



HARPAGOS

HARPAGOS, a Median magnate and the trusted advisor of the last Median king Astyages (q.v.). In 550 B.C.E, during the war between the Medes and Persians, Harpagos, who had already made common cause with a number of Median nobles to support Cyrus II, defected to his side (q.v.; Herodotus 1.108-13, 117-20, 123, 127, 129). According to a legend recorded by Herodotus (1.119), the reason for Harpagos' defection was that Astyages, in order to punish him for an act of disobedience, had his son killed and his flesh served to him and other magnates at a feast.

In 547 Harpagos served in Cyrus's army that conquered Lydia (Herodotus 1.80), and later, in about 540, he subjugated the cities of western Asia Minor (Herodotus 1.164-77; see also Diodorus Siculus 9.35.33). Descendants of this Harpagos probably remained in Asia Minor and carried the same name. In any case, Lycian inscriptions of the late 5th and early 4th centuries B.C.E. mention some prominent men with Iranian names, one of whom was called Arppaxu (see Cook, p. 177; Schmitt, pp. 17 f.). A certain Harpagos commanded Persian troops in Asia Minor in 499-93 B.C.E. (Herodotus 6.28, 30). It is possible that he was a grandson of Harpagos the Mede.



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