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ARTAXERXES II
Article by **Rüdiger Schmitt**

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ARTAXERXES II

ARTAXERXES II, Achaemenid Great King whose personal name is given as Arsaces (Ctesias F 14 apud Photius 469.28 in Jacoby, *Fragmente*) or Arsicas (Ctesias F 15a, apud Plutarch, *Artoxerxes* 1.4, etc.) or as Oarsēs (for *ho Ársēs*?) by Dino (F 14 [Jacoby], apud Plutarch, loc. cit.). He was the oldest son of Darius II and Parysatis, thus a grandson of Artaxerxes I. His reign (405-04 to 359-58 B.C.) was the longest among the Achaemenids. Greek authors, beginning with Plutarch, give him the epithet *Mnēmō* "Remembering, Having a good memory"; the Old Persian form of this seems attested in the Greek gloss *abiataka.mnḗmona.Pérsai* (Hesychius A-123 L., corrected from *abiltaka* since J. Oppert, *Le peuple et la langue des Mèdes*, Paris, 1879, p. 229 n. 1). Artaxerxes II was born before his father's accession, ca. 453 or 445 (if his life-span is taken as 86 or 94 years; cf. *Artoxerxes* 2.4; Ctesias F 15, par. 51; Ps.-Lucian, *Macrobii* and Dino F 20a in the same text). He had an older sister, Amestris, and younger brothers—Cyrus, Ostanes (Ctesias: Artostes), Oxathres (Ctesias: Oxendras), and others (Ctesias F 15, par. 51; *Artoxerxes* 1.2, 5.5). He was first married to Stateira, daughter of Idernes (Ctesias F 15, par. 55; *Artoxerxes* 5.6).

When Darius II died in 405-04 B.C., Artaxerxes was appointed king in accordance with his father's wish. Parysatis had favored Cyrus, who was born in the purple and so would have been the legitimate successor (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.1.3; Diodorus 13.108.1; *Artoxerxes* 2.4-5; Justin 5.11.1-2). Cyrus, who was satrap of the western provinces of Asia Minor, took part in a conspiracy against his brother at the coronation ceremony at Pasargadae; but the plot went wrong (Ctesias F 16, par. 59; *Artoxerxes* 3.1-6; Justin 5.11.3-4). At

Parysatis' request Cyrus was pardoned; he was reappointed to his satrapy (*Anabasis* 1.1.3; *Artoxerxes* 3.6, 6.7). In 401 Cyrus rebelled again and moved on Babylon with a force that included 10,000 Greek mercenaries (in abundant supply since the end of the Peloponnesian war in 404). At the crucial battle of Cunaxa in Mesopotamia, Cyrus fell at the hand of a Carian soldier, although the official record credited this deed to Artaxerxes (*Anabasis* 1; Ctesias, F 16; Diodorus 14.19.2-24.6; *Artoxerxes* 6.2-13.7; Georgius Syncellus 1.485.14ff. D.; Justin 5.11.5-11). An authentic account of these events is given in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, whose main subject, however, is the subsequent retreat of the Greek 10,000. Their escape clearly indicated the empire's debility (cf. *Artoxerxes* 20.1-2). Another eyewitness was Ctesias of Cnidus, for some years (perhaps 405-04 to 398-97 B.C.) physician to the Great King's family (ibid.; 1.4; cf. Jacoby, *Fragmente*, no. 688). Ctesias healed Artaxerxes' wounds at Cunaxa.

This succession dispute led, further, to hostilities between Artaxerxes (represented by his satraps Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus) and Sparta, whose forces were led by the generals Thibro, Dercylidas, and Agesilaus. Sparta had sided with Cyrus. For some years (400-394) the fortunes of war wavered; but in August, 394 B.C., Conon of Athens, admiral of the Persian fleet, gained a decisive victory at Cnidus (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.3.10-12; Diodorus 14.-83.5-7; Cornelius Nepos, *Conon*). A settlement was then reached in 387-86, called the king's peace or (after Sparta's ambassador) the peace of Antalcidas. The terms were favorable to the Persians. Artaxerxes dictated, with threat of war, that the Greek *poleis* of Asia Minor and the islands of Clazomenae and Cyprus should be Persian; the other *poleis* (except for the ancient Athenian possessions of Lemnus, Imbrus, and Scyrus) should be autonomous (cf. *Hellenica* 5.1.31 and Diodorus 14.110.3). Thus was secured both Persian power in Asia Minor and Persian influence in Greece itself.

The main task of Artaxerxes' entire reign was the maintaining of the empire's frontiers. At Artaxerxes' accession Egypt had rebelled, and a local dynasty ruled in virtual independence. The Achaemenid campaign of 389-87 B.C. failed, and in 380-79 the king began to plan a new expedition using Greek mercenaries. The attack was carried out in 374-73 but failed, due to disagreement between the leaders Pharnabazus and

Iphicrates of Athens (cf. Cornelius Nepos, *Iphicrates*). Another failure was the campaign against the Cadusii which the king himself led (*Artoxerxes* 24.2-25.3). Successful undertakings included the war against King Euagoras of Salamis

(Cyprus), ended in 381 B.C., and the repression of rebels in Ionia, Paphlagonia, and elsewhere. An especially great danger was posed by the Satraps' Revolt (ca. 368-58). Satrapies had by then become in part hereditary. Some of the western satraps, from Egypt to Bithynia and from Caria to Syria, formed a coalition against the central government and minted their own coins. Prominent rebels were Datames of Cappadocia (see Cornelius Nepos' biography) and Ariobarzanes of Phrygia; they were later joined by Autophradates of Lycia, initially one of the king's most reliable followers, and Pharaoh Tachos. The latter, confronted by a rising at home, deserted the cause and surrendered to the king. The entire revolt was suppressed, but some of the satraps were pardoned and allowed to return to their satrapies. (See especially the account in W. Judeich, *Kleinasiatische Studien. Untersuchungen zur griechisch-persischen Geschichte des IV. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Marburg, 1892.)

Plutarch praises Artaxerxes as just, mild, and affable (cf. Diodorus 15.93.1, Cornelius Nepos, *De regibus* 1.4). Yet he seems to have been effeminate, enervated, and easily influenced—weak, but also cruel and mistrustful, engulfed as he was in harem intrigues. Vigor was displayed only at the moment of need; thus he was late in deciding to fight a decisive battle with Cyrus, but then he took part personally (*Anabasis* 1.7.9, 17; 1.8.22ff.; *Artoxerxes* 7-13). The inner vigor of the empire's administration was weakened by his inefficiency; and if many of his troubles came to a favorable end, it was due to such able men around him as Tissaphernes, Pharnabazus, Autophradates, and, not least, his son Ochus, the subsequent Artaxerxes III. Particularly strong influences at court were those of Parysatis, who had little liking for her eldest son (*Anabasis* 1.1.4, *Artoxerxes* 2.3) and Stateira. These were enemies from the time of the king's accession and vied in securing executions (Ctesias F 15-l6, 27, pars. 56, 58ff., 68ff.; *Artoxerxes* 6.6-8, 14.9-17.9). Parysatis at last succeeded in poisoning Stateira (ca. 400 B.C.) and was removed from Susa to Babylon, but she soon recovered her influence on the king (Ctesias F 27, par. 70; *Artoxerxes* 19, 23.1-2).

Artaxerxes next married one of his daughters, Atossa (*Artoxerxes* 23.3-5); he is said to have also had 360 concubines (ibid., 27.2). Another daughter was Amestris, whom Heraclides Cumaeus asserts was likewise married to the king (ibid., 23.6, 27.8); others included Apamā and Rhodogune (27.8). Of his three known legitimate sons (Justin 10.1.1), Darius was made co-regent (and so recognized as heir-apparent) at the age of 50; but he was later executed for conspiracy (*Artoxerxes* 26-29). Ochus eventually removed his other brother

Ariaspes (Justin, *Ariaratus*), as well as the illegitimate Arsames (ibid., 30.1-8). The king is said to have had 115 sons by his concubines (Justin, loc. cit.).

The last dating for Artaxerxes II is day 10, month 8, regnal year 46 (Ungnad, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler*, Leipzig, 1908, VI, no. 186; see Weissbach, *ZDMG* 62, 1908, pp. 646-47). This is year 389 of the Babylonian Nabonassar era (beginning in November, 360 B.C.). Shortly after, in 359-58, the king died. Thus Plutarch's 62 years for the reign (*Artoxerxes* 30.9), Diodorus' 43 years (13.108.1), etc., must be wrong. One may not assume an independent reign before accession to the throne, although Artaxerxes may have received the title of king during his father's lifetime (ca. 421 B.C.).

Artaxerxes left trilingual inscriptions at Susa, one [A^2Sa] on the restoration of Darius' palace (Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 154; additions and corrections by M. -J. Steve in *Studia Iranica* 4, 1975, pp. 7-18), one [A^2Sb] on a column base (Kent, p. 154), and a further building inscription [A^2Sd] (ibid.). The Old Persian fragment A^2Sc is from a stone tablet. One Elamite and two Akkadian fragments also come from Susa ("A^2Se" and "A^2Sf" published in F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, Leipzig, 1911, pp. 125, 127 ["Art. Susa d-e"]; "A^2Sg" ed. V. Scheil, *MDAFP* 24, 1933, p. 129 no. 31). Further evidence for this king's building activities, with which the inscriptions are chiefly concerned, is found in the several inscriptions at Hamadān, ancient Ecbatana: A^2Ha is a trilingual text partially identical with A^2Sa; the building inscription A^2Hb occurs on a column of the palace; while A^2Hc is a gold foundation tablet. It is notable that Artaxerxes in his inscription invokes Mithra and Anāhitā as well as Ahura Mazdā. This agrees with Berossus' remark (F 11 [Jacoby]) that under Artaxerxes II, idols (especially those of Anaitis) were introduced for worship throughout the empire.

The Arsacid dynasty of the Parthian empire claimed to derive their lineage from Arsaces/Artaxerxes II, according to Georgius Syncellus (1.539.16f. D.). This claim can be taken seriously, considering the name Artaxšahrakan applied to a royal vineyard mentioned in the Nisa documents (P. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes, Corp. Inscr. Iran.*, Suppl. Ser. I, London, 1972, p. 46b).

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