



## CISSIANS

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**CISSIANS** (Gk. Kíssioi), a name for the Susians, the Elamite inhabitants of Susiana (Strabo 15.3.2; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Soûsa); the Cissians were mentioned by several Greek authors, the earliest of whom was Aeschylus, who called Susa (*még' ástu Sousídos* “the great city of Susiana”) *tò Kissíōn pólisma* “the town of the Cissians” (*Persae* 120; cf. 17).

Herodotus provided many details on the Cissians. In the tribute list from the reign of Darius I (3.90-94) “Susa and the other parts of Cissia” are identified as the eighth *nomós* (3.91.4), which paid 300 talents of silver each year. The last section of the famous Royal Road passed through Cissian territory (*Kissíē chōrē*) for eleven days’ march, or 42.5 parasangs, to the river **Choaspes**, on which Susa was situated (5.52.6; on this point Herodotus was no doubt following the description of Hecataeus; cf. 5.49.7). Another Cissian station mentioned by name was **Arderikka**, perhaps one of Darius’s estates, where he settled the captive Eretrians in 490 b.c.e., after the conquest and destruction of their city (6.119.2). The Cissian infantry in Xerxes’ army in Greece was under the command of Anáphēs (see **anaphas**), son of Otánēs; they and the Cissian cavalry wore the same dress and equipment as the Persians, except for a fillet (*míttra*) instead of the Persians’ felt cap (7.62.2, 7.86.1). The Cissians and the Medes were in the advance guard at the battle of Thermopylae (7.210.1; cf. Diodorus, 11.7.2) and suffered heavy losses. In later times the Cissians joined the Medes, Cadusians, and Carmanians in the battle at Raphia in 217 b.c.e. (Polybius 5.79.7, 5.82.1), at which Ptolemaeus IV defeated Antiochus III during the Fourth Syrian War. Claudius Ptolemaeus described *Kyssía* (6.3.3) as one of



the regions of Sousianē, which also included Melitēnē, Kabandēnē, Charakēnē, and Chaltapītis. From all these reports Ernst Herzfeld (p. 190) concluded that the name “belongs to Hecataeus alone” and “must have been a term of Achaemenian administration” (p. 13).

The Cissians have frequently been identified with the Kassites (Babylonian Kaššî), a people attested from the 18th century b.c.e. in Babylonia and later also in Assyria. F. Weissbach was quite correct, however, in emphasizing the phonological and material difficulties in such an identification; he pointed out, too, that the Kassites were actually the Kossaioi of Strabo and other Greek authors (“Kissía, hē,” in Pauly-Wissowa XI/1, cols. 520-21). Nevertheless, it is possible that Kíssiōi is the same name as Babylonian Kaššî and that it was transferred from the Kassites to the Elamites through a confusion of these two neighboring peoples.

The *Kíssiāi pylai* “Cissian gates,” a city gate in Babylon mentioned by Herodotus (3.155.6, 3.158.1), are more likely, however, to have been named for the old Babylonian city of Kiš (Kish, located a few kilometers southeast of Babylon) than for the Cissians.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text. See also E. Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire. Studies in Geography and Ethnography of the Ancient Near East*, Wiesbaden, 1968, especially pp. 11ff., 188ff..