

# A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE ACHAEMENID EMPIRE

BY

M. A. DANDAMAEV

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY W. J. VOGELSANG



E. J. BRILL  
LEIDEN • NEW YORK • KØBENHAVN • KÖLN  
1989

ISBN 90 04 09172 6

© Copyright 1989 by E. J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands

*All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or translated in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, microfiche or any other means without written permission from the publisher*

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS BY E. J. BRILL

## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations .....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Preface by the author to the Russian edition of 1985 .....	xi
Preface by the author to the English edition .....	xiii
Preface by the translator .....	xiv
I. The Achaemenid Dynasty in the Early Period .....	1
II. Cyrus II, King of Persis .....	10
III. War with the Medes .....	14
IV. War with Lydia and the Emergence of the Achaemenid State.....	20
V. The Conquest of Eastern Iran and West Central Asia	31
VI. War with Babylonia and the Fall of Syria .....	39
VII. The Campaign against the Massagetae and Cyrus’ Death .....	66
VIII. The Conquest of Egypt.....	70
IX. Coup d’Etat in Iran.....	83
X. The Policy of Gaumata.....	95
XI. The Accession of Darius I.....	103
XII. Revolts in Persia and other Countries .....	114
XIII. The Victory Proclamation of Darius .....	132
XIV. The Campaign against the <i>Sakā Tigraxaudā</i> .....	136
XV. Darius in Egypt .....	141
XVI. The Conquest of Hindush and Macedonia and the Scythian Campaign of Darius .....	147
XVII. The Ionian Revolt.....	153
XVIII. The Beginning of the Persian-Greek Wars .....	168
XIX. The Battle of Marathon .....	173
XX. Revolts in Egypt and Babylonia.....	178
XXI. Xerxes’ War with Greece.....	188
XXII. Persian Victory at Thermopylae .....	198
XXIII. The Battle of Salamis .....	205
XXIV. The Defeat of Mardonius.....	214
XXV. The Battle of Mycale and the Significance of the Per- sian-Greek Wars .....	222
XXVI. Wars in the Aegean Sea and in Asia Minor, 478-469 B.C.....	227
XXVII. Palace Revolution in Persia .....	232

XXVIII.	The Revolt of Inarus in Egypt .....	238
XXIX.	The Province ‘Across-the-River’ during the Second Half of the Fifth Century B.C.....	244
XXX.	The Peace of Callias .....	250
XXXI.	A Revision of Persian Policies .....	256
XXXII.	The Reign of Darius II .....	258
XXXIII.	The Revolt of Amyrtaeus in Egypt.....	270
XXXIV.	The Revolt of Cyrus the Younger.....	274
XXXV.	The Peace of Antalcidas.....	286
XXXVI.	War with Egypt and the Great Revolt of the Satraps	296
XXXVII.	Temporary Successes.....	306
XXXVIII.	The Macedonian Threat .....	314
XXXIX.	The Campaign of Alexander .....	319
Sources and their Abbreviations.....		333
Bibliography.....		335
Chronological Table.....		351
Indices .....		355
Illustrations		
Maps		

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

### Illustrations:

1. Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae
2. Fire altar at Pasargadae
3. View of the Persepolis terrace
4. Relief of Darius in Throne Hall, Persepolis
5. View of Xerxes Gateway, Persepolis, after De Bruin, 1711.
6. Seal impression showing King Darius
7. Royal tombs at Naqsh-i Rostam
8. One of the royal tombs at Naqsh-i Rostam, after De Bruin, 1711
9. Statue of Darius from Susa, originating in Egypt
10. Drawing of Behistun relief: Darius confronts the rebel leaders
11. Statue of Udjhorresne
12. Walls of ancient Bactra
13. Ancient site of Harauvatiš, Arachosia
14. Achaemenid-period citadel of ancient Harauvatiš, Arachosia

### Maps:

- I: The Achaemenid Empire
- II: The Western marches of the Empire

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements are due to Prof. Dr. L. Vanden Berghe for kindly providing certain photographs (Nos. 1-2; 4; 7; 11), and to Mr A. Smeekens for the drawing of the Behistun relief (No. 10). Photographs Nos. 3 and 9 were provided by the author of the book. Photographs Nos. 12-14 are from the translator's collection. Illustrations 5 and 8 are based on drawings from Cornelis de Bruin, *Reizen over Moscovië door Perzië en Indië* (A.D. 1711).

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION  
OF 1985

The Achaemenid empire originated in the sixth century B.C. and lasted for more than two hundred years. It was the first world power in history and encompassed, under the rule of the Persian kings, dozens of countries and peoples living in a huge area which stretched from Egypt in the west to northwestern India in the east. Essentially, the history of the Achaemenid realm is the history of all the Near East and West Central Asia. The Achaemenid empire represents a crucial period during which the foundations were laid for important socio-economic and political institutions and cultural traditions which were to play a vital role in world history. It is this aspect which explains the great interest in the subject shown by scholars and a wide circle of lay readers.

Although separate studies dedicated to the Achaemenid period are published almost every year, all too often the political history is discussed only superficially and commonly broken off at the fifth century B.C. After this date the authors pass on to a discussion of the campaigns of Alexander of Macedonia in the territory of the Persian kings, during the second half of the fourth century B.C. In modern times, the political history of ancient Iran was thoroughly investigated for the last time by the American orientalist A. T. Olmstead, in his *History of the Persian Empire*. Olmstead's study was concluded in 1943. After the posthumous publication of the book in 1948, archaeologists have brought to light a considerable number of written sources which frequently supplement in an essential way our information on the political events between the sixth and the fourth centuries B.C.

In the present book an attempt has been made to redraw the complete map of the Achaemenid empire's political history. This has been done with the help of all of the available information and academic literature. For an extensive survey of the written sources, and a brief discussion of the literature on the problems which will be outlined in this book, I refer the reader to a previous publication, written in collaboration with V. G. Lukonin, entitled *Kul'tura i Ekonomika Drevnego Irana* (Moscow 1980; English edition, revised and updated: *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*, Cambridge 1988). Information on the most important publications which have appeared since 1980 will be indicated in the course of the discussions of the relevant problems.

Iranian and other Eastern names are listed in their most common form, which is normally based on Latin and Greek tradition. References

in the main text to textual sources and special studies are made in a concise manner. The full titles of the studies are listed in the bibliography. Additions which have been made in order to clarify the translation of original sources, are presented between parentheses. Reconstructions of damaged texts are put between square brackets.

During various discussions about the manuscript of this book, many valuable suggestions were made by staff members of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; Dr. V. A. Livšits offered considerable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication. Work on the Russian original of the book was concluded in 1981, but later additions to the Russian text were made on the basis of the most important publications which were published subsequently.



## PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The present book is a revised and updated English version of a study which was first published in Russian (Moscow 1985). Additions have been made on the basis of recent literature published until the beginning of 1988.

I should like to thank the Brill's publishing house for their acceptance of the manuscript for publication, and above all, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Willem Vogelsang and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood for their comments and their tremendous, excellent and impartial work on the original Russian text.

## PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

During my visit to Leningrad in the spring of 1987, M. A. Dandamaev kindly presented me with a copy of his book on the political history of the Achaemenid empire, which had shortly before been published in Moscow. Back in Holland, and having read parts of the book, I asked several scholars in the field whether it would be a good idea to have Dandamaev's study translated into English, and thus ensure that the book would be easily available to Western historians, archaeologists, and all those who are interested in the history of the Persian Achaemenids. Reactions were unanimously positive. Subsequently, contact was again sought with Dandamaev, and permission was kindly granted to translate his work, and to look for a suitable publisher. Thus, in the autumn of 1987 I started with the translation; at the same time, the Brill publishing house accepted the book for publication. The first draft of the translation was completed by the end of 1987 and sent to Leningrad. In February 1988, I had the chance to meet the author again in the Soviet Union, and to discuss certain details. The final comments on the draft were received in Holland in the summer of the same year, and the translation was completed by the end of the year.

There is hardly any need to introduce Dr Dandamaev to the specialist public in the West. Being a student of famous Soviet scholars such as V. I. Abaev, V. V. Struve, and I. M. Diakonoff, Dandamaev has since 1959 been connected to the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Eastern Studies, Academy of Sciences, USSR. His main studies include *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden (6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.)* (1976), being a translation and revision of an original study in Russian published in 1963; *Slavery in Babylonia* (1984), original Russian edition published in 1974; and, together with V. G. Lukonin, *Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (1988), first published in Russian, 1980.

In recent years, a number of studies have been published which discuss the history of the Achaemenid empire. These include J. M. Cook's *The Persian Empire* (1983); R. N. Frye's *The History of Ancient Iran* (1984), and *The Cambridge History of Iran. Vol. II: The Median and Achaemenian Periods* (1985). The present book constitutes an important addition to the above, since it not only discusses in detail the 'empire-building' years of the Persians, but also the last century of its existence, before the Empire was conquered by the Macedonians under Alexander. Another important aspect of the book is the use which has been made of Babylonian sources, which often seem to be neglected by historians who favour the classical

information. In short, I feel sure that the present book will be an important contribution to the study of the Persian Achaemenid empire.

Willem Vogelsang, December 1988