



## Character List for Herodotus 7

The characters are mentioned in order of appearance in the text.

### **Darius**

Darius I, also known as Darius the Great. 3<sup>rd</sup> king of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia. Born 550 BC, died 486 BC. Ruled 522-486. Father of Xerxes I. Attained the throne by overthrowing the usurper Gaumata. Secured lands in Egypt conquered by the previous king, Cambyses II. Sent expedition to punish Athens and Eretria for their support of the Ionian revolt, which ended in defeat at the Battle of Marathon in 490. Was planning second expedition at time of death.

### **Xerxes**

Xerxes I, also known as Xerxes the Great. 4<sup>th</sup> king of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia. Born 518BC, died 465BC. Gained throne by claiming porphyrogeniture against his brother Artobazanes. Crushed revolts in Egypt and Babylon. Launched second Persian invasion of Greece in 480BC. Defeated the Spartans at Thermopylae. Sacked and burned Athens. Defeated at Battle of Salamis and retreated to Asia. Contingent under Mardonius finally defeated by combined Greek forces at Plataea. After return to Persia, Xerxes oversaw completion of Darius' unfinished building projects at Susa and Persepolis. Assassinated in 465 by Artabanus, the commander of the royal bodyguard.

### **Mardonius**

Son of Gobryas, one of the noblemen who had assisted Darius I in his ascent to the throne of Persia. Appointed general by Darius and sent to punish Athens for its support of the Ionian revolt. Mardonius recalled after fleet destroyed rounding Mount Athos and relieved of command. Returned to favour under Xerxes and spoke strongly in favour of the second expedition against Greece. Sacked Athens. Was defeated and killed at the Battle of Plataea.

### **Gobryas**

One of the six helpers of Darius I in his deposition of the usurper Gaumata. Father of Mardonius.

### **Aleuadae**

An ancient and very powerful Thessalian family claiming descent from the mythical Aleuas, who was supposedly given the gift of prophecy by a serpent.

**Peisistratidae**

Peisistratus and his two sons Hipparchus and Hippias, tyrants of Athens between 546 and 510BCE. Instituted the Panathenaic Festival.

**Onomacritus**

C530-480BC. Chresmologue (compiler of oracles). Lived at court of Peisistratus, tyrant of Athens. Said to have prepared the first edition of the Homeric poems. Hired by Peisistratus to compile the oracles of Musaeus but included forgeries of his own. Discovered by Lasus of Hermione and banished by Hipparchus. Reconciled with the Peisistratids in Persia and joined in inducing Xerxes to invade Greece.

**Musaeus**

Of Athens. Legendary polymath, prophet and seer, said to have founded priestly poetry in Attica.

**Hipparchus**

Tyrant of Athens jointly with his brother Hippias 528-514BC. Patron of the arts. Assassinated by 'the tyrant slayers' Harmodius and Aristogeiton in 514BC.

**Lasus**

Of Hermione. Greek lyric poet of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Said to have been a teacher of Pindar. Exposed the forgeries of Onomacritus.

**Achaemenes**

This Achaemenes is the full brother of Xerxes, who was made provincial governor (satrap) of Egypt. Killed at Pampremis in the rebellion led by Inarus in 460BC and his body sent to the Persian king, Artaxerxes I (the successor of Xerxes).

**Inaros**

Son of Psammetichus. Led a revolt against the Persians in 460BC with the help of Athenian allies. Defeated the army commanded by Achaemenes but was eventually defeated by the Persian Megabyzus. Taken to Susa and eventually either crucified or impaled (sources differ) on the order of the Queen Mother Amestris who wished to avenge the death of Achaemenes.

**Cyrus**

Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia. Son of Cambyses I of Anshan and Mandane, daughter of King Astyages of Media. According to Herodotus, Astyages dreamed that his daughter gave birth to a son who would destroy his empire. He married her to Cambyses I, King of Anshan, but when she gave birth he was warned again by a dream and sent his general Harpagus to kill the child. Harpagus instead gave the child, the infant Cyrus, away to a shepherd. Cyrus lived in secrecy until the age of 10, but his noble nature was revealed in a childhood game and Astyages discovered him and sent him back to his parents, punishing Harpagus by feeding him his own son at a banquet. Harpagus encouraged Cyrus to rebel against Astyages and after three years of fighting Astyages' troops mutinied at the battle of Pasargadae leaving Cyrus victorious over the Median Empire.

**Astyages**

The last king of the Median Empire, deposed by Cyrus the Great in 550BC after the battle of Pasargadae, (see entry on Cyrus above) but subsequently treated with clemency by Cyrus.

**Cambyses**

This is Cambyses II, son of Cyrus the Great and grandfather of Darius I.

**Aristagoras**

Tyrant of Miletus. Leader of the Ionian revolt, portrayed by Herodotus as having travelled to Sparta and Athens soliciting help, carrying a map of the world engraved on bronze. His request was rejected by the Spartans, but he was more successful in Athens. Troops from Athens and Eretria joined the Ionians in marching on and burning the city of Sardis, for which act Darius vowed revenge.

**Datis and Artaphernes**

Joint leaders of the Persian forces in the first invasion of Greece, defeated at the Battle of Marathon.

**Artabanus**

Son of Hystaspes (the brother of Darius I) and uncle of Xerxes I. Portrayed by Herodotus as the trusted adviser of both Darius and Xerxes, advising caution in foreign policy to both.

**Histiaeus**

Tyrant of Miletus. Uncle and father-in-law of Aristagoras. Left to guard the pontoon bridge over the Ister (Danube) when Darius invaded Europe. Persuaded the other allies not to destroy the bridge on Darius' defeat on the grounds that they all owed their power to him. Rewarded by being allowed to occupy and fortify Myrcinus in Thrace. Subsequently summoned to Sardis by Darius and kept at his court. Said to have encouraged Aristagoras to start the Ionian revolt by sending him a message tattooed on the head of a slave. Ultimately executed by Artaphernes for 'stitching the shoe that Aristagoras put on'.

**Pythius**

The Lydian. Offered Xerxes his fortune and was rewarded with the official friendship of the King but presumed on this basis to ask that his eldest son be spared to look after him in his old age. This request was met with rage by Xerxes, who instead bisected the son and made his army walk between the two parts of his body.

**Demaratus**

Deposed King of Sparta, in self-imposed exile in Persia. First introduced by Herodotus in 7.3, where he decided the argument of succession in favour of Xerxes by introducing the concept of porphyrogeniture, the system of which he himself had fallen foul. His role here is to laud Spartan bravery and obedience to the laws to a disbelieving Xerxes.

**Mascames**

Son of Megadostes. Appointed by Xerxes as governor of Doriscus (in Thrace, on the northern shores of the Aegean Sea). Doriscus remained in Persian hands even after the defeat of the second Persian invasion of Greece and Mascames and his descendants were rewarded by Xerxes and his successor Artaxerxes with yearly gifts for their continued successful defence of the city.