called Taurus Mountains in the north, and, as Strabo (2.1.31) emphasizes, also by its name, “as of a single nation.” This large region includes almost all of the countries east of Media and Persia and south of the great mountain ranges up to the deserts of Gedrosia and Carmania (ibid., 2.5.32), i.e. the provinces of Carmania, Gedrosia, Drangiana, Arachosia (cf. especially Strabo 11.10.1), Aria, the Paropamisadae; also Bactria was reckoned to Ariane and was called “the ornament of Ariane as a whole” by Apollodorus of Artemita (apud Strabo 11.11.1). A detailed description of that region is to be found in Strabo 15.2.1-9. Eratosthenes’ use of this term (followed by Diodorus 2.37.6) is obviously due to a mistake, since, firstly, not all inhabitants of these lands belonged to the same tribe and, secondly, the term “Aryan” originally was an ethnical one and only later a political one as the name of the Iranian empire (for all Indians and Iranians designated themselves as “Aryan;” see [Aryans](#)), thus comprising still other Iranian tribes outside of Ariana proper, like Medes, Persians or Sogdians (so possibly in Diodorus 1.94.2, where Zarathushtra is said to have preached Ahura Mazdā’s laws “among the Arianoi”). The Greek term is based upon Old Iranian **Āryana-* (Avestan *Airiiana-*, esp. in *Airiianəm vaējō*, the name of the Iranians’ mother country, whose localization is disputed).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Tomaschek in Pauly-Wissowa, II/1, cols. 619f., and 813f.

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