

# Strabo and Tibios

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STRABO REMARKED (7.304) that the Athenians named their slaves after the country they came from, calling them for instance “Lydos” or “Syros”: or they gave them names common in their country of origin, so that a Phrygian would be called “Manes” or “Midas”, and a Paphlagonian “Tibios”. Later the geographer states (12.553) that Paphlagonian names are common amongst the Cappadocians, and amongst his examples gives Tibios and Manes. Manes, then, is not simply Phrygian but is also at home in Pontus; and Herodotus shows that the name is also linked with Lydia, where a king Manes once reigned.<sup>1</sup> Tibios, however, seems to be peculiar to Paphlagonia and to Cappadocia nearby. That the name was not confined to slaves is shown by its having been borne by a kinsman of Strabo, whose family enjoyed great distinction in those parts<sup>2</sup>.

A variant of the name Tibios is also found in the Pontic country as a place name. According to Arrian, Thība was a place in Pontus named after an Amazon killed by Herakles.<sup>3</sup> The people of Thiba, who were called Thibeis or Thibii,<sup>4</sup> evidently impressed Greek imaginations as being thoroughly disagreeable barbarians. Anyone they looked at or breathed upon or spoke with, fell ill; their eyes had double pupils; and their bodies would not sink in water even when weighted down.<sup>5</sup> Even allowing for exaggeration, we can see that the Thibii, Thibeis, or Tibioi must in their wild homeland have long resisted the advance of Hellenism.

It seems, moreover, that already in the time of the Hittite empire the Tibians were causing trouble to their neighbours in Pontus. The annals of the Hittite emperor, Muršiliš II, state that in the time of his father Šuppiluliumaš, a certain Pikhuniyaš, the Tibyan, had plun-

<sup>1</sup> 1.94 and 4.45. Cf. G. M. A. Hanfmann, *HSCP* 63 (1958) 71.

<sup>2</sup> Str. 12.557.

<sup>3</sup> *FGrHist* 156 F 84.

<sup>4</sup> Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 5.7.1 p. 680E (Phylarchos 81 F 79a) *Θιβεῖς*. Pliny *NH* 7.17 (Phylarchos 81 F 79b) *Thibiorum* genus.

<sup>5</sup> Phylarchos, *loc. cit.* Didymos ἐν β̄ Συμποσιακῶν αρ. Steph.Byz. s.v. *Θηβαίς*.

dered the Upper Land and brought his booty down to the Gašgaš region.<sup>6</sup> Now the Upper Land of the Hittites lay due east of their capital at Hattušaš in the Halys bend, while the territory of the barbarian Gašgaš, who caused trouble throughout Hittite history and may have helped to overthrow the Hittite empire about 1200 B.C., lived to the north of Hattušaš between the Hittite heartland and the Black Sea, in the wild country east of the Halys mouth which was later called Pontus. Hence Tibya, the city of the marauder Pikhuniyaš, lay in the same general area as the later Thiba, and we can suggest that the two names are connected. Thus the Thibii, whose barbarity Phylarchos expounded, seem to be historical successors of the Gašgaš with their city at Tibya; these enemies of the Hittites were active more than 1300 years before the time of the urbane Strabo, who, since he had a kinsman called Tibios, may well have been descended from them.

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<sup>6</sup> A. Götze, *Die Annalen des Muršiliš* (Leipzig 1933) 89. John Garstang and O. R. Gurney, *The Geography of the Hittite Empire* (London 1959) 32.