

**Ctesias *FGrH* 688 F 13.21-33 (translation): the Persian Wars**

(21) Mustering an army of 800,000 and bridging the Bosporos and the Istros, Dareios crossed over against the Scythians, making a journey of 15 days. And they sent bows to one another; the bow of the Scythians was more powerful. And fleeing because of this, Dareios crossed the bridges and in his haste broke them up before the entire army had crossed. And the 80,000 who were left behind in Europe were killed by Scytharches. After crossing the bridge, Dareios burnt down the houses and temples of the Chalcedonians because they had intended to break up the bridge in their territory, and because they had destroyed the altar that Dareios had set up in the name of Zeus Diabaterios when he crossed. (22) Datis, coming back from the Black Sea and leading the Median forces, ravaged the islands and Hellas. At Marathon, Miltiades faces him and defeats the barbarians and Datis himself also falls. And the body was not given to the Persians when they asked for it. [23: *Dareios went home to Persia and died, after ruling 31 years*]

(24) His son Xerxes is king and Artapanos son of Artasyras has power under him, like his father under his father, and Mardonios the Old. Among the eunuchs, Natakas had most power. Xerxes marries Onophas' daughter Amestris, and he has a son Dareiaios and another after two years, Hystaspes, and in addition Artaxerxes; and two daughters, of whom one was Amytis, named after her grandmother, and the other Rhodogyne. (25) Xerxes leads an army against the Greeks because the Chalcedonians tried to break up the bridge, as I have said, and because they took down the altar that Dareios set up. And because the Athenians killed Datis but did not give up his body.

(26) But first he went to Babylon, and he wanted to see the tomb of Belitanas, and he saw it thanks to Mardonios [...] Xerxes drove off to Ekbatana and the revolt of the Babylonians and the killing by them of their general Zopyros was reported to him. This is what Ctesias says about these matters, unlike Herodotos. What the latter says about Zopyros, except that his mule gave birth, the former says that everything else was done by Megabyzos, who was Xerxes' son-in-law via his daughter Amytis. Thus he captured Babylon thanks to Megabyzos. Xerxes makes many gifts to him, including a golden millstone weighing 6 talents which among the Persians is the most honorific of royal gifts.

(27) Xerxes, mustering a Persian army of 800,000, not including chariots, and 1,000 triremes, marched against Hellas, bridging at Abydos. Demaratos the Lacedaemonian was already with him before this and accompanied him in crossing over and prevented a march against Lacedaemon. Xerxes attacks Leonidas the general of the Lacedaemonians at Thermopylae, by means of Artapanos who had 10,000 men. The Persian multitude was cut down; of the Lacedaemonians two or three were killed. Next, he orders an attack with 20,000, and these too are defeated. Then they are whipped into battle but although they were whipped they were still defeated. On the next day, he orders them to fight with 50,000 men, and because this achieved nothing he then put an end to the fight. Thorax the Thessalian and the powerful Trachinians, Kalliades and Timaphernes, were present with their armies. Summoning these men and Demaratos and Hegias of Ephesos, Xerxes discovered that the Lacedaemonians could not be defeated unless they were surrounded. Led by the two Trachinians, a Persian army of 40,000 went by a difficult route and arrive in the rear of the Lacedaemonians. And when they were surrounded, they all died fighting bravely.

(28) Xerxes again sends an army, against the Plataeans, 120,000 men, appointing Mardonios to be their leader. It was the Thebans who incited Xerxes against the Plataeans. Pausanias the

Lacedaemonian marches against him, with 300 Spartiates, 1,000 of the *perioikoi*, and 6,000 from the other cities. And he wins a great victory over the Persian army and Mardonios too flees after having been wounded. (29) This Mardonios is sent by Xerxes to plunder the temple of Apollo, and there (he says) he dies in a heavy hailstorm. Xerxes grieved deeply over him.

(30) Xerxes marches on Athens itself and the Athenians, manning 110 triremes, flee to Salamis. And Xerxes seizes the empty city and burns it down, apart from the Acropolis. For on it some men left behind were still fighting. In the end, when those too fled at night, he destroyed even that. Xerxes, coming from there to the straits of Attica (called Herakleion) built an earthwork towards Salamis, intending to cross over there by foot. On the advice of Themistocles the Athenian and Aristides, archers are summoned from Crete, and arrive. Then a naval battle between Persians and Greeks takes place, the Persians having more than 1,000 ships, with Onophas as their commander, and the Greeks 700. And the Greeks win and destroy 500 Persian ships, and Xerxes flees, again due to the planning and skill of Aristides and Themistocles. In all the remaining battles, 120,000 Persians died.

(31) Xerxes, crossing to Asia and marching to Sardis, sent Megabyzos to plunder the sanctuary at Delphi, but when he asked to be excused, he sends off Matakas the eunuch, who brought insults to Apollo and plundered everything. And when he had acted in this way he returned to Xerxes.

(32) Xerxes came from Babylon to Persia; and Megabyzos raised an accusation against his own wife Amytis, the daughter of Xerxes as stated above, that she committed adultery, and Amytis was verbally rebuked by her father and she promised to behave with restraint.

[33: *Artapanos and Aspamitres kill Xerxes, but blame Dareiaios, who is executed by Artaxerxes.*]

### **Ctesias *FGrH* 688 F 14 (summary): Artaxerxes I, or the further adventures of Megabyzos**

34: Megabyzos, offended by Amytis' adultery, joins Artapanos' plot against Artaxerxes, but then reveals all to the king; the killers of Xerxes and Dareiaios are executed. War between Artapanos' co-conspirators and the other Persians, during which 'Megabyzos is severely wounded; and Artaxerxes, and Amytis, and Rhodogyne, and their mother Amestris lament (θρηνεί), and he is saved with difficulty by the intensive care of the physician Apollonides of Cos'.

35: Bactrian revolt put down by Artaxerxes. 36: Egyptian revolt led by Inaros with Athenian support, Artaxerxes' brother Achaemenides is defeated and killed. 37: Megabyzos is sent to Egypt with an army; he 'hits Inaros in the thigh' and wins a great victory. 38: Megabyzos gets Inaros and over 6,000 surviving Greeks to surrender on condition that they will remain unharmed; he takes them all to Artaxerxes, who is furious about the death of his brother, but is persuaded by Megabyzos to abide by the terms of the surrender. 39: Amestris pesters the king and Megabyzos for revenge for her son; Megabyzos refuses. After 5 years, the king concedes and Amestris impales Inaros and beheads c. 50 Greeks. 40: Megabyzos is upset and starts a revolt with the help of the remaining Greeks; fights a duel on horseback with the commander sent against him, wins and saves his opponent's life; his sons Zopyros and Artyphios fight bravely. 41: Megabyzos fights and defeats the next commander sent against him as well. 42: Amestris and the eunuch Artoxares tell king to make peace with Megabyzos; Artarios satrap of Babylon tells Megabyzos to make peace with king. Amytis among those sent to negotiate a deal; Megabyzos is pardoned.

43: During a lion hunt, Megabyzos kills a lion before the king can kill it. Amestris and Amytis ensure that his punishment is commuted from beheading to exile. Eunuch Artoxares exiled for supporting Megabyzos. Megabyzos returns from exile disguised as a leper, and thanks to Amestris and Amytis, is reconciled with the king and restored as 'table-fellow'. Dies age 76 'and the king grieved deeply'.

44: After Megabyzos' death, Amytis sleeps with many men, like her mother (Amestris) before her. Apollonides of Cos persuades her to have sex with him as therapy for a disease of the womb, but when she gets worse he abandons her. Artaxerxes gives Amestris permission to punish him as she sees fit, and she punishes him for 2 months, then buries him alive when Amytis dies. 45: After the death of Megabyzos and Amytis, their son Zopyros rebels and gets support from Athens 'on the basis of his mother's benefaction towards them'. Forces entry into Kaunos with Athenian support, but is killed by a Kaunian, who is then impaled by his grandmother Amestris. 46: 'And Amestris dies, having become a very old woman, and Artaxerxes also dies, having been king for 42 years'.

### **Ctesias *FGrH* 688 FF 15-16, 27 (summary): Dareios II and Artaxerxes II, or the story of Parysatis**

47: Artaxerxes had made his son Ochos satrap of Hyrcania and given him his half-sister Parysatis as wife. Oldest son Xerxes (II) initially succeeds. 48-49: other son Sekyndianos kills half-brother and succeeds. 50: Ochos gains support (incl. exiled eunuch Artoxares); on advice of Parysatis tricks and kills Sekyndianos. 51: Ochos becomes Dareios II and 'relied for advice especially on his wife', with whom he had 2 children before he became king and then another eleven of whom eight died young 'and the author says that he himself heard this from this Parysatis herself'. 52: revolt of king's brother and Artyphios, son of Megabyzos. Artyphios wins two battles but loses the third after the Greeks who support him are hired away from him until he only has 'three Milesians' left. Parysatis ensures that not only Artyphios but also the king's brother are caught and executed. 53: revolt of Pissuthnes; his Greek mercenaries bribed to desert him. 54: Parysatis ensures execution of powerful plotting eunuch Artoxares. 55: king's son-in-law Terituchmes revolts as satrap after his father's death and intends to kill his wife Amestris, but is prevented from doing so. 56: Parysatis has Terituchmes' mother, two brothers and two of his sisters buried alive; third sister 'hacked to pieces', but she spares the fourth sister, Stateira, who is married to her son Arsaces, who begs her not to kill his wife – but she would later regret this. 57: Arsaces succeeds as Artaxerxes (II). 58: his wife Stateira seeks revenge for the death of her brother; Parysatis is distressed. 59: Cyrus is falsely accused and seeks help from Parysatis, then plans revolt. 60: King executes Orondes for allegedly sleeping with Parysatis, 'although she behaved with great restraint', and she was angry with her son. 61: Parysatis poisons Terituchmes' son. 62: story about a man who cremated his father against custom, on the basis of which Ctesias criticises Hellanikos and Herodotos as liars. 63-65: Cyrus' revolt; the Ten Thousand. 66: Parysatis grief over Cyrus and her revenge on all those who played a part in his death. [...] 69: 'Ctesias, being Parysatis' physician', was able to help imprisoned Clearchos with her assistance. Parysatis would have let Clearchos go, but Stateira made the king execute him. 70: Parysatis poisons Stateira; her eunuchs and close friend Ginge are executed for this. Mother and son remain furious with each other. [F29b.10: She is exiled to Babylon.]