

Papers on Inner Asia
No. 6

John R. Gardiner-Garden
University of California, Berkeley

**KTESIAS ON EARLY CENTRAL ASIAN
HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY**

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR INNER ASIAN STUDIES**

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From his birth place of Knidos, Ktesias found his way to the Persian court, either in c.414 B.C. after enlisting in the army of the ill-fated rebel Pissuthnes, being captured by Tissaphernes and being turned over to Dareios II as a physician, or in 404 B.C. as one of the 300 Greeks who accompanied Kyros from Sardis to Babylon, where Dareios II lay dying and where he was retained by Dareios' successor, Kyros' elder brother, Artaxerxes II. In 401 B.C. Ktesias assisted Artaxerxes II at Kunaxa, while his younger contemporary, Xenophon, assisted, albeit in a different capacity, Kyros. After Artaxerxes' victory Ktesias was involved in several rounds of diplomatic activity, visiting Kyros' Greek mercenaries and the imprisoned Klearkhos, and acting as an intermediary between prominent Greeks and Persians as Sparta and Persia drifted towards war¹. Between his medical practice and diplomatic activity, and then upon his return to Knidos, Ktesias wrote numerous works. These included an Ἰνδικά, a Περίοδος in 3 books, a work entitled Περί τῶν κατὰ Ἀσίαν Φόρων and a Περσικά in 23 books². The first 5 books of the *Persika* covered the period from the establishment of the Assyrian Empire by Ninus to the end of the Median Empire, and may have in some periods of the work's life been known under the separate title, *Assyriaka*³. The next 6 were all devoted to the life and times of Kyros. The final 12 books covered the period from the reign of Kambyses to the end of the eighth year of Artaxerxes II, Ktesias' employer.

¹ J.W.McCrindle (ed. & tr.), *Ancient India as described by Ktesias the Knidian, being a translation of the abridgement of his "Indika" by Photios, and of the fragments of the work preserved in other writers*, (London, 1882; New Delhi, 1973), pp.1-2; I.V.P'jankov, *Средняя Азия в известиях античного историка Ктесия*, (Dushanbe 1975), pp.9-16; T.S.Brown, 'Suggestions for a Vita of Ctesias of Cnidos', *Historia*, 1978, pp.1-19.

² See McCrindle, *ibid.*, 1882, p.3; E.H.Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography among the Greeks and Romans from the earliest ages till the fall of the Roman Empire*, (1883; New York, 1959), I, p.338; F.Jacoby, 'Ktesias', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, XI, 1922, col.2032-2040; R.Drews, *The Greek accounts of Eastern History*, (Cambridge Mass., 1973), pp.103-4 and P'jankov, *ibid.*, 1975, p.15.

³ On the structure of Ktesias' history see Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2040-2043 and F.W.König (ed.), *Die Persika des Ktesias von Knidos*, (Graz, 1972), pp.28-33. For the purpose of this paper König's allocation of episodes to books has been adopted.

Though Ktesias has been omitted from even the most extensive discussions of Skythians in classical literature⁴, it is clear that Ktesias' work preserves many interesting notices on early history and ethnography of Central Asia, that he was the source of many later Greek writings on Central Asia and that his work on Central Asia deserves to be more fully discussed.

Ktesias' sources⁵

The lowest of reputations is attributed to Ktesias by ancient⁶ and modern⁷ scholars alike. The identity of Ktesias' sources has been much debated, but their authority and credibility has generally been reckoned as low as Ktesias' own⁸. A fairer judgement upon Ktesias' work is to be found in Bunbury, who though condemning the *Indika* as a 'tissue of fables' wrote that:

'Of the historical merits of the "Persica" in general, it does not fall within our province to speak; had the work been preserved to us in its entirety it would unquestionably have afforded us many interesting notices and casual details of a geographical character⁹.

⁴ M.I.Rostovtzeff, *Skythien und der Bosporus*, I, (Berlin, 1931); St.Borzsak, *Die Kenntnisse des Altertums über das Karpathenbecken*, (Diss. Pannon. I, 6; Budapest, 1936); L.Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians*, (1939; Oxford, 1975); M.Ninck, *Die Entdeckung von Europa durch die Griechen*, (Basel, 1945); K.E.Müller, *Geschichte der antiker Ethnographie und ethnologischen Theoriebildung von den Anfängen bis auf die byzantinischen Historiographen*, I, (Wiesbaden, 1972).

⁵ Unless otherwise stated translations of relevant text are drawn from Loeb editions.

⁶ See the catalogue of classical writers in *FGrHist* III C 688 T11 and T13. For a summary of ancient judgements see P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975, pp.30-31.

⁷ Marquart, according to W.B.Henning, *Zoroaster. Politician or Witch-doctor*, (Oxford, 1951), p.21, called Ktesias 'The Father of Romances'. McCrindle wrote in his *Ancient India as described by Ktesias*, 1882 (1973), p.4, that 'Ktesias unfortunately was not only a great lover of the marvellous, but also singularly deficient, for one of his profession, in critical acumen' and that his work was 'little else than a tissue of fables and of absurd perversions or exaggerations of the truth...'. See also T.S.Brown, *The Greek Historians*, (Lexington, Mass., 1973), pp.77-86 and Drews, *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History*, 1973, pp.103-116. For summaries of further modern judgements see P'jankov, *ibid.*, pp.28-30 and Gh.Gnoli, *Ricerche storiche sul Sistan antico*, (Roma, 1967), p.95 n.5 and *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland, A study on the Origins of Mazdeism and related Problems*, (Naples, 1980), p.92.

⁸ See the discussion of the matter in Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2047-2051.

⁹ Bunbury, *Ancient Geography*, 1883, pp.338-9.

The suggestion that there may be some greater value still in Ktesias' work, has occasionally been made¹⁰. Diodoros' report (II. xxxii.4) that Ktesias claimed to have found the names of the Median kings in the Βασιλικαὶ διαθήραι (the 'royal leather records') has even been taken by some scholars, upon the supposed resemblances between some stories in Ktesias' *Persika* and some stories in Firdousi's *Shahnameh*, as evidence of the existence of Median and Persian archives and of Ktesias' consultation of them upon a wide number of subjects¹¹. This may be going too far. The fictitiousness of Ktesias' Median King list might not imply, as Drews suggests it does, that official records did not exist, but it does imply that if they did Ktesias never directly consulted them¹².

Whatever judgement might be passed on Ktesias' sources and method, his work offers a view from the heart of an empire which stretched from the Aegean to the Indus, from the Aral to Libya. The administrative centres of this empire, Sousa and Babylon, were cosmopolitan cities and the royal residence, Persepolis, received embassies from all over the known world. It is highly probable that Ktesias, attached to the Persian court for 17 years, came into contact with merchants, soldiers, and diplomats from the Central Asian frontier provinces of Hyrkania and Bactria. Indeed, Ktesias referred to two Baktrians holding high positions in the court of Artaxerxes II, the King's eye, Artasyras, and the King's son-in-law, Orontes,¹³ and Xenophon refers to a large number of Hyrkanians in influential positions in Kyros' court¹⁴. Though there are no records of Saka tribesmen rising to high office, Xenophon's story of a conversation between Kyros and a champion horseman among his Saka troops does suggest that Saka horsemen were thought, at least in Xenophon's day, to have been stationed in the

¹⁰ e.g. J.Junge, *Saka-Studien. Der ferne Nordosten im Weltbild der Antike*, (Klio Beiheft, XLI, 1939), p.42 n.5. In more recent years P'jankov and Bigwood have subjected Ktesias' work to a close and fruitful historiographical analysis. I.V.P'jankov, 'Сведения Ктесия о владениях Бардии на востоке Ирана', *Вестник древней истории*, LXXVIII, 1961, 4, pp.98-103, "История Персии" Ктесия и среднеазиатские сатрапии ахеменидов в конце V в. до н.э.', *ibid.*, XCII, 1965, 2, pp.35-50, and *Средняя Азия*, 1975; J.M.Bigwood, 'Ctesias' Account of the Revolt of Inarus', *Phoenix*, XXX, 1976, pp.1-25; 'Ctesias as Historian of the Persian Wars', *ibid.*, XXXII, 1978, pp.19-41; 'Diodoros and Ctesias', *ibid.*, XXXIV, 1980, pp.195-207.

¹¹ A.Christensen, *Les Gestes des Rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique*, (Paris, 936), pp.116-7 and A.M.Pizzagalli, 'L'epica iranica e gli scrittori grec', *Atene e Roma*, ser.III, 10 (1942), pp.33-43.

¹² Drews, *The Greek Accounts*, 1973, p.111-2.

¹³ Photius' epitome of Ktesias' *Persika*, ch. 50 & 57 respectively.

¹⁴ Xenophon, *Kyropaideia* IV.ii.8 and VIII.iv.25. This is doubtlessly anachronistic. Darios I, who was satrap of Hyrkania before assuming the throne, probably brought most of the Hyrkanians to the capital. Xenophon's reference does, however, illustrate the capital's later cosmopolitan reputation.

capitals from an early date¹⁵. In Ktesias' day there were Hyrkanians, Baktrians and Saka troops serving in the Persian armies¹⁶ and Greeks living in Bactria and Sogdiana¹⁷. It was the stories which people such as these told, rather than any archive in Persepolis, which carried the Iranians' essentially oral historical tradition¹⁸. Thus, though the stories about Central Asia which Ktesias related might be nothing more than a 'tissue of fantasies', the fantasies were almost certainly not his alone.

Investigation of Ktesias' conception of the history and ethnography of Central Asia might best be undertaken by examining the suspected Ktesian references to Central Asia in the order in which they would seem to have appeared in his *Persika*, and by examining the geographical conceptions implicit in the above *Persika* fragments and in suspected fragments of Ktesias' *Periodos*.

Semiramis

It was probably in Book I, after giving an account of Ninus' campaigns and the establishment of the Assyrian Empire, that Ktesias dealt with the Assyrian Queen Semiramis. Indeed, as Olmstead wrote, Ktesias' Assyrian history may well be described as 'a wild romance whose heroine is Queen Semiramis'¹⁹. Diodoros (II.16-19), repeatedly citing Ktesias²⁰, offers a lengthy account of how, after a miraculous birth, notable youth and marriage to the Assyrian noble Onnes, the Syrian-born Semiramis helped the Assyrians take the citadel of the Baktrian King Oxyartes, was appropriated by her infatuated king, Ninus, to whom she gave birth to a son, Ninyas, carried out an extensive building programme in Babylon, visited Egypt and Ethiopia, gathered a force in Bactria, conducted an unsuccessful campaign against the Indian King Strabrobates, and then at the age of 62 disappeared. That there were other versions of the story circulating in Diodoros time is clear from Diodoros'

¹⁵ Xenophon, *Kyropaideia*, VIII.iii.25-32.

¹⁶ Cf. B.Ja.Staviskij, 'Средняя Азия и ахеменидский Иран', in B.G.Gafurov et.al.(ed.), *История иранского государства и культуры. К 2500 летию иранского государства*, (Moscow, 1971), p.156.

¹⁷ P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975, pp.34-37. Dareios had carried off to Bactria the Greeks of Barka in Libya (Her.IV.204) and threatened to do the same to the daughters of the Ionian rebels (Her.VI.9), while Xerxes had settled the Brankhidai of Didyma somewhere in Sogdiana (Strabo XI.xi.4, XIV.i.5, XVII.i.43).

¹⁸ E.Yarshater, 'Iranian national history', *Cambridge History of Iran*, 3, 1, 1983, pp.359-477.

¹⁹ A.Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, (1948; Chicago, 1970), p.380.

²⁰ Diodoros II.v.4, vii.1, vii. 3, 4, viii.5, xiv.15, xvii.1 and xix.10. Indeed Diodoros prefaced his account of Ninus and Semiramis (II.ii.2) with the declaration that '...we shall undertake to win over briefly the most important nations, as given in the account of Ctesias of Cnidus' and closed his account of Semiramis' life (II.xx.3) with 'Such, then is the account that Ctesias of Cnidus has given about Semiramis...'.
 ...

comment in II.xx.3, that Athenaios and certain other historians are said to offer a different account, wherein Semiramis seized power from her husband. Herodotos mentioned Semiramis briefly in I.184. Polyainos' story in his *Strategika* VIII.26, writes that:

'Semiramis, when in the bath, received intelligence of the revolt of the Siracians and, without waiting to have her sandals put on or her hair dressed, immediately left it, and took the field'.

and that she had her achievements inscribed on pillars:

I swayed the sceptre of Ninus: and extended my dominions to the river Hinamenes... and northward to the Sacae and the Sogdians...²¹.

Although Polyainos' account in no way contradicts Diodoros', the accounts include very different material. Diodoros' account, for example, does not mention Siracians. The question of Polyainos' source will be returned to later in this paper. The question which might be addressed here is that of the origin and transmission of the story which survives in Diodoros' work.

The Semiramis cycle of tales almost certainly originated in the Syrian-Mesopotamian region. Not only is Semiramis said to be Syrian-born and charged with Ishtar-like characteristics, it is not hard to see in her name, the name of 'Sammuramat', the wife of Shamsi-Adab V (824-811 B.C.) and mother of Adad-Nirari²². Sammuramat has, however, provided Assyriologists with many difficulties. Luckenbill, in his translation of, and commentary on, the Assur inscriptions, expresses the belief that Sammuramat acted as a regent for five years after her husband's death before her son, Adad-Nirari III, assumed full powers²³. Though this regent theory has been adopted by some historians²⁴, others have

²¹ Translation by R.Shepherd, *Polyaenus' Stratagems of War*, (London, 1793; Chicago, 1974).

²² See the inscription at Assur, D.D.Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, (1927; New York, 1968), no.732 (p.260) and the inscription on the statue of the god Nabu at Nimrud, Luckenbill, *ibid.*, 745, (p.264). For discussion see M.Braun, *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature*, (Oxford, 1938), pp.6-8; G.Roux, *Ancient Iran*, (London, 1966), p.279; H.W.F.Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon. A survey of the ancient civilisation of the Tigris-Euphrates valley*, (London,, 1962; 1966), p.103; W.Eilers, *Semiramis, Entstehung und Nachtal einer altorientalischen Sage*, (Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, CCLXXIV, 2, 1971), pp.25-46, and P. Briant, *L'Asie centrale et les royaume proche orientaux du premier millénaire (c.VIIIe-IVe siècle avant notre ère)*, (Paris, 1984), p.25.

²³ Luckenbill, *ibid.*

²⁴ Most recently of all by Eilers, *Semiramis*, 1971, pp.32-38 and I.Borzák, 'Semiramis in Zentralasien', in J.Harmatta (ed.), *Studies in the sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, (Budapest, 1979), pp.56-57. A coregency is tentatively proposed by S.Page, 'Adad-nirari III and Semiramis- The Stelae of Saba'a and Rimah', *Orientalia*, n.s.38, 1969, pp.457-8.

argued that this theory demands misreading the Nabu inscription and postulating an exception to all known Assyrian succession practices²⁵. In either case the difficulty remains of determining whether an Assyrian army was ever likely to have marched as far east as Semiramis is said to have marched.

Many scholars have argued the existence of some form of Baktrian State in the 7th century B.C.²⁶. Some have argued that the most organised state in Central Asia in this period was that of the Khorasmians²⁷ and others that there were several states coexisting in pre-

²⁵ W.Schramm, 'War Semiramis assyrische Regentin?', *Historia*, XXI, 1972, pp.513-521; A.R.Millard and H.Tadmor, 'Adad-nirari III in Syria another Stele Fragment and the dates of his campaigns', *Iraq*, XXXV, 1973, pp.57-64; and H.Tadmor, 'The Historical inscription of Adad-Nirari III', *Iraq*, XXXV, 1973, pp.141-150, who concludes on p.147 that 'What remains is mostly the desire of the historian to seek authentic elements in the late and complex legends of Ctesias about Semiramis and Ninos'.

²⁶ e.g. W.Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur im Altertum*, (Erlangen, 1882), pp.62ff. and *Civilisation of the Ancient Iranians in Ancient Times*, (London, 1885), p.45; J.Prasek, *Geschichte der Meder und Perser bis zur makedonischen Eroberung*, I, (Gotha, 1906), pp.50-54; Henning, *Zoroaster*, 1942, p.42; R.Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, (London, 1962), p.401; B.G.Gafurov and B.A.Litvinskij (ed.), *История таджикского народа*, I, (Moscow, 1963), ch.3; M.M.D'jakonov, *Очерк истории древнего Ирана*, (Moscow, 1961), pp.63, 75 and 366 and 'Восточный Иран до Кира (к возможности новых постановок вопроса', in Gafurov et al. (ed.), *История иранского государства*, 1971, pp.122-154; E.E.Kuz'mina, 'The "Bactrian Mirage" and the Archaeological Reality. On the problem of the formation of north Bactrian culture', *East and West*, n.s.XXVI, 1976, pp.111-132; A.Cattenat and J.C.Gardin, 'Diffusion comparée de quelques genres des poterie caractéristiques de l'époque achéménide sur le plateau iranien et en Asie centrale', in J.Deshayes (ed.), *Le Plateau iranien et l'Asie centrale*, (Paris, 1977), pp.225-248, esp. p.243; J.C.Gardin & P.Gentelle, 'L'exploitation du sol en Bactriane antique', LXVI, 1979, pp.1-29 and Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, p.93. Besides the archaeological indications of a flourishing Baktrian culture in the 7th century B.C. it has been noted that Diodoros II.xxvi refers to Baktrians coming to the aid of the Assyrians (to be discussed later in this paper), Xenophon, *Kyropaideia*, I.v.2 refers to Kyaxares' war with the Baktrians, Herodotos I.153 refers to Kyros' fear of Baktria, and Xenophon, *Kyropaideia*, VI.1.3 and Ktesias (Photius XXII) refer to Kyros' war with Baktria.

²⁷ S.P.Tolstov, *Древний Хорезм*, 1951, pp. 20ff. & 341 and I.V.P'jankov, 'Хорасмий Гекатей Милетского', *Вестник древней истории*, СХХ, 1972, 2, pp.3-21 interpreted the Hekataian fragment in Athenaios II.70B as alluding to ancient Khorasmian control of Merv and Harat. I.Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, (Cambridge, 1959), pp.14-21, 296-299 argues the existence of a pre-Akhaemenid Khorasmian state on the basis of allusions to a 'council of premiers'.

Achaemenid Central Asia²⁸. Nevertheless, even if a well organised pre-Akhaemenid Baktrian state can be said to have existed, there is no literary or archaeological evidence that the Assyrians campaigned as far east as Baktria²⁹. Though the stories introduced above may have been appended to the life of Sammuramat, and though it is possible that there was communication between the Assyria Empire and Central Asia, it is unlikely that the extant Semiramis stories are echos of Assyrian military operations in Baktria, Sogdia, the land of the Saka, or India³⁰. It is possible, as Eddy, P'jankov and Gnoli suggest, that the linking of Semiramis with these distant lands was encouraged by the expeditions to these lands of Kyros, Dareios and Alexander³¹.

Polyainos' story drew heavily upon images associated with Dareios I. Firstly, the reference to Semiramis extending her empire to the Σάκακ καὶ Σόγδουκ would seem to reflect the ethnographic conceptions implicit in the expression 'Saka who are beyond Sogdiana', found in one of Dareios' Persepolis inscription³². Secondly, the reference to Semiramis' war with the Sirakoi recalls Polyainos' story, to be discussed at greater length later in this paper, about the horse-keeper Sirakes who delivered the nomads from Dareios I. Thirdly, the canal system, which the inscription says Semiramis devised, was only developed in Akhaemenid times³³. Borzák has argued that one other influence in the formulation of the story Polyainos preserves was the story of the Egyptian king Sesostris³⁴. Sesostris is said by Herodotos (II.103) to have 'passed over from Asia to Europe and subdued the Scythians and Thracians'. He is said by Diodoros (I.lv.3-4) to have:

'passed over the river Ganges and visited all of India as far as the ocean, as well as the tribes of the Scythians as far as the river Tanais, which divides Europe from Asia', and (I.lv.6-12) after subjecting all of Asia, to have crossed into Europe, campaigned as far as Thrace, and set up numerous stelae throughout his new domains. It is more likely, however, that the Sesostris story, like the Semiramis one, was influenced by the achievements of the first Akhaemenids³⁵. As Polyainos' account seem to have preserved material relevant to the rule of the first Akhaemenid kings, it is possible that Ktesias was one of the original sources for the material, but as Polyainos account varies greatly from Diodoros' (e.g. the 'Sirakoi' being

²⁸ Briant, *L'Asie centrale*, 1984.

²⁹ Kuzmina, 'The "Bactrian Mirage"', 1976, p.130 and Briant, *ibid.*

³⁰ Borzák, 'Semiramis in Zentralasien', 1979, p.58.

³¹ S.K.Eddy, *The King is Dead*, (Lincoln, 1961), pp.121-125, and B.A.Litvinskij, *СРЕДНЯЯ АЗИЯ*, (Moscow, 1977), pp.53-57 and Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, p.92 n.6.

³² R.Kent, *Old Persian*, (New Haven, 1953), p.136, DPh lines 5 & 6 *Sakaibiš : tyaiy : para : Sugdam ...*

³³ Eilers, *Semiramis*, 1971, p.13 and Borzák, *Semiramis in Zentralasien*, 1979, p.65.

³⁴ Borzák, *ibid.*, pp.61-65.

³⁵ O.K.Armayor, 'Sesostris and Herodotus' autopsy of Thrace, Colchis, Inland Asia Minor and the Levant', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 84, 1980, pp.51-74.

mentioned in the former but not in the latter), it is possible that one or both of these writer's accounts diverged dramatically from Ktesias' original. The relationship between Polyainos and Ktesias will be discussed further later in this paper. Attention might now turn to the relationship between Diodoros' and Ktesias' account of Semiramis.

Diodoros' account of Semiramis' life, though presented as Ktesias' account, clearly includes elements drawn from the campaigns of Alexander. The account of how Semiramis lead an assault upon the acropolis of Baktra and defeating the Baktrian King Oxyartes³⁶ was clearly influenced by the record of Alexander's assault upon the Sogdian Rock, where, among others, the Baktrian chief Oxyartes had taken refuge³⁷. As to who may have been responsible for the post-Alexander version of the legend, suspicion must fall on Kleitarkhos who is cited by Diodoros (II.vii.3) as differing with Ktesias on the length of the walls Semiramis built at Babylon. It is no coincidence that Kleitarkhos' figure is also given by Curtius (V.i.26). Though the relationship between the work of Kleitarkhos, Aristoboulos and Ptolemy is unclear, it does seem that Arrian and Strabo worked chiefly from Aristoboulos and Ptolemy, while Diodoros and Curtius worked chiefly from Kleitarkhos. The only question remaining, is from where did Kleitarkhos draw the material for his story. Eddy saw Kleitarkhos as responsible for the 'Macedonian edition' of the Semiramis legend, but as Semiramis' achievements in this legend exceed Alexander's (for example, her conquest of Ethiopia), as Kleitarkhos is not likely to have wanted to slight Alexander, and as Babylonia is the world centre in this version of the story, he suggested that Kleitarkhos was not himself responsible for the Alexander motifs: 'Rather it would appear that he picked them up from an otherwise unknown Babylonian "Semiramis legend"' and that this legend was 'a logical extension of previously established native propaganda brought up to date in order to compare Babylonians favourably with Makedonians'³⁸. Eddy believed this Babylonian version was written some time between the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. and the publication of Kleitarkhos' work in c.275 B.C. The thesis is not, however, convincing. That Babylonia features as the world centre need occasion no surprise. Not only was Babylon an important city in both Alexander's day and the Assyrian times in which the story is supposed to be set, but as has been noted above, the story probably had its origins in Babylonia or Syria. Diodoros, moreover, repeatedly claims to be using Ktesias' account and the post-Alexander modifications could easily be explained in terms of Diodoros dipping into the essentially Ktesian account of Kleitarkhos. Kleitarkhos, whose father Deinon will later be argued to have used Ktesias' work extensively, probably simply rewrote the story he found in the copy of Ktesias' work he undoubtedly possessed. Thus, though 'It was probably not through the Medes and Persians but in opposition to them that Ninus, the Assyrian, and Semiramis, the Babylonian, became the

³⁶ See Lenschau, 'Semiramis', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supp. VII., 1940, col.1208 and König, 'Die Persika des Ktesias von Knidos', 1972, p.39.

³⁷ Arrian IV.xviii-xx; Curtius, VIII.iv.21-22; IX.viii.10; X.iii.11.

³⁸ Eddy, *The King is Dead*, 1961, pp.123-4.

central figures of a popular cycle of stories³⁹, and though Ktesias had probably recorded a Babylonian version of the story, late Babylonian mediation in the transmission of the story from Ktesias to Kleitarkhos is unnecessary. Diodoros thus probably used Ktesias and Kleitarkhos' reworking of Ktesias⁴⁰.

Arrian's account (VI.24) of how Alexander's comrades listened to local stories of Semiramis' Indian campaigns does not necessarily suggest that Semiramis did actually campaign in the east. It might only suggest that the Semiramis legend was known in eastern Iran⁴¹ or, more probably still, that Alexander's comrades were happy to think they were hearing Semiramis stories. Thus, the campaigns of Kyros, Dareios and Alexander were probably influencing the narration of Semiramis' legendary exploits at the same time as the Semiramis legend was influencing the way Kyros', Dareios' and Alexander's campaigns were narrated.

Arbakes and Maudakes

From his discussion of early Assyrian history, Ktesias moved on, in his third book, to a discussion of Median history. Diodoros (II.xxxii.4-6) cites Ktesias as mentioning a certain Arbakes, who ruled the Medes for 28 years⁴², and his son Maudakes, who ruled for 50 years. Though Ktesias is said to have associated these names and reign periods with the Medes, Herodotos associates them with Skythians. In connection with Arbakes it might be noted that Herodotos, in his first story of Skythian origins (IV.5-10) calls Targitaos' second son 'Ἀρπόξαις. This name bears a great resemblance to one of the fathers of the world's races in Genesis I.x.22, Arpachshad⁴³. In Judith I.13 Arpachshad appears in a different guise, the Median who was attacked and killed by Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria. The name Arpoxais may have once been associated with the Skythian tribes that came out of the Caucasus in the 7th century B.C. Christensen noted a similarity between the *Arpo* of 'Arpoxais' and the geographical name Πιλαῖα. That 'r-p-a' may have designated not only a mountain range (the Caucasus) but also a people is evident from Genesis I.x.12 where Japhet's son Gomer is said to have had three sons, Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarma. As the Ashkenaz are associated in

³⁹ Braun, *History and Romance*, 1938, p.9.

⁴⁰ The same conclusion is reached by P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975, pp.136-139.

⁴¹ V.V.Bartold, 'К истории персидского эпоса', *Записки Восточного отделения Русского археологического общества*, XXII, 1915, pp.258ff. saw the legend as being part of an eastern Iranian epic tradition.

⁴² Diodoros II.xxv-xxviii. A.Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des iraniennes*, I, (Stockholm, 1917), pp.138-9.

⁴³ Genesis I.x.22. See Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi*, 1917, p.139 and L.A.El'nitskij, 'Скифские легенды как культурно-исторический материал', *Советская археология*, 1970, p.66.

Jeremiah 51.27 with the northern kingdoms of Ararat and Minni⁴⁴, as Japhet is usually regarded in Hebrew tradition as the ancestor of northern and eastern peoples⁴⁵, and as 'Gomer' is clearly from 'Gimirri', the first wave of horsemen to come down from the Caucasus, and 'Ashkenaz' is clearly from the Assyrian 'A/Iš-k/gu-za-ai' (an original Hebrew 'waw' being later misread as an 'nun')⁴⁶, the second main wave, the Riphath too may be supposed to be a mounted people from the Caucasus (the 't' being a Saka plural ending)⁴⁷. As the -xais of 'Arpoxais' is clearly a rendering of an Iranian word for 'ruler' (cf. O.Per.𐎧𐎱𐎠𐎿𐎧𐎡𐎹), 'Arpoxais' might have meant 'King of the Ripat'.

In connection with Arbakes' reign period and the name Maudakes it might be noted that Herodotos (I.103-107) names a certain Madyes as king of the Skythians and gives 28 years as the duration of Skythian domination of Asia⁴⁸. Do these names and reign period, then, rightfully belong to Medes or to Skythians? Besides Diodoros' account of late 7th century B.C. events in Mesopotamia, there are the accounts of Herodotos, the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Most scholars agree in reconciling these three accounts as follows. The main protagonists in the mid 7th century B.C. conflicts were the Assyrians of Ashurbanipal and the Skythians of Madyes, son of Partatua, on the one hand, and a confederacy of nomads (known

⁴⁴ Noted by O.Szemerényi, *Four old Iranian Ethnic Names: Scythian-Skudra-Sogdian-Saka*, (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historisch Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, CCCLXXI, Veröffentlichungen der Iranische Kommission, IX), (Wien, 1980), p.7.

⁴⁵ D.Leslie, 'Japhet in China', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, CIV, 3, 1984, pp.403-449.

⁴⁶ P.Daffina, *Il Nomadismo Centrasiatco*, (Roma, 1982), pp.6-7.

⁴⁷ Christensen, *Les types du premier homme*, 1917, p.138. This possibility is overlooked even by those scholars who note that the Hebrew Ashkenaz designated Skythians. e.g. H.Winler, 'Kimmerier, Ašguzäer, Skythen', in his *Altorientalische Forschungen* I, 1897, pp.484-496 and Szemerényi, *Four old Iranian ethnic names*, 1980, p.7.

⁴⁸ Kyaxares, king of the Medes, had just gained the upper hand in his war with the Assyrians when 'There came down upon him a great army of Scythians, led by their king Madyes son of Protothyas. These had invaded Asia after they had driven the Cimmerians out of Europe: pursuing them in their flight the Scythians came to the Median country'. After giving an account in I.104-106 of the Skythians' route to Media, adventures in Syria, 28 year harsh rule over Asia and final overthrow, Herodotos concluded in I.107; 'Afterwards Cyaxerxes died after a reign of forty years (among which I count the years of Scythian domination)'. That Herodotos means here only Upper Asia, that the Scythian activity in Palestine could only have been a raid, not the great occupation many Biblical scholars imagine, and that there is little reason to see these raids behind Jeremiah's earliest prophecies (Jeremiah I.12-14; 4:6) has been argued cogently by R.P.Vaggione, 'Over all Asia? The extent of the Scythian domination in Herodotus', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XCII, 1973, pp.523-530.

variously as Umman-manda and Gimmeri) and a confederacy of rebel subjects, headed by the Median chieftain (known to the Greeks as Phraortes). The Assyrians repelled the attack, killing the Median chieftain and routing the Umman-mandas, but the real victors were the Skythians. For the next 28 years, probably together with their one time enemy, the Kimmerians, the Skythians ravaged most of Asia Minor. In 512 the Skythians with their Median subject Kyaxares, son of Phraortes, and Babylonian ally, Nabopolassar, dealt a final blow to Assyria and destroyed Nineveh⁴⁹.

Ktesias seems to have presented the Skythian leader who destroyed Nineveh as the founder of the Median Empire. He may have been led to do so by a Median tradition which sought to ascribe as many accomplishments as possible to the Median Kings, or may simply have been in need of names and reigns to fill out the Median history which he was struggling to write⁵⁰. Ktesias' misuse of names elsewhere associated with Skythians is not, however, the only reason Diodoros' Ktesian fragment is of relevance to the present study. The most curious element in Diodoros' story is the reference to how Arbakes on the eve of his onslaught on Nineveh had to win allegiance of a force which had arrived from Bactria to relieve the Assyrians⁵¹. As has been discussed above, it is possible that some form of organised Bactrian state existed in the 7th century B.C. and the Ktesian fragment in Diodoros II.xxvi has often been taken as evidence for the existence of such a state. Thus, it is possible that Ktesias accurately recorded Bactrian involvement in Median history⁵².

⁴⁹ A.T.Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, (1948; Chicago,1970), pp.29-33; R.Ghirshman, *Iran from earliest times to the Islamic conquest*, (1954; London, 1978), pp. 98-99 & 106; L.Aliev, *История Мидии*, (Baku, 1960), pp.222-230.

⁵⁰ Drews, *The Greek accounts of Eastern History*, 1973, pp.111-112 suggested Ktesias' Median names 'represent the ancestors of various Median families prominent in the fifth and fourth centuries' and that his Median history was little more than a couple of unusual incidents which he had heard as taking place in Median times. For a full exploration of the names of Ktesias' Median rulers see W.Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis in Sage und Geschichte iranische Staaten und Reiternomaden vor Darius*, (Berlin, 1982), pp.102-109.

⁵¹ Diodoros II.xxvi; 'there came a messenger with the news that a force which had been despatched from Bactriana to the king was near at hand, advancing with all speed. Arbaces, accordingly, decided to go to meet their generals by the shortest route, taking along the best and most agile of his troops, so that, in case they should be unable to persuade the Bactrians by arguments to join in the revolt, they might resort to arms to force them to share with them the same hopes'.

⁵² As Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, p.92, suggested: 'This piece of information not only shows the complete autonomy of the Bactrians at the end of the 7th century B.C., but also their declared hostility towards the growing power of the Medes, whose assertion they evidently feared'.

Zarinaia

A story which seems to have featured prominently in Ktesias' Median history is that of the romance between the Saka queen Zarinaia and the ruler of Parthia, a nominally Median domain. Diodoros cited Ktesias in II.xxxiv.1-5:

'After the death of Artaeus, Ktesias continues, Artynes ruled over the Medes for twenty-two years, and Astibaras for forty. During the reign of the latter the Parthians revolted from the Medes and entrusted both their country and their city to the hands of the Sacae. This led to a war between the Sacae and the Medes, which lasted many years, and after no small number of battles and the loss of many lives on both sides, they finally agreed to peace on the following terms, that the Parthians should be subject to the Medes, but that both peoples should retain their former possessions and be friends and allies for ever. At that time the Sacae were ruled by a woman named Zarina, who was devoted to warfare and was in daring and efficiency by far the foremost of the women of the Sacae. Now this people, in general, have courageous women who share with their husbands the dangers of war, but she, it is said, was the most conspicuous of them all for her beauty and remarkable as well with respect to both her designs and whatever she undertook. For she subdued such of the neighbouring barbarian peoples as had become proud because of their boldness and were trying to enslave the people of the Sacae, and into much of her own realm she introduced civilized life, founded not a few cities, and, in a word, made the life of her people happier. Consequently, her countrymen after her death, in gratitude for her benefactions and in remembrance of her virtues, built her a tomb which was far the largest of any in their land; for they erected a triangular pyramid, making the length of each side three stades and the height one stade, and bringing it to a point at the top; and on the tomb they also placed a colossal gilded statue of her and accorded her the honours belonging to heroes, and all the other honours they bestowed upon her were more magnificent than those which had fallen to the lot of her ancestors'.

In his abridgment of Ktesias' history, Diodoros, a serious historian with a great task in hand, seems to have omitted that which later writers most enjoyed retelling - the tale of the love between Zarinaia and a Median leader. A certain Demetrios offered the following story:

'Stryngaeus, a Median man, having unhorsed a Sacian woman (for the women of the Sacae join in battle like Amazons), was struck with the youth and beauty of the Sacian and allowed her to escape. Afterwards, when peace was declared, he became enamoured of her and failed in his suit. He resolved to starve himself to death. But first he wrote a letter upbraiding the woman thus: "I saved you, ay, you were saved through me; and now I have perished through you"⁵³.

⁵³ Tr. Roberts, Demetrius, *On Style*, 213.

That this is but a summary of a more detailed Ktesian story is clear, not only from the context, a defence of Ktesias' style, and from the absence of introductory epistolary formula⁵⁴, but also from a comparison with the following Ktesian fragments.

Nikolaos of Damaskos offers the fullest extant version of the love-story:

That Stryaggaios, after the death of Marmares, the King of the Saka, fell secretly in love with Zarinaia, and she with him. When he was coming near the town of Roxanake, where the palace of the Sakai was, Zarinaia went out to meet him, and looking upon him with much joy, she welcomed him and kissed him before everyone's eyes, got in his carriage, and, chatting together, they went into the palace. Zarinaia also welcomed most splendidly the army following him. Afterwards Stryaggaios went off to his lodging and sighed for his love of Zarinaios. Not being strong, he confided in the most trusted of the eunuchs who accompanied him. He advised him to be of good courage and, throwing off his cowardice, to speak with Zarinaia. He was persuaded, and jumping up, went to her. She received him happily and after much sighing, hesitation and blushing he said to her, that in his desire for her, he was burning up in passionate love. She, however, refused him gently, and said to him that the matter was shameful and injurious, and for him much more shameful and injurious, as he had as a wife Rhoitaia, the daughter of Astibaros, whom she'd heard was much more beautiful than herself and most other women. He ought then be brave not only before the enemy, but also before such matters as when something pierces the soul, and should not, for the sake of brief pleasure, which he could get from his concubines, be sorry for a long time, as he would if Roitaia learnt of it. Leaving this aside she said he could ask for anything else. Having heard this he was completely silent, greeted her again and left. Greatly down at heart, he complained to the eunuch. In the end he wrote on a leather skin, and made his eunuch swear that when he'd committed suicide, he would give it to Zarinaia directly. He had written: "Stryaggaios says the following to Zarinaia: I saved you and am responsible for your present happiness. But you have killed me, and have done so unnecessarily. If you had handled the matter fairly, you should enjoy all things good and be happy, but if you did wrong, you should bear the same sorrow as I, for you have warned me of the same". Having written this he placed it under the pillow and bravely asked his sword for a departure to Hades. But the eunuch..⁵⁵

The Oxyrhynkos Papyri fragment, dating back to about the 2nd century A.D. introduced a god into the tragedy:

'...because you left...'. He said: 'Come, as a first step at any rate I will write a letter to Zarinaia'. He wrote: 'Stryaggaios speaks thus to Zarinaia: I saved you and it was by me that you were saved. But I have been ruined by you and have killed myself, because you were unwilling to grant me your favours. I did not of myself choose these evils

⁵⁴ E.Lobel and C.H.Roberts (ed. & tr.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, XXII, (London, 1954), p.83.

⁵⁵ Own translation from the text in König, *Die Persika des Ktesias*, 1972, p.175.

and this passion, but this god is one in whom you and all mankind share. Now to whom he comes in gracious mood, to him he offers countless pleasures, and countless other benefits he confers upon him. But whomsoever he visits in anger, as he visits me now, on him he works countless evils and ends by destroying him root and branch and overthrowing him. This I infer from my own death. For I will call down no curses on your head, but will make this prayer on your behalf, the fairest that can be: if you had acted justly by me...⁵⁶

As the line Demetrios quoted from Stryaggaios' letter ἐγὼ μὲν σὲ ἔσωσα, καὶ σὺ μὲν δι' ἐμὲ ἐσώθης· ἐγὼ δὲ διὰ σὲ ἀπώλόμεν, apart from an intrusive μὲν in the second clause, tallies exactly with lines 7-9 of the papyrus, Lobel and Roberts believe, 'we are entitled to regard the papyrus as containing not another rewriting of the story but the text of Ktesias'⁵⁷. Though this may be the case, it is probable that the references to a divinity, found in no other fragment, was inserted into the Ktesian text by a late Hellenistic hand.

A version differing somewhat from those offered above can be found in the late anonymous work, *De Mulieribus quae bello claruerunt*, 2:

Zarinaia. This woman, after the death of her first husband and brother, Kydraios, King of the Sakai, was married to Mermeros, the dynast of the land of the Parthians. When the King of the Persians invaded, she went to war and being wounded fled. Being hard pressed by Aggaios, she went to him as a suppliant and was saved. Soon after this her husband captured him and wanted to kill him. She wanted to save him. Not being able to persuade her husband, she freed some of the captives, with them killed Mermeron, and gave over the land to Persia, concluding a friendship with Persia, as Ktesias writes⁵⁸

Finally, a brief reference to the story can be found in Tzetzes, *Chil.* 12, 894-899:

The people, the Sakai, whose invention the shield (sakos) was/ and among whom the women fight together with the men/ as Ktesias has said, and many others./ "The women of the Sakai, fight on horse back/ and again, Stryalios, a certain man from among the Medes,/ threw a woman of the Sakidai from her horse"⁵⁹

Ktesias' Zarinaia story was undoubtedly a genuine Iranian tale he heard while at the Persian court⁶⁰. The number of versions of the Ktesian Zarinaia story was doubtlessly a result of the wide circulation of an originally Ktesian story. One of the main reasons for the wide circulation of the story was that it became, at a very early stage, part of a collection of stories

⁵⁶ Pap.2330. Modified version of trans. by Lobel and Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, XXII, 1954, p.84.

⁵⁷ Lobel and Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, XXII, 1954, p.82.

⁵⁸ Own translation from the text in König, *Die Persika des Ktesias*, 1972, p.127.

⁵⁹ Own translation from the text in König, *ibid.*, p.202.

⁶⁰ Brown, *The Greek Historians*, 1973, p.84.

about 'Remarkable Women'⁶¹. Surprisingly no scholar, to the present writer's knowledge, has attempted a reconstruction of Ktesias' original story, but the extant fragments of the stories are not so incompatible as to render such a reconstruction impossible. There seems to have been three main characters in Ktesias' story. The first is a Median called 'Styrragaios' (or by a variant of this name - Nik., Oxy., Dem., Tzetzes, *De mulieribus*), who was married to Rhoitaia, daughter of Artibaros (Nik.), king of the Medes (Diod.). The second is the Saka woman Zarinaia (Nik., Oxy., *De Mulieribus*), whose first husband was Kydraios, the Saka king (*De Mulieribus*). The third is Mermeros, ruler of Parthia (*De Mulieribus*, or, according to Nik., 'Marmares, king of the Saka'). The stages by which the story unfolded were probably as follows. The Medes conquered Parthia (Diod.). Mermeros made an alliance with his Saka neighbours, married the late Saka king's wife Zarinaia (*De Mulieribus*), and with Saka help revolted from the Medes (Diod.). The Median King sent his son-in-law Styrragaios to recover Parthia. In the ensuing battle Styrragaios unhorsed and captured the Saka princess Zarinaia (Demetrios, *De Mulieribus*, Tzetzes). Being struck by her beauty and taking pity on her Styrragaios allowed Zarinaia to escape (Demetrios, *De Mulieribus*). The war between the Medes and Parthian-Sakas continued (Diod.). Mermeros captured Styrragaios, along with some other Medes, and wanted to kill him. Zarinaia could not persuade her husband to spare Styrragaios so freed the Median captives and together with them killed Mermeros (*De Mulieribus*). Zarinaia then made peace with the Medes and gave them back Parthia (Diod. & *De Mulieribus*). Styrragaios, having completely fallen in love with Zarinaia, upon a visit to the Saka capital declares his love to her. Zarinaia rejects his advance and he plans to suicide (Demetrios, Nik. & Oxy.). There follows some twist in the story, but no extant fragment offers any clue as to what this may have been and how the story ends (Nik.).

Ktesias' Zarinaia story clearly supports Jacoby's proposition that Ktesias represents the transition from literary Ionic to literary *koine* and that Ktesias became 'der Vater des historischen Romans'⁶². It might also, however, offer a glimpse of Median Saka relations in the 6th century B.C. Unfortunately the historical and geographical context of Zarinaia's conflict with the Medians and the geographical location of Zarinaia's kingdom are matters upon which the above fragments offer few clues.

Although from Diodoros II.xxxiv.1 it appears Ktesias set Zarinaia's conflict with the Medians in the reign of Astibaros, Ktesias' eighth and last Median monarch, Nagel is probably correct in identifying Zarinaia's Median opponent as Kyaxares (II) and is justified in arguing

⁶¹ At least six such collections are known to have existed, though modern scholars have shown little interest in the corpus. A notable exception is P.A.Stadter, who in his *Plutarch's Historical Methods, An Analysis of the Mulierum Virtutes*, (Cambridge Mass., 1965), p.8 noted references to at least five such works, other than the *Mulierum Virtutes* of Plutarch, to which he devoted a book.

⁶² Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, p.2064 and p.2045 respectively. See also Lobel & Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 1954, pp.82-83.

that as Kyaxares was occupied with conquering Assyria, Trans-Caucasia, Eastern Anatolian and the Kimmerians from c.614 to 600 B.C. and with conquering Lydia from c.591 to 585 B.C. his conflict with the Sakas and acquisition of Parthia might have taken place c.595 B.C.⁶³

The problem of determining where Ktesias may have conceived of the Zarinaia episode as having taken place deserves some consideration. There is only one clue to the geographical context of the conflict. This is the reference in Diodoros II.xxx to Zarinaia having 'founded not a few cities', and having as her capital, the town of Roxanake. In Nikolaos' version Roxanake is called ἡ πόλις ἐνθα Σάκαις τὸ Βασίλειον ἦν. The only other reference to this town might be Stephanos' reference to the town of 'Ροξονοκαία⁶⁴. Stephanos' reference to Φάσταια, πόλις ἐν Σάκαις, might also have been drawn from Ktesias, where it might have been another of Zarinaia's towns, but this reference offers no further clues as to the geographical location of the Saka kingdom. The reference to Roxanake has been taken by some scholars to be an allusion to the district of northern Afghanistan once called Roshan⁶⁵, but as variants of Roxana, 'the shining one', were common in the Iranian speaking world⁶⁶, this identification is of dubious value. The most probable etymology of Zarinaia's name does not, however, imply a particular geographical location. Of those suggested⁶⁷, the most compelling is that it meant 'the golden one' (cf. the words for 'gold' in Avestan, *zarri*, in Sogdian *zern* and in Pahlavi, *zarr*)⁶⁸. It may have been the heroine's name which inspired one of the Iranian tellers of the tale to add the notice which survives in Diodoros' story as a reference to a 'colossal gilded statue' of Zarinaia being placed upon her tomb. The only clues to the geographical location of her kingdom are that it was the Parthians who opened the door to the Saka, and that names very similar to Zarinaia and Roxanake occur in a Hyrkanian context in Ktesias' story of the

⁶³ Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, pp.44, 47 and 161.

⁶⁴ Stephanos, 'Ροξονοκαία, πόλις τὸ ἔθνικὸν 'Ροξονοκαίος καὶ 'Ροξονοκαιάτης καὶ 'Ροξονοκαϊανός.

⁶⁵ W.W.Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, (Cambridge, 1938; 1951), p.449.

⁶⁶ There is even mention of a 'Ρωξάνη in a Pantikapaion inscription. See M.Vasmer, *Untersuchung über die ältesten Wohnsitze der Slaven, I: Die Iranier in Südrussland*, (Leipzig, 1923), p.49.

⁶⁷ B.B.Grigor'ev, 'О скифском народе саках', (St.Petersburg,1871), p.96, suggested the name was derived from the Slavonic word for dawn, in modern Russian, 'Zarja'. V.I.Abaev, *Осетинский язык и фольклор*, 1949, p.190, (cited in H.Schmeja, 'Iranisches bei Lukian', *Innsbrücher Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft*, XVII, 1972, p.27) connected the name with the ossetian woman's name 'Zärinä', and the pass word mentioned in Lukian, *Toxaris*, 40. When the Skythian Dandamis swam the Tanais to rescue his captured friend, 'The Sauromatae rushed at him with brandished javelins, intending to spear him to death, but he called out "Zirin". If anyone says that, he is not killed by them, but is received as coming to offer ransom'.

⁶⁸ See König, *Die Persika*, 1972, p.46 and Schmeja, 'Iranisches bei Lukian', 1972, pp.26-27.

attempted rebellion against Dareios I (epitomised in Photios' *Bibliothēke*, 54 & 55). In this story the satrap of Hyrkania, Teriteukhmes, married the King's daughter Amistris. Later, out of love for his sister Roxana and hatred of his wife, the satrap plotted to kill his wife and rebel. The satrap was killed before he could rebel by one of his companions, Udiastes, and the satrap's family were put to death by the Persians. Mitradates, Udiastes' son and the satrap's shield-bearer, had been sympathetic to the satrap and sought refuge in the town of Zaris. Though it is not stated, it is possible, that Roxana was a native of Hyrkania and Zaris a town in Hyrkania. It is possible then that Ktesias, with an excellent imagination for all but names, chose the names Roxana and Zarinaiia for his two heroines as he knew of two towns in or near Hyrkania called Roxanake and Zaris and conceived of the two heroines as coming from near Hyrkania⁶⁹. Zarinaiia's Saka may then have come from in or near Hyrkania. The association of the Saka with towns need present no problem, the relationship between ancient nomads and towns in their region probably being much closer than most modern day westerners imagine, and the association of the Saka with a region very near Hyrkania makes sense considering the close alliance in the story between the Saka and the Hyrkianian neighbours, the Parthians.

Kyros' and Dareios' Central Asian campaigns

From his account of Median history, Ktesias would seem to have progressed in Book VI to give an account of the career of Kyros the Great (559-530 B.C.), a career which saw the founding of the Persian Empire and which included a major expedition against the Saka of Central Asia. Photios' epitome of Ktesias' eighth book begins (in ch.3) as follows⁷⁰:

'And (he writes) that Kyros made war against the Sakai and that he captured Amorges, the King of the Sakai, husband of Sparethre. She, after the capture of her husband, gathered an army together and made war against Kyros, leading forward 300,000 men and 200,000 women. She conquered Kyros and captured alive, along with many others, Parmises, the brother of Amytis and three of his sons. For these Amorges was later released, when those ones too (P. and sons) were released'.

Photios goes on to give an account in ch.4 of Kyros' campaign against Kroisos of Lydia, in which Kyros had the assistance of Amorges, and in ch.5 of the downfall of Oibaras. In ch.6 & 7 Photios epitomises Ktesias' account of Kyros' war with a nomadic people distinct from Amorges' Saka, the Derbikai:

'(ch.6) But Kyros marched against the Derbikai, of whom Amoraioi was King, and the Derbikai stirred up their elephants from cover, and they routed Kyros' cavarly. Kyros himself fell from his horse and an Indian man, the Indians being allies of the Derbikai and from whom the elephants came, this Indian then, hit the overthrown Kyros with a spear below the hip joint in the thigh. He died from this, but at the time his own men

⁶⁹ König, *ibid.*, suggested that Zarinaiia may be so named because she came from the city of Zaris mention in the Terteukhmes story.

⁷⁰ Translations will be from the Greek text presented in König, *Die Persika des Ktesias*, 1979.

picked him up still living and hurried back to camp. Many Persians and an equal number of Derbikai died in the battle. They were 10,000.

(ch.7) Amorges, having heard about Kyros, arrived on the spot hastily with 20,000 Sakai cavalry, and with war breaking out between the Persians the Derbikai, the Persians and Saka army won overwhelmingly. The King of the Derbikai, Amoraïos was also killed; himself and his two sons. 30,000 of the Derbikai died and of the Persians, 9,000. The land went over to Kyros'.

Photius closed his epitome of Ktesias' account of Kyros in ch.8 with the following passage:

'But Kyros, being about to die, established his first son, Kambyses, King, and he appointed the younger son, Tanyoxarkes, as despot of Baktria and the land of Khoramnia, Parthia and Karmania, defining the country without boundaries. From the children of Spitames he appointed Spitakes satrap of the Derbikes, and Megabernes satrap of the Barkaniai. He ordained that all should obey his mother. And he made Amorges the right-hand friend of these and others.

Ktesias clearly believed two large nomad groups, Amorges' Sakai and Amoraïos' Derbikai, played an important role in the history of the northeast in Kyros' day. The problem of where Ktesias would seem to have believed these two groups of Scythians dwelt will be returned to later.

From an account of Kyros' life and the activity in the north east of the Sakai and Derbikkai, Ktesias proceeded to deal with the history of the Persian Empire from the reign of Kambyses in Book XII to the reign of Araxerxes in Books XX-XXIII. Though no reference to Central Asian Saka is to be found in any cited fragment of Ktesias history of this later period, although Photios' epitome (33b) of the Dareios section of Ktesias' *Persika* (Bk.XIV) only gives an account of Dareios' Kappadocian satrap's Sea-borne raid against Skythians (arguably in the east Pontic region) and Dareios' expedition against Skythians in the West Pontic region⁷¹, and although Herodotos seems to have known nothing of any activities by Dareios I against Central Asian Saka, it is possible that his book on the reign of Dareios included a detailed account of Dareios' dealings with at least one group of Central Asian Saka, and that some of the details of Ktesias' account might survive in two anecdotes in Polyainos' *Strategika*. Polyainos' *Strategika* VII.xi.6 and VII.xii have been translated as follows⁷²:

Darius, in an expedition against the Saccae, found himself in danger of being inclosed by three armies. Advancing therefore with all expedition against that, which was nearest to him, he engaged and defeated it. And habiting his men in the dresses and arms of the Saccians, he marched against another army of the Saccae, advancing slowly and securely as it were to meet their friends. But the Persians, according to their orders,

⁷¹ The present author offers a study of this Ktesian material, together with Herodotos' account of Dareios' Skythian expedition, in a forthcoming *Klio* article entitled 'Dareios' Skythian expedition and its aftermath'.

⁷² R.Shepherd (tr.), *Polyaenus' Stratagems of War*, (London, 1793; Chicago, 1974). Shepherd numbers these two passages VII.xi.6 and VII.xi.8.

no sooner came within spear's length of them; than, instead of friendly salutations, they fell upon them, and cut them to pieces. Thus victorious over two divisions of the enemy, he advanced against the third; who, having learned the fate of the other two, submitted to him without hazarding a battle.'

and

'Darius having invaded the Saccae, their three kings, Sacephares, Homarges, and Thamyris, had retired in consultation upon the measures proper to be taken in the present emergency of their affairs. When a certain stable-keeper, Risaces [Sirakes⁷³] by name, was introduced to them, and proposed himself to destroy the Persian force: if they would pledge themselves to him by oath, to give to his children and family all the horses and treasures that from the destruction of the enemy should fall into their hands. This being satisfactorily settled, he drew out his knife, cut off his nose, and ears, maiming himself also in other parts of the body; and thus disfigured deserted to Darius: who gave credit to his complaints of the cruel treatment he had received from the Saccian king. But, added he, by the eternal fire, and the sacred water, I swear, that by the Persians I will have my revenge. And it is in your power, by the means I will explain to you, to give the glorious revenge I ask. Tomorrow night the Saccae mean to shift their camp: I know the spot where they intend to post themselves; and can conduct you to it by a nearer way, than they will take; where as in a net you shall inclose them. I am a horse-keeper; and know every step of the country for many miles around. But it will be necessary to take with us water and provision for seven days: for this purpose order preparations to be made: no time is to be lost. Having accordingly conducted the army, in a march of seven days, into the most barren and sandy part of Media; when both their water and provisions began to run short: the Chiliarch Rhanosbates, suspecting the treachery of their conductor, took him aside, and expostulated with him. What could induce you, said he, to deceive so powerful a monarch, and so numerous an army? You have brought us to a place destitute of every necessary of life. Neither beast, nor bird inhabits it: nor do we know whither to proceed, or how to return. Risaces [Sirakes], clapping his hands, answered him with an effusion of laughter, I have gained a noble victory: I have saved my country from impending danger; and by famine and thirst consigned the Persian army to destruction. The Chiliarch enraged immediately struck off his head. Darius fixed his sceptre in the ground, tying round it his tiara and royal diadem; and climbing an eminence, implored Apollo in this moment of distress to preserve his army, and give him water. The god heard his prayers; and a plentiful shower ensued: which they received on hides, and in vases; and subsisted on it, till they reached Bactrum:...

Melber has argued that Polyainos drew his material for these anecdotes from Ktesias as Herodotos' work contains no information on Dareios' Central Asian expedition and as

⁷³ The Teubner text edited by E. Woelfflin and I. Melber, *Polyaeni strategematon libri octo*, (Leipzig, 1887), offers the manuscript readings Σιράκης and Σειράκης.

Polyainos seems to have drawn his anecdotes on Semiramis and Tomyris from Ktesias⁷⁴. It is, however, by no means clear that Polyainos drew his Semiramis and Tomyris material from Ktesias. As has been noted earlier, Polyainos' Semiramis story is unlikely to have been pure Ktesias, and Polyainos' story of Tomyris' victory over Kyros is much closer to Herodotos' (L202-214) and to the Ktesian story of Kyros' death which Photios epitomised, from which a Tomyris figure is entirely absent. The 'Sirakes' figure in Polyainos' story of Dareios' Saka expedition, moreover, recalls the 'Sirakoi' of Polyainos' Semiramis tale, and as has been noted earlier, no 'Sirakoi' are to be found in any cited Ktesian fragment. Although the name of one of the Saka kings Dareios is said to have faced in the Polyainos account, 'Homarges', is very similar to the name of the Saka king captured and released by Kyros in Photius epitome of Ktesias' *Persika*, 'Amorges', this Amorges is presented in Photius' epitome as an ally of the Persians who even accompanied Kyros on the later campaign against Sardis. Though it is possible Ktesias might have had the Saka chieftain change his allegiance at the time of Dareios' campaign, it seems more likely that a different writer used the chieftain's name differently. P'jankov does not include either of these Polyainos passages in his collection of Ktesian fragments⁷⁵.

There are grounds, however, besides Melber's argument that Herodotos could not have furnished any of the information, for suggesting that Polyainos' anecdotes preserve some Ktesian material. These grounds are that the anecdotes are reconcilable with the official Behistun account of Dareios' Saka campaign, and that Ktesias is the writer most likely to have reproduced this account. No scholar has failed to note the similarity between these accounts of Dareios' Saka campaign and the account in the Behistun inscription V.20-30 of an expedition which must be dated to the third year of Dareios' reign, that is 519 B.C.⁷⁶ and which Kent has translated as follows⁷⁷:

'Saith Darius the King: Afterwards with an army I set off to Scythia (Sakam), after the Scythians who wear the pointed cap. These Scythians went from me. When I arrived at the sea [*darya*], beyond it there with all my army I crossed. Afterwards I smote the Scythians exceedingly; another (leader) I took captive; this one was lead bound to me and I slew him. The chief of them, by name Skunkha (Skuxa), him they seized and led to me. There I made another their chief as was my desire. After that, the province became mine'.

⁷⁴ J.Melber, 'Über die Quellen und den Wert der Strategemensammlung des Polyän', *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Supp.XIV, Leipzig, 1885, p.460.

⁷⁵ P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975.

⁷⁶ G.G.Cameron, 'The Old Persian Text of the Bisitun Inscription', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, V, 1951, pp.52ff.

⁷⁷ Kent, *Old Persian*, 1953, p.134.

The above Behistun passage has usually been interpreted as an account of a campaign in Central Asia⁷⁸. In 1972, however, Balcer argued that though both the Polyainos stories and the Behistun inscription refer to the same campaign conducted by Darios in 519 B.C, it was a campaign not against the Saka of Central Asia, but against those of Europe, the Scythians against whom Herodotos records Darios as marching⁷⁹. Balcer's arguments included the following. Firstly, the chronology of the *Tabula Capitolina*, which synchronises Darios Scythian expeditins with the murder of the tyrant Hipparchus in 514-3 B.C., is not reliable. Secondly, similarities in the way in which Darios' Skythian expeditions are recorded in Herodotos Bk IV, Ktesias F 13 (Photios ch.38b) , Polyainos VII.xi and the Behistun Inscription col.V, 20-30 might suggest that all four accounts are of the one and the same expedition⁸⁰. Thirdly, the reference to 'Saka Tigraxauda', 'the Saka with the pointed caps', in the Behistun inscription need not be a reference to tribes in Central Asia as the Akkadian text of Xerxes' Perspolis foundation tablet refers to 'Kimmerians (wearing) pointed caps' and the Cimmerians lived in the Crimea. Fourthly, the references to 'those beyond the Sea' in Darios' Persepolis inscription E, to 'Saka who are across the sea' in Darios' Naqs-i-Rustam inscription, and to 'Saka of the Marshs' in the stele erected at Tell-el-Maskhoutah in 517 after Darios' Egypton expedition, must all refer to Skythians vanquished by Darios across the

⁷⁸ e.g. Junge, *Saka-Studien*, 1939, pp.67ff.; R.Kent, 'Old Persian Texts: IV. The Lists of Provinces', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 2, (1943), p.305; A.A.Frejman, 'Племенный враг Дария - скиф Скунка', *Известия Академии наук СССР, Отделение литературы и языка*, 1948, VII, 3, pp.235-240; V.V.Struve, 'Дарий и скифы Причерноморья', *Вестник древней истории*, XXX, 1949, 4, pp.15-28 and *Поход Дария I на саков-массагетов*, 1946, pp.231-250, reproduced in Struve, *Этюды по истории Северного Причерноморья, Кавказа и Средней Азии*, (Leningrad, 1968), pp.51-102; A.R.Burn, *Persia and the Greeks: the Defence of the West, c.546-478 B.C.*, (London, 1962), p.103; M.A.Dandamaev, 'Поход Дария против скифского племени Тиграхауда', *Краткие сообщения Института народов Азии*, LXI, 1963, pp.175-187; A.T.Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, (Chicago, 1970), p.141; I.V.Pjankov, 'Массагеты Геродота', *Вестник древней истории*, CXXXII, 1975, pp.46-70; I.M.Oganskij, *Древнеиранская филология и древнеиранское языкознание в СССР (1957-1970)*, *Вестник древней истории*, 1974, 2, pp.121-3.

⁷⁹ J.M.Balcer, 'The Date of Herodotus IV.1 Darius' Scythian expedition', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, V, 76, 1972, pp.99-132.

⁸⁰ This had previously been suggested by E.Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire*, (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp.290ff.

Black Sea, and in the neighbourhood of the Maeotian marshes⁸¹. Fifthly, the Saka captive depicted on the Behistun inscription and called Skunka and on the Naqš-i-Rustam inscription and called the 'Saka with the pointed cap' must be the Skythian prince, Marsagetes, to whom Ktesias referred.

Balcer's argument that even Skythians on the north coast of the Black Sea wore pointed hats can be considerably strengthened. The pointed hat of the Saka might not have distinguished a particular region so much as a particular class. Lukian, in his story *Scythian or Consul*, I, describes the Scythian Toxaris as follows:

'At home he was not a member of the royal family or of those who wear the felt cap; he belonged to the general run of the people- called 'eight feet' in Scythia, meaning the owner of two oxen and a cart.'

The pointed cap would seem to perform a similar class denoting function, albeit a narrower one, in Persian society where it was worn by the King alone⁸². It is even possible, as Cornillot has recently argued, that the names Σκύθαι and Κολάχαις were derived from Iranian words meaning 'wearers of pointed caps'⁸³. This is the only argument of Balcer's, however, which can be strengthened and the possibility that 'Sakā Tigraxaudā' described European Skythians does not mean that Dareios was referring to these Skythians when he used the term in the Behistun inscription.

⁸¹ The following translations are modified versions ('Saka' being used instead of 'Scythian') of those in Kent, *Old Persian*, 1953. Dareios' Persepolis inscription E, II.5-18 reads: '...these are the countries which I got into my possession...and bore me tribute:...Ionians who are of the mainland and (those) who are by the sea, and countries which are across the sea...Saka...'. Dareios' inscription at Naqš-i-Rustam, a, 15-30 reads: '...these are the countries which I seized outside of Persia; I ruled over them and they bore tribute to me... Sind, Amyrgian Saka, Saka with pointed caps, Saka who are across the sea'. Dareios, in his Persepolis inscription H II.3-10, described his empire as: 'from the Saka who are beyond Sogdiana thence into Ethiopia: from Sind then into Sardis'. Finally, a stele erected at Tell-el-Maskhoutah in 517 B.C., after Dareios' Egyptian expedition, refers to 'the Saka of the marshes and the Saka of the plains'.

⁸² On Scythian social organisation see by G.Dumézil, *Romans de Scythie et d'alentour*, (Paris, 1978), p.196, where κίλοφορικῶν is interpreted as 'aristocratie guerrière' and A.M.Khazanov, *Социальная история скифов*, (Moscow, 1975).

⁸³ F. Cornillot, 'De Skythès à Kolaxais', *Studia Iranica*, X, 1981, pp.7-52.

Although Balcer's thesis was endorsed by Cameron in 1975⁸⁴, it was soundly rejected by Harmatta in 1976⁸⁵. Harmatta's reasons for rejecting the thesis include the following. Firstly, the synchronisms given by the *Tabula Capitolina* are in most cases correct. Secondly, there is no direct parallelism between the Behistun account and the Greek accounts, and neither Herodotos, Ktesias nor Polyainos dates the Skythian expeditions to which they refer. Thirdly, there is no evidence that the Saka Tigraxauda dwelt in the Crimean area and Herodotos' reference to Kimmerian remains in the Crimea does not mean Dareios conflict with the Scythians took place there. Fourthly, Dandamaev and Bogoljubov have shown that it is possible to improve upon Kent's restoration of the Behistun text⁸⁶ and Harmatta's suggested reading leaves little doubt that it was against the Central Asian Saka that Dareios fought in 519:

'Saith Darius the king: Afterwards I went with an army against the Saka land. Afterwards the Sakas who wear pointed cap, these Sakas marched against me. Then I arrived at the sea. A river by name Araxša, I crossed it with all equipment. Afterwards I slew the Saka army, another (army) they took captive, this was led bound to me. And who was the chief among the Sakas, by name Skunxa, they seized him and led him to me. There I made another chief as was my desire.'

The restoration of the name *Araxša* would discount Schnitzler's theory that the 'darya' which Dareios crossed was the Caspian Sea⁸⁷. It does not, however, affect Schnitzler's theory that the Saka Tigrakauda, against whom Dareios marched, had affinities with those people known to later tradition as the Sarmatians, Aorsoi and Alans⁸⁸. It is possible that the *Araxša* which Dareios crossed was not the main course of the Oxos river but the branch which flowed into the Caspian⁸⁹, that Kyros too had campaign in this region, and thus a Berossos fragment

⁸⁴ G.G.Cameron, 'Darius the Great and his Scythian (Saka) Campaign, Bisitun and Herodotus', *Acta Iranica*, 1975, pp.77-88.

⁸⁵ J.Harmatta, 'Darius' expedition against the Saka Tigraxauda', *Antiqua Antiqua*, XXIV, 1976, pp.15-24 and followed by W.Nagel, 'Frada, Skuncha und der Saken-Feldzug des Darius I', in H.Koch and D.N.MacKenzie (ed.), *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben*, (Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, 10, Berlin, 1983), p.169.

⁸⁶ M.A.Dandamaev, 'Поход Дария против скифского племени Тиграхауда', *Краткие сообщения Института народов Азии*, LXI, 1963, pp.176-7.

⁸⁷ Schnitzler, 'Der Sakenfeldzug Dareios', 1972, p.63.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ On the ancient course of the Oxos see A.Herrmann, *Alte Geographie des unteren Oxusgebiets*, (Berlin, 1914), 'Saka', 1920, col.1780, 'Gibt es noch ein Oxusproblem?', *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilug*, LXXVI, 1930, pp.286-7 and 'Die Wohnsitze der Massageten', *ibid.*, LXXVII, 1931, p.75-76. Nagel, 'Frada, Skuncha und der Saken-Feldzug des Darius I', 1983, pp.171-173 argued that Dareios' captor Skunka, had been the chief of the Saka Paradraya and that these Saka could be identified with the Dahai between the Caspian, the Uzboi and the Aral.

(FGrH 680 F 10) has Kyros die 'in the Dahai plain' and that the tribes whom Dareios met beyond this river, between the Caspian and the Aral, had affinities with the Sarmatians, Sirakoi and Aorsoi of later times⁹⁰.

An association of the Saka Tigrakauda against whom Dareios fought and the early Sarmatian groups of the north Caspian area can not be supported by noting the number of women associated with Central Asian affairs in the 7th and 6th centuries⁹¹, for although at least two of these women, Zarinaia and Tomyris appear to be associated with tribes on the west Caspian coast, others such as the Babylonian Semiramis and the wife of Amorges, Sparethre, were not, and it is possible that while the role played by Saka women in their tribes affairs may have helped inspired some of the stories, a greater role was played by the expectations of the audience to which the stories, whether in Persian or Greek, were directed and by the medium through which many of these stories were transmitted. It is clear that Polyainos drew many of his anecdotes from Plutarch's *Mulierum Virtutes*, and that many similar collections of stories on women were circulating in Hellenistic times⁹². The number of Saka women in the extant stories is probably a better measure of the interest they held for later writers than the status they enjoyed in early times.

It is significant, however, that the name of the Saka hero of Polyainos's second Saka story is Sirakes and the name of the people whose revolt is said in Polyainos' Semiramis story to have been energetically crushed by the Queen is Sirakes. Kretschmer and Kothe have argued that as there are numerous references to the Sirakoi dwelling in the north Caucasian region from the fourth century onwards, the Sirakoi tribe had migrated in the 7th century from the Oxos, the context in which Polyainos' uses the name, through Hyrkania into Assyria and then retired with the Skythian nomads northwards over the Caucasus⁹³. Though possible, a northerly route is also conceivable. As the nomads against whom Kyros and Dareios campaigned dwelt north of a branch of the Oxos which flowed into the Caspian, that is, they dwelt between the Caspian and the Aral, as the references to Sirakoi in the Kuban-North Caucasus region in the late fourth century B.C. can be interpreted as alluding to their recent

⁹⁰ As has been argued by Junge, *Saka-Studien*, 1939, pp.61-82.

⁹¹ Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, p.157 suggests 'Alle diese Heroinnen stammen aus dem reiternomadischen Milieu der nördlich Westarier..'

⁹² See Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods*, 1965, pp.15-29 and the summary of R.J.Phillips, *The Sources and Methods of Polyaeus*, (PhD Diss., Harvard, 1971), in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, LXXVI, 1972, pp.297-8.

⁹³ Kretschmer, Σίρακες, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, IIIA.1, 1927, pp.282-3 and H.Kothe, 'Der Skythenbegriff bei Herodot', *Klio*, LI, 1969, p.16.

arrival from the north⁹⁴, and as archaeological investigations suggest the bearers of the 'Sarmatian' present in the Kuban and north Caucasus in the late fourth century B.C. had come from the region of the lower Volga⁹⁵, then it is clear that the 'Sirakoi' might only have had a homeland on the north Caspian coast for the whole of the 6th and 5th century. There is no need to postulate, as the present author has earlier done, that the name 'Sirakoi' was taken from an origin north-Caucasian context for use in the story of Dareios' Central Asian expedition⁹⁶. Polyainos' stories of Dareios' Saka expedition might, like his story of Semiramis, go back to Ktesias and Ktesias may have heard of the Sirakoi as being one of the tribes against whom Kyros or Dareios had marched. He used this ethnonym in the form of a personal name for his account of Dareios' expedition and projected it back into his Semiramis story, at a point where Semiramis' actions are a mere projection of those of Kyros and Dareios.

The possibility that Ktesias' conception of Central Asian ethnography closely resembled that of the early Akhaemenids, Amorges' Sakai and the Derbikes corresponding to the Sakā Haumavargā and Sakā Tigrakaudā of the Akhaemenid inscriptions, might now be discussed.

Amorges' Saka and the Derbikes

There have been numerous attempted identifications and localisations of Amorges' Sakai. Clearly related to Ktesias' 'Ἀμοργῆς is the 'Ἀμύργιον πεδῖον Σακῶν, which Stephanos (s.v. 'Ἀμύργιοι) says Hellenikos referred to in his *Skythika*. and the 'Ἀμύργιοι whom Herodotos (VII.64) brigades with the Baktrians in his Persian army. The Amyrgioi homeland which these notices imply has not, however, been unanimously agreed upon. The Sistan-Gedrosian desert area was favoured as the homeland in 1906 by Thomas, who believed Sakastana was settled by Saka as early as the sixth century B.C.⁹⁷ but this belief has been shown to be of dubious historical value⁹⁸. The western Pamirs has been favoured by several

⁹⁴ E.g. Strabo XI.v.8. For a full discussion of these later references see John R. Gardiner-Garden, 'Fourth Century Conceptions of Maiotian Ethnography', *Historia*, XXXV, 1986, 2, pp.220-221.

⁹⁵ For some references to the relevant Soviet literature see Gardiner-Garden, *ibid.*, p.222 n.145.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ F.W. Thomas, 'Sakastana. Where dwelt the Sakas named by Darius and Herodotus?', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1906, pp.199 and 463.

⁹⁸ See Daffina, *L'immigrazione dei Saka nella Drangiana*, 1967.

scholars⁹⁹, but although archaeological researches have put Saka habitation of the Pamirs in Achaemenid times beyond doubt, Hellanikos specifically refers to an Ἀμύργιον πεδῖον¹⁰⁰ and although it is possible that by this he meant a valley or plateau in the Pamirs, there are areas of Central Asia to which the term πεδῖον might more naturally refer. The area around Merv, Margiana, has been favoured by Grigor'ev, Struve, Bernshtam, Dandamaev and Hamis¹⁰¹. This identification has found two justifications. The first is that the hydronym *Murgab* is not just to be found in the Pamirs, but is also to be found in the region of Merv. The second is that Herodotos (VII.64) brigaded the Amyrgioi Skythians with the Baktrians, and Margiana is not only adjacent to Baktria but geographically inseparable from it. König believed that if Sparmitres was the real name of Amorges' wife, and if this was derived from the Persian Sparmithra, 'the eye of Mithra', then it is possible that Amorges' Sakai dwelt close to Persia, in eastern Asia Minor¹⁰². However, given Ktesias' unreliability with personal names, a localisation of the Amyrgioi near to Persia is not necessary. The steppes on the Syr Darya and Ferghana were first suggested by Herzfeld in 1932 and Junge in 1939, both of whom favoured identifying the Amyrgioi with the Saka Haumavarga of the Achaemenid inscriptions¹⁰³, and the localisation has been favoured more recently by P'jankov and Nagel¹⁰⁴. The Saka Haumavarga of some inscriptions seem to be the 'Saka beyond Sogdiana' of others¹⁰⁵. This would fit in well with P'jankov's and Khlopin's reconstruction of a march by Kyros eastward

⁹⁹ Tomaschek, 'Amyrgioi Sakai', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 1894, col.2011; J.Marquart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran*, (Leipzig, 1905), pp.86 and 137-142; A.Herrmann, 'Sakai', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 1920, pp.1794 and *Das Land der Seide und Tibet im Lichte der Antike*, (Leipzig, 1938: Amsterdam, 1968), pp.9-10; Junge, *Saka-Studien*, 1939, p.85; V.Abaev, Геродотовские Σκύθαι Γεώγοι', *Вопросы языкознания*, 2, 1981, pp.74 & 76.

¹⁰⁰ As J.Marquart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran*, 2 Vols., (Leipzig, 1905), II, p.140 noted.

¹⁰¹ B.V.Grigor'ev, О скифском народе саках, (St.Petersburg, 1871), pp.5-8; V.V.Struve, 'Поход Дария I на саков-массагетов', 1949, I, p.104; M.A.Dandamaev, 'Поход Дария против скифского племени Тиграхауда', *Краткие сообщения Института народов Азии*, LXI, 1963, p.180; M.Hamis, 'Recherches sur les Saces et leurs rapports culturels avec les Wou-souen', *Annuaire du Collège de France*, LXXIII, 1973, p.452.

¹⁰² König, *Die Persika des Ktesias*, 1972, p.72.

¹⁰³ E.Herzfeld, 'Sakasten', *Archeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, IV, 1932, p.10 and Junge, *Saka-Studien*, 1939, pp.86 and 95.

¹⁰⁴ I.V.P'jankov, 'Саки', *Известия Отделения общественных наук АН Тадж. ССР*, 3, LIII, (Dushanbe, 1968), pp.13-14; W.Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, pp.63, 86 and 91 n.4 and 13 and Frada, Skuncha und der Saken-Feldzug des Darius I', in H.Koch and D.N.Mackenzie (ed.), *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben*, (Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, 10, Berlin, 1983), p.171.

¹⁰⁵ DPh lines 3-4.

from his Parthian and Hyrkanian provinces, along the Tedjen river valley, through Areia and Drangiana, northwards along the edge of the Hindu-Kush to the Oxos, then north west along the Oxos, eventually crossing the river to meet the Saka on the Sogdian plains¹⁰⁶. As Herodotos' and Hellanikos' references to the tribe and the plain are both likely to have been drawn from the work of Hekataios, based upon official Persian sources¹⁰⁷, it is highly probable that 'Amyrgioi', was an attempted phonetic rendering of 'Haumavarga' and that Ktesias followed Hekataios in this usage.

Turning now to the Derbikes, extant Ktesian fragments give no clear idea of Ktesias' conception of this people. Sometimes it seems Ktesias may have associated the Derbikai with western Central Asia. In Diodoros' list of nations subdued by the Assyrian Ninus (II.ii.3-4), where Ktesias is the cited source, the Derbikai seem to be closely associated with the land bordering on the Caspian Sea. Ninus ruled:

'all the barbarian nations who inhabit the shores of the Pontos as far as the Tanais; he also made himself lord of the lands of the Cadusii, Tapyri, Hyrcanii, Drangi, of the Derbici, Carmanii, Chorammaei, and of the Borcanii, and Parthyaiei; and he invaded both Persis and Susiana and Caspiana, as it is called, which is entered by exceedingly narrow passes known for that reason as the Caspian Gates. Many other lesser nations he also brought under his rule, about whom it would be a long task to speak. But since Bactriana was difficult to invade and contained multitudes of warlike men, after much toil and labour in vain he deferred to a later time the war against Bactriana'.

Othertimes it appears Ktesias may have associated the Derbikai with eastern Central Asia. Thus in Photios' epitome of ch.6 the Derbikai are said to have fought Kyros with Indian allies and Indian elephants, and Stephanos gave the following account of the Δυρβαῖοι:

'A tribe which stretches up to Baktria and the Indika. Ktesias in his *Persika* book 10, "but the land lies to the south, the Dyrbaioi, whom stretch up to Baktria and Indika"¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁶ P'jankov, 'К вопросу о маршруте похода Кира II на массагетов', Вестник древней истории, LXXXIX, 1964, 3, pp.115-130 and I.I.Khlorin, 'Бактрийский поход Кира II', *Altorientalische Forschungen*, I (Berlin, 1974, pp.216-7.

¹⁰⁷ This has been argued in the present author's work, *Herodotos' contemporaries on Skythian ethnography and geography*, submitted to the series *Papers on Inner Asia*..

¹⁰⁸ Own translation.

The name Derbikai has, moreover, been linked with the demon called in the Rigveda II.xiv.3 *Drbhika* and a one who lived near Herat in the Videvdad I.8 *Driwika*¹⁰⁹. Given the apparent contradiction in the Ktesian material, Nagel concluded that there must have been two separate groups of Derbikes in the 6th century B.C. and that it was against the more easterly group that Kyros had campaigned¹¹⁰. It is, however, possible to explain the reference to an Indian force assisting the Derbikes in their war with Kyros as an interpolation of images associated with Dareios' Indian campaign, and though the tribes name may be related to that of a demon in eastern Iranian epic tradition, the tribe need not be located exactly where the demon once was located.

The Derbikes are associated most strongly with western Central Asia. Not only does Strabo (XI.viii.8) write that:

'on the other side of the Hyrcanians are Derbices; and the Cadusii border on the Medi and Matiani below the Parachoathras'

and (XI.xi.8) locate the Tapyroi between the Derbikes and Hyrcanians¹¹¹, but Stephanos, in his entry under Δερβίκκαι, writes that they are 'a people close to Hyrcania...Ktesias calls them Derbioi or Derbissoi'¹¹².

That Stephanos' Derbikkai, Derbioi, Derbissoi and Dyrbaioi all come from a single original Ktesian form is clear, not simply by comparing the forms in the various fragments and manuscripts¹¹³, but also by comparing Stephanos' descriptions of the Dyrbaioi with Strabo's description of the Derbikai. Stephanos writes that the Dyrbaioi:

'are happy, wealthy and very law-abiding men. They do no one harm, nor kill anyone. If they find gold, clothing, silver or anything else on the road, they do not take it up.

¹⁰⁹ This equation was first suggested by Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur im Altertum*, 1882, p.204 (cited Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, p.67 n.58). It was later adopted by Brunnhofer, *Iran und Turan*, 1889, pp.81f & 206ff. (cited by König, *Die Persika*, 1972, p.56), A.Christensen, *Le premier Chapitre du Vendidad*, (Kopenhagen, 1943), p.62, König, *Die Persika*, 1972, p.56, Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, p.67 n.58 and Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, p.67 (for the linking of the Derbikes with the *Drbhika* of the Rig Veda).

¹¹⁰ Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, pp.63, 67 and map IV. J.Marquart, *Wehrot und Arang*, (Leiden, 1938), pp.107-8 had also interpreted Ktesias as referring to an eastern Derbikes, perhaps in the Hindu-Kush.

¹¹¹ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 1951, p.26, mentions the Derbikes 'whom Ctesias wrongly localized on the Indian border while in fact they lived in the neighbourhood of Hyrcania'. This is insupportable. Ktesias was probably responsible for both localisations and neither can be said to be right or wrong.

¹¹² Own translation.

¹¹³ See the study of the problem in P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975, pp.149 and 186-7.

They do not bake bread...except on account of sacrifices. They make barley meal much softer than the Greeks, and they eat barley bread.'

and Strabo writes that the Derbikai:

'slaughter people even for slight offences. The Derbices worship Mother Earth; and they do not sacrifice, or eat, anything that is female, and when men become over seventy years of age they are slaughtered, and their flesh is consumed by their nearest of kin; but their old women are strangled and then buried. However, the men who die under seventy years of age are not eaten but only buried.'

It might, moreover, be noted that the above descriptions of the Dyrbaioi/Derbikai closely resemble Herodotos' description (I.216) of the Massagetai:

'Though they (the Massagetai) set no certain term to life, yet when a man is very old all his kin meet together and kill him, with beasts of the flock besides, then boil the flesh and feast on it. This is held to be the happiest death; when a man dies of a sickness they do not eat him, but bury him in the earth, and lament that he would not live to be killed. They never sow; their fare is their live-stock and the fish which they have in abundance from the Araxes'.

Similar customs are attributed to the Derbikkai by Aelianos and to the Massagetai and Derbikes by Porphyrios¹¹⁴. The correspondence in the way Massagetai and Derbekai customs are described could be explained in any of several ways. Firstly, two distinct tribes, the Massagetai and Derbikes, may have shared the same custom and were thus both recorded as having this custom. The descriptions, however, correspond too closely for such an 'historical' explanation to be entertained. Secondly, two distinct tribes, the Massagetai and Derbikes, may have been so closely associated politically and culturally, that the early record of this custom among one of the tribes was taken as evidence for the custom among the others. This would be possible were it not that ancient writers would seem not to have conceived of the Massagetai and Derbikai as neighbours. Herodotos (I.202) had Kyros killed by the Massagetai and made no mention of the Derbikai while Ktesias (Photios 6) had Kyros killed by the Derbikai and made no mention of the Massagetai. Thirdly, and most probably, the tribal-names Massagetai and Derbikai were, for some ancient Greek writers, interchangeable. Thus, Kyros probably did not, as Nagel would suggest¹¹⁵, campaign against both Massagetai and a more easterly Derbikes, but against a people dwelling in western Central Asia known to the Greeks by (at least) two names.

¹¹⁴ Aelianos, *Poikile historia* IV.1: 'The Derbikkai kill those over 70 years of age, sacrificing the men and strangling the women' and Porphyrios *Peri apokhes empsukhon*, IV.21: 'It is said that the Massagetai and Derbikes believe in automatically killing the most decrepit of their kin, for they prematurely sacrifice and eat the dearest of their elderly'. (Own translation).

¹¹⁵ Nagel, *Ninus und Semiramis*, 1982, pp.63-67.

One variation which can be detected in the stories associated with Massagetai and Derbikai customs is the age at which the elderly were sacrificed, for although all the above mentioned writers either specify no age or 70 years of age, Sextus Empiricus and Philostratos specify 60 years of age¹¹⁶. In 1975 P'jankov suggested that while the notices on the Derbikai can be traced back to Ktesias, the notices on the 60 years of age can be traced back to a still earlier source, Hellanikos, who writes the following of the Hyperboreans: 'They lead 60-year olds out of the city gates and abandon them'¹¹⁷. It is clear that Ktesias was aware of the earlier, possibly Hellanikan, possibly Hekataian, reference to killing of elders. It is less likely, however, that Ktesias drew his ethnonym 'Derbikai' from Hellanikos or Hekataios. He may have picked up the name Derbikai in his own day and transferred to this new name much of what his predecessors (Hekataios, Hellanikos and Herodotos) had associated with the terms Massagetai and Hyperboreans.

Variants of the tribal-name 'Derbikai' enjoyed a long life in classical literature¹¹⁸. Curtius, for example, included the tribe in his catalogue of Dareios III's army:

The Hyrcani had mustered 6000 as excellent horsemen as those nations could furnish, as well as 1000 Tapurian cavalry. The Derbices had armed 40,000 foot-soldiers; most of these carried spears tipped with bronze or iron, but some had hardened the wooden shaft by fire¹¹⁹

Though Thomas believed this reference testifies to the power of the people as late as Alexander's own day¹²⁰, it is clearly little more than a formula drawn from the earliest tradition in which Hyrkanians, Tapurians and Derbikai are always mentioned together, and in which the names Massagetai and Derbikai are virtually interchangeable. Thus the attention Curtius pays to the metals used by the Derbikai, reflects the attention paid by Herodotos and Hellanikos to the metals used by the Massagetai¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrroneioi hypotyposesis*, III.210 & 228 and Philostratus, *The life of Apollonios*, VI.20.

¹¹⁷ I.V.P'jankov, 'Массагеты соседи индийцев', in B.Gafurov and B.A.Litvinskij, *Средняя Азия*, (Moscow, 1977), pp.55-56. Hellanikos F187 b) Clement, *Stromata*, I.15.

¹¹⁸ Dionysius Periegesis 734, 738 located the Δερέβιοι on the river Mardos, between the Hykanioi, Tapuroi and Baktroi. Mela III.39 wrote *Caspia, Amazones (Sauromatidae), Albani, Moschi, Hyrcani*, in *Scythico Amardi et Pestici et iam ad fretum Derbices*. Pliny VI.xviii.48 included in his catalogue of tribes near the Caspian, 'the Derbices, Oaxus...'. Ptolemy VI.x.2 placed the Δερκέβοι in the steppes north of Margiane, on the lower course of the Oxos, between the Daai, Masagetai and Tapuroi. *Tabula Peutingeriana* mentioned the Derbiccae between the rivers Nigrinus and Oxus. See Tomaschek, 'Derbikes', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, V.1, 1903, col.238.

¹¹⁹ Curtius III.ii.7.

¹²⁰ Thomas, 'Sakastana', 1906, p.462.

¹²¹ Her. I.215-6 and Strabo XI.viii.6.

These associations of Ktesias' Derbikes with the Massagetai of Herodotos and the west Caspian coast region, point to an association with the Saka Tigrakauda, for as has been suggested in the earlier discussion of Dareios' Saka expedition, although the wearing of pointed caps was probably common to most northern nomads, the name 'Saka of the Pointed caps' was probably used to designate a Saka group near to the west Caspian coast. Though 'Derbikes' is clearly not an attempted rendering of 'Tigrakauda' as 'Amyrgoi' probably was of 'Haumavarga', that the Persian ethnonym was known to the Greeks is clear from Herodotos' reference (III.92) to the 'Ὀρθοκορυβάντιοι, 'the wears of pointed-hats'. Herodotos' placing of the people in the 10th satrapy, along with Medes, was probably, as Junge has suggested, for want of somewhere to insert the name¹²². The same people may have been labelled 'Derbikai' by Ktesias as had been labelled 'Saka Tigrakauda' by Dareios.

To conclude discussion of Ktesias' conception of Saka and Derbikai, it is tempting to subscribe to P'jankov's understanding of the Ktesian's conception:

'Sakai and Derbikai are two "Scythian" people. The Sakai were widely known of outside Ktesias. The Derbikai were, it appears, mentioned for the first time by Ktesias. Their names had two senses- a narrow (specialist) one and a wide (general) one. In the first, since the name "Sakai" belonged to the group of "Scythian" tribes of the eastern part of Central Asia, and the name "Derbikes" to the group of "Scythian" tribes of the western part of Central Asia, corresponding, perhaps, to the "Massagetai" of other authors. In the second sense, both names belong to "Scythian" in general. Ktesias had no clear conception of either the Sakai or the Derbikai. He oscilated between the two senses of the names'¹²³.

P'jankov may, however, have overlooked one very important aspect of Ktesias' concept of Central Asian ethnography. This aspect was an underestimation of the distance across Central Asia, from the Caspian Sea to India. Modern scholars might puzzle at Ktesias' apparent ability to associate both the Saka and Derbikai with both western and eastern Central Asia, but this is perhaps because we conceive of peoples being enumerated from west to east across the breadth of Central Asia. Ktesias, with no idea of the gap between the Caspian and the Aral, probably conceived of the Derbikai stretching from the Caspian to Baktria, and Amorges' Sakai dwelling to the north of them. This would fit in well with P'jankov's own model of Ktesias' northern ethnography, a model which has Ktesias conceive of the Parthioi, Khoramnioi and Baktrioi as

¹²² Junge, *Saka-Studien*, 1939, pp.44-45 and 63 n.1.

¹²³ P'jankov, *Средняя Азия*, 1975, p.5.

lying on a central west-east axis, and the Barkanioi, Hyrkanioi and Derbikai as lying to their north on a south-north axis¹²⁴.

Trogus Pompeius

The discussion might now turn to the influence Ktesias' work on Central Asian history had upon the formulation of subsequent Scythian and Amazon histories. In the 2nd book of his epitome of Trogus' work Justin gave a detailed account of Skythian affairs. Whereas Justin's account of Pontic Skythian affairs corresponds closely with Herodotos¹²⁵, his account of Central Asian Skythian affairs is clearly of a non-Herodotean origin. In II.iii Justin mentioned the Skythian victories over Dareios, Kyros and Zopyrion, their foundation of the Parthian and Baktrian powers, and, in greater detail, their war against Sesostris. Herodotos offers different accounts of the war against Dareios, Kyros and Sesostris¹²⁶. In II.iv Justin gave a detailed history, including fourteen personal names, of the Amazons, said to be descended from a group of exiled Skythians. Herodotos' version (IV.110-116) had the Sauromatai who are descended from the Skythians exiles, these having taken Amazon wives, and included no personal names.

To investigate further the identity of the non-Herodotean source of Trogus' account of early Central Asian history discussion might turn from Justin to Jordanes. Jordanes' account of the war between the Goths and Vesosis of Egypt corresponds so closely to Justin's account of

¹²⁴ Р'јанков, 'Сведения Ктесия', 1961, p.100 and *Средняя Азия*, 1975, pp.5-6. On the problems of localising the names referred to see R.Schmitt, 'Die Wiedergabe iranischer Namen bei Ktesias von Knidos im Vergleich zur sonstigen griechischen Überlieferung', in J.Harmatta (ed.), *Prolegomena to the sources of the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, (Budapest, 1979), pp.129-131, I.I.Khlopin, 'Zur Lösung des Rätsels des Akas-Flusses (Her.III.117)', *Orientalia Lovanienna Periodica*, II, 1971, p.147 n.30 and Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, pp.39-40 &100.

¹²⁵ For example Justin's stories in II.v of rebellious Skythian slaves and Dareios' Skythian campaign correspond closely to stories in Her.IV.3 and IV.87.

¹²⁶ For example, Justin said the Skythians defeated Sesostris. Herodotos (II.102-3) said Sesostris defeated the Skythians, and 'marched over the country till he had passed over from Asia to Europe and subdued the Scythians and Thracians'. Justin said the Skythians took 15 years to subdue Asia, which remained a Skythian tributary for 1500 years. Herodotos said the Skythians ruled Asia for 28 years. Justin said the Skythians imposed 'only a moderate tribute, rather as a token of their power over it, than as a recompense for their victory'. Herodotos (I.106) wrote 'all the land was wasted by reason of their violence and their pride, for, besides that they extracted from each the tribute which laid upon him, they rode about the land carrying off all men's possessions'.

the Skythians' war against Sesostris, that Jordanes' source may have been Trogus¹²⁷. Jordanes indeed cites Trogus on Skythian related matters in ch.48. Whether Jordanes used Trogus directly, or indirectly through Paulus Orosius is unclear¹²⁸. Jordanes' account of the conflict between Kyros and the Getic Queen Tomyris¹²⁹ corresponds closely to Justin's account of the conflict between Kyros and the Skythian Queen Tamyris. Here a line from Trogus through Orosius is even more evident. Trogus is Jordanes' cited source, but Orosius' account is so similar to Justin's and Jordanes that he was almost certainly the intermediary between Trogus and Jordanes¹³⁰. Jordanes' claim that Tomyris founded the city of Tomis, may be inspired by his own imagination or a folk etymology¹³¹ but was certainly in keeping with a tendency evident in Trogus' work to attribute the foundation of nations and cities to Amazon queens. Justin's epitome of Trogus' history of the Amazons (II.iv) included mention of a plain near the Thermodon called Themiskyrios, probably said by Trogus himself to have

¹²⁷ Jordanes 47. The similarity was noted by V.Iliescu, 'Bemerkung zur gotenfreundlichen Einstellung in den Getica des Jordanes', I: Actes de la XIIe Conférence Internationale d'études classiques, Eirene, 1972, Bucharest, (Amsterdam, 1975), p.414. Jordanes twice cites Trogus, VI.48 and X.61. There is no problem in Jordanes interchanging *Gotes*, *Getae* and *Scythae*.

¹²⁸ In the context of an attempt to prove that Vesosis waged a war against the Goths, Jordanes wrote in ch.44: 'Concerning these female warriors Orosius speaks in convincing language'. It is possible that Orosius included in his own history the Trogean history of Skythian expansion. Other intermediaries besides Trogus and Orosius might have been Dio Chrysostom and Cassiodorus (both periodically cited). Mommsen's grounds for believing that Orosius was the only author other than Cassiodorus of which Jordanes made direct use, are unsound. As C.C.Mierow, in his introduction to *The Gothic History of Jordanes*, (1915; New York, 1966), p.26, points out, Mommsen (in his editorial comments to Jordanes, *Romana et Getica*, 1882) errs when he says that Orosius is the only author Jordanes refers to by book number. Ptolemaios and Symmachus are also referred to by book (Jordanes III.16 and XV.83 respectively).

¹²⁹ Jordanes X.61-62.

¹³⁰ Jordanes X.61: *Tunc Cyrus, rex Persarum, post grande intervallum et pene post DCXXX annorum tempores (Pompeio Trogo testante) Getarum reginae Thomyre sibi exitiabile intulit bellum. Orosius, Historiarum Adversum Paganos, II.7: Igitur idem Cyrus proximi temporis successu Scythis bellum intulit. quem Thamyris regina quae tunc genti praeerat cum prohibere transitu Araxis fluminis posset, transire permisit...* Justin I.viii.1: *Cyrus subacta Asia et universo Oriente in potestatem adacto Scythis bellum infert. Erat eo tempore regina Scytharum Tamyris, quae non muliebriter adventu hostium territa, cum prohibere eos transitu Araxis fluminis posset, transire permisit...*

¹³¹ Jordanes offers foundation stories for three cities in Moesia; Tomis (62), Marcianopolis (Nicolopolis?) (101) and Anchialos (108). It is possible that Jordanes had lived in these cities and picked up the etymologies from its inhabitants. Cf. Iliescu, 'Bemerkungen zur gotenfreundlichen Einstellung', 1972, p.417 n.52.

been founded by the famous Amazon of that name. Jordanes would, therefore, seem to be as ultimately dependant on Trogus' account of the Skythian and Amazon history, as Justin, Trogus' epitomiser, was. But who was Trogus' source?

Trogus' source for historical episodes later than the 3rd century B.C., the Skythian foundation of the Parthian and Baktrian nations, and Skythian successes against Zopyrion and the Romans, may well have been a Mithridatic historian¹³², but who was his source for the Skythian-Amazon history? Gutschmid postulated a 4th century Athenian source, but offers no name or mechanism¹³³. The source was clearly not Herodotos, though Herodotos did mention a Queen Tomyris. The further investigation of this source's identity and use, is best pursued through an examination of Diodoros' work.

Diodoros' account of Skythian and Amazon history corresponds so closely to the Trogean account reconstructed above that use of a common source is probable. Diodoros' account of the Skythian-Sesostris conflict resembles Trogus¹³⁴. His history of the Amazons in II.45-46, while not including the great cast of leading Amazons and Skythians named by Trogus, corresponds with Trogus' history, as preserved in Justin II.iv at almost every point. The Amazon homeland was on the Thermodon river. A warlike Queen emerged and was responsible for the initial tribal expansion. Right breasts were burnt off. The city of Themiskyra and Themiskyrian plain are mentioned. The first great queen (Justin's *Marpesisa*) was succeeded by her daughter (Justin's *Orithya*). The daughter surpassed her mother in great deeds and further expanded the kingdom. Herakles made an expedition against the Amazons and met Queen Hippolyte. Penthesilea, at the time of the Trojan war, was the last great Amazon queen and the race soon afterwards dwindled out of existence. The correspondence between the accounts is not only close with respect to content, but also the order in which episodes are presented.

As Diodoros' source in the above account is not cited, observing the above correspondences does not in itself provide an identification for Trogus' source. Observing the similarity between Diodoros' story of the Saka queen Zarinaia in II.34.3-5 and his story of the Amazon queens in II.45-46 does, however, lead us to a source. As Diodoros' Zarinaia story was derived from a Ktesian Zarinaia story so might Diodoros' and Trogus' Amazon stories go back to an originally Ktesian tale. The problem is that the transmission in this later case. Diodoros might have drawn upon two different sources, Ktesias and someone who reworked

¹³² Justin II.i.3 and II.iii.3-6 respectively. See Rostovtzeff, *Skythien*, 1931, p.107.

¹³³ A.Gutschmid, 'Die beiden ersten Bücher des Pompeius Trogus', *Kleine Schriften*, V, (Leipzig, 1894), pp.161ff.

¹³⁴ Diodoros I.lv.3-5. The same tradition is preserved in the work of Dikaiarkhos. Kees, 'Sesostres', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, II.A.2, 1923, col.1861-1876, provides an overview of all the historical and historiographical problems associated with this story.

Ktesias. As Ktesias' Zarinaia can be seen in Justin's and Jordanes' Amazon queens, Marpesia and Orithya, as well as Diodoros' anonymous Amazon queen, it is possible that Ktesias' story of a Saka queen was used in the composition of at least one Amazon queen story before Diodoros' time. Who then was responsible for the marriage of Ktesias Zarinaia story and the Hellenikan Amazon history?

Jacoby long ago suggested Deinon played a role in transmitting and transforming Ktesias' Assyrian, Median and Persian history¹³⁵, but Schwartz, seemingly on the grounds that Deinon was the father of Kleitarkhos, had earlier been the first to suggest Deinon may be 'das Mittelglied zwischen K. und der romanhaften Alexanderhistorie'¹³⁶. Jacoby agreed with the definition but added one qualification. Although Deinon appears to have been read widely in antiquity, so was Ktesias, and with regard to Ktesias 'dürfte die Wirkung nicht nur eine indirekte gewesen sein'¹³⁷. Jacoby accordingly suggested that Ktesias was used directly by Ephoros who was in turn source for Trogus' early Asian history (Justin I.1-3), that Ktesias was used directly for Trogus' Assyrian history, and that a combination of Herodotos, Ktesias and a third writer was responsible for Trogus' Median-Persian history. Neither Schwartz nor Jacoby, however, say who may have been used for Trogus' early history of the Skythians and Amazons (Justin II.1-5).

The above question was offered its first answer by Gutschmid, who claimed that Deinon was not only responsible for the content of the stories, but also for the pro-Skythian

¹³⁵ Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2069: 'Dion schient in hellenistischer Zeit allerdings das Hauptbuch gewesen zu sein (...), was wohl darauf beruht, das er die letzet, bis auf das Ende des Reiches herabgeführte Darstellung gegeben hat. Sie fusste in ihren älteren Teilen offensichtlich ganz auf K. natürlich mit der Massgabe, dass Dion ihn in der Richtung effektvoll- rhetorische Ausgestaltung zu übertreffen sucht, ihn variierte und durch solche Mittel die stoffliche Abhängigkeit verdeckte, ganz wie es K. selbst mit Herodot gemacht hat.' Jacoby successfully supports this conclusion with numerous examples.

¹³⁶ Schwartz, 'Dion 2)', *Pautys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, V.I, 1903, col.654.

¹³⁷ Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2069: 'Poseidonios had ihn noch gelesen (*Cic.de.divin.* I.46); Plutarch benutzt ihn im Artaxerxes zur Correctur und Ergänzung des Ktesias; für den zweiten Teil von c.22 an, wo Ktesias versagte, liegt er wohl zu Grund (vgl.frg.29 = Plut. *Artax.* 30).

sympathies and anti-Herodotean polemics¹³⁸, and that Deinon's source was in turn a Persian authority¹³⁹. Rostovtzeff's response was to point out that it is highly improbable that stories in which the Persians are twice defeated by Skythians would be of Persian origin, and that elements of Skythian idealisation found in Trogus' work did not come from Ktesias or Deinon, but from a later source who simply drew upon the above two writers for material¹⁴⁰. Though the first response is appropriate, the second is not. The idealisation of Skythians had been a part of the historical literature long before Deinon wrote, so there is no reason why a romantic historian such as he might not have been responsible for the elements of idealisation in Trogus' work.

In 1964 Iliescu was prepared to concede Trogus' use of Deinon's *Persika* in the first book of his *Historiae Philippicae*, but was not convinced that Gutschmid proved use of Deinon in Trogus' second book, nor certain of the source of Trogus' idealisation¹⁴¹. The caution with which Iliescu and Rostovtzeff have approached Gutschmid's thesis is commendable. Gutschmid did not discuss the Zarinaia story of the history of idealisation of Skythians. Having discussed these, however, the appropriateness of Gutschmid's thesis is clear. The material on early Skythians and Amazons in Jordanes and Justin might therefore be traced back

¹³⁸ Gutschmid, 'Die beiden ersten Bücher', 1894, pp.87ff., concluded 'Als Quelle des ersten Buches ist Deinons Persische Geschichte nachgewiesen worden. Es erübrigt nur noch, zu zeigen, dass alle für den Urheber der skythischen Nachrichten des Trogus ermittelten Kriterien auf diesen passen' This Gutschmid does in pp.102-104, pointing to 1) the correspondence of Trogus with Arrian and Polyainos (the latter of whom is known to have used Deinon), 2) the contrasting of Egypt and Skythia, (cf. Deinon, F 23b), and 4) use of folktales on Sesostris and the Skythians.

¹³⁹ Rostovtzeff, *Skythien*, 1931, p.109, was not the first to regard Deinon's source as a problem, for Gutschmid wrote: 'Das einzige Bedenken, welches man gegen eine Ableitung des Abschnittes des Trogus über die Skythen aus Deinon haben könnte, dass dieser in seiner Persischen Geschichte keinen Anlass gehabt habe, die vollständig Geographie und Geschichte Skythiens zu behandeln, erledigt sich bei näherem Zusehen von selbsts:...', and further that 'Die Nachrichten des Trogus enthalten also Nichts, was nicht in einer persischen Geschichte wie die des Deinon vorkommen musste'. Though this is perhaps a reasonable conclusion, it is not reasonable to say 'die Quelle der Nachrichten des Trogus über Skythien den persischen Standpunkt einnimmt...'

¹⁴⁰ Rostovtzeff, *ibid.*, p.109.

¹⁴¹ Iliescu, 'Bemerkung zur gotenfreundlichen Einstellung in den *Getica* des Jordanes', 1972, p.415 n.38. On the latter point, 'Und auch in diesem Fall wissen wir nicht, ob die "Verschönerung" der Anfänge der skythischen Geschichte bereits in der Vorlage gleichwohl welche es gewesen sein mag- zu finden war, oder sie dem Skythenliebhaber Trogus zu verdanken ist, um so mehr als es sich um weitzurückliegende und längst vergessene Dinge handelte'.

to Trogus, from him to Deinon and from him to Ktesias. Similar material in Diodoros may be traced back to Deinon, who used Ktesias, and to Ktesias.

Thus, though Murray rejected attempts to accredit Ktesias and Deinon with a major role in Hellenistic historiography, believing it 'unnecessary to set up these two as the source of a type of Hellenistic history when their predecessor Herodotus is such a much more obvious candidate', it is clear that the above cycle of stories owe a lot more to Ktesias and Deinon than they do to Herodotos¹⁴².

Ktesias' geography

Though such scholars as Herrmann have suggested that Ktesias told his fabulous tales without too much concern for geographical context¹⁴³, that Ktesias worked with some very definite geographical conceptions would seem probable considering that besides his *Persika*, *Indika*, and *Phoroi*, Ktesias wrote a geographical work variously called a *Periodos*, *Periegesis* and *Periploi*¹⁴⁴. There are very few extant fragments of Ktesias' geographical treatise, but from those few fragments that are extant it is possible to speculate that the first book might have dealt with Egypt and western Asia Minor¹⁴⁵, the second with Asia from the Caucasus

¹⁴² O.Murray, 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', *Classical Quarterly*, XXII, 1972, p.212. More recently Drews, *The Greek accounts of eastern history*, 1973, p.116, has argued that though it is tempting to denounce Ktesias 'it is more important to recognize that his *Persika* reflected his contemporaries' interest in early Eastern history' and that he was read by Isocrates, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Ephorus, Theopompus, Diodorus, Nicolaus and Pompeius Trogus, the last of whom 'used either the *Persika* itself or a work dependent on it (Dinon?)'.

¹⁴³ Herrmann, 'Sakai', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, IA.2, 1929, col.1174: 'Aber ob er mit seinen teilweise ungläubwürdigen Erzählungen bestimmte geographische Vorstellungen verbunden hat, ist...richt unwahrscheinlich'.

¹⁴⁴ For discussion of Ktesias' *Indika* see McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ktesias*, 1882 (1973) and Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, pp.2037-39. For discussion of Ktesias' *Phoroi* see Jacoby, *ibid.*, pp.2039-40. For the fragments of Ktesias' geographical treatise see *FGrH* 688 F 55-58.

¹⁴⁵ Thus Stephanos' reference to Sigynnos 'a city of Egypt, as Ktesias (writes) in the 1st (book) of (his) *Periplous*', and thus the reference to the 1st book of Ktesias' *Periodos* in connection with the mountains and Makronai on the south Euxine coast in Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes, II.1015.

eastward¹⁴⁶ and the third with the west¹⁴⁷. The extant fragments of the geographical treatise do not, however, give any grounds for determining the continental boundaries with which Ktesias worked. For an understanding of Ktesias' continental boundaries, it is necessary to turn back to Ktesias' *Persika*.

Though it is evident from the *Periodos* fragment in *Scholia on Apollonios of Rhodes* (Π.399) that Ktesias mentioned the Kolkhian Phasis in his geographical work, and though Herodotos' treatment of this river suggested that it was regarded in some quarters as a continental boundary, it is, as Jacoby noted in 1922, unlikely that it constituted a boundary for Ktesias¹⁴⁸. The river which would seem to have featured as the boundary between Europe and Asia in Ktesias' historical work was the Tanais. Ktesias' Asia would seem to have been bound by the Nile, the Tanais and the Indus. King Ninus, the hero of the Ktesian story, is said by Jordanes (*Getica* 5) to have conquered all of Asia 'to Libya on the side of Egypt, and to Europe on the side of the Danube', by Justin (I.i.5) to have crossed Asia to Libya, and by Diodoros (Π.ii.1) to have been 'seized with a powerful desire to subdue all of Asia that lies between the Tanais and the Nile'¹⁴⁹ and (Π.ii.3) to have conquered nearly all Asia, subduing among other nations, the Egyptians, and 'all the barbarian nations who inhabit the shores of the Pontus as far as the Tanais'. Although it is possible that these passages are reworkings of Ktesias into which post-Alexandrian hydrological conceptions have been introduced, it is also possible that Ktesias had himself conceived of the Tanais as stretching from the Maeotis, where a Don-Tanais had been used as a continental boundary at a very early date¹⁵⁰, to the source of the Jaxartes¹⁵¹. Though Jacoby has correctly noted that Ktesias is included in no ancient list of geographers, nor once cited by Pliny and has argued that apart from his compatriot

¹⁴⁶ Thus the reference in *Scholia to Apollonios of Rhodes*, Π.399, to Ktesias' mention of the Kolkhis: 'That the Amaranta mountain is in the Kolkhian land, Ktesias informs in Book 2. The Phasis, however, flows from the Armenian mountains, as Eratosthenes says, and disgorges through the Kolkhis into the sea'.

¹⁴⁷ Thus Stephanos' citing of Ktesias' Book 3 on the subject of the Sicilian city *Kosute*.

¹⁴⁸ Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2036.

¹⁴⁹ The Nile as a continental boundary might seem to present a problem, with half of Egypt thus falling inside and half outside Asia. Ktesias might simply, however, have placed the whole of Egypt within Asia (thus dealing with both Egypt and Asia Minor in Book I of his *Periodos*) and might have conceived of the Nile dividing Egypt from Libya.

¹⁵⁰ Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, (Berlin, 1923), Pt.1 a, pp.352-4 and J.D.P.Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, (Oxford, 1962), p.190.

¹⁵¹ As suggested also by P'jankov, 'Сведения Ктесия о владениях Бардии на востоке Ирана', 1961, pp.98-103, "История Персии" Ктесия и средне-азнатские сатрапии Ахеменидов', *Вестник древней истории*, ХСП, 1965, 2, pp.35-50 and *Средняя Азия в известиях античного историка Ктесия*, 1975, p.22.

Agatharkhides no ancient geographer used his geography directly¹⁵², Ktesias may have played a principle part in the development of the concept of a Tanais which included within its course the lower Don and the Iaxartes, a concept which was to feature so prominently in the works of Eudoxos, Ephoros, Aristotle and some Alexander historians.

Conclusion

It might then be concluded that though modern scholars invariably underestimate the amount of Ktesian material accessible through extant accounts, underestimate the relevance of this material to the study of ancient Central Asia, and underestimate Ktesias' influence on subsequent historical, ethnographic and geographical writing, it is possible to piece together Ktesias' conception of Central Asian history and ethnography, to gain from Ktesian material valuable insights into Persian and Babylonian perceptions of Assyrian, Median and Persian contact with Central Asian Skythians, and to see Ktesias, through the medium of Deinon and Kleitarkhos, as having influenced subsequent writings on Skythians.

¹⁵² Jacoby, 'Ktesias', 1922, col.2971. On Agatharkhides, see F.Susemihl, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur in der Alexandrinerzeit*, I, (Leipzig, 1891; Hildesheim, 1965), p.689.