



## ASAGARTA

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**ASAGARTA** “Sagartia,” **ASAGARTIYA** “Sagartian” (Old Persian; Elamite Aš-šákar-ti-ia, Babylonian <sup>kur</sup>Sa-ga-ar-ta-a-a, Greek Sagartíā, Sagártioi), an Iranian tribe of uncertain location. In the list of Achaemenid lands given in a Persepolis inscription of Darius I (DPe 15-16), the Sagartians precede the Parthians (Parθava), Zarangians (Zra<sup>n</sup>ka), Arians (Haraiva), Bactrians (Bāxtriš), etc.; they thus must have dwelt in the east of the kingdom. Darius, in securing the throne, had to defeat a Sagartian rebel, Ciça(n)-taxma (DB 2.78-91), who was eventually impaled at Arbela (Arbairā), in the west. According to Herodotus the Sagartians were nomads of Persian (i.e., southwest Iranian) origin and language (1.125, 7.85). This attribution might be supported by the Old Pers. form Ciça(n)-taxma (Elam. Ši-iš-šá-an-tak-ma) rather than \*Čiθra-(cf. Babyl. Ši-it-ra-an-taḥ-ma); however, this man boasted of Median origin, claiming to be “of the line of Cyaxares” (*Uvaxštra[hyā] taumāyā*, DB 2.81). It would therefore seem that the Sagartians were neighbors of the Parthians in northeast Iran and extended westward as far as Arbela. Ptolemy (6.2.6) locates them in Media, in the region of the Zagros Gates (Ḥolvān). Stephan of Byzance, in contrast, asserts that there was a peninsula in the Caspian Sea called Sagartía (ed. A. Meinecke, Berlin, 1849, p. 549.14-15, a testimony of uncertain value). In any case, the Sagartians were nomadic herdsmen, their main weapon being the lasso (Herodotus 7.85). Clearly their grazing areas were not yet firmly defined, or they may have extended throughout northern Iran.

The Babylonian and Greek forms of the name show an early aphaeresis: “Sagartians” occurs instead of \*Asagartians (cf. Mardians, Parnians, and Māda



(Medians) instead of \*Amardians, \*Aparnians, and \*Amāda; see W. Eilers, *Iranische Beamtennamen in der keilschriftlichen Überlieferung*, AKM 14/4, 1940, p. 32). It can be variously analyzed. The first element of the name could be *asa* “horse” (the southwestern form of OIr. *aspa-*), or “stone” (OIr. *asan-*, NPers. *sang*). The second element is also problematic. Does *garta-* correspond to one of the OInd. homonyms *gārta-* “pit, hole” and “high seat, throne” (note the OInd. tribal name Trigarta), and were the Sagartians “stone-hole,” i.e. “cave-dwellers,” as some people in present-day Iran. But comparative study shows that most tribal names are eponymous, and names compounded with “horse” are very common in Iran (see Asp).

It is difficult to ascertain whether the Sagartians can be identified with the <sup>kur/nū</sup>Zi-kir-ta-a-a (attributive name to <sup>kur</sup>Zi-kir-ti), who are mentioned by Sargon as inhabitants of the northern Zagros (late 8th century B.C.). Their king possibly bore an Iranian name: <sup>m</sup>Mi-ta-at-ti <sup>kur</sup>Zi-kir-ta-a-a. Cyaxares might have given the Sagartians the district around Arbela as a reward for aiding him to capture Nineveh (J. Markwart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran II*, Leipzig, 1905, p. 228, n.). For their connection with the Medes and the Median royal house, see also J. van Wesendonk in *ZII* 9, 1933, pp. 23f. Fravartiš/Phraortes, the pretender to the Median throne, described himself as a descendant of Cyaxares (DB 2.13-16, 4.18-20), as did Ciça(n)taxma. Possibly there was at one time a political union between Medes and Sagartians.

Siirt, a town and region in eastern Anatolia, south of Lake Van near the Bohtān Šū, is first mentioned in the 4th/10th century by Mas‘ūdī (see *EI*<sup>1</sup> IV, pp. 202-03). Judging simply by sound, one might assume a connection with the name of the Sagartians; but Siirt lies too far to the northwest. P. J. Junge deemed Kermān province in southern Iran to have been the home of the Sagartians (*Klio* 34, 1941, pp. 23 n. 3, 42, 45 n. 7); A. Christensen (*Die Iranier*, in W. Otto, ed., *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, Munich, 1933, p. 236) looked in the same direction, toward Lorestān. Indeed, according to Herodotus 3.93, the Sagartians belonged to the 14th satrapy, that of the Persian Gulf (“Red Sea”). (Could the modern Bašākerd in southeast Iran derive from \*Bē(t)Asagart?) These problems of location have also not been resolved in G. Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis*, Berlin, 1966, where one of the tribute-bearing delegations on the Apadāna procession relief is identified as Sagartian (pp. 91ff., pls. 23, 68).



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