



IRAN V. PEOPLES OF IRAN (2) PRE-ISLAMIC

IRAN

v(2). Pre-Islamic Period

This survey focuses on the early phase of the Iranian-speaking peoples' presence on the plateau, during the early state-building phase. It is driven, inevitably, by two major early resources: (a) the dahyus (on which see above, Introduction) enumerated in the Achaemenid inscriptions to define the extent of the king's domain, (b) Herodotus's list (3.89-94) of the 20 tax districts (*nomoi*, described as "administrations they call satrapies") and of the peoples in them across the entire Achaemenid empire. The formalization of the tax districts is attributed to Darius I; and their overall effectiveness as a means to provide flows of specie and in-kind tribute to the king's central administrative cities was ultimately testified to by the Alexander historians. The names of lands and peoples found in both categories vary over time—the tax districts must have been particularly changeable, as political conditions fluctuated—and provide an overview of the population diversity in the early period of recorded Iranian history.

The following sections are limited to the Iranian peoples on the plateau within the dahyus. Not considered here is the vast territorial expanse of the Iranian-speaking Scythians (a generic term for people on the Eurasian steppes) in



Central Asia, from the Danube to the frontiers of China. In that obscure ethnographic picture with its “countless peoples” (*multitudo populorum innumera*, Pliny, 6.19.50) were groups who preserved the ancestral name Arya (q.v.) which they shared with their kin to the south (see also [ALANS](#)).

Sources. The Achaemenid inscriptions provide important glimpses on the Iranians’ own perspective on their ethnic and political milieu. While every repetition and variation of the dahyu list is of interest, the inscriptions cited here are as follows: DB—the monumental trilingual inscription of Darius I at Bisotun (q.v.), recounting his rise to power. DNa and b—the same king’s self-logy on his tomb at Naqš-e Rostam. DNc—the caption engraved for the figure of the king’s spearbearer at the same location. DNe—the captions for the figures of the king’s thronebearers, graphic representations of the dahyus. DSab—the Egyptian statue of Darius I, found in Susa; apart from the main inscription, the base contains a dahyu list in hieroglyphics. XPa—in which Xerxes I proclaims the “Gateway of all the dahyus” in the palace of Persepolis. XPh—the famous “Daiva Inscription” of the same king, also from the palace of Persepolis. A3Pb—the captions for the figures of the king’s thronebearers on the tomb of (most probably) Artaxerxes III at Persepolis, (See Schmitt, 2000; Yoyotte; see also [EPIGRAPHY i.](#))

More abundant, however, and more frequently cited below, are the records of the Iranians’ western neighbors. The surviving Greek and Latin sources capture some direct experience and eyewitness accounts, as well as hearsay and popular lore, and preserve part of the wealth of knowledge accumulated during the campaigns of Alexander and his successors in Iran. The following list indicates the texts which are referred to more than once in the subsequent survey of peoples. They are given here in approximate chronological order, along with any abbreviations or short reference forms that will be used for titles and authors’ names: Herodotus (Hdt.), d. after 450 B.C.E., *Histories*. Ctesias, d. after 400, *Persica* (as summarized in Photius [d. ca. 897], *Bibliotheca [Bibl.]*). Xenophon (Xen.), d. ca. 350, *Anabasis (An.)*, *Cyropaedia (Cyr.)*, *Hellenica*. Polybius (Polyb.), d. 122, *Histories*. Diodorus Siculus (Diod. Sic.), fl. mid-1st cent. B.C.E., *Historical Library*. Trogus Pompeius, d. early 1st cent. C.E., *Historiae Philippicae* (as later summarized in the *Epitome* by a certain Marcus Junianus Justinus [Justin]). Strabo (Str.), d. early 1st cent., *Geographia*. Isidorus Characenus (Isid. Char.), d. early 1st cent., *Mansiones Parthicae*. Anon., mid-1st cent., *Periplus maris erythraei (Periplus)*. Pomponius Mela (Mela), mid-1st cent. *De chorographia*. Quintus Curtius Rufus (Curt.), d. 53, *Historiae Alexandri*



Magni. Pliny the Elder (Pliny), d. 79, *Historia naturalis*. Plutarch (Plut.), fl. ca. 100, various of the *Parallel Lives*. Tacitus (Tac.), d. after 116, *Annales* (*Ann.*). Claudius Ptolemaeus (Ptol.), mid-2nd cent., *Geographia*. Arrian (Arr.), d. mid-2nd cent., *Anabasis of Alexander* (*An.*), *Indica* (*Ind.*). Athenaeus, fl. ca. 200, *Deipnosophistae*. Claudius Aelianus, d. ca 235, *De natura animalium*. Philostratus, d. mid-3rd cent., *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (*Vita Apollonii*). Ammianus Marcellinus (Amm. Marc.), fl. ca. 390, *Res gestae*.

WESTERN IRAN

The westernmost of the Iranian peoples were those best known to, and most influenced by, their non-Iranian neighbors in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Caucasus and by the Greco-Roman world. Distinctions between them would be blurred in their neighbor's view, because of the Iranians' close everyday political and cultural interdependency and continuities; a blurring of perception of cultural differences occurred, in part due to Median influences (Str., 11.13.9). This happened, in spite of the sharp distinctions that might have been made by the peoples concerned (e.g., the dying Cambyses, giving advice to the Persians in Hdt., 3.65). Athenian envoys spoke of the "king of the Medes," and the general Mardonius was referred to by Pausanias, king of Sparta, as "leader of the Medes" (Hdt., 9.7 and 8, 9.82); similarly other Greeks shown conversing by Herodotus freely interchange "Persian" and "Median" (Hdt., 6.9, 109, 129). In the 4th century C.E. Ammianus Marcellinus has a historical awareness fixed on the traditional Arsacid opponent, and he uses "Persian" or "Parthian" interchangeably to represent the general enemy, whether of Arsacid or Sasanian period (e.g., 20.7.5-6; 21.13.3; 23.3.2; 25.3.4-5, 7.12, 9.8). Similarly, his emperor, Julian, longed for the title "Parthicus" (Amm. Marc., 22.12.2). Thus it becomes difficult to tell if Xenophon's interpreter, who spoke to the locals in the mountains of Armenia "in Persian" (*persistí*, Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.5.10 and 34), was in fact using the language of the king or that of the Median neighbors to the southeast, or some mixed colloquial, perhaps used in commerce. (See also, on 'Med-isms' in Old Persian, Schmitt, 1989, pp. 83-84.)

Persia. The Persians are said by Herodotus (1.125) to be "many tribes" (*suchnà génea*; cf. the "Persidae" of Xen., *Cyropaedia* 1.2.1); listed, they total ten groups: the Pasargadae and two lesser leading tribes, three other, settled groups, four nomadic ones. The settled tribes include the Germanii (q.v.), who are taken to be Carmanians of later sources (see below); some of the names are obscure and of uncertain transmission (e.g., "Maspii" perhaps reflecting an Elamite



rendering of an eponym, *Huvaspa- “Having good horses”). The Pasargadae tribe at least can be located in central Persia (OPers. *Pārsa*); there the Achaemenids were the clan (*phrētrē*, Hdt. 1.125) of its chiefs (“kings” in the titulature of the Zagros; see below on the Assyrian examples). Further references to the tribe names are few (Hdt., 4.167 is unusual in giving two). But two of the nomad tribes receive some mention. The Sagartii (see below, under Eastern Iran) are recorded over a wide range outside Persia, while the Mardi (see below) lived in Persia, apparently ranging the lower Zagros mountains up to Elam. Herodotus does not point out that the total of the tribes is ten, but this conventional number might indicate a tradition in his sources regarding a confederation (cf., e.g., DORRANI) or even the historian’s analogy with the example he gives (Hdt., 5.66, 69; 6.111) from contemporary Greece: Cleisthenes (d. ca. 508 B.C.E.) redistricted the socialaffinities of the Athenians for all aspects of citizenship, including military service; that is, he apportioned the people among ten tribes (*dekaphúlous*), which were defined by locality, in place of the traditional four (*phulē* is often translated “[artificial] tribe,” more cautiously “group, section, ‘county’,” or left untranslated). (For the decimal denomination of the units of the Achaemenid army, Hdt., 7.81, see IMMORTALS; cf. the counting off of Xerxes’ 1,700,000-man land army in myriads, Hdt., 7.60.) By contrast, and perhaps not by accident, the Persian youths being educated at the palace are said to be organized into twelve sodalities (*phulaí*: Xen., Cyr. 1.2.5 and 12).

A later version of “the tribes [*phûla*] living in the land [of Persia]” (Str., 15.3.1) gives a different account, in which Herodotus’s settled tribes have nearly disappeared. It lists two of Herodotus’s tribes (the nomadic Mardi, and the Achaemenidae = Pasargadae), plus one of his Median tribes, the priestly Magi, plus two other nomadic tribes, the Cyrtii and the Pateischoreis. Of these groups, only the predatory (*lēistikós* “piratical,” see below for habitual linking with *oreinós* “mountainous, mountaineer,” as in Str., 11.12.4, 11.13.6) Mardi and Cyrtii are transhumants (*metanástai*, perhaps intended to be more precise than the usual *nomádes*, such as those who adjoin the Hyrcanii, Str., 11.7.2; for *metanástēs* as “migrant,” cf. Hdt., 7.161). The “Pateischoreis” (OPers. *Pātishuvari-*, “people of the land on the sunny side [of the mountain]”; Eilers, 1987, p. 49) would be understood to be people of the Alborz, from the Patusharra of the Assyrian annals, as well as by comparison with Mid. Pers. *Pādišxwar*/*Pārišxwar* (ŠKZ, Mid. Pers. [2]/Parth. 2/Gk. 5; Greek/Latin Parachoathras); but the known Patischorian is called a Persian (see GOBRYAS, no. 3; DB 4.84, DNc). The Babylonian version of Darius’s Bisotun inscription



(DB Bab. 111) says “Gubaru son of Marduniya, a Persian, a Padishumarish—” a formula which could be a scribal error (a natural one in that paragraph of the text) or an unusual double ethnicon (people [Persian] and tribe). The ancient name Pātišuvāri- need not have been exclusive to one region, or else the name for the Alborz might have been reapplied within Persia by the newly arrived Iranians. The mobility of this mountain name may even be more ancient than the Persian migration, if it was also used in the east (see refs. in Vallat, pp. 214-15, s.v. Patusharra, also p. 42, s.v. Bikni).

The Mardi nomads are named as one of the four predatory mountain peoples of the southwest discussed by Alexander’s admiral, Nearchus (Str., 11.13.6; the others are non-Iranian). They are said to live next to the Persians (sic, perhaps meaning the settled Persians generally), from whom they extort or steal (Arr., *Indica* 40.6)—or perhaps levy a tribute, in the manner of the Aparni (see below, Eastern Iran). They also neighbored on the Uxii to the west, who lived in very similar fashion (see below). Ptolemy’s district of Mardyena (Ptol., 6.4.3) hints at a range in southwestern Persia, down to the Gulf; and in Darius III’s army at Gaugamela the men cited by Arrian (*An.* 3.8.5) as leaders of “the [people] dwelling along the Red Sea” are said by Quintus Curtius Rufus (4.12.7), more precisely, to have commanded “Persians and Mardi and Sogdians.” According to Diodorus Siculus (17.59.3; cf. Arr., *An.* 3.13.1), the Mardi and Cossaei, both esteemed for toughness and tenacity, fought in that battle along with the king’s Persian household units. Other references to Mardi individuals (Curt., 3.13.2; Plutarch, *Antony* 41, 47-48) also seem more likely to mean the tribe of Persia than the Amardi/Mardi of the Caspian mountains. The Achaemenid army must have spelled income and opportunity (e.g., for surplus sons) for the Mardi, as for the Cossaei and other mountain tribes in or near Persia; already in Cyrus’s campaign in the west Herodotus mentions (1.84) a nimble Mardian, who scaled the walls of the citadel at Sardis. Alexander, after taking Persepolis and while making a show of force (of unknown extent) within Persia, met some Mardi and obtained their submission (Curt., 5.6.17); later they would submit to the Arsacids, in contrast to their then neighbors, the rising regional power of the Elymaeans (Pliny, 6.31.134). Whatever the status of the Mardi in Persia, their Persian ethnicity seems supported by Nicholas Damascenus’s version of the rise of Cyrus, a story which gives him Mardian parentage (Jacoby, IIA, 90, F66 [3 and 9]).

Not surprisingly, Herodotus’s story of how Cyrus II persuaded the assembled Persians to rebel against the Medes (1.125-26; cf. Justin, 1.6.4-7; for other



versions, see [CYRUS ii](#) and [iii](#)) presents him as a tribal chief who can deliver prosperity to his people; already an elite (*áristos*) in his society through his clan, he makes his claim to paramount leadership: he deserves it, because he has the Luck (*túchē*, i.e., *xwarrah* [see [FARR](#)]) needed to deliver general prosperity to the people. (Darius III would pray to the gods of his ancestors, after the defeat at Issus, for *túchē* to be restored [Plutarch, *Alexander* 30.12].) A similar note is struck in Herodotus's lesson on *hybris* (7.8); to Xerxes is attributed a speech which reviews his predecessors' successes over the peoples (*éthneá*) and promises still more and better land (*chōrē*) for the Persians.

The strength of traditional tribal culture, the need to secure the tribes' loyalty, and fear of unrest in the dynasty's homeland may have helped motivate the exemption of the Persians from the tribute system imposed by Darius I (Hdt., 3.97). In the west of the empire, Artaphrenes, hyparch of Sardis, measured the territory of the Ionian cities and calculated their tributes accordingly (Hdt., 6.42). Within Persia, such action would have been perceived as a threat to rights and privileges of the tribes, whether settled or nomad. Similarly, Cyrus's generosity toward the Ariaspae (see below, Eastern Iran) in remitting tribute, while he and his army were under duress, may have been a prudent measure, even necessary (at least for his prestige); compare the lavish gesture of the False Smerdis in remitting tribute generally (Hdt., 3.67), presumably in order to win regional support. A positive step taken by Darius I after his accession was a series of politic marriages, which must have strengthened mutual clan bonds and tribal loyalty to the new king; he took "wives foremost in status among the Persians" (Hdt., 3.88).

Conservative tribal peoples may have viewed the royal fiscal policy with considerable reserve. The early Persians did not themselves engage in banking and commerce in urban marketplaces (i.e., had no agora in the Greek manner, Hdt., 1.153) and were said to be lacking in luxury goods (1.71). Yet, from Cyrus's time on (Diod. Sic., 17.71.1; Arr., *An.* 3.18.10), Persepolis and Pasargadae and the other centers of Achaemenid administration served as sinks for the hoarding of bullion and in-kind tribute (Str., 15.3.6; cf. 15.3.9; Curt., 5.2.11, 5.6.9-10; cf. Hdt., 5.49), including luxury goods (Curt., 5.6.3). Hence Darius I's nickname "the Huckster" given by the Persians (Hdt., 3.89) might have originated as a wry observation by those still oriented toward a non-monetary, largely subsistence economy. (See [PERSEPOLIS ELAMITE TABLETS](#) at iranicaonline.org, regarding the conservative practice of payment in kind at Persepolis [illustrated in Athenaeus, 4.145], combined with "cash



supplements” in metal; see Cameron for the documents giving a glimpse of in- and outflows of bullion and in-kind payment there in the early 4th century B.C.E.) By the end of the dynasty, considerable coinage too was accumulated (darics [q.v.] at Susa, Diod. Sic., 17.66.1; coinage, *nomísmatos*, there and at Persepolis, Plut., *Alex.* 36.1, 37.4), despite the policy of minting coin only as needed (Str., 15.3.21) and despite what must have been heavy expenditures by the time of Darius III in war and diplomacy (Arr., *An.* 2.11.10, 14.6, 15.1); e.g., the mercenaries under a certain “Didales the Persian,” whether Greek or not, expected their pay in coin (Aristotle [attrib.], *Oeconomica* 2.2.24; cf. Athenaeus, 4.145: “wages in coin” in contrast to the Persian practice). Perhaps subventions (“tribute” in Str., 11.13.6) and road tolls given to the mountain tribes also were paid out in coin (*chrē-mata* in Diod. Sic., 19.19.8) and thus contributed to the spread of a monetized economy.

Achaemenid Persia extended from the mountain boundary with Media to the “Red Sea” (Hdt., 4.37), along which they had “always” lived and the name of which they turned into the “Persian Gulf” (Pliny, 6.25.115). Strabo, perhaps relaying a popular tradition—or impression—that drew maximum contrast with the northern, mountain-dwelling Medes, says that the Persians originally established the greater part of their settlements along the Red Sea (11.13.9). This statement may or may not convey some fact about the arrival of the Persians; but the habitat of the settled Persian tribes, may be viewed as centered on the Shiraz region—ancient Anshan (q.v.; see also [MALIAN](http://MALIAN.iranica.com) at *iranica.com*), which was one of the traditional domains of the kings of Susa, going back to the 3rd millennium B.C.E. The addition of Persians to the native Elamite population, and the further development of the economy, may in fact have made Persia the most densely populated land of Iran, as Diodorus states (19.21.3). Its possession gave to the Achaemenid (q.v.) clan (of which Darius I lists five generations back, probably into the 7th century B.C.E., to the eponymous Achaemenes; DB 1.1-6, Bab. 1-4) prestige, strategic location, and access to a relatively urban population with literacy and accounting skills. Persia was thus well poised to exert influence and build control over the surrounding region of southern Iran, and beyond. After the overthrow of Darius III, Alexander’s persianizing (Gk. *persízō*; Arr., *An.* 7.6.3) satrap at Persepolis, Peucestes, would establish excellent rapport with the people; his wealth from the prosperous domain, his popularity with the people, and his ability to raise troops made him a factor in the struggle of the Diadochs; Eumenes feared him even as a supporter (Diod. Sic., 19.22, 23.1, 317 B.C.E.), and the victorious Antigonus dismissed him, braving Persian anger in spite of a



concern for stability which is evidenced by his appointing a Mede as satrap of Media and leaving well enough alone in the Uplands (see below, Eastern Iran) and Carmania (Diod. Sic., 19.48.5, 46.5, 48.1-2). Peucestes' 10,000 archers and slingers (Diod. Sic., 19.14.5) suggest partnership with the mountain tribes, especially Uxii (see below) and Mardi (cf. 19.21.3, with Eumenes in Uxian country).

Susiana. To the west of Persia were found denser concentrations of non-Iranians in the fertile (Str., 15.3.11) plains of Susiana, core land of the kingdom of Elam, and in the Zagros mountains. The name "Cissii" (see Cissians) is equivalent to "Sousii" in Arsacid times (Str., 15.3.2), when Philostratus (d. mid-3rd cent. C.E.) described Cissia as a land of farming villages and a nomad people (*génos*; *Vita Apollonii* 1.24). Earlier, the term Cissian perhaps distinguished—ethnically, economically, and politically—the upland people, toward the Zagros, from the plainsmen (Hdt., 3.91: "Susa and the other country of the Cissii"; cf. Ptol., 6.3.3, placing them "above the Elymaei"). This desirable and strategic area was brought under Persian rule by Cyrus, and perhaps there was already significant Persian population there by his time. This expansion also must have drawn new groups of Elamite scribes, managers, and other technicians from Susa into Anshan, at least to focal points such as Persepolis, where they are represented in the administrative documents (Cameron, Hallock). One indication of the resulting interaction may appear in the regional uprisings after the accession of Darius I; Elam saw not only a native claimant declare himself king (DB 1.72-81, Bab. 29-33), in league with the Babylonians, but also a Persian named Martiya, son of Cicixrāiš/Bab. Shinshakhrish (2.8-11, Bab. 41-42). Martiya, whether through opportunism, acculturation to Elam, or mixed parentage, claimed an Elamite descent. (Compare the case of the Armenian/Urartian claimant to Babylonia, Arkha, son of Haldita [3.76-83; Bab. 84-86].)

Susiana was a logical area in which to settle deportees (Gk. *anáspastoi*), for the benefit of royal estates, enhancement of an already key economic region, and diversification of a strongly non-Iranian population. Herodotus (6.20) says that, after the capture of Miletus in 494 B.C.E. at the end of the Ionian Revolt (q.v.), Darius settled its citizens at Ampe at the mouth of the Tigris—perhaps to form a link with *anáspastoi* settlements in the Persian Gulf (see below, Eastern Iran). When the Persians destroyed the Greek city of Eretria in 490, its population was taken to Susa; and Darius settled them (*katoíkise*) on one of his estates in Cissia (Hdt., 6.119). Perhaps these people, like the Paeonians of



Thrace, had been recommended as “good workers” (*hou̓tō ergátides*, Hdt. 5.13). The Eretrians, besides farming, opened a stone quarry and built temples. By the Arsacid period, according to Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii* 1.24), their descendants were working the most marginal lands and, even so, had their crops stolen by the locals. The local tradition was that 780 people had been taken into captivity, of whom 400 men survived the march to their place of exile.

Part of the duty of deportees, it appears from the Persepolis documents, was to produce offspring, preferably males (Hallock, pp. 37-38, 344-53, 634), who would grow up to serve in the king’s army. The statuses and freedom of movement of different deportee groups may have varied widely. Diodorus relates (17.69.2-9; Just., 11.14.11-12; Curt., 5.5.5-24, with heightened drama) Alexander’s meeting in Persia with some 800 (Curtius: 4,000) Greek deportees who had been mutilated and branded during their captivity. They were given aid and chose to remain in Persia. Such deportees or their descendants who stayed on may have expedited the foundation of some of the new towns, like Ptolemy’s Ionaca City (6.4.2; cf. the Macedonian foundations mentioned in Str., 11.13.6). After the fall of the Achaemenid empire, Greeks and Macedonians settled in Susiana and across the Iranian plateau, in much smaller numbers than the Arabs later but making an important contribution with their urban economy and culture (see [HELLENISM](#)). In Sasanian times, the southwestern lands (*šahr*) are again emphasized as destinations for settlement of captives and deportees from Roman Asia (ŠKZ 4/3/5-6). (See also [DEPORTATIONS](#).)

Mountain peoples. To the north, the plains Susians and the Persians were bounded by peoples of the Zagros mountains. Here the complex geography created refuge areas for marginalized populations and served to divide and isolate (cf. Str., 11.13.3) newly arriving populations, such as Iranians, whether in quest of settlement or of prosperous transhumance. The Assyrian annals chronicle the regional complexity, from Elam in the south to Urartu in the Lake Van region in the north, with the survival of archaic names and the partial overlay of one name over another (see overview in [ASSYRIA i](#)). These tribes were often non-Iranian (like the Elymaei in the western Zagros and the Uxii in the eastern). In the Arsacid period, the Elymaei formed the autonomous kingdom of Elymais (q.v. for its evolution) in later Khuzestan and extending to the lower Tigris. They perpetuated non-Iranian culture (including religion; see [TANG-E SARVAK](#) at iranicaonline.org) and perhaps the Elamite language for



some time, until Aramaic became dominant there. The Susiana region thus continued to form a cultural and ethnolinguistic, as well as political, boundary of the Persians. (See also [CHARACENE](#) for the Aramaic-speaking region at the head of the Persian Gulf.) The Uxii, mountain herders in the region above Susa, dominated the road eastward into interior Persia (Arr., *An.* 3.17.1-2; Strabo, 15.3.6, 16.1.17). In Alexander's time both the Elymaei and the Uxii were classified by Nearch among the four predatory peoples of the southwest (Str., 11.13.6), and both exacted payments from the Sousii. The Mardi (see above), the only Iranian people in this predatory group, may also have been under pressure from their neighbors, the Uxii.

Strabo also applies Nearchus's term, as "mountain-dwelling and predatory tribes" (*oreinà kai lêistrikà éthnē*, 16.1.17), to the Cossaei (the last of Nearchus's four) and the Paraetaceni, who bordered on Media; it is also used for other mountain tribes of Media and the Caspian shore (Str., 11.13.3). The Cossaei (see [COSSAEANS](#); Ptol., 6.3.3) bordered on Assyria and were possibly the remains of the ancient Kassites (q.v., at iranicaonline.org). They collected tolls for road passage (Gk. *párodos*) on the route between Ecbatana and Mesopotamia (Str., 11.13.6) and the mountain 'shortcut' from Susiana to Ecbatana (Diod. Sic., 19.19.2-3). The Parataceni (Paraetacae, Arr., *An.* 3.19.2, Diod. Sic., 19.34.7; the region Paraetacena, Ptol., 6.4.3) occupied the mountains of northern Persia. They held the shorter, but mountainous, road from Persia into Media and on to Ecbatana. Compared to the Cossaei (and the others), they were more settled and practiced farming. Here Alexander, as in Uxii country, chose to fight his way through. Questions remain, whether this people was ethnically Median (see below), and whether the term itself implied an Aryan-speaking mountaineer population. The name is also applied to a mountainous area in eastern Sogdiana (Arr., *An.* 4.22.1). Persian Paraetacena is later viewed as extending eastward between Parthia and Carmania (Pliny, 6.29.113; see below, Carmania) to become another name for Sakastān (Isidorus Characenus, 18). By comparison, the mountaineer name "Paricanii" certainly indicates non-Aryans in Gedrosia (Hdt., 3.94, 7.68; see below, Eastern Iran); the same name is applied to another people, of unknown ethnicity or location, associated with the Medes and the Pointed-hat Sakas (of DB 5.20-30) in the tax district X (Hdt., 3.92, 7.86).

The Cyrtii (see [CYRTIANS](#); Str., 11.13.3, 15.3.1) are called one of the Persian tribes by Strabo (see above) and are not labeled as predatory. The putative ancestors of the Kurds and Lurs, as such they would belong to the Aryan-



speaking category. They may already have been well distributed in the Zagros from Persia into Media, though not yet as far as Gordyene above the upper Tigris or Azarbaijan (Media Atropatene). The Kurds would be firmly ensconced as a major people of the Zagros by the end of the Sasanian period, when they formed part of the forces opposing the Arab invaders.

Peoples are described occasionally as “independent” (*autónomos*), such as the Cossaei (Diod. Sic., 19.19.3), the southeastern peoples (Arr., *An.* 6.21.3; cf. *liber . . . populus*, Curt., 9.10.5, of the Gedrosii; see below, Eastern Iran), the Scythians (Arr., *An.* 4.11.9), and certain Indians (Arr., *An.* 5.20.6; cf. also Lat. *sui iuris*, said of the Mardi in Margiana, Pliny, 6.18.47, for whom cf. the Mardiyeni of Sogdiana, Ptol., 6.12.4). More often they are “not subject” to the king. In practice there must have occurred a process of mutual accommodation by the royal and tribal parties, with either side having its own perception of the ultimate status of the people concerned. Whatever status terms were used, they did not preclude the practice of giftgiving by either side. The four predatory peoples received “tribute” (*fórous*, Str., 5.3.6) from the king, in consideration for road passage. The “not subject” Uxii collected road toll fees (*misthoús*, Str., 15.3.4) on the road between Babylonia and Persia, as Alexander found (Arr., *An.* 3.17.1). The Cossaei received gifts (*dōra*) on the Assyria-Ecbatana road (Str., 11.13.6), and in 317 B.C.E. Antigonos came to regret he did not consent to giftgiving (*dōrodokein*) with them on his way from Susa to Ecbatana (Diod. Sic., 19.19.4). The two sides, king/satrap and tribe, presumably tried to maintain a standing agreement. Thus the non-subject, presumably Caucasian people, the Carduchi (q.v.) north of the Tigris are said to have done business with the lowland peoples during periods when they had a treaty in effect with the satrap (Xen., *An.* 3.5.16; cf. 5.5.17). This might have entailed gifts that were, from the tribe’s standpoint, freely given for diplomatic purposes, like those given by the peripheral peoples neighboring the empire (on which, see Hdt., 3.97; cf. the “gift” colts of the Armenians for the king, seen by Xenophon, *An.* 4.5.24; probably these were part of an eventual in-kind offering like the 20,000 foals mentioned by Str., 11.14.9). Even tribute could be regarded by the givers in this light, i.e., as not entailing subjection. (See the example of the Malli and Sydracae Indians, below, Eastern Iran, on Arachosia.)

A condition of such agreements more important than gifts must have been mutually beneficial mercenary service. When Alexander’s commander Eumenes recruited cavalry as satrap of Cappadocia by offering exemption from the usual “gifts and tribute,” he may have been following common (later,



if not earlier) Achaemenid practice (Plut., *Eumenes* 4.3). A satrap, or his local administrator, the hyparch, was in a position to materially enhance the economy of a given tribe, or to pressure it, by his policy for recruitment of mercenaries—for example, a certain hyparch in Armenia, who brought contingents of coastal peoples to augment his regular troops against the intrusion of Xenophon (Xen., *An.* 4.4.4 and 18). A policy which might well have been a tool, especially of the Arsacids, is recorded by Philostratus (*Vita* 2.26) in the context of northwest India: tribesmen (*bárbaroi*) are paid by the king to police the region and fend off incursions by other tribes.

Alexander refused to follow the Achaemenid *modus vivendi* with the mountain tribes, i.e., did not accept the notion of “not subject,” and chose to battle for their complete submission, however temporary. His victories are ascribed to speed of movement and unremitting pressure, since he understood their limited material resources and limited freedom of movement—especially, their vulnerability in winter (for the case of the Uxii: Arrian, *An.* 3.17.1-6; *Indica* 40.7).

Media. In the northwest the Medes lived in contact with Assyria, Urartu, and Mannea from the mid-9th century on (see [MEDIA](#), at *iranica.com* for the Assyrian annals, beginning with Shalmanesar III), before the Persians had reached their final settlement area. Given 150 years of acculturation and the Urartian example of fortified towns (see [ART IN IRAN i](#), s.v. “Urartian Fortresses”), not to mention the “great towns” (Hdt., 1.178) of Assyria, it is no wonder that Herodotus’s story of the royal founder, Deioces (ca. 700 B.C.E.; Hdt., 1.96 ff.), portrays a context of town culture and describes in detail (1.98) the construction of his own stronghold, Hamgmatāna (Gk. Ecbatana, q.v.; see also below, [vi. IRANIAN LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS](#), on the city name, and cf. HAMADĀN). This city was strategically situated on the roads west to the Zagros and Babylonia, east to Parthia and beyond, and south to Persia. The name Hamgmatāna “[place of] coming together” (cf. the Gk. term *súnengus*; see below, “Northern Iran,” on the city of Dioscurias) suggests a regional trading center, perhaps already functioning before Deioces. The experience, skills, and familiarity with other peoples would assure the Medians an integral role in management of the Achaemenid domain. Their bond with the Parthians (see below) would be renewed from the mid-2nd century B.C.E., when the Arsacids (q.v.) expanded their rule westward.

The Assyrian records indicate, as one would expect, a complex pattern of petty chiefs, such as, in 820 B.C.E., the 28 rulers of Parsua above the Zagros Gates,



near the modern Sar-e pol, Kermānshāh province; these included both Iranians and others, to judge by their names. Some consolidation (or possibly confederation) may have occurred by the time of the three chieftains who visited Nineveh in 677/676. Herodotus, in contrast, provides a simple picture, enumerating for the Median people (*éthnos*, Hdt., 1.101) six tribes (*génea*; cf. Ctesias: the first king, Arbaces, is of Median lineage [*génos*]; Diod. Sic., 2.24.1; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F1 [24]). This might be regarded as a late reinterpretation of national history by Herodotus's sources, one which applies various criteria: (1) ethnolinguistic status (Arizanti, q.v.: "Aryan Clan" or, here not using **arya*—as an ethnonym, analogous to the Aristophyli "Elite Tribe" of Ptol., 6.18.3, who are placed in the east, in Paropamisadae); (2) economy and environment (mountain Paraetaceni); and (3) social role (priestly Magi; cf. the occupation/caste *génea* of Egypt in Hdt., 2.164, the seven Indian castes, Arr., *Ind.* 11.1, and the four classes of the Iberians, Str., 11.3.6). Given the intermingling of ethnicities in the Zagros (e.g., those enumerated for tax district XVIII, Hdt., 3.94), there is no assurance that only Iranian-speakers were regarded as within the *éthnos*. (Besides the Parsua rulers, note therebellious chief Aspabara in non-Iranian Ellipi [q.v. at *iranica.com*], in the mountains below the Zagros Gates; he might be the offspring of mixed parentage or perhaps was given a name with prestige value.)

Did the Medes and the Zagros peoples practice a notable degree of ethnic mingling or fluent cross-communication and sharing of culture? King Cyaxares hired a group of Scythians to teach "the art of the bow" and their speech (*glōssa*) to elite Median youths (Herodotus, 1.73)—perhaps a hint at some such flexibility, even if *glōssa* "speech" only refers to mastering technical terms and description of tactics. Cyaxares is said to have been the first in Asia to divide troops into companies (*katà télea*) according to armament (spearmen, archers, cavalry; Hdt., 1.103), but that does not necessarily imply that the army became a 'melting pot'. The Achaemenids too would follow this practice, but the Persian army continued to be primarily organized the way men were conscripted—by peoples, with their own leaders, who were in turn subject to Persian commanders (Hdt., 7.81-82).

The permeable linguistic frontier in the northwest between the Medes and the Armenians was described above. (See "Introduction." For the long, subsequent historical and cultural engagement of the Armenians with Iran, see [ARMENIA AND IRAN](#).) Sharing in the contact between these peoples in Azarbaijan, in Achaemenid times and after, were the non-Iranian Matieni/Matiani people;



these occupied the western part of this region and extended farther south in the Zagros; to the northwest they faced the Armenians and to the east the Cadusians and Medes (Str., 11.8.8, 13.2 and 7; Hdt., 1.189, 1.202, 5.49; the Martiana district and lake [Urmia] of Ptol., 6.2.5 and 2). The distinct mountain environment and population of the northwest were also expressed in political separation—clearly by Arsacid times, when Strabo distinguished Atropatene from Greater Media (11.13.1), but, implicitly, already in Herodotus’s separate tax district XVIII (3.94) for the Matieni and others.

The Medes of Greater Media were centered on Ecbatana and spread out to the mountains of Paraetacena above Persia, and eastward, where they held the east-west road through Rhaga to the Caspian Gates (q.v.; Str., 6.2.7, 11.8.9, 11.12.1) and on to Parthia and the other eastern Iranian lands. A Median tribe, the Pratitae, is mentioned as bordering on Parthia (Pliny, 6.19.113). The Medes prospered in the plains and valleys productive in food and pasturage (Str., 11.13.7; see [NISĀYA](#) at [iranica.com](#)). They were delimited to the north by the Alborz mountains, the above-mentioned Parachoathras (Ptol., 6.4.1), where the peoples (see below, Northern Iran) later are characterized as transhumants and predatory (Str., 11.13.3); Ctesias records (in Diod. Sic., 2.33; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F5) the tradition of a savage and unforgiven war between the Medes and one of them, the non-Iranian Cadusians.

To the east, according to that same historian, the Medes were more successful, holding Parthia under submission, in spite of a bitter struggle in which the Parthians turned to the Sakas for help (Diod. Sic., 2.34). Upon Darius I’s seizure of the throne, the Median rebel Xšaθrita/Bab. Fravartish claimed descent from Cyaxares, and he gained some support in Parthia and Margiana (DB 2.13-29, 64-78, 92-98; Bab. 42-48, 57-61, 64-68). Median authority even seems to be implied over the Bactrians—by Ctesias, relating their submission to Cyrus due to his seeming legitimacy in the Median line (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 72.2; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F9). When Cyrus took power, Justin relates (1.7.2), without specific names, that states (*civitates*) formerly subject to the Medes revolted, and Cyrus had to subdue them. Darius I lends credence to Ctesias’s depiction by documenting the invocation of Median legitimacy also in Asagarta (see below, Eastern Iran). Whatever the political role of the Medes in the east, the depiction of an Indian embassy at the court of Cyaxares (Xen., *Cyr.* 2.4.1) seems a plausible result of commercial contacts, and even tribute paid by Indians west of the Indus seems not impossible (Arr., *Ind.* 1.3).

Carmania. Arrian (*Ind.* 40.2-5; Str., 15.3.1) divides Persia into three climactic



zones—the hot, semi-arid Gulf coast, marked by date palm culture the fertile, temperate plains inland and the cold mountains bordering on Media. Carmania (q.v.), the region adjoining the straits of Hormuz (q.v. for Nearchus and other sources), was part of the “date palm zone” extending from Babylonia through Persia (Str., 16.1.5); generally, in ecology and economy, it was an extension of Persia—“they live like Persians” (Arr., *Ind.* 38.1; cf. description in 32.4-5), and the people had Persian and Median customs and language (Nearchus, in Str., 15.2.14). Nearchus observed, in the context of heading up the Gulf from Oaracta/Qeshm (q.v.), the largest island on the coast of Carmania: “from there are the Persians” (Arr., *Ind.* 38.1). Pomponius Mela (3.75) generalizes that “the Cedrosi [Gedrosii] live in the interior, and from there hither the Persians” (*dehinc Persae*, thus citing Nearchus). Strabo (15.2.14) emphasizes the land’s fertility, but east of it the climate was different; rainfall became unpredictable and pasturage sparse. Oaracta was found to be well cultivated like the mainland by Nearchus, with its own hyparch administrator (Arr., *Ind.* 37).

Non-Iranians still had a presence on the coast of Carmania in the Hormuz region, where are located the Turtle-eaters (Pliny, 6.28.109; Ptol., 6.8.12), who are described in much the same terms as the Fish-eaters of Gedrosia (see below, Eastern Iran) by Mela (3.75). Warlike attributes and customs (reminiscent of Herodotus’s Scythians) are ascribed to the people of this region, without specific locality: a man, to prove readiness for marriage, kills an enemy and presents the head to the chief (“king”) for ritual cannibalism (Str., 15.2.14). Few population groups are recorded; Ptolemy (6.8.12) offers the “Charadrae tribes” (*éthnē*) and the Camel-drivers of the desert.

According to Strabo (16.1.17), Persia “encircles” Carmania on the north; perhaps here he views Paraetacena (northern Persia) as extending between Parthia and Carmania, as Pliny also does (6.29.93 and 116). Carmania is also described as having a desert which extends to Parthia and to Paraetacena (Str., 15.2.14). It is thus like the “desert Carmania” of Ptolemy, which contains the Isatichae people and borders on Tabicena in southern Parthia (Ptolemy, 6.6.2, 6.5.1)—i.e., the northern border intersects the modern cross-desert route Yazd-Tabas. To the east are Drangiana and Aria. Thus “desert Carmania” extends farther north than does Gedrosia, as Strabo points out (15.2.10). This desert area meets the conditions for the likely territory of Asagarta (see below, Eastern Iran), that is, of the apparently wide-ranging Persian nomadic tribe of that name (Sagartii, Hdt.1.125); DPe 15 names it first in the list of the eastern



lands of the empire, just before the three eastern lands it touches in Ptolemy's scheme: Parthia, Drangiana, and Aria.

Presumably the Carmanians were reckoned with the Persians in Darius I's time; they perhaps were mostly settled (as were the Germanii of Hdt., 1.125), in contrast to the neighboring Sagartii. As part of Persia it may have administered the Asagarta dahyu; royal dispatches passed from Darius I and back, with abundant other transactions, to an official of Carmania, Karkiš (Hallock, pp. 716, s.v. Kurman; cf. p. 670, s.v. Aššakartiyara). The same personal name occurs as "satrap at Pura" (Hallock, no. 681). If this Pura is identified with the main town of Gedrosia (Arr., *An.* 6.24.1) and with the area of Bampur in modern-day Baluchestan of Iran, then his authority (if one assumes the same person) reached well east, even though coastal Gedrosia might have been expected to be part of tax district XIV (Hdt., 3.93; see ref. in Vallat, p. 223, for rejection of the identification). In any case, Carmania was one of the keys to the eastern lands—for movement of troops of the king or of rebels, and for trade—to the extent that, as some of Strabo's sources calculate (Str., 15.2.8), it falls within the compass of the greater Aryan region of the east, Ariana (see below, Eastern Iran). Alexander heard the story of how Cyrus II's expeditionary force, marching eastward against India, was consumed in the desert of Gedrosia (Arr., *An.* 6.24.3). Yet the lines of communication between Carmania and the interior of the Iranian plateau are illustrated by the resupply effort mounted for Alexander's army; animals and stores were brought from the satrap of the Arii and Zarangi and that of the Parthyaei and Hyrcanii (Curt., 9.10.22; Diod. Sic., 17.105.7; Plut., *Alex.* 66.7; cf. Arr., *An.* 6.27.6); here Alexander also met up with his general Craterus, who had marched with the elephants from India via Arachosia through Ariana (Arr. *An.* 6.17.3; Str., 15.2.4-5). In Ctesias's depiction of Cyrus's deathbed partition of the kingdom (see below, Eastern Iran), Carmania is appropriately the base of the eastern territory. This story might indicate a growing regionalism—perhaps a shifting of political power eastward—after the struggle for the succession to Xerxes I (d. 465 B.C.E.). By the end of the Achaemenid period, Carmania had a satrap, Astaspes, who was executed and replaced with Macedonian appointees (Curt., 9.10.21; Arr., *An.* 6.27.1). Ardašir I, having struggled to subdue the region to Persia again, made it one of his eastern viceroyships, with one of his sons as Kermānšāh (ŠKZ 28/23/55, 30/24-25/60).

NORTHERN IRAN

The northern periphery of Iran was the direction from which, chiefly, the



population of the plateau would be both disturbed and incremented prior to the Arab conquest. Across the permeable frontiers of mountain, seacoast, desert, and river were peoples both Iranian-speaking and non-Iranian, settled and nomad. Those outsiders (like the Scythians/Sakas) who bordered on key regions of political control might sometimes acknowledge the authority invested in the nearest representatives of a distant king. More often, probably, they sought as independent entities to profit from the state when they were not in conflict with it.

The western coast of the Caspian. Dividing the north was the coastland and bordering mountains which flank the sea called Caspian or Hyrcanian (Str., 11.6.1; Ptol., 5.12.1). The eponymous people, the Caspians (q.v.; Ptol., 6.2.5), is listed by Herodotus among those tributary to Darius I. Tax district XI (Hdt., 3.92) was comprised of the Caspii and other tribes (named Pausicae, Pantimathi, and Daritae—cf. the people of “Daritis country” in Media, Ptol., 6.2.6). The area it covered, to judge by the classical sources, was the southwestern coast, north across Caspiana—the plain of the lowest reaches of the Cyrus (mod. Kur) and Araxes (q.v.)/Aras rivers—which the Armenians detached from Media (Str., 11.14.5). It extended to the eastern end of the Caucasus mountains, which, Eratosthenes stated, also were called the “Caspian” mountains (Str., 11.2.15; Ptol., 5.13.3-6). The Caucasian-speaking Albani tribes replaced the Caspians along the mountains. The latter are said to have vanished by Roman times (Str., 11.4.5), although Aelian (2nd cent. C.E.) had a source, of unknown age, which described how the Caspii marketed their fish in Ecbatana and also made some remarkable products from fish (*De natura animalium* 17.32). Along the coast the Caspii may have been enveloped in the Arsacid period by the “Scythian Gelae” (Str., 11.5.1; cf. Pliny, 6.18.48, where Gelae are equated with the Cadusii [on whom see below]); these people, the Romans were told, lived north of the Albani, but they probably had already spread down to their historical home on the southwest coast (see [GILĀN iv](#)). Perhaps Sacalbina (Ptol., 5.13.11) on the coast, in Ptolemy’s Armenia, was a Gelae town. The early Sasanians asserted authority over the coastal Gelae, as shown by the existence of a Gelānšāh (the future Wahrām I, r. 273-76, ŠKZ 25/20/47); but in the 4th century Šāpur II seems to acknowledge their autonomy; he made an alliance with them in 357, as with the Chionites (Amm. Marc., 17.5.1). The Gelae, like the earlier Cadusii, were noted warriors (ibid.).

Did the Caspians, possibly a fragmented people by Achaemenid times,



originally extend to the northern and eastern shores of the sea? Herodotus's tax district XV—occupied by Caspii and Sakas (Hdt., 3.93)—might have referred to an area adjoining XVI (thus the eastern [“on the left”] Sakas of Str., 11.6.2) or next to XIII in the west. In the latter case, it would take in some of the “perhaps others up to the Scythians” (Str., 11.8.8) who lived above the Caspii and south of the “plains of the Sarmatians” (Str., 11.2.15). To the west it would have claimed part of the mix of nomadic and settled Sarmatians and other Scythians (like the Sacani people of Ptolemy's Sarmatia of Asia, 5.9.20) who were trending southward toward the Caucasus (Str., 11.2.1, 11.5.8), as well as those moving along the Caspian shore. This movement could be facilitated by the tribes' mercenary service (see, e.g., the Sarmatians, Tacitus, *Annales* 11.10). These western people presumably made up the most reachable, and therefore significant, members of the “Beyond the Sea” (Paradraya) Saka dahyu. But, according to Herodotus (3.97), the peoples of the Caucasus marked the limit of Persian rule, to which those living to the north gave no thought; hence an alternative, eastern “Caspian” group has been sought.

The name Caspii occurs in the infantry and the cavalry lists among the nations in Xerxes' army (Hdt., 7.67, 86), armed with reed bows like the Indians (Hdt., 7.65) and both times in the context of eastern peoples. The second time they are paired with one of the two Paricanii peoples—the one which is placed in tax district XVII, on the Indian frontier (Hdt., 3.94; see below, Eastern Iran; see also [CASPIANS](#)). These Caspii might be equated with Ptolemy's district Caspira and the Caspiraei people (Ptol., 7.1.49, 7.1.47), east of Gandāra and extending north at least to Kashmir—thus neighbors of the Daradrae (ibid., in Hazara division, FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas], Pakistan); the latter have been compared with the Dadicae, who make up tax district VII along with other peoples in contact with the upper Indus and Kabul rivers: the Sattagydae, Gandarii, and Aparytae (Hdt., 3.91). The Sakas with whom these Caspi[rae]i would be grouped must have been in northeastern Afghanistan, Badakhshan province, and in the Pamirs east of Sogdiana, in modern Tajikistan.

Western Scythians and Caucasians. In the northwest, independent of Persian domination, if not beyond the temporary reach of Darius I's campaign (Hdt., 4.122), lay the vast living space of diverse peoples, both settled and nomadic, who were embraced under the generic name “Scythians” (Ir. “Saka”; Str., 11.2.1-2, 11.6.2; cf. Hdt., 7.64). To the east they extended past the Caspian through present-day Kazakhstan to the Altai mountains, and to the west across



south Russia. The Scythians, from the irruption of the Cimmerians (q.v.) through the Caucasus into the Near East and Anatolia in the 8th-7th centuries, had also been part of the mix of peoples in the Caucasus; and the passage or settlement of Iranian tribal populations in historical times is indicated by, e.g., the district name Sacasene in Armenia (Str., 11.7.2 and 8.4) and the Scythini near the Black Sea coast (Xen., *An.* 4.7.18). The Sarmatae (Hdt.: Sauromatae), the Scythian people dwelling from the Don river and the Sea of Azov eastward (Hdt., 4.21), continued to press westward into Europe, and their lands adjoining the Caucasus became the domain of the Iranian Alans (q.v.) from the first century C.E. until their conquest by the Huns (q.v.).

The mountain-dwellers of the Caucasus, even to a greater degree than those of the Zagros, can be visualized as socially divided into small, cohesive tribal units (*amíktōs oíkeîn*, Str., 11.2.16) with considerable dialect diversity (*heteróglōtta*, *ibid.*), whether Caucasian speakers or Iranian-speaking Sarmatians. Although they were jealous of their independence, political fusion was possible, as with the Albani (Str., 11.4.6). Neither social nor linguistic consequences of isolation should be overdrawn, even for the period before the spread of Iranian political control and cultural influence westward into Armenia, Cappadocia, and Pontus (qq.v.). For Arsacid/Roman times Strabo contrasts the above picture with the statement that “70 peoples” shared a common gathering place (*súnengus*; cf., above, OPers. Hamgmatāna “[place of] coming together,” the name of the Median capital); that was the market city of Dioscurias in Colchis, on the Black Sea coast on the south side of the Caucasus (Str., 11.2.16). Pliny (6.5.15) makes it 300 tribes, with the Roman merchants employing 130 interpreters. Thus intercommunication, trade, and social relations such as marriage can be assumed; one indication of these is Strabo’s description of the warlike mountaineer Iberians (the presumed proto-Georgians), who lived south of the Caucasus west of Colchis, as “neighbors and kin [*sungeneîs*]” (Str., 11.3.3) of the Scythians and the Sarmatians. The settled, peaceful Iberians in the lowlands are said to dress “Armenian-style, Mede-style” (*ibid.*; see [GEORGIA i](#) and [ii](#)), i.e., like their other neighbors; and they may have shared much more culture with them. This process was expedited by strategic alliances (e.g., Str., 11.4.5) and common interest in the independence they maintained against Medes and Persians and Alexander (Plut., *Pompey* 34.5).

The southern coast of the Caspian. The southern coast and the coastal range of the Parachoathras (mod. Alborz; Mid. Pers. Pādišxwar-gar in Sasanian times



[see above]) were the territory of the Cadusii, Anariacae, and Amardi/Mardi (Str., 11.8.8, 11.13.3), as well as of less numerous peoples. The last-named group, who share a name with the Persian Mardi discussed above (cf. the ethnicons Parni/Aparni; see [APARNA](#)), is presumed to be Iranian and to have dominated the coast east of the Safid Rud (the [A]mardus river and the Mardi people, Ptol., 6.2.5), in present-day Gilān prior to the arrival of the Gelae. The Arsacid Phraates I (176-171 B.C.E.) conquered the Amardi (Just., 41.5.10) as Parthian control of the Alborz and of the Median east-west road expanded; the way to success here was prepared by the earlier incorporation of Hyrcania into the kingdom (Just., 41.6.7). Phraates is said to have settled Mardi at his foundation Charax, near the pass of the Caspian Gates connecting Media with Parthia; presumably the duty of the settlers was to secure the road (Isid. Char., 6). The name of the Anariacae “non-Aryas” is more ambiguous. Strabo and others (Ptol., 6.2.5; Pliny, 6.18.46; Polybius, 5.44.9) use it as a specific ethnicon; another group even came and lived among them (Str., 11.7.1). However, the name looks like an epithet that could have been commonly used and passed along by Iranians, especially by intruding Sakas (with their *Arya- tribal names such as “Alan” and “Ariacae,” Ptol., 6.14.9, 14); they might have applied it to peoples, perhaps displaced by invasions, who had taken refuge in the rugged, infertile isolation (Str., 11.7.1) of the Parachoathras. Ctesias for one did not use it in his list of peoples of the area (Diod. Sic., 2.2.3). In any case, the central coastal peoples of later Māzandarān (“those from the Caspian Sea,” Curt., 3.2.8) supplied more troops to Darius III’s last battle in 331 B.C.E. than the Iranian Hyrcanii or Tapuri to the east of them.

Cadusii. The most often mentioned of the littoral peoples were the Cadusii (q.v.; Str., 11.7.1), who held the part of the Parachoathras mountains west of the Amardus river (Ptol., 6.2.1-2; cf. 6.2.5) and so overlapped with the Caspii. The Cadusii are among the peoples Strabo characterizes as predatory and transhumants (Str., 11.13.3). They lived just north of the Medians (Str., 11.8.8), against whom they defended their independence (see above, Western Iran). They seem to have maintained the same position vis-à-vis the Achaemenids, in a way consistent both with the history of the Gelae in Sasanian times and with that of the people of the Alborz in the medieval Islamic period (see [DEYLAMITES](#)). The sources do not allow us to conclude in what period the Cadusii were tributary to the king, when they were giftgivers, or when they were independent and hiring out as mercenaries of the king. In 405 B.C.E. Darius II fell sick and died after campaigning against the Cadusii (Xen., *Hellenica* 2.1.8). Relations must have been restored; for, at the battle of Cunaxa



in 401, their leader commanded the center in front of the new king, Artaxerxes II, and fell in battle (Plut., *Artaxerxes* 9; for the king's position at Cunaxa: Xen., *An.* 1.8.12). The same king fought them ca. 385 and was defeated (Diod. Sic., 15.8.5; Trogus Pompeius, *Prologus* 10); and he concluded a peace treaty with their kings (Plut., *Artox.* 24.5). Artaxerxes III fared more successfully in his war (Diod. Sic., 17.6.1-2; Just., 10.3.2-3). In Darius III's army, they served with the Medes and Albanians and the Sacesinae of Armenia (Arr, *An.* 3.8.4); as at Cunaxa, they were in the front line, left of center (3.11.3-5). A year later, Alexander heard that the king would be reinforced in Media by Cadusian and Scythian allies (*súmmachoi*, Arr, *An.* 3.19.3), who did not materialize. Their military service appears again under the Seleucid Antiochus III (r. 223-187); Cadusii are found together with Medes, Cissii, and Carmanii under a Median commander (Polyb., 5.79.7; Livy, 35.48), and Strabo's information about their skill with the javelin may derive from their contribution to the fight against Mark Antony's invading force in Armenia in 35 B.C.E. (Str., 11.13.4).

Hyrcanii. At the southeast corner of the Caspian, the land of the Hyrcanii (NPers. Gorgān, q.v.), with its well-watered, cultivated fields and forests (Str., 11.7.2) extended from the mountains and the coast up to and along the Atrak (q.v.) river. The settlement of the area by Iranian-speakers is reflected in the Avestan geographical summary, which preserves an older name: "Xnənta holding the settlement of the Vəhrkāna" (Vd. 1.11). The old name persisted in the Chrēndi people of the region's interior, and perhaps the Charinda river farther west along the coast (Ptol., 6.9.5, 6.2.2; cf. the Chindrum river, Pliny, 6.18.48). The name of the Iranian *Vṛkāna tribe is distinctive in that it may evidence a wolf totem from the people's Central Asian heritage. (Cf. the *Buryat* Mongols; see refs. s.v. *börī* "wolf," for lore of the wolf as "guide, ancestor, or nurse," in G. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* II, Wiesbaden, 1965, p. 333; for *vṛka and the problematic name of the Old Persian eighth month, see Schmitt, 2003b, pp. 44-47.) Xenophon depicts the Hyrcanii as subject to the Assyrians, as the Medes were (Cyr. 4.2.1), and he has them submit to Cyrus II voluntarily (Cyr. 1.1.4); presumably they would do so because they regarded the new king as legitimate successor, as did the Bactrians, in Ctesias's account (see below, Eastern Iran). Their political experience may have given Hyrcanian individuals ready entrée into Achaemenid service. In 465 B.C.E. a "Hyrcanian by birth," named Artabanus, is found as captain of the royal bodyguard and plotting the murder of Xerxes I (Diod. Sic., 11.69.1). Ca. 425 B.C.E. Ctesias has the future Darius II be named as satrap of Hyrcania (Photius, *Bibl.* 72.47; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F15) an act



reminiscent of princely appointments to Bactria (see below, Eastern Iran).

A close tribal and/or economic relationship, as well as a common need to resist the pressure of “predatory and nomadic” groups (Str., 11.7.2) in the region, may have shaped a close bond between the Hyrcanii and the people to the southeast, the Parthians, to the extent that they could be combined as a single dahyu. The two peoples may have been subject to the Medes together (see above for the Medes and the Parthians). Together “Varkāna and Parthava became rebellious” (DB 2.92-93), i.e., challenged Darius I’s assumption of power. The two made up a common tax district (Str., 11.9.1), originally as part of the great district XVI of the northeast (Hdt., 3.93, not mentioning Hyrcania). They paid tribute together at the end of the Achaemenid period and under Alexander as well (Arr., *An.* 3.23.4; Str., 11.9.1). Hyrcania became part of the Parthian Arsacid domain early on (under Arsaces I; see ref. to Phraates I, above), and Hyrcanii may have enjoyed a certain insider status through clan links. In 127 B.C.E. Phraates II’s favorite, a “Hyrcanian by lineage,” Himerus, governed in Babylonia while the king fought and lost to the Scythians (Diod. Sic., 34/35.21.1; Just., 42.1.3). Artabanus II (d. ca. 38 C.E.) may have come from Hyrcania (see [ARTABANUS](#); he was “raised among the Scythians,” Tac., *Ann.* 6.41) and had marriage ties there (also in Carmania, Tac., *Ann.*, 6.36); thus, when driven from the throne, he took refuge in the north with family (Tac., *Ann.*, 6.43; see also below, on the Dahae).

Derbices. One of the peoples pressing on Hyrcania in the Achaemenid period was the Derbices. Eratosthenes located them in the arid region north of the Atrak (Str., 11.8.8). Apparently a numerous people, they must have held or shared the territory from the Caspian coast to the Oxus also occupied by the Dahae; Pliny (6.18.48) has the “Drebices” straddling the Oxus, and Stephanus Byzantinus (Jacoby, IIC, 688 F11) extends them to Bactria and up India. In Ctesias’s account it was the Derbices against whom Cyrus waged his last campaign; victorious (thanks to Saka aid), he assigned them a satrap (Photius, *Bibl.* 72.7-8; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F9). Some Derbices continued moving to the southwest along the Caspian shore past the Hyrcanii into central Māzanderān (the Dribyces, Ptol., 6.2.5). In the accounting of Darius III’s army at Gaugamela, these Derbices furnished more troops (40,000) than all the other peoples on the Caspian coast combined (Curt., 3.2.7). Some others found their way southeastward into Margiana—a migration pattern analogous with that of the next group, the Tapuri (Ptol., 6.10.2).

Tapuri. The mountains inland from the coast of Hyrcania are called the



“Tapurian mountains” by Arrian, after the people there, settled in the mountains between the Derbices and the Hyrcanii (Str., 11.9.1, 11.11.8). They are spread toward the Caspian Gates and Rhaga in Media (Ptol., 6.2.6). These western Tapuri could have resulted from a tribal division north of the Sarnius/Atrak river—another, perhaps ancestral, group, the Tapurei, is located by Ptolemy (6.14.12) in Scythia. The remainder moved south and east into Margiana (“between the Hyrcani and the Arii,” Str., 11.8.8; Ptol., 6.10.2) along the Ochus/Arius (mod. Tejen/Hari-rud) river into Aria (cf. Polyb., 10.49). The Tapuri on the Caspian could, alternatively, represent a later westward migration along the main east-west highway from Margiana. These Tapuri furnished 1,000 cavalry for the battle of Gaugamela (Curt., 3.2.7), apparently aligned with the Hyrcanii (the “Topeiri,” Arr., *An.* 3.8.4). Alexander later subdued them (Arr., *An.* 3.23.1-2; Polyb., 5.44.5; Curt., 6.4.24-25). A separate satrap administered them at the time of Alexander’s arrival, and this official was assigned the Caspian Mardi as well (Arr., *An.* 3.22.7, 24.3; 4.18.2).

Strabo remarks on a few customs of this general region which he has heard about: the Tapuri practice serial marriage (Str., 11.9.1); the Derbices have a food taboo on female animals (Str., 11.11.8); geronticide is reported of the Tapuri, Derbices, and Caspii (ibid.; for the related custom of the exposure of corpses [see [DEATH ii](#)], see also Str., 11.11.3). The practice of skull deformation (Str., 11.11.8), in Sasanian times observed among the Hephthalites (q.v.), is mentioned without being clearly assigned to a particular people or tribe.

North of the Atrak river. To the immediate north of Hyrcania lay desert frontier and, beyond, a configuration of tribes spread eastward from the coast to the Oxus river, called collectively the Dahae. They seem to be contiguous with (see [DAHAE ii](#)), and of uncertain relationship to (Str., 11.9.3; Pliny, 6.19.50), the great family of Iranian Saka tribes beyond the Oxus, and also to the west of the Aral Sea. They appear to dominate the lower region, even as other (or related?) groups like the Derbices and Tapuri pass through or around. As in the case of the Amardi, the “Dahae” name is homophonous with that of a nomadic Persian tribe, the Dai (in Hdt. 1.125). They are claimed explicitly in only one list of the Achaemenid dahyus (XPh 26-27), where they are named just before the Saka groups. Various Dahae came to live in Margiana. Their best-known member tribe, the Parni/Aparni (see [APARNA](#)) lived along the Hari-rud/Ochus river (Str., 11.9.2), then descended into Parthia and there established a base for the expansion of the domain of the Arsacid (q.v.) dynasty. Strabo also records the Aparni as living near the Caspian coast



and facing Hyrcania, while the other Dahae tribes (called Xanthi and Pissuri) lived to the east, facing Aria (Str., 11.8.2), so the Aparni may first have migrated eastward into their kinfolk's territory. Whether as subjects or as allies, the Dahae fought in Darius III's army, aligned with the subject Bactrians and Arachosians at Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 3.11.3). After submission of the northern peoples to Alexander, they served in his Indian expedition (Arr., *An.* 5.12.2, with Sogdians, Bactrians, and Scythians) and, no doubt, in the subsequent wars among the Macedonian successors (mentioned, Polyb., 5.79.3; Livy, 35.48), as well as in conflicts of the Arsacids (e.g., as troops of Gotarzes II, together with Hyrcanii [Tac., *Ann.* 11.8]; see [GÖDARZ](#)).

Still farther north, around the Aral Sea and between the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, were the people (*éthnos*) made up of the Massagetae and the Sakas (Str., 11.8.8, citing Eratosthenes); their component tribes included (by historical times) the Chorasmii (*ibid.*) and perhaps the Apasiacae (q.v.) between the Aral and the Caspian seas (Polyb., 10.48.1, relates how they penetrated into Hyrcania). They occupied the fluid zone of interaction between settled and nomadic peoples which Cyrus and Alexander each tried to stabilize as a secure border. The destruction of Cyrus by forces of the Massagetae (as related in Hdt., 1.201-14) was the opening act in the continuous struggle of central regimes to manage the settled populace of Transoxiana and to control the intrusion of new peoples coming from the north. In the buffer area from the Caspian east to the Jaxartes are placed the two families of eastern Sakas named in the dahyu lists and depicted as thronebearers at Naqš-e Rostam (DNe 15; A3Pb 14-15): the Haumavargā (q.v. for the problem of the "Amyrgii" of Xerxes I's army, Hdt., 7.64) at the easternmost reach of the Achaemenids into Central Asia, the northernmost of that of Alexander; and the more westerly, and visually distinctive, Tigraxaudā "of the pointed caps." The latter must have adjoined the Dahae, if they were not in fact part of the same larger nation.

The Sakas must have held strong, common economic interests in common with Bactria and Sogdiana, as well as with Chorasmia. They could not surround, and ultimately absorb the larger and partly mountainous territories, as they did ancient Chorasmia, but they did find there opportunities for military service. Dahae, Massagetae, and other Sakas, when not migrating toward Margiana or Hyrcania, found ready entrance onto the Iranian plateau as troops of king or satrap, most likely through collection points in Bactria. Sakas served as allies (Arr., *An.* 3.8.3), mercenaries, and



probably hostages for the Achaemenids, for Alexander, and also for the Arsacids (e.g., those at Seleucia, Strabo 16.1.16, or those hired by Phraates II in 139 B.C.E. and then cheated—as they saw it—of their pay, Just., 42.1.2).

The Chorasmii were a stable, settled population on the lower Oxus before the Achaemenids. They are named consistently in the dahyu lists, implying an ongoing Achaemenid claim to suzerainty, but they must also have needed to come to terms with the nomadic peoples around them. Economic ties with Bactria and Sogdiana presumably continued, even as the population of the region became more and more Scythian in character. (See [CHORASMIA i](#) for political history.) By the late Achaemenid period they appear autonomous in Arrian's account (4.15.4), with their king himself coming with 1,500 horsemen to submit to Alexander; Curtius (8.1.8) speaks of a satrap sending envoys, whether acting alone or possibly in concert with the Dahae (Just., 12.6.18).

EASTERN IRAN

The Uplands. The central deserts of Iran and the lands beyond them formed a distinct world of Iranian habitat, and one with different foreign peoples and cultures with which to interface, as compared with the west. A political concept of the strategic east is found in the term “Upland” peoples/places/satrapies, in the later classical sources, with particular application to Aria, Parthia, Arachosia, Bactria, and Sogdiana (Gk. *ánō*, Lat. *superior*; Str., 15.2.1; Diod. Sic., 17.37.1, 19.21.1; Just., 41.4.2; *ta anōtātō éthnē* for Mid. Pers. Abaršahr [q.v., old Parthia], in ŠKZ 3/2/4). This same region forms the core of the Aryan living space described in the Avesta (*Vd.* 1; see [AVESTAN GEOGRAPHY](#)). The reality of the “Upland” concept is supported by the great expanse of Herodotus's tax district XVI (3.93): the Parthi (with the Hyrcanii) are combined with the Arii (who must include the Margiani; the latter name is not mentioned in the list) and the northern dahyus of the Sogdi and Chorasmii. Only Bactria is kept apart.

With continuities of language and culture, the Upland peoples were able to work together and fight together, whether under Achaemenid, Macedonian, or their own leadership. These continuities worked to maintain the Iranian character of the Uplands, even as the population became increasingly diversified. The Uplands peoples make up the extreme left-wing line and cavalry forces at Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 3.11.3-6; some are on the right wing also). Bactrians, Sogdians, Scythians, and Dahae are all found fighting later, in Alexander's service (Arr., *An.* 5.11.2). After Alexander's return to Persepolis, it



was his intention to recognize the service of the Bactrians, Sogdians, Arachoti, Zarangi, Arii, and Parthyeni by giving their unit a status comparable to that of the Macedonian Companions (Arr., *Ind.* 7.6.3; Just., 12.12.1-5; Scythians are not mentioned here, although they had served in India). In 317 B.C.E. the northernmost peoples were absent from Eumenes army, and his gathering of eastern peoples centered on Ariana (see below); it included, besides Persians, the Carmanii, Arachoti, Paropamisadae, Arii, Drangi (= Zarangi), Bactrians, and also Indians (Diod. Sic., 19.14.5-8).

Ctesias has the dying Cyrus actually define a political East, as if anticipating the Sasanian princely rulerships (cf., e.g., [HORMOZD KUŠĀNŠĀH](#)). The king divides his realm, appointing his youngest son Tanyoxarces as “autocrat of the Bactrians and of the territories of the Chora[s]mians and the Parthians and the Carmanians, directing these lands to be held tribute-free” (Photius, *Bibl.* 72.8; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F9). It is not known if this account reflects some actual, tribal Persian tradition of dividing authority. On firmer historical ground, after Artaxerxes III’s executive officer (see [CHILIARCH](#)) Bagoas resolved the rebellion in Egypt in 349 B.C.E., he next was sent to “follow up on everything for the king in the Upper Satrapies” (Diod. Sic., 16.50.8); perhaps his mission was to check a drift toward eastern autonomy during the preceding years of the crisis in Egypt.

Ariana. Overlapping the Uplands is the vision of “Ariana” (q.v.), which is interpreted as meaning a traditional habitat of the Arya-speakers. That is, it represented a sort of Aryan hinterland with mobile populations which shared many linguistic and cultural continuities. Envisaged by Eratosthenes as rectangular in shape, it extended from the Parachoathras mountains and the Paropamisus (see below, Paropamisadae) south to the climatically and economically hostile (to horse and cattle raisers) shores of the Sea of Oman, and from the Indus river west to Carmania and the Caspian Gates (Str., 15.2.1). Eratosthenes also explained (Str., 11.8.9, 11.10.1) the roads which ran through the region and tied it to India and Bactria, as well as to the west and other Aryan-speakers—who were in a sense separated from Ariana by the central deserts but also linked to it by language, culture, and history. Thus Strabo observes (15.2.8): “The name of Ariana can be extended [west] as far as parts of the Persians and the Medes and, to the north, the Bactrii and Sogdiani, since they are speakers of, by and large, the same language (*homóglōttoi*).” In the south and east of Ariana, however, the Iranian-speakers would encounter a numerous Indo-Aryan population, as well as diverse non-Aryan peoples. (See



below and [INDIA ii-iv.](#))

Aria and Margiana. As Strabo explains (11.8.1), proceeding eastward one passed through Hyrcania, with the Sarnius/Atrak river to the north, above which lay the desert of modern Kazakhstan; to the south lay the continuation of the Parachoathras mountains, with Parthia on the other side. Continuing on, one reached the beneficent rivers, the Harirud and, farther along, the Morḡāb. These nourished the farmlands of the Arii and Margiani peoples (OPers. Haraiva and Margu; *Vd.* 1.9 and 1.6); the two dahyu are paired in *Yt.* 10.14 as lands receiving abundant water. Margiana enjoyed “celebrated sunshine” (Pliny, 6.18.46) and thrived in spite of the nearness of the desert (cf. Pliny, 6.25.93, who here refers particularly to Aria with his “Ariana”). Both regions were famous for viticulture (Str., 11.10.1), which is abundantly attested by the archive of vineyard receipts excavated at Nisa in old Margiana (near Ashkabad, the capital of Turkmenistan; Diakonoff and Livshits). Each also had its principal town, the predecessors of Herat (q.v.) and Marw respectively. Pliny (6.25.94) lists a number of tribes in “Ariana”; others, probably more ancient, are found in Ptolemy (6.17.3), such as the Nisaei (see [NISĀYA](#), no. 8, at [iranicaonline.org](#)), Etymandri (see [HELMAND](#)), and the Paruti “along the Paromadisadae.” This is the Avestan land Pouruta (for the name, see Mayrhofer, II, p. 228), which is paired with Iškata (q.v.) as receiving abundant water (*Yt.* 10.14). These areas could represent the Kuh-e Siāh of western Afghanistan and other extensions south of the Farāh Rud, in the direction of Arachosia. The name Pouruta has been compared with that of the Aparytae of Herodotus’s district VII; the latter, whether Iranian or Indian, are grouped with Indian peoples to the east, the Gandarii, Sattagydae, and Dadicae (Hdt., 3.91).

These lands and water sources beckoned to the nomadic peoples to the north, and Ptolemy records none but such migrants in his Margiana—for example, the Tapyri, positioned between Hyrcanii and Arians (Str., 11.8.8), but also in contact with some of the Derbices (“Derbiccae,” Ptol., 6.10.2). Some Parni are here, as well as to the southwest in Parthia (see below). Pliny (6.18.47) adds a Mardi group, extending over to Bactria; these can be compared with Ptolemy’s Mardyeni just to the north in Sogdiana (6.12.4). Strabo refers to nomadic groups in general (“tent-dwellers”) as present in the mountain regions (Str., 11.10.1). Alexander’s general Craterus founded an Alexandria (the city of Marw; Str., 11.10.2) as part of a line of six towns (Curt., 7.10.15) intended to secure the region, primarily against the perennial threat from the north.



Neither Alexander (Pliny, 6.18.47) nor the Seleucids who rebuilt after him enjoyed lasting success with these bulwarks; as Curtius observes (7.10.16), in his time the tribes (*gentes*) who were supposed to be governed by the towns now controlled them. Similarly, the results of the Arsacid settlement of some or all of the 10,000 Roman troops said to have been taken prisoner at Carrhae (q.v.; 53 B.C.E.) are unknown (Plut., *Crassus* 31; Pliny, 6.18.47; see also [DEPORTATIONS ii](#)).

Bactria and Sogdiana. East and north of Margiana lay the country of the Bactrii (see [BACTRIA i](#)) and, across the Oxus, the more sparsely settled one (Curt., 7.10.1) of the Sogdii. Both are noted in Avestan geography (*Vd.* 1.7, 1.5), and Sogdiana is paired with Chorasmia among the lands receiving abundant water (*Yt.* 10.14). Each had its major town—Maracanda (Samarkand, q.v. at *iranica.com*) in Sogdiana, and in Bactria the administrative center (*basíleion*) Bactra (Balkh), with the nearby town of Zariaspa on the Oxus (thus Ptol., 6.11.9 and 7; Pliny, 6.18.45, identifies the two; they are distinct in Arr., *An.* 4.7, 4.16). Zariaspa carried a tribal name, that of the Zariaspae (Ptol., 6.11.6; from the eponym, “Having golden horses” [Mayrhofer, III, p. 581; the personal name is borne by a Persian noble, Curt., 9.10.19]).

Bactria especially was the counterpart to Persia in the west, with a large and stable population and a robust economy; of varying climate, its kinder regions brought forth “a vast multitude of men and horses” (Curt., 7.4.30, evoking an image like that of the no doubt aristocratic Avestan name *Virāspa* “Having men and horses,” Gignoux, no. 1004). Bactria’s potential as a power center may already appear in its early involvement with Media in western affairs (discussed above) and may be reflected in Ctesias’s romance of its conquest by an Assyrian king (Diod., 2.5-7).

Close relations must have existed with the neighboring Scythian peoples. The Scythians’ readiness to cement a relationship with intermarriage (cf. the offer to Alexander and his officers, Curt., 8.1.9) may support other, uncertain cultural indicia, such as the claim that in former times Bactrians and Sogdians were much like the nomads in lifestyle and customs, and that they shared the practice of geronticide in Alexander’s time (Str., 11.11.3). These claims could be true, or they could be invented to explain more general continuities in Iranian culture between the populations, such as esteem for the horse and for cattleraising and the values derived from that aspect of their economy. Shared elements of traditional history (see IRAJ, *HŌŠANG*) also may point to ties between nomad and settled.



Bactria (“the Bactrian *éthnos*,” Hdt. 1.153) was one of Cyrus’s concerns after the conquest of Lydia. In Ctesias’s (perhaps revisionist) account, however, the region had a higher priority; and it promptly submitted after Cyrus’s accession to power, viewing him as a legitimate successor in the Median line (Photius, 72.2; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F9). Similarly, and better attested, the uprising of Ciçantaxma against Darius I in Asagarta (see below) also invoked Median legitimacy. The Achaemenids had to have a dual concern: (1) A firm hold on Bactria was necessary to check any general tendency toward autonomy such as occurred in the far western lands; possible symptoms might be the rebellion of a satrap of Bactria, Artabanus, under Artaxerxes I (Ctesias: Photius, 72.35; Jacoby, IIC, 688 F14), as well as the above-mentioned mission of Bagoas. Bactria may have been a preferred posting for members of the royal family. Xerxes I’s brother Masistes served there, and he hoped to escape from the king’s grasp back to where the Bactrians and Sakas “loved him [like a father]” (Hdt., 9.113.). A younger son of Xerxes I, Hystaspes, also is mentioned as satrap there (Diod. Sic., 11.69.2). (2) The frontier needed to be stabilized, to resist incursions and population pressures from the north. The tools employed for this were city foundations and population transfers (see [DEPORTATIONS i](#)), even voluntary migrations—in the case of the city in Sogdiana established by the Branchidae (priests of Apollo at Didyma, near Miletus) during the reign of Xerxes I and destined to be destroyed by Alexander (Str., 11.11.4). Cyrus worked to secure a border at the river Jaxartes, marking it with several city foundations including Kureschata “Cyropolis” (q.v.; Curt., 7.6.16; Arr. *An.* 4.1.4, 4.3.1).

By late Achaemenid times the northeastern peoples were well accustomed to fighting together. After the battle of Salamis (480 B.C.E.), the general Mardonius chose the troops of the Medes, Bactrians, Sakas, and Indians in their entirety for the continuing land campaign, and at Plataeae he aligned them next to each other (Hdt., 8.113, 9.31). The satrap of Bactria, Bessus, brought reinforcements for the battle of Gaugamela: Bactrians and Sogdians, Saka allies, and “the Indians who border on the Bactrians” (Arr., *An.* 3.8.3; cf. the Indians who “live like Bactrians” [Hdt., 3.102]). These last could be peoples within reach via the Bactra-Ortospana/Kabul road (Str., 15.2.8) from the Paropamisadae, and Indians from the upper Indus/Kabul rivers region. The Sakas were independent allies, not subjects; the name of their chief, Mauaces, could be a regnal name, perhaps echoed in a dynastic descendant, the first-century B.C.E. Indo-Scythian Maues (for coins, see [INDO-SCYTHIAN DYNASTY](#) at iranicaonline.org). As noted above, Bactrian cavalry were deployed at



Gaugamela with Dahae and with Scythians on the left wing (Arr., *An.* 3.11.3).

The potential for Bactria's separation was shown after the defeat of Darius III by the energetic efforts of the satrap Bessus (see [BESSOS](#)) to mobilize against Alexander a multi-ethnic, regional alliance of Bactrians, Chorasmii, Dahae, Sakas, Scythians from beyond the Jaxartes, and Indians (Arr., *An.* 4.17.4-7). He is depicted as confidently mobilizing the local resources (Diod. Sic., 17.74.1-2). But, after they were forced by Alexander's speedy advance to retreat from their own country into Sogdiana, the Bactrians became dispirited and abandoned the fight, and the coalition dissolved (Curt., 9.4.5-6, 20). After the subjection of Sogdiana was completed, Alexander turned back toward India taking into his army as hostages some number (Curt., 8.5.1, gives 30,000) of young men from across the Uplands (*ex omnibus provinciis*); regional contingents continued to fight together, now in the Macedonian service.

Alexander is credited with eight city foundations in Bactria and Sogdiana (Str., 11.11.4; or twelve, Just., 12.5.13); his farthest was Alexandria Eschate (mod. Khojand) on the upper Jaxartes (Curt., 7.6.25; Pliny, 6.18.49), which was built to hold this frontier in the face of the Scythians across the river (Arr., *An.* 4.4.1-2). The role of the new bases was accentuated by destruction of some long-established towns such as Maracanda (Samarkand; Str., 11.11.4) and Cyropolis (q.v.; Curt., 7.6.16). Alexander settled in the new towns his malcontent or invalided troops, former Greek mercenaries of the Achaemenids, people transferred from older (and perhaps recently destroyed) towns, and local people, whether volunteers or conscripts (Arr., *An.* 4.4.1; Diod., 17.99.5-6, 18.7.1; Just., 12.5.12; see also [CENTRAL ASIA iii](#)). A substantial fighting force was left to populate and secure the frontier: in Bactria 10,000 troops plus 3,500 cavalry (Arr., *An.* 4.22.3); Diodorus (18.7.2) makes the number of Greeks who later rebelled against their forced settlement 20,000 for the Uplands generally. The cavalry were no doubt needed to cope with the hit-and-run tactics of the nomads; for example, Alexander's general Craterus was able to respond quickly to an ambush by Dahae and Massagetae, and the Macedonians claimed to have killed 1,000 Dahae (Curt., 8.1.6). Alexander's motivation for founding cities was not only to create safe havens; they were also intended to promote settlement of nomad populations as "farmers and laborers on the land," taming their wild ways and making them "fearful about doing harm to one another" (Arr., *Ind.* 40.8).

Ca. 245 B.C.E. the secession of Diodotus the satrap from the Seleucid kingdom can be seen as an inevitable expression of the dynamics in this region. The



newkingdom is described as “the Bactrian empire of 1,000 cities” (Just., 41.1.8, 41.4.5). However, according to Justin (41.6.3) the Greeks in Bactria exhausted themselves in wars with the neighboring Iranians (Sogdii, Arachoti, Drancae, Arii) and Indians. Their power in Bactria passed to the Yueh-Chih in the late second century B.C.E., while continuing for a time in north India (see [INDO-GREEK DYNASTY](#)). In spite of the contribution of the Greek and Macedonian population to the political forms, art, and culture of the Iranian plateau—toward the “cultural mixture” (*anákrasis*) desired by Alexander (Plut., *Alex.* 47.5)—it can be said (with Livy, 38.17.10) that the foreign element in the end became absorbed into the surrounding Iranian populace. In this way was completed the adaptation to local customs, the achievement of “common practice” (*koinōnía*, Plut., *Alex.* 47.5), that Alexander envisaged somewhat differently (cf. Plut., *Alex.* 45.1). (See [HELLENISM](#), also [HERAUS](#).)

The Parthians had no opportunity to push for control of the northeast. The diversification of population there continued with “the nomads who took away Bactriana from the Greeks” (Str., 11.8.2; Trogus, *Prologi* 41, 42)—that is, the Asii, Pasiani, Tochari (Ptol., 6.11.6, in Bactria “below Zariaspa,” 6.12.4, “Tachori” in Sogdiana) and Sacarauili who had come from beyond the Jaxartes. Ca. 124 B.C.E. the Arsacid king Artabanus became one more king who died combating, and perhaps deflecting, the advance of northern intruders—in this case, the Tochari (Just., 42.2.4). The Saka invaders continued southward (see below, Arachosians), perhaps forced to move on by the Tochari and Asii, who are said to have destroyed the Sacaraucae (Trogus, *Prologus* 42).

The Tochari and Asii are equated with the Yueh-Chih, who brought about the Kushan empire of the 1st-3rd centuries C.E., which came to extend through the Indus region and northwest India (see [HUVIŠKA](#) and, at *iranicaonline.org*, KUSHANS). The linking of eastern Iranian economy and culture with northern India under this dynasty had a lasting influence, evoked also under its claimed successors in the east, the Kidarites (see [HUNS](#)). Likewise in the Kushano-Sasanian principality (ca. 233-34 to mid 4th century), which centered on Bactria, Aria, and the Paropamisadae (cf. Huyse, II, p. 34), the Persian ruler would attempt to stabilize the eastern frontier while accommodating its economic and cultural diversity. The position must have been especially prestigious; the prince comes near the top of the list of regional kings in the Paikuli inscription ([44]/41).

In the 4th century C.E. the migration of tribal Iranian-speakers out of Central Asia came to an end, while the first Altaic-speakers appear, with the influx of



the Chionites (q.v.). This movement continued in the following centuries with the establishment of the Hephthalites (q.v.; see also [HUNS](#), [HUNNIC COINAGE](#)) in the northeast. They prepared the way for entry of the Turkic peoples, who were to play such a major role in the subsequent history of the Iranian-speakers. (See SASANIAN POLITICAL HISTORY at iranica.com.) All of these movements accommodated themselves to the enduring language of the dense and perduring local Arya-speaking population (see Sims-Williams and Cribb for the term “Arya” in Kanishka’s Robatak inscription; see Sims-Williams for the other documents in the Bactrian language).

Parthians. The northern connection of the Parthians, mentioned above in regard to Herodotus’s tax district XVI, also occurs in Hdt. 3.66, where the Parthians and Chorasmians in Xerxes’ invasion force have a common commander. The semi-arid country was characterized in Arsacid times as poor (Str., 11.9.1); the population was in part nomadic (Pliny, 6.29.113)—the “more distant” Parthians, who are probably those toward Carmania to the south. In the second half of the third century B.C.E. Parthia became the home of the Dahae group (Str., 11.8.2) of the Parni/Aparni. From Strabo’s description, there may have been a progressive encroachment into both Parthia and Hyrcania, eventually leading to conquest of these lands (Str., 11.8.3; more clearly, in Just., 41.1.10-11, which also supports their intrusion into Margiana). The nomadic Parni, perhaps repeatedly, violated their agreement with the settled populations, whereby the latter paid tribute to the nomads at their seasonal (*taktoîs tisî chrónois*, Str., loc. cit.) visitations. (As was noted above, the Uxii and perhaps others of the herder peoples may have had a similar arrangement.) The Parni assimilated to the language and culture of their new domain; Justin (41.2.3) gives a rough picture of the process, describing their language as a mixture of Scythian and Median. While disseminating some of their own oral culture and other folkways, they acquired the identity of “Parthians,” which they carried westward in their expansion during the second century B.C.E. (See [ARSACIDS](#), also [GÖDARZ](#).)

Sagartii. The Asagartiyā/Sagartii were one of the Persian tribes (see above, Western Iran) and thus Persian in speech (Hdt., 7.85); they are classed as nomads. They form a separate dahyu only in DPe 15. They are not exempt from tribute (Herodotus includes them in district XIV), whether due to their physical, economic, or cultural separation from Persia, or because the exemption applied only to the settled Persians in the first place. Only one dispatch to Asagarta is preserved in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets



(Hallock, no. 1501), in contrast to the volume of communications to and from Kerman. A habitat just to the south of Parthia, within Carmania Deserta (see above), seems likely, given their inclusion in XIV, implying contact with Drangiana. Ptolemy's Pasacartia (6.5.4) in western Parthia, may also bear witness to their presence in the desert, but the Sagartii may have ranged well beyond there. Ptolemy (6.2.6) shows them also in Media; and so the Sagartii, although Persians, may have had close bonds with the Medians, through direct contact as well as Median influence in Parthia. In any case, one of Darius I's unsuccessful challengers (list, DB 4.1-32; Bab. 89-96) was Ciçantaxma, who rebelled in Asagarta and claimed to be a Median of Cyaxares' lineage; a Mede was sent to subdue him (DB 2.78-91; Bab. 61-64).

Drangiana. The lowlands of Aria led south to Drangiana (q.v., OPers. Zranka), the region of the Hamun lake, and presumably including the lower Helmand river. It is included in Herodotus's district XIV (3.93), which covers much of the area of Strabo's Ariana and takes in the peoples of the drainage regions to the south of Parthia and Aria: the Sagartii and Sarangei (i.e., the people of Drangiana), and the Thamaneii—this last group perhaps an important (pre-Aryan?) tribe along the river system, from their inclusion in Herodotus's story (3.117) about the king's exercise of control of water for irrigation. District XIV includes the Persian Gulf region (see below). It also includes the Utii people, whose name is sometimes identified with that of the Yautiyā dahyu in Persia mentioned in DB 3.23. Perhaps this group, like the Sagartii, ranged from the east across the desert to Persia or Carmania. However, the name *Outioi* is also found among the Caspian peoples (Str., 11.7.1, 11.8.8), and possibly no two of the three are related. The Drangae are said to “persianize” (*persízō*, Str., 15.2.10) their way of life, except that they suffer from wine being in short supply; perhaps this statement is not merely a report of a late fashion of Arsacid times fostered along the trade routes, but testimony to an older, enduring interaction with western Iran. “Persianizing” could be reflected in the very name *Dranga circulating beside the presumed local form Zranka, which is the one used in the Achaemenid inscriptions.

Cyrus and his army passed this way, coming via Aria or else from Carmania, on their expedition against the Scythians (i.e., heading for the Paropamisus mountains). They went astray while making their way in this region—in the desert, according to Diodorus (17.81.1)—but were rescued by a local tribe, the Ariaspae; and the king exempted them from tribute and bestowed the honorific name “Benefactors” (Euergetae, Arr., *An.* 3.27.4-5). Diodorus (loc. cit.)



makes them neighbors of the Gedrosii to the south (see below) and fellow subjects with them of Alexander's new satrap, and so the Ariaspae are usually placed on the lower Helmand. (Cf. "Drangae and Gadrosi," *An.*, Arr. 3.28, which may intend to include Ariaspae and other tribes under a broader administrative name.) The tribe's name represents another eponymous ancestor: *Aryāspa "Having noble horses," analogous to the Zariaspa in Bactria (see above) and the possible *Huvaspa ("Maspii," see above) of Persia. Alexander likewise encountered, or sought out (Curt., 7.3.1), this people after the Zrangae/Drangae, whether by the same route as Cyrus or the alternative (Str., 15.2.10; Just., 12.5.9; Ptol., 6.19.5). His route is usually interpreted as following the Helmand. It can also be taken as a direct eastward march from the Zrangian city Phrada/mod. Farāh (q.v.; cf. the epitome of Justin, 12.5.9); and Alexander may have kept close to the direction of the mountains, as he did in India. (Cf. the route delineated by Eratosthenes, Str., 11.8.9: from Prophthasia/Farāh [Diod. Sic., 17.78.4; Ptol., 6.19.4] to the city Arachoti [see also Pliny, 6.24.92], which is variously identified with present-day Kandahār, Kalāt-e Ġilzāy, or some other site in the Helmand system.)

Paropamisadae. Alexander's next destination after the Ariaspae was the Paropamisadae (Str., 15.2.10), who probably are meant by the Indians "next to the Arachoti" (Arr., *An.* 3.28.1). Strabo (15.2.9) describes the general position of peoples (*éthnē*) in eastern Ariana, again (as Nearchus described Persia; see above) in terms of latitudinal zones. They are spread from west to east as far as the Indus region, from south to north: the Gedroseni ("with the others [non-Ariani], who hold the coast" [see below]), then Arachoti, finally Paropamisadae. The Paropamisus mountains (the dahyu Paruparaesanna in DB, Bab. 6; Gandāra, OPers 1.16) include much of the central and eastern Kuh-e Bābā mountains leading eastward to the Hindu Kush (Av. Upāirisaēna) and to India. They must have been home to diverse Aryan- and Indo-Aryan-speaking groups (cf. Str., 15.2.10). Curtius calls the inhabitants by the collective, geographical name, making them one people (*natio*, 7.3.5); but, reminding us of Strabo commenting on the Zagros (see above), he emphasizes the harsh climate and the geographical isolation of this environment. Several Iranian tribes are represented in Ptolemy—the Parsii and Parsyetae (6.18.3), the latter continuing into Arachosia (6.20.3), as well as the above-mentioned *Aryazantu/Aristophyli (6.18.3).

If Cyrus advanced along the Paropamisus route to Bactria, it was probably at this time that he reached Capisa north of present-day Kabul (see [BEGRAM](#);



Ptol., 6.18.4) and destroyed it (Pliny, 6.25.92); presumably he intended to impress his new Indian subjects in this dahyu. These would include the peoples (*éthnea*) explicitly named as Indians west of the Indus and former subjects of the Medes and Persians, the Astaceni and Assaceni (Arr., *Ind.* 1.1-2). The king might also have wished to intimidate the Indians east of the Indus and impede any threat to his force as it turned north on the road to Bactria and the Massagetae and Sakas beyond. Cyrus may have intended to found his own city there, as he did on the northern frontier. Alexander did establish a city, Alexandria in the Caucasus, as a base for control of the region (Arr., *An.* 3.28.4, 4.22.4; Str., 15.2.10; the name is in keeping with the Alexander historians' practice of subsuming the eastern mountain chains under the Caucasus [Str., 11.8.1; cf. Curt., 7.3.19-22]). For population, he as usual drew on the immediate surroundings (*períoikos*), as well as on his own army (Arr., *An.* 4.22.5). Curtius (7.3.23) says that, along with invalided troops, 7,000 from among the subject peoples were "allowed" to settle at Alexandria; and in fact volunteers for the new center for this satrapy (Arr., *An.* 4.21.4-5) might be expected in this region with its long history of urban settlement. Similarly in the Panjab, Alexander is said to have found volunteers among the locals (*proschōroi*, Arr., *An.* 5.29.3). Other, supporting towns (cf. above, in Margiana) within a day's journey of Alexandria are also said to have been founded (Diod., 17.83.2)—one of them apparently a "Nicea" probably in the direction of Kabul (Arr., *An.* 4.21.5).

Arachosians. The dahyu of OPers. Harauvatī/Arachosia (Pliny, 6.25.92) combined the western plains surrounding the Haētumant (*Vd.* 1.14)/Helmand (q.v.) river and the eastern hill country of the Haraxvaitī (*Vd.* 1.13)/Arġandāb river (q.v.); To the north it encountered the mixed Iranian and Indian populations of Drangiana and Paropamisadae. To the east, it met with the Indians of Thatagush/Sattagydia. Leading northeastward, Arachosia provided one of the principal avenues along which Iranians would encounter a transition to Indic population, language, economy, and culture. Coming westward through Arachosia, traffic from northwest India and from the Indus valley could access the desert roads to Carmania, crossing Asagarta territory, and to Persia beyond. The sequence of the thronebearers of the Achaemenid tomb reliefs at Naqš-e Rostam, Drangian > Arachotian > Sattagyidian > Gandharan > Indian seems to express a logical geographical sequence for the flow of communications and administration (A3Pb, matching the sequence in DNa 24-25).



The Achaemenids, although leaving little trace of their presence here (see [INDIA ii](#)), may have staged their penetration of Indian lands from here. The peoples over whom they claimed some degree of authority were defined in the adjoining dahyus of Paruparaesanna/Gandāra (the Gandarii) to the northeast, Thatagush (the Sattagyddii) to the east (from the modern-day Quetta district of Balochistan province, Pakistan, to the Indus, also north through Bannu district in the Northwest Frontier province); both were part of Herodotus's taxation district VII (3.91). To the southeast the lower Indus valley could be reached, the presumed dahyu of Hindu (district XX; see below). When Vahyazdāta, a "false Bardiya," rebelled against Darius I in Yautiyā, Persia, he sent troops into Arachosia against the satrap; either they continued on, or were driven, into Sattagydia, where they also were defeated (DB 3.21-76, Bab. 71-84). The Sattagyddii people could be the "mountain Indians" who fought at Gaugamela together with the Arachosii and under the latter people's satrap (Arr., *An.* 3.8.4), and/or the (variously identified) "mountain Indians" (Arr., *An.* 5.8.3 and 20.5) who cautiously awaited the result of Alexander's battle with the Indian king Porus.

The authorities of Arachosia, as agents of the king, may at times have administered the Indian frontier dahyu of Thatagush/Sattagydia up to the Indus and even beyond (see above, Western Iran, on Herodotus's explanation of delegation of power). One might judge by the claim of the Sydracae and Malli Indians of the lower Panjab, who claimed that they had kept "their liberty intact through so many ages" before submitting to Alexander; and he "levied the tribute which each of the two peoples used to pay out to the Arachosians" (*stipendio quod Arachosiis utraque natio pensitabat imposito*, Curt., 9.7.13-14; not in Arr, *An.* 6.14.1-3). These peoples might also have extended west of the Indus; Ptolemy (6.20.5 and 3, perhaps misled) has Maliana and the Sydri people within Arachosia itself. Later the Sasanian prince (later king) Narseh, in a similar manner, exercised authority from old Arachosia to the Indus (see below).

In contrast to the trend to make satrapies smaller in the course of the empire, the Arachoti and the Drangae were under one satrap at the time of Darius III's flight eastward (Arr., *An.* 3.21.1). Alexander added the Gadrosii after their voluntary submission to him (Arr., *An.* 3.28.1); later, he assigned just the Arachoti and Gedrosii together (*An.* 6.27.1). When he founded an Alexandria in Gedrosia (on the coast, according to Diod., 17.104.8), Arachosian people were apparently the closest suitable town-dwellers who could be drafted as settlers



(Curt., 9.10.7). Later the Sasanians too would see the more northerly, settled region as a base for governing the area of modern Baluchestan and Makran to the south.

While the Indian ethnic and cultural presence continued in this region, a major change to both Drangiana and Arachosia, as well as to the Indus region, would be effected in the 2nd cent. B.C.E.-1st cent. C.E., after the ebb both of Seleucid and of Maurya Indian power, by the influx of Sakas. They reshaped the Hāmūn and Helmand region politically, giving it the name Sacastena (Isid. Char., 18)/Mid. Pers. Sagastān while adapting to its established culture. In the 3rd century Sagastān, like Kušān, was assigned to Sasanian princes in the securing of the east (Ardašir I's appointment, Ardašir Sakānšāh [ŠKZ 28/23/55-56] and the rebellious Wahrām [Paikuli 2-3/2]). At the siege of Amida, 359 C.E., the Segestani are declared by Ammianus Marcellinus (19.2.3) to be "the fiercest warriors of all."

The Scythians continued to push eastward through and beyond Arachosia, to the west bank of the Indus, which Ptolemy names "Indoscythia" (Ptol., 7.1.55, 62), and south to the delta of the river to establish the city Minnagara (Isid. Char., 18; *Periplus* 38), beyond the reach of Arsacid authority. (See INDO-PARTHIANS and, at *iranica.com*, [INDO-SCYTHIAN DYNASTY](#). For a general survey of pre-Islamic areal communications in the southeast, by land and sea, and population movements, see [GUJARAT](#).)

Gedrosia and overseas. The broad expanse of desert and mountain Gedrosia/Gadrosia seems to be necessarily included in the tax district XIV, which comprises on the one hand the Sarangae (Drangiana) and Sagartii, on the other hand, the Gulf. Gedrosia extends to the shore of the Sea of Oman and east to the Indus (Ptol., 6.21.1), west to Carmania. The home of the presumably Iranian Gedrosians is placed in the northern part of the region, above the non-Iranians (Arr., *Ind.* 26.1), who are also in the mountains of Baluchestan and prominent on the Makran coast. Of these, the Arbies (Str., 15.2.1)/Arabitae are called the westernmost Indians (Arr., *Ind.* 22), living east of the Arbita/mod. Kirthar mountains and the Ar(a)bis/mod. Hab river of Pakistan, up to the Indus (Str., 15.2.1; Ptol., 6.21.2-4). To the west of the river were the Oritae (Gk. "Mountaineers"; cf. the Ākaufaciya "Mountaineers" of unknown location, a dahyu in XPh 27). They differed from the Indians in language and customs, although they dressed similarly and used similar weaponry (Arr., *Ind.* 22.10, 25.2; Pliny, 6.25.95).



Herodotus's Paricanii (7.68, 3.94) are of uncertain relationship to any of the above (for a summary of opinions, see Vallat, pp. 203-4, s.v. Par[r]likana; Pliny, 6.18.48, lists them between the names of the Gandari and the Zarangae). The Paricanii fought in Xerxes I's army, together (as they may have been conscripted) with peoples of district XIV who are likely Gedrosians: the Outii and Myci (Hdt., 7.68). For tribute payment, however, Herodotus has the Paricanii in XVII with the "Ethiopians of the East," who served in Xerxes' army with the Indians (Hdt., 7.70, 3.94). These Ethiopians are sometimes suggested to be an early Brahui-speaking population in Baluchestan west of the Arabis river, if not the Arabitae themselves.

West of the Oritae were the Fish-eaters, along the arid coast up to Carmania, at which point extensive agriculture and grazing, and organized Persian rule, resumed. The term "Fish-eaters" covers an unknown extent of ethnolinguistic variety but marks a shared condition of low technology but high adaptivity in the face of the stressful environment (described in Arr., *Ind.* 26.2 through 29). Quintus Curtius (9.10.8) types them as Indians.

The Oritae were found by the Macedonians to be independent (*autónomoi*, Arr., *An.* 6.21.3.) of the king, as were the Gedrosii generally at the time of the conquest (Curt., 9.10.5). As seen above (under Carmania), the chief town, Pura (Arr., *An.* 6.24.1, 6.27.1), which was located inland from the Fish-eaters on the coast, may have seen a Persian governor in the past. While the Gedrosii submitted to a Macedonian satrap, the Oritae resisted his attempt to extend his control, before their defeat and submission of "themselves and the people [*éthnos*]" (Arr., *An.* 6.22.2). Alexander intended to colonize their chief village (Arr., *An.* 6.21.5, 6.22.2-3; *Ind.* 23.5); clearly he identified, as in the far north, a problem of political stabilization along an ethnolinguistic and cultural frontier. During the Arsacid period the southward movement of Iranians (summarized above) and the consequent fusion of peoples and cultures earned for the Makran coast of present-day Pakistan the name "Scythia" (*Periplus* 38).

In Sasanian times as well, Gedrosia formed an administrative amalgam, under regional kings, of the territories of Makurān, Tugrān, and Pāradān (Paikuli 44/41, Skjærvø, pt. 3.2, pp. 120 ff.; ŠKZ 3/2/4; Huyse, II, p. 38; for Tu[g]rān, see. V. Minorsky in *EI* 2 X. pp. 672-73; Pāradān/Paradena [Ptol. 6.21.4] is placed by Ptolemy north of the Makran Central Range). These lands corresponded to most of present-day Balochistan province of Pakistan. As in earlier times, they adjoined a district of uncertain dimensions called Hind, recalling Achaemenid



“Hindu” and Herodotus’s tax district XX “the Indians,” the one with the largest population and tribute (3.94; cf. “parts [of the lands] along the Indus . . . formerly belonging to the Persians,” Str., 15.2.9). Hindu may have taken in—whenever control was asserted—the Indus valley and even the lower Panjab (thus north beyond the boundary of present-day Sindh province). The Sasanian Hindestān was for a time assigned, with Sagestān and Turān, to Narseh son of Šāpur I (ŠKZ 24/19/42); earlier, perhaps Ardašir Sakānšāh (ŠKZ 28/23/55-56), claimed authority of similar extent.

The tax district XIV also took in the *éthnea* of the Red Sea (i.e., Persian Gulf) “islands in which the king settles those who are called deportees” (Hdt., 7.80). The practice of deportation here presumably had an economic purpose, such as improving communications to the head of the Gulf and supporting the Indian Ocean trade network. The Red Sea was also a suitable place of punishment for individual exiles, such as the Artaxerxes I’s general Megabyzus, who was banished to a coastal town called Cyrtaia (Ctesias: Photius, *Bibl.* 72.43; Jacoby, *IIC*, 688 F14), and the ex-satrap Mithropastes on the island of Ogyris, who was encountered by Nearchus (Str., 16.3.5 and 7; cf. Arr., *Ind.* 37). Although mobilized for the king’s army, the Gulf deportees may not have been dependable; they were placed in the center rear at Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 3.11.5) with the Babylonians and the Uxii.

On the far shore of the Gulf of Oman from Carmania and Gedrosia was the dahyu usually last in the lists, Maka, the Macae people (e.g., DB 1.17 and DPe 18; Pliny, 6.26.98; Pomponius Mela 3.75; Maces, *Amm. Marc.*, 23.6.10). There was a satrap there (Hallock, nos. 679-80), indicating a presence of Median/Persian administrators and perhaps troops and deportees. The dahyu thus paid tribute, whether or not its people are to be identified with the Myci of tax district XIV (Hdt., 3.93), in which case the two shores were linked for revenue collection. Also last is the Maka man (OPers. Maciya) among the thronebearer at Naqš-e Rostam, trailing Carian > Ethiopian > Libyan and other peripheral peoples. (cf. inscription DNa 30, with the Maciyā preceding the Carians). The dahyu list of DSab places it with the peripheral, non-Iranian lands: Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Maka, Hindu (Yoyotte). In Arsacid times, the region, referred to as Ommana (*Periplus* 36), continued its ancient role in international trade (see [MARITIME TRADE](#) at [iranica.com](#)); and, as the land Mazun of the early Sasanian empire (ŠKZ 3/2/5; Huyse, II, p. 38), it is explicitly “across the sea” and so excludes any of the old Gedrosian/Oritan coast. The possible relationship between the non-Iranian populations on both shores of



the Gulf (e.g., the Fish-eaters on the Arabian side, Ptol., 6.7.14) remains undetermined.

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