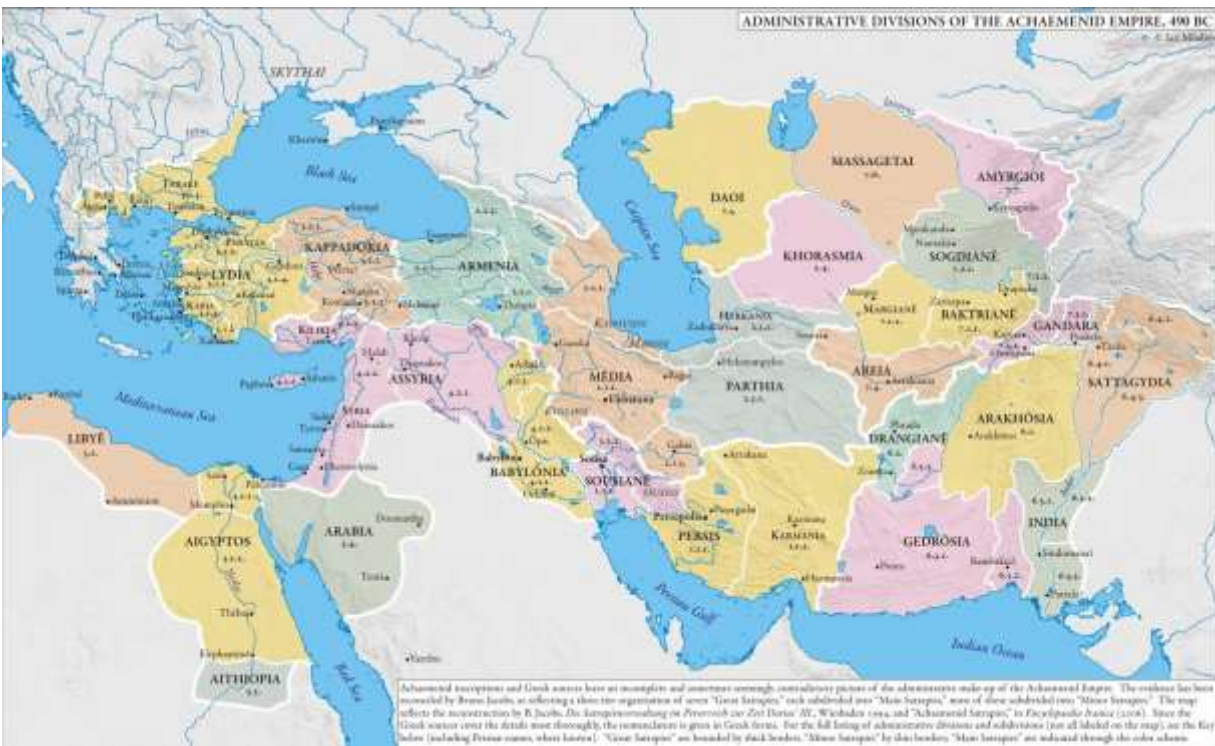


Lifelong Learning Collaborative Fall, 2024

Fridays from 1:00 to 3:00, starting September 13-- on Zoom

The History and Culture of Ancient Persia

Coordinator: Bob Martin
Rmartin500@icloud.com



Administrative Divisions of The Achaemenid Empire, 490 BCE

<https://www.the-persians.co.uk/largemap.htm>

In this course we will survey the history and culture of ancient Persia – from prehistory to the arrival of Alexander the Great as its conqueror. We’ll consider how Persia came to be as a nation, what were its accomplishments and culture, and why ancient Persia was so important to the development of Western civilization.

Class members are strongly encouraged to look beyond the “Essential Reading” and bring insights and ideas that you find in other sources. Presentations should be at least somewhat related to the topic of the hour. A list of possible presentation topics appears at the end of this syllabus

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Trade Patterns During the Reign of the Achaemenids



Persian merchants apparently were not a presence in the Mediterranean, but Greeks and Phoenicians traded with Persian buyers, just as Western travelers visited Persian cities.

Persian conquest of Greek and Phoenician cities and regions did not mean an end to trade or travel. Traders from both cultures came and went across the Mediterranean and in Persian Anatolia, Egypt and the Levant, though undoubtedly paying considerable taxes.

Class 1
September 13

The Making of Iran

All references to chapter numbers below pertain to Llewellyn-Jones's *Persians: The Age of the Great Kings*, except where otherwise noted.

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Prologue, Introduction
And Chapter 1: The Medes and the Persians 32 pp

Wikipedia: Prehistory of Iran 4 pp
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prehistory_of_Iran

Topic(s) for the First Hour: **Course Goals, Presentations**

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: **Prehistory: Aryans, Medes, Elamites et al**

Optional reading and viewing:

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part I (550-486 BC): Cyrus the Great - Darius the Great). 75 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzIVddeWfR4>

A very good, concise history of early Persia from prehistory to the death of Darius I.
Worth watching!

Wikipedia: Achaemenid Empire
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire

A Little Historical Perspective

All dates are BCE

c. 11700	End of the most recent glacial episode	1000	Iranians migrate into Persian regions
10000	Beginnings of agriculture in the Middle East.	729	Babylon is occupied by Assyrians again
c. 5400	The City of Eridu is founded in Sumer	612	Medes overthrow Assyrians
5000	Irrigation and agriculture spread in Mesopotamia.	550	Cyrus defeats the Medes
c. 3600	Sumerians at Uruk invent writing	539	Babylon conquered by Cyrus
2700	Elamite civilization begins	530	The Achaemenid Empire rules Mesopotamia
2334	Sargon of Akkad creates the world's first empire.	525	Cambyses II conquers Egypt
1755	Hammurabi rules all Mesopotamia from Babylon.	515	Darius conquers Central Asia and Indus Valley
1225	Assyria conquers Babylon for first time	330	Alexander conquers all
		247	Parthians create a new Persian empire

Class 2

September 20

Why Cyrus Was Great

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapters 2 and 3

42 pp

See, the Conqu'ring Hero Comes

The Many Deaths - and Births - of Cyrus the Great

Cyrus the Great: Building the First Superpower

51 minutes

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/empire/id1639561921?i=1000634716046>

This fascinating podcast features Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones discussing Cyrus with the great historian of India, William Dalrymple. Don't miss it!

The Enduring Secret To Cyrus The Great's Success

8 pp

By Ali Ansari

<https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/the-enduring-secret-to-cyrus-the-greats-success/>

Topic(s) for the First Hour:

The Career and Accomplishments of Cyrus

Topic(s) for the Second Hour:

Just How Great Was Cyrus?

Optional reading and viewing:

Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations.

28 pp

By R.J. (Bert) van der Spek

https://www.academia.edu/3753890/Cyrus_the_Great_Exiles_and_Foreign_Gods_A_Comparison_of_Assyrian_and_Persian_Policies_on_Subject_Nations

This scholar presents a contrarian view of both Cyrus and the Cyrus Cylinder, arguing that Cyrus was a master of propaganda whose reputation as a champion of civil rights is based on a misunderstanding of how similar his policies were to those of most of his predecessors and other regional monarchs.

The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: Charting a New Empire. 59 minutes

The Met Museum

<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/cyrus-cylinder>

This website provides extensive discussion of the cylinder and its significance. A one-hour YouTube podcast lecture is included.

The Text of the Cyrus Cylinder

Translated by Hanspeter Schaudig

https://www.academia.edu/38436868/_The_Text_of_the_Cyrus_Cylinder_in_M_Rahim_Shayegan_ed_Cyrus_the_Great_Life_and_Lore_Ilex_Series_21_Harvard_University_Press_2019_pp_16_25?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper

Wikipedia: Cyrus the Great

15 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great

**Class 3
September 27**

Cambyses, Bardiya and Darius

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapters 4,5,13,14

57 pp

**The Sceptre of Egypt
The Truth and the Lie
Exit Darius
Ruling over Heroes**

Darius the Great: Ruling from India to the Mediterranean Empire 51 minutes

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/empire/id1639561921?i=1000634983424>

In this podcast Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones discusses with historian William Dalrymple several aspects of the reign of Darius, including his murder of Bardiya and likely murder of Cambyses II. Also discussed in detail: the lives of royal women, the conquests of Darius, and the historic imperial bureaucracy he created.

Topic(s) for the First Hour: Darius And The Behistun Inscription

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: Cambyses and Bardiya: Early Victims of a Murderous Monarch?

Optional reading and viewing:

Wikipedia: *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistûn in Persia/Annotated/The Persian Text* 35 pp

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Sculptures_and_Inscription_of_Darius_the_Great_on_the_Rock_of_Behist%C3%BBn_in_Persia/Annotated/The_Persian_Text

A complete translation, with photos and illustrations.

***Darius I, King of Persia* 3 pp**

**By J.M. Munn-Rankin
*Encyclopædia Britannica***

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arses>

***DARIUS iii. Darius I the Great* 14 pp**

<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/darius-iii>

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part I (550-486 BC; Cyrus the Great - Darius the Great)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzIVddeWfR4>

***Cambyses II* 10 pp**

Livius.org

<https://www.livius.org/articles/person/cambyses-ii/#Death%20of%20Smerdis>

Class 4
October 18

Persian Society and Government

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapters 6-11 75 pp
When Bureaucrats Ruled the World
A Court under Canvas
Constructing Majesty
Slavery by Another Name
Crowns and Concubines
The Politics of Etiquette

Topic(s) for the First Hour: Governmental Accomplishments

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: Satraps, Slaves, Eunuchs, Oh My!

Optional reading and viewing:

King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 BCE
by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
<https://ia903207.us.archive.org/35/items/KingCourtInAncientPersia/King%20%26%20Court%20In%20Ancient%20Persia.pdf>

See especially:

Chapter 3 The Great King in His Empire: The Movable Court

Ancient Persian Government 15 pp
by Joshua J. Mark
World History Encyclopedia
https://www.worldhistory.org/Persian_Government/

The Administration Of The Achaemenid Empire 58 pp
By Christopher Tuplin
https://www.academia.edu/4251207/The_administration_of_the_Achaemenid_Empire

Satrap 3 pp
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satrap>

Eunuchs 2 pp
<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/eunuchs>

*Bureaucracy in the Achaemenid Empire:
Learning from the Past* 10 pp
by Haleh Brooks
World History Encyclopedia
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/767/bureaucracy-in-the-achaemenid-empire-learning-from/>

Slavery in Ancient Persia: see
BARDA And BARDA-DĀRI I. Achaemenid Period
<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/barda-i>

This article says slavery in its usual meaning was not generally practiced in Persia, but the truth is much more complicated/

Herodotus: On The Customs of the Persians **10 pp**
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/149/herodotus-on-the-customs-of-the-persians/>

Class 5 **The Achaemenid Royal Family**
October 25

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapters 18, 19, 20 **44 pp**
(Un)Happy Families
Blood Brothers
Women Beware Women

Topic(s) for the First Hour: **Patricide and Fratricide**

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: **The Roles of Royal Women**

Optional reading and viewing:

King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 bce
by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
<https://ia903207.us.archive.org/35/items/KingCourtInAncientPersia/King%20%26%20Court%20In%20Ancient%20Persia.pdf>
See especially: Chapter 4 Harem: Royal Women and the Court

Families, Officialdom, and Families of Royal Officials in Chaldean and Achaemenid Babylonia **8 pp**

By M. Jursa
https://www.academia.edu/10537184/Families_Officialdom_and_Families_of_Royal_Officials_in_Chaldean_and_Achaemenid_Babylonia

Note that this article is contained in a book titled *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East* Scroll down to page 7 of the document

Wikipedia: Cambyses II **6 pp**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses_II

Xerxes I **12 pp**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xerxes_I

Class 6
November 1

Ancient Persian Religions

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapter 12 Also Sprach Zarathustra 23 pp

The Achaemenid Kings and the Worship of Ahura Mazda: Proto-Zoroastrianism in the Persian Empire. 8 pp

By Avram R. Shannon

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=studiaantiqua>

Topic(s) for the First Hour: Zoroastrianism And Other Religions of the Empire

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: Persians, Jews And Judaism

Optional reading and viewing:

Ancient Persia and the Book of Esther: Achaemenid Court Culture in the Hebrew Bible

<https://www.amazon.com/Ancient-Persia-Book-Esther-Achaemenid/dp/1788317378>

Amazon says, “The author reveals answers to important questions, such as the role of the King’s courtiers in influencing policy, the way concubines at court were recruited, the structure of the harem in shifting the power of royal women, the function of feasting and drinking in the articulation of courtly power, and the meaning of gift-giving and patronage at the Achaemenid court.”

Ancient Persian Religion

by Joshua J. Mark

World History Encyclopedia

https://www.worldhistory.org/Ancient_Persian_Religion/

Herodotus and the Persian Priests: The Histories as a Source for Iranian Religion

20 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGFxcFSHFgA>

Achaemenid Religion

8 pp

Encyclopædia Iranica

<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/achaemenid-religion>

Class 7
November 8

Persepolis, Passagardae, Susa,
Ectabana, And Other Cities

Essential Reading or Viewing:

9 Greatest Cities Of The Persian Empire 10 pp
<https://www.thecollector.com/greatest-cities-achaemenid-persian-empire/>
Brief profiles of the major cities important to the Achaemenids.

Art of the Empire: Monumental Cities of Ancient Persia. 66 min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Indxgu9mLpE>
A really good Getty Museum lecture by archaeologist Ali Mousavi of UCLA, with extensive imagery

Wikipedia: Achaemenid architecture 12 pp
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_architecture

Topic(s) for the First Hour: City Histories and Notable Events

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: Official Roles of the Cities over Time

Optional reading and viewing:

Persepolis: Images Of An Empire
https://artsandculture.google.com/story/KwVRKSxv_NfpLQ?hl=en
Based on an exhibit displayed at the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago, this is a truly wonderful website with text, images and video.

Persepolis
UNESCO World Heritage
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/114/>

Susa - Gallery - UNESCO World Heritage Centre
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1455/gallery/>

Ecbatana – Wikipedia 6 pp
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecbatana>

Class 8
November 15

Art and Sculpture

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Featured Exhibition: Persia, Ancient Iran and the Classical World
<https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/persia/>
The Getty Museum's 2022 Exhibit

Ancient Persian Art – Achaemenid Empire (700 BC – 500 BC)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xyl47NxOyeQ>

<https://youtu.be/Xyl47NxOyeQ?si=O-c9Monm0REB2wFm>

Wikipedia: Persian art

24 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_art

Extensive imagery

Topic(s) for the First Hour: Persian Jewelry and Goldwork

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: Bas Reliefs and Statuary

Optional reading and viewing:

Bas-Reliefs of Persepolis: 5 Fascinating Facts

12 pp

<https://www.thecollector.com/fascinating-facts-from-the-bas-reliefs-of-persepolis/>

Egyptian Acculturation in Achaemenid Persia: The Iconographic Evidence

By Chana Algarvio

17 pp

https://www.academia.edu/45401886/Egyptian_Acculturation_in_Achaemenid_Persia_The_Iconographic_Evidence

With many photos and drawings, this interesting article documents the ways in which Achaemenid and Egyptian art and architecture influenced each other over a long period.

Wikipedia: Persian art

24 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_art

Extensive imagery

Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World

<https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/persia/explore.html>

A set of brief essays with illustrations

The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistûn in

Persia/Annotated/The Persian Text

35 pp

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Sculptures_and_Inscription_of_Darius_the_Great_on_the_Rock_of_Behist%C3%BBn_in_Persia/Annotated/The_Persian_Text

Many images of bas reliefs included

Class 9
November 22

Persia and the Greeks

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Chapter 15,16,21,22 71 pp
Let Slip the Dogs of War
Les Liaisons Dangereuses
Violent Delights Have Violent Ends
Some Talk of Alexander

Topic(s) for the First Hour: The Many Wars with the Greeks

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: The Greek Portrayal of Persia

Optional reading and viewing:

The Persians

By Aeschylus

<https://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/persians.html>

In *The Persians*, Xerxes invites the gods' enmity for his hubristic expedition against Greece in 480/79 BC; the focus of the drama is the defeat of Xerxes' navy at Salamis. Aeschylus himself had fought at Marathon (490 BC). He may even have fought at Salamis, just eight years before the play was performed.

Herodotus: On The Customs of the Persians

by Joshua J. Mark

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/149/herodotus-on-the-customs-of-the-persians/>

Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great on Persian elites. 6 pp

<https://www.purplenotes.net/2013/10/13/aristotle-advice-alexander-persia/>

Plato: *The Laws*

<https://iep.utm.edu/pla-laws/#SH6c>

In Book 6, section c, Plato compares Athens with Persian society, revealing his poor opinion of the Persians and understating the scope of slavery in Athens.

Ctesias' History of Persia – Tales of the Orient 264 pp

Translated By Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones And James Robson

<https://archive.org/details/llewellyn-jones-robson-ctesias-history-of-persia-tales-of-the-orient-routledge-c>

Individual chapters are devoted to different periods of Persian history and to certain kings, showing what ancients thought of Persia, The Greek Ctesias was physician to the Achaemenid king, Artaxerxes II, whom he accompanied in 401 BC on his expedition against his brother Cyrus the Younger.

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part II (486-330 BC; Xerxes I - Alexander the Great)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiIUDZsojhI>

A one-hour account of events from Xerxes invasion of Greece to Alexander's defeat of Darius III.

**Class 10
December 6**

The Legacy of the Achaemenids

Essential Reading or Viewing:

Epilogue- Persian Past, Iranian Present 24 pp

Topic(s) for the First Hour: **Political, Cultural and Intellectual Impact
Of the Achaemenids on the Western World**

Topic(s) for the Second Hour: **East is East and West is West?**

Optional reading and viewing:

Achaemenid Dynasty
Encyclopaedia Iranica

<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/achaemenid-dynasty>

In describing the achievements of the dynasty (see *ii. The empire.* and *iii. Culture.*), *this article provides an excellent summary of the dynasty's long-term impact on Iran and on even Western history.*

Suggested Presentations

Presentation topics should align to the week's readings and class agenda. You are not limited to the topics below in deciding on a presentation. You might choose to focus on a single event, personage or artwork, for example.

Please consult with the coordinator if you choose a topic not on this list.

Why Cyrus was Great

The Cyrus Cylinder and Human Rights

Darius, Cambyses and Bardiya: Fake News?

Cambyses and Egypt

Darius and Egypt

The Behistun Inscription (and, perhaps, Leni Riefenstahl)

Fratricide, Patricide and Family History

Persian Government and Imperial Strategy

Important Persian Women and Their Roles

The Religions of Ancient Persia

Zoroastrianism Then and Now

Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism (and Islam)

Persia, the Jews and Judaism

Xerxes and Esther

Cyrus, the Bible and Israel

Major Achaemenid Cities: The Persian Capitals and Their Architecture

Achaemenid Art and Imperial Power

Achaemenid Art and Architecture

The Glory of Persepolis

The Many Greek and Persian Wars

Aeschylus: The Persians

Persia in the Greek Imagination

Was the Fall of the Achaemenids Inevitable?

East is East and West is West?: Is it so?

Persia's Lasting Impact on the West

Suggest your own topic!

Resources

Books

History of the Persian Empire (1948) 670 pp
By A.T. Olmsted
https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/shared/docs/history_persian_empire.pdf
Possibly outdated now, this book led to a dramatic change in how scholars viewed the Achaemenids

Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550-330 BCE
By Matt Waters 252 pp
Available at Ocean State Libraries

The Persian Empire 208 pp
By Lindsay Allen
Available at Ocean State Libraries
A solid history with especially good illustrations

The King And Kingship In Achaemenid Art 311 pp
By Margaret Cool Root
https://www.academia.edu/21201942/The_King_and_Kingship_in_Achaemenid_Art_Essays_on_the_Creation_of_an_Iconography_of_Empire
There are more than 70 pages of photo illustrations at end of the book.

King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 BCE 288 pp
By Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
Available online at
<https://ia803207.us.archive.org/35/items/KingCourtInAncientPersia/King%20%26%20Court%20In%20Ancient%20Persia.pdf>

Chapter 1 The Great King and His Men
Chapter 2 Pomp and Circumstance: Monarchy on Display
Chapter 3 The Great King in His Empire: The Movable Court
Chapter 4 Harem: Royal Women and the Court
Chapter 5 The Pleasures and Perils of Court Life
These 5 chapters total 120 pp

Ctesias' History of Persia – Tales of the Orient 264 pp
Translated By Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones And James Robson
<https://archive.org/details/llewellyn-jones-robson-ctesias-history-of-persia-tales-of-the-orient-routledge-c>

Individual chapters are devoted to different periods of Persian history and to certain kings, showing what ancients thought of Persia. The Greek Ctesias was physician to the Achaemenid king, Artaxerxes II, whom he accompanied in 401 BC on his expedition against his brother Cyrus the Younger.

Websites

There is an immense amount of material relating to ancient Persia on the Web. These sites are among the very best. Many museum websites are also important resources.

Academia.edu

<https://www.academia.edu/>

Academia is a platform for sharing academic research on any topic ancient or modern, and is extremely useful.

The Circle Of Ancient Iranian Studies (Cais)

<https://www.cais-soas.com/essays.html>

A cultural body founded to promote scholarship & research in all aspects of pre-Islamic Iranian civilization, CAIS offers an enormous trove of information.

Persia

Livius.org

<https://www.livius.org/category/persia/>

This reliable website lists 525 articles on a wide variety of Persian topics.

Iran Chamber Society

https://iran-chamber.com/history/history_periods.php

Iran Chamber Society was founded as a non-partisan and non-profit organization with the aim to promote Iranian culture and history.

Encyclopedia Iranica

<https://www.iranicaonline.org/>

The Encyclopaedia Iranica is a comprehensive research tool dedicated to the study of Iranian civilisation in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Iran & The Iranians From Koroush To Khamenei

<https://www.the-persians.co.uk/index.htm>

This site offers information on all things Iran, ancient and modern. It has a lot of helpful information about ancient Iran and the Achaemenids.

Videos

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part I (550-486 BC; Cyrus the Great - Darius the Great).
75 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzIVddeWfR4>

A very good, concise history of early Persia from prehistory to the death of Darius I. Worth watching!

Art of the Empire: Monumental Cities of Ancient Persia. 66 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Indxgu9mLpE>

A really good Getty Museum lecture by archaeologist Ali Mousavi of UCLA, with extensive imagery

Ancient Persia Cities of Persepolis & Darius

21 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXyosMpzAes>

The Ancient And Forgotten Empire Of Persepolis

49 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV30XIkDubo>

Herodotus and the Persian Priests: The Histories as a Source for Iranian Religion

20 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGFxcFSHFgA>

Herodotus and the Persian Wars

66 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PSMOGCwMxo>

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part II (486-330 BC; Xerxes I - Alexander the Great)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiIUDZsojhI>

A one-hour account of events from Xerxes invasion of Greece to Alexander's defeat of Darius III.

Articles

Achievements and Impact of the Achaemenids

Achaemenid Dynasty

Encyclopaedia Iranica

<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/achaemenid-dynasty>

In describing the achievements of the dynasty (see *ii. The empire.* and *iii. Culture.*), this article provides an excellent summary of the dynasty's long-term impact on Iran and on even Western history.

Art and Architecture

Major museum websites displaying ancient Persian art include the Metropolitan, the Louvre and the British Museum.

Wikipedia: Persian art

24 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_art

Extensive imagery

Orientalism and Ornamentalism: Athenian Reactions to Achaemenid Persia

By Margaret C. Miller

https://www.academia.edu/98828511/Orientalism_and_Ornamentalism_Athenian_Reactions_to_Achaemenid_Persia?email_work_card=title

An analysis of Greek thinking about Persians as demonstrated in artwork

Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World

<https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/persia/explore.html>

A set of brief essays with illustrations from the Getty Museum

The King And Kingship In Achaemenid Art

311 pp

By Margaret Cool Root

https://www.academia.edu/21201942/The_King_and_Kingship_in_Achaemenid_Art_Essays_on_the_Creation_of_an_Iconography_of_Empire

There are more than 70 pages of photo illustrations at end of the book.

Engraved Gems from the Ancient Persian Empire

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/engraved-gems-from-the-ancient-persian-empire-the-j-paul-getty-museum/eAWxHXd-0U7Edw?hl=en>

A beautifully done Getty Museum video discussing personal seals carved from semiprecious stones and engraved with exquisite miniature scenes were used widely within the ancient Persian Empire.

Bas-Reliefs of Persepolis: 5 Fascinating Facts

12 pp

<https://www.thecollector.com/fascinating-facts-from-the-bas-reliefs-of-persepolis/>

Bas Reliefs Of Persepolis

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=bas+reliefs+of+persepolis&qvvt=bas+reliefs+of+persepolis&form=IOFRML&first=1>

Dozens of images and links

Wikipedia: Achaemenid architecture

12 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_architecture

Egyptian Acculturation in Achaemenid Persia: The Iconographic Evidence

By Chana Algarvio

17 pp

https://www.academia.edu/45401886/Egyptian_Acculturation_in_Achaemenid_Persia_The_Iconographic_Evidence

With many photos and drawings, this interesting article documents the ways in which Achaemenid and Egyptian art and architecture influenced each other over a long period.

This link pertains to one city, but UNESCO has information and great photos on many important cities and other subjects in Persia.

The Border between War and Peace. Power and Propaganda in Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid Art

12 pp

By M. Castelluccia

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340110617_The_Border_between_War_and_Peace_Power_and_Propaganda_in_Neo-Assyrian_and_Achaemenid_Art/link/5e7cec78a6fdcc139c08b72b/download?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19

Persepolis: Images Of An Empire

https://artsandculture.google.com/story/KwVRKSxv_NfpLQ?hl=en

Based on an exhibit displayed at the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago, this is a truly wonderful website with text, images and video.

Persepolis

UNESCO World Heritage

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/114/>

Cyrus the Great

Cyrus the Great: Building the First Superpower

51 minutes

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/empire/id1639561921?i=1000634716046>

This fascinating podcast features Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones discussing Cyrus with the great historian of India, William Dalrymple.

Wikipedia: Cyrus the Great

15 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great

Wikipedia: Cyrus the Great in the Bible 4 pp
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great_in_the_Bible

The Text of the Cyrus Cylinder
Translated by Hanspeter Schaudig
https://www.academia.edu/38436868/_The_Text_of_the_Cyrus_Cylinder_in_M_Rahim_Shayegan_ed_Cyrus_the_Great_Life_and_Lore_Ilex_Series_21_Harvard_University_Press_2019_pp_16_25?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper

The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: Charting a New Empire. 59 minutes
The Met Museum
<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/cyrus-cylinder>
This website provides extension discussion of the cylinder and its significance. A one-hour YouTube podcast lecture is included.

Darius I - the Great

Darius the Great: Ruling from India to the Mediterranean Empire 51 minutes
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/empire/id1639561921?i=1000634983424>
In this podcast Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones discusses with historian William Dalrymple several aspects of the reign of Darius, including his murder of Bardiya and likely murder of Cambyses II. Also discussed in detail: the lives of royal women, the conquests of Darius, and the historic imperial bureaucracy he created.

Darius I, King of Persia 3 pp
By [J.M. Munn-Rankin](#)
Encyclopædia Britannica
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arses>

History of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Part I (550-486 BC; Cyrus the Great - Darius the Great) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzIVddeWfR4>

Wikipedia: The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistûn in Persia/Annotated/The Persian Text
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Sculptures_and_Inscription_of_Darius_the_Great_on_the_Rock_of_Behistûn_in_Persia/Annotated/The_Persian_Text
A complete translation, with photos and illustrations.

Religion

The Achaemenid Kings and the Worship of Ahura Mazda: Proto-Zoroastrianism in the Persian Empire. 8 pp
By Avram R. Shannon
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=studiaantiqua>

Zoroastrianism And Persian Mythology: The Foundation Of Belief 11 pp

<https://www.thecollector.com/zoroastrianism-persian-mythology/>

By Edd Hodsdon

A very good introduction to Zoroastrianism and its impact on Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland 23 pp

By Wouter F.M. Henkelman

https://www.academia.edu/41141190/Practice_of_worship_in_the_Achaemenid_Heartland

A chapter in a much larger volume of articles

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Ancient Persian Religion

by Joshua J. Mark

World History Encyclopedia

https://www.worldhistory.org/Ancient_Persian_Religion/

The Formation of Achaemenid Imperial Ideology 25 pp

and Its Impact on the Avesta

by Abolala Soudavar

See pages 111 to 136 of the attached excerpt from a book.

https://www.academia.edu/3269572/THE_FORMATION_OF_ACHAEMENID_IMPERIAL_IDEOLOGY_AND_ITS_IMPACT_ON_THE_AVESTA

Government

Administrative Legacies Of The Persian World-State Empire 10 pp

<https://sdaworldhistory.edublogs.org/files/2015/08/5-Administrative-Legacies-of-the-Persian-World-State-Empire-1xr5ap5.pdf>

This provides both a comprehensive review of the overall legacy of the Achaemenid empire and a detailed analysis of its importance in providing a model of imperial governance to rulers throughout the Mideast and the World in centuries to come.

King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 bce 288 pp

by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

<https://ia903207.us.archive.org/35/items/KingCourtInAncientPersia/King%20%26%20Court%20In%20Ancient%20Persia.pdf>

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<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/767/bureaucracy-in-the-achaemenid-empire-learning-from/>

Ancient Persian Government 15 pp
by Joshua J. Mark
World History Encyclopedia
https://www.worldhistory.org/Persian_Government/

The Administration Of The Achaemenid Empire 58 pp
By Christopher Tuplin
https://www.academia.edu/4251207/The_administration_of_the_Achaemenid_Empire

Satrap 3 pp
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satrap> *Bureaucracy in the Achaemenid Empire:*

Learning from the Past 10 pp
by Haleh Brooks
World History Encyclopedia
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/767/bureaucracy-in-the-achaemenid-empire-learning-from/>

Persian Society

Families, Officialdom, and Families of Royal Officials in Chaldean and Achaemenid Babylonia 8 pp
https://www.academia.edu/10537184/Families_Officialdom_and_Families_of_Royal_Officials_in_Chaldean_and_Achaemenid_Babylonia?email_work_card=title
Note: Scroll down to page 7 of this document

Torture In The Achaemenid Period 6 pp
Encyclopaedia Iranica
<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/torture-achaemenid-period>

Herodotus: On The Customs of the Persians 10 pp
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/149/herodotus-on-the-customs-of-the-persians/>

King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 bce 288 pp
by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
<https://ia903207.us.archive.org/35/items/KingCourtInAncientPersia/King%20%26%20Court%20In%20Ancient%20Persia.pdf>

Slavery in Ancient Persia: see
BARDA And BARDA-DĀRI I. Achaemenid Period
<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/barda-i>

This article says slavery in its usual meaning was not generally practiced in Persia, but the truth is complicated/