



## DARIUS IV. DARIUS II

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Darius II was the sixth Achaemenid king of kings (r. February 423- March 403 B.C.E.). He had been satrap of Hyrcania. Darius was his throne name; his given name is reported in classical sources as Ochus (Babylonian Ú-ma-kušor Ú-ma-su; Stolper, p. 115). The Old Persian name may have been either \*Vauka (Schmitt, 1977, pp. 422-23; idem, 1982, p. 84) or \*Va(h)uš (cf. Stolper, p. 115). His father was [Artaxerxes I](#) (465-25 B.C.E.), his mother a Babylonian. Greek authors therefore considered him a bastard (Gk. *nóthos*), though this epithet appeared rather late (Pausanias, 6.5.7). According to Ctesias (Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 15.47-51), Darius II ascended the throne after the short reigns of two of his half-brothers, Xerxes II (425-24) and Sogdianus (or Sekyndianus; 424). In the dating formulas of the Babylonian business documents, however, these kings are not mentioned, and Darius II directly succeeds Artaxerxes I. The struggle for the throne probably took place during the first years of Darius' reign, rather than before it, as Greek authors have it (cf. Ctesias, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 15.47-49; Diodorus, 11.69.6, 12.7.1, 12.64.1). Its effects appear to be reflected in the archive of the Babylonian banking family the Murašū: In the second year of the reign of Darius II Ochus there was an increase in the number of mortgages, possibly resulting from the fiscal and military demands of his first year (Stolper, pp. 122-23). The names of those who supported Sogdianus and Darius given by Ctesias are confirmed in these cuneiform documents (Stolper, p. 116); these names include that of



Parysatis, Darius' wife and half-sister. In discussions of her presumed pernicious influence at court (e.g., Olmstead, pp. 356, 364; Cook, p. 135) little account is taken of her wealth and landholdings, as they appear in the Murašū tablets.

Iranian evidence for the rule of Darius II is scarce; all his inscriptions refer to building activities. He built at Susa (cf. Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 154, D2Sa, D2Sb, both fragmentary; but cf. Lewis, p. 78, for mention of an unpublished inscription, presumably from Hamadān), and one of the three anepigraphic tombs at Naqš-e Rostam is ascribed to him; he was the last Achaemenid to be buried there.

Darius' reign was conspicuous for frequent revolts, led partly by satraps who had acquired a power base in regions where their families had ruled for generations. Ctesias mentioned a revolt by Darius' full brother [Arsites](#), assisted by [Artyphios](#), son of the satrap Megabyzus, who had mounted a revolt during Artaxerxes' reign. The revolt of the satrap Pissouthnēs at Sardis was crushed by Tissaphernes (see [ČĪORAFARNAH](#)), probably in 422 (cf. Ctesias, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 15.53), who bribed Pissouthnēs' Greek mercenary troops to abandon their commander. Tissaphernes' sojourn in Asia Minor signaled the start of intensified Persian interference in Greek affairs during the Peloponnesian war. The Paphlagonian eunuch [Artoxares](#), who had once helped Darius to become king, also attempted a coup at an uncertain date (Ctesias, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 15.54). In addition, the novelistic tale of the insubordination of Teritouchmes, married to a daughter of Darius II, may well mask a more serious threat to the throne (Ctesias, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 15.55-56). There is evidence of trouble in Egypt in 410 B.C.E., prelude to a successful revolt in 404 (on its origins, cf. Briant, pp. 138 ff.; Ray, 1987; idem, 1988). Finally, in the heart of the empire the crushing of a Median revolt (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.11.19) was followed by a campaign against the [Cadusii](#)

(Gk. *Kadoúsioi*).

Darius II died in 404 in Babylon (Ctesias, in Jacoby, *Fragmente* 688 frag. 16.57). He was survived by Parysatis, who supported her younger son, Cyrus the Younger (see [CYRUS vi](#)), in his well-known rebellion against his full brother Artaxerxes II (405-359), reported by Xenophon in the first book of his *Anabasis*. Dependence on Greek sources, notably Ctesias (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, pp. 34 ff.), and the virtual absence of Near Eastern documentation seriously biases current views on the reign of Darius II.



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