



## CARDUCHI

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**CARDUCHI** (Latin form of Greek Kardoûkhoi), warlike tribes that in antiquity occupied the hilly country along the upper Tigris near the Assyrian and Median borders, in present-day western Kurdistan.

The Carduchi were first mentioned in the early 4th century b.c. by Xenophon, who described them as living in villages and engaging in agriculture, viticulture, handicrafts, and animal husbandry (*Anabasis* 3.5.15, 17; 4.1.3-25; 4.2.3-28; 4.3.1; 5.5.17). The Carduchi were probably subjugated by [Cyrus the Great](#) (r. ca. 558-29 b.c.), but they frequently rebelled against the Achaemenids, and by the end of the 5th century b.c., under Artaxerxes II (r. 405-359), they were no longer under Persian control. They even defeated a large army sent against them and at times concluded treaties with Persian satraps (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.5.16). In 401 the 10,000 Greek mercenaries of [Cyrus the Younger](#) fought their way across the Carduchi's territory. In the Roman period Diodorus Siculus (1st century b.c.; 14.27.4) called the northern spurs of the Zagros the Carduchian mountains, but Strabo called the tribes living there Gordyaeans (16.1.24; see also Pliny, *Natural History* 6.44).

It has repeatedly been argued that the Carduchi were the ancestors of the Kurds, but the Cyrtii (Kurtioi) mentioned by Polybius, Livy, and Strabo (see MacKenzie, pp. 68-69) are more likely candidates.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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D. N. MacKenzie, "The Origins of Kurdish," *TPS*, 1961 [1962], pp. 68-86.

F. H. Weissbach, "Kardoukhoi," in *Pauly-Wissowa*, X/2, 1919, cols. 1933-38.