

Development of Achaemenid Studies in the West after 1979

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Abstract:

Following the Islamic revolution of 1979 archaeological excavations and Achaemenid studies ceased in Iran. Almost all foreign archaeologists and scholars of Iranian ancient history, as well as many Iranians who were known as historical nationalist and supported Achaemenid studies left the country. The politicization of the ancient history of Iran halted studies of the ancient history of Iran, in particular Achaemenid history which had been encouraged and supported during the Pahlavi dynasty; in contrast after the Islamic revolution of 1979 the Achaemenids were ignored by officials who saw this dynasty as a symbol of ignorance and despotism, with Persepolis and other monuments regarded as symbols of monarchical tyranny imposed on the masses.

However, in spite of the lack of support for Achaemenid studies by Iranian officials during the last three decades, western scholars in general and European scholars in particular continued to study Achaemenid history in their institutions without hiatus, using new methodologies through various disciplines; philology, archaeology, Assyriology, Egyptology, Classical history, and Semitics studies etc. During this time many conferences and meetings have been organized, numerous ancient texts have been translated and studied, many new archaeological excavations and researches have been carried out within the territory of the Achaemenid Empire, from Central Asia to Egypt, and from Indian valleys to the Aegean Sea. A huge number of titles (books and articles) related to Achaemenid history have appeared during the last thirty years in the west, keeping Achaemenid studies very much alive. Taking into account the many territories and nations of the Achaemenid Empire and analysing the new methodologies which have been used for studying Achaemenid history, a number of those activities in the West during the last thirty years will be introduced in this paper.

Following the revolution of 1979, foreign archaeologists were banned from working in Iran and archaeological activities by foreigners came to a halt in Iran until 1995. Although, many academic and non-academic titles have been published on Achaemenid history by Iranian individuals during the last three decades, in particular by some western educated scholars, Achaemenid history is still largely ignored by Iranian officials. Nevertheless, the senior generation of

scholars in the ancient history of Iran in the West tried to publish new titles by accessing and analyzing previously discovered archaeological materials in Iran or by studying classical and Biblical sources. A huge number of titles, written mostly by senior and younger generation of scholars of Achaemenid history came to print in the first decade after the revolution of 1979. New trends in Achaemenid studies, which began by using new methodologies from the early 1980s, reached their climax at the end of the 1990s and in the first decade of 2000. For example, more than 1250 books and articles appeared between Autumn 1995 to Autumn 2000 (BH Ach I and II; Weber and Wieshofer, 1996; Haerinck E. & K. G. Stevens, 1996-2003; bibliographies of Briant, 1996 and Kuhrt 2007) . It still is speeding up, in particular through the establishment of *www.achemenet.com* and the digitalization of the Persepolis Fortification Archive in the *Oriental Institute of Chicago*.

One of those monographs in the early years of this decade, which followed the survey by Olmstead (1948), was J. M. Cook's *The Persian Empire*, (1983), a general survey mostly based on Greek sources. The *Cambridge History of Iran*, whose materials had been provided by a number of the most distinguished Iranologists 10 years earlier, was published in the same year (Mousavi, 1996/1997: 83). In its new edition, the fourth volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, published in 1988, was also devoted to the Achaemenid history. Former Soviet Union scholars like Dandanaev, Vladimir G. Lukonin, W. Vogelsang and H. Koch of Germany continued their studies in Achaemenid history during those years and published a number of

monographs in the 1980s (Cook 1983; Dandamaev 1985 & 1989; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989; Frye 1984; Koch 1990; cf. Weber and Wischofer 1996; Briant, 1996). Richard Frye also paid special attention to Achaemenid History in his more lengthy survey of the *Ancient History of Iran* in 1984. The *Bible and Persia*, 1990 by Yamauchi, which was dominated by Greeks and biblical sources, especially Herodotus, came to print at end of this decade (Grabbe 1991: 295-98). Along with those monographs, a huge number of articles on Achaemenid History also appeared in academic journals that had been established by the senior generation of Iranologists in London, Paris, Berlin and Leiden for study the history and archaeology of Iran, some of them specifically devoted to archaeology and the ancient history of Iran such as *Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, Iran* (London), *Iranica Antiqua* (Leiden), *AMI* (Archäologisch Mitteilungen aus Iran (Berlin), *Studia Iranica* (Paris), *Abstracta Iranica*, (Paris), *Acta Iranica* series and some other journals related to Near Eastern studies like *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (previously *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*). A number of articles on Achaemenid history were published or reviewed in those Journals and issues like Koch and Mackenzie (eds) 1983, *Kunst, Kulture und Geschichte der Achamenidezeit und ihr Fortleben* were devoted to Achaemenid history and archaeology specifically.

However, the Achaemenid Empire encompassed a variety of nations and territories each with its own history, culture and language, with most of them now located beyond the present Iranian borders where archaeologists continued work. Thus, restrictions

banning foreign archaeologists working in Iran could not affect Achaemenid studies abroad. In particular, when we remember that the field of Achaemenid studies can be divided in accordance with linguistic categories and specialists in particular conventions of writing: Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, Hebrew, Phoenician, demotic and hieroglyphic Egyptian, Aramaic, Greek, Lycian, Carian, Lydian, Phrygian, etc. Such studies also belong to larger disciplines; Babylonian and Assyriology, Egyptology, Classics and Semitic studies etc.

(Briant, 2002, at <http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>, p. 5).

Archaeological activities and new discoveries in territories which belonged to the Achaemenid Empire and study of those materials by scholars from different disciplines also provided new documents for the study of Achaemenid history. Furthermore, the expanse of the Achaemenid empire and the diversity of disciplines utilised in Achaemenid history encouraged the younger generation of scholars of Achaemenid history, who had mostly been trained in the 1970s, to strive together with the senior generations of this field for a new methodology; an “interdisciplinary” or rather multidisciplinary, “structural” and “statistical” approach to the study the history of the Achaemenid Empire.

It was perhaps following this methodology that the modern institution of Achaemenid studies took shape and was marked by the colloquia of the Achaemenid History Workshop (1981-1990) and its associated publications (*Achaemenid History: I-VIII*, 1987-1994). The most important aspects of these colloquia - as was mentioned in the first call for the meeting - was to establish contact between various researchers who in

their several fields were working on the Achaemenid period in Near Eastern and Mediterranean history (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 231).

The annual multidisciplinary Achaemenid History workshop began as the brainchild of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg at Groningen University. As one of the new generation of scholars of Achaemenid History, she started the ground-breaking work of this thematically and multidisciplinary colloquia in 1981 and was soon joined by Amelie Kuhrt from London. Both launched a series that was to continue until 1990 when in Ann Arbor they found another collaborator, Margaret Root (Briant, 2002: 3). The first volume of these thematic and academic series of workshops was published in 1987 and was largely devoted to the proceedings of the *Third Achaemenid History workshop* which had been held in 1983. New volumes were provided for all workshops held until 1994

(<http://www.ninoleiden.nl/publicationslist.aspx?series=11%7CAchaemenid+History>).

Although the colloquia, in general, dealt with problems of sources in the study of the Achaemenid Empire, each annual colloquium was devoted to an important aspect of Achaemenid history; *Sources, Structure and synthesis* (1987), *Greek Sources* (1987), *Methods and Theory* (1988), *Centre and Periphery* (1990), *The Root of European Tradition* (1990), *Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a new Empire* (1991), *Through Traveller's Eyes* (1991) and, *Continuity and Chang*, (1994). The multidisciplinary approach of this series of Achaemenid History Workshops provided an opportunity for various scholars of the Ancient Near East, Central Asia and the Mediterranean, including

Classics, and from different disciplines such as ancient history, archaeology, Assyriology, Egyptology and Philology to contribute. Using a multidisciplinary approach in these series of Achaemenid Workshops saved Achaemenid History from being viewed from a Hellenocentric stance which relied only on Greek history, providing one-sided images of Achaemenid history (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987: XII). In this type of research, non-written evidence and written traditions of non-literary character have become more important and have served to question the traditional view of the history of the Achaemenid period based predominantly on the use of Greek historical sources. This new approach to the study of the history of the Achaemenid empire, which comprised so many different nations, earlier empires and kingdoms like Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia and Lydia as well as various cultures and languages - with each studied within different academic disciplines, was an important event which could bring all those scholars together and keep Achaemenid study alive among different disciplines (Ibid).

A second approach which was emphasised in this series of workshops and was in use, at least from 1970s, was the "structural" approach, looking at the empire from below, .i.e. "not so much the study of events and chronologies, but the analysis of an entire society" (Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987:X). Although part of this road had already been paved by research which attempted to study the organization of the empire on various administrative and bureaucratic levels, in particular by Pierre Briant in *Rois, tribute et paysans*, 1983 (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987:XIII); nonetheless, emphasis on the structural approach in this

series of Achaemenid History Workshops helped scholars of Achaemenid History to break away from the dominant Hellenocentric discourse, which looked to Achaemenid history from the top, without paying attention to how this great empire worked within the lower strata (Ibid). Furthermore, by using statistical approaches in this series of workshops they could assert a relationship between the number of documents and objects like coins and seals found in a province and the intensity of the presence with the control exercised by the Persian central government (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1990: 263-274). Thus, the interruption in the Babylonian archive in the first years of Xerxes's reign is connected "with the revolts known from classical sources and with the Babylonian usurpers attested in a few tablets and all these matters are put in a cause-and-effect relationship with Xerxes' brutal repressive measures against the Babylonian temples and against Babylonia itself" (http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/History/hakhamaneshian/new_trends.htm P. 5) or the limited number of objects that have been discovered in some sites in Anatolia indicate that imperial power in those territories was limited to a few closely-controlled enclaves and the major routes, not to all those lands (cf. Briant and Boucharlat (eds), 2005). It is also true for the case that we have not found enough evidence or markers to prove previous claims such as "Median Empire" which previously had been suggested by some historians and scholars of ancient history (Imanpour, 2002-2003:61-81). By using the new methodology in the study of Achaemenid history (the multidisciplinary, structural and statistical approaches), the studies which had been limited either to Classical historians (Persian-Greek

Wars and the landing of Alexander in Asia in 334 BC), the Old Testament (to Cyrus the Great and return of exiled Jews and the Persian Court), or a few major sites like Pasargadae Susa, Persepolis, was expanded and brought within the field of history by the initiative of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Amelie Kuhrt (Briant, 2002: 4; Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt 1987: 10). This highly academic, international colloquia, though small, provided an opportunity for scholars of the Ancient Near East from different disciplines, in particular Achaemenists, to meet and to carry on discussions more systematically on historical problems and questions posed by the organizers of each workshop meeting. It is perhaps the reason why Briant (2002: 3) refers to 1983 as “golden Star” in his intellectual history when following an invitation of Sancisi-Weerdenburg, he participated for the first time in the Achaemenid Workshop in Groningen.

The Achaemenid History Workshop became a model for scholars of the ancient history of Iran and the Near East in different disciplines in organizing such meetings and conferences in different institutes across the Europe, whether thematically focussed in terms of geographical scope (e.g. Anatolia, Trans-Euphrates, the coastal plain of the Black and Mediterranean Seas), or type of evidence (coinage, archaeology) and Textual sources (Classical, Biblical sources and Old texts) or with wider thematic remits and relatively disparate content. Both subsequently and in parallel with this series of colloquia (Achaemenid workshop in 1980s and early 1990s), mostly thematic meetings and conferences were held in France, mostly through the efforts of Pierre

Briant in Belgium, Turkey, Britain and sporadically in other European countries and the United States.

Pierre Briant and Clarisse Herrenschildt organized the first such conferences, "le tribut dans l'Empire perse" in Paris (1986). Briant also organized another two meetings, the *Near East viewed by a Greek* and *Anabasis of Xenophon* in Toulouse in 1995. Josette Elayi and Jean Sapin organized three meetings on the Transeuphrates region, *Syria-Palestine under the dominion of Great Kings* in 1990, 1993-4, 1996-97; Jean Kellens organized a colloquium on Persian religion, *la religion Iranienne a l'epoque Achemenide* in Belgium (Liege, 1987). Bakir organized the *Hellespontine Phrygia and Asia Minor* (1998) in Turkey. Pierre Debord, Raymond Descat with the cooperation of the Centre Georges-Radet of Bordeaux called two meetings, the first on *Coinage of Asia Minor* (1985) and the second on Monetary problems, *Coins and Coinage* (1989), both in France. *Coinage of Asia Minor* was another colloquium organized by Casabonne in Turkey in 1998. Similar symposiums on coinage and monetary history were held at St. Hilda's College, Oxford in April 1986 under general title of the *Impact of Empire on Fifth century Coinage* and subtitled as *Persia, the Athenian coinage Decree*. The proceedings of conference was published later as: Carradice (ed), 1987. *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empire*, The Ninth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History, BAR International Series 343. Another Numismatic meeting devoted to research on coins that had been discovered between years 1996-2001, mostly from the territories under Persian rule such as Asia Minor, Palestine and Egypt, was held at Madrid in 2003

(<http://www.ins.org.il/The%20Levant%201996-2001.pdf>).

Scholars of Judean history also organized a number of conferences on the history of Jews during the Achaemenid period. In July 2003, a conference was held at the University of Heidelberg (Germany), focusing on the people and land of Judah during the 5th and early 4th centuries BC., the period when the Persian empire ruled over the entire ancient Near East. This conference in fact was the second of the three such meetings. The proceedings of the conference were published later in 2006 (Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (eds), 2006, at:

<http://www.achemenet.com/document/ConferenceUCI190208.pdf>). A similar International (Israeli-British) conference on Judaism, *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)* was held in 2007 by the Department of Archaeology and Middle East in Tel Aviv University at which many papers were devoted to Judaism under Persian rule

(http://www.achemenet.com/document/PB260307_Plan-Conference.pdf). A number of books related to Judaism during Achaemenid period have been published in recent years as well (see for example: Betford, 2001 and Trotter, 2001).

Although these new approaches helped scholars of Achaemenid History to break away from the dominant of Hellenocentric view which relied just on Greek history, classical historians had an essential role in many of those colloquia and Achaemenid studies in the last three decades. This is because much of Greek

history in the fifth and fourth centuries during the Achaemenid period was concerned about the interaction with Persia. Even the Greek historiography tradition which was initiated by Herodotus was the result of this interaction, as Herodotus stated he started writing history just to know who the Persian are (Mousavi 1375-1376/1996-1997: 83). As David Lewis (1977) also demonstrated in the seminal series of lectures delivered at the University of Cincinnati in 1997, "much of Greek history in the fifth and fourth centuries remains incomprehensive if Greek interaction with Persia is not taken into account" (Kuhrt, 1998:1). The interest of David Lewis, a classical historian, was not limited to the history of Classical Athens but his recognition of the vital role that the Persian Empire, its powerful neighbour, played in Greek political development and self-definition (Ibid). Accordingly he was at the forefront of Greek historians who turned to the history of the Persian Empire and maintained regular contacts with the Oriental Institute in Chicago, where thousands of Persepolis Fortification Tablets are housed. Through his connection to this centre, he established close links with Mathew Stolper, who has been in charge of the tablets since Richard Hallock's death in 1981 as well as with Margaret C. Root who has been working for thirty years on the seal-impressions of the Persepolis archive (cf. Garrison and Root 1996). David Lewis's knowledge of the classical Greek and Persian history made him an obvious choice to revise the volumes of *Cambridge Ancient History*, volume (IV-VI) and he was invited to participate on several occasions in the Achaemenid Workshops in 1986, 1987 (Kuhrt 1998; cf. Lewis, 1990). David Lewis' approach to Greek history and the Persian Empire was followed by his pupils such

as Christopher Tuplin and Maria Brosius who have published various titles on Achaemenid History and now are known more so as Achaemenists than classicists (for Tuplin's recent publications see Tuplin 1993; Tuplin 1996; Tuplin and Rihll (eds) 2002; Tuplin (ed.) 2004; and for some of Maria Brosius' publications see Brosius 1998; Brosius 2006; Brosius 2000). Margaret Christen Miller and A. Zournatzi are also Classical scholars who in recent years have been active in the case of the Achaemenid studies (Miller 1997; Zournatzi 2005). Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg by initiating the Achaemenid Workshop in fact established the modern Institute of Achaemenid Studies, and Pierre Briant one of the most distinguished scholars of Achaemenid history in our time, both turned to history of the Persian Empire from classical history. For example Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1944-200) became familiar with Achaemenid history when she was studying Ancient Greek language and history in Leiden University (Abdi., 2001-2002: 79). Pierre Briant also began to take an interest in the ancient Near East, and accordingly came to Achaemenid history through one of successors of Alexander, the former satrap of greater Phrygia, Antigonus of One-Eyed and peasants of Asia Minor at the every beginning of Hellenistic period, in land that had been part of the Achaemenid empire. Briant has mentioned " the preparation of long article on Eumenes of Cardia (1972-73), an opponent of Antigonus and of a small book on Alexander (1974) quickly convinced me of the need to go further in time; just what was this Achaemenid Empire" (Briant, 1996:10; cf. Mousavi, 1996/1997: 83-89; and Briant's Curriculum vitae see: <http://www.college-de-france.fr/default>

/EN/all/civ_ach/travaux.htm). Briant by writing and editing more than 150 titles in the subject relating to Achaemenid history, in particular the book of *Histoire de L'Empire Perse De Cyrus À Alexandre* (1996), in which nearly all available sources and bibliographies had been consulted, opened new era in the Achaemenid studies. His establishment of www.achemenet.com promoted the position of modern institute of Persian studies in recent years.

However, classical historians like archaeologists, biblical scholars and linguistics also held a number of conferences in association with Achaemenid history after the Achaemenid History Workshop. The thematic colloquia of *Anabasis of Xenophon* was held by Pierre Briant at Toulouse (1995); and *Xenophon and his world* by Christopher Tuplin at Liverpool in 1999 (Tuplin and Azoulay (eds), 2004). The old model conference of *Persia and Greeks: Reaction and Reception* was held in Universite de Rennes II in September 2004, forming part of the Celtic Conference in Classics (Tuplin (ed), 2007). The latest of such thematic conferences, *Herodotus and Persian Empire*, was recently held in Innsbruck in November 2008, during which many aspects of Herodotus's report on Persian conquered lands and the organization Persian empire as it is conceived by Herodotus was discussed in comparison with other sources

(http://www.achemenet.com/document/Herodotus_Conference_Tagungsprogramm_nov-2008.pdf).

Furthermore, for two hundred years, from the second half of the sixth century to the 330's BC the Persian Achaemenid dynasty ruled Anatolia, Transcaucasia and the eastern shore of the Black Sea as

part of an enormous empire. The Great King Darius I and his successor, Xerxes I, both tried unsuccessfully to conquer Greece and the northern Black Sea territories. In contrast to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea did not have prosperous cities or provinces to offer as Egypt, Phoenicia and Syria did. Thus it seems that after some initial struggles the Persian Kings acknowledge the fact and the Caucasus formed the natural borders of the Empire. They could not, on the other hand avoid, getting involved in Black Sea affairs to keep the border safe. However, the presence of Persians in those regions and the side-effects from the long lasting Persian presence on the inhabitant of Anatolia and on the Black Sea region has been the subject of a number different conferences and meetings in recent years. A conference entitled *The Achaemenid Impact on Local Populations and Cultures in Anatolia (6th- 4th)* was held at Istanbul in 2005. It treated monuments in Turkey and gave a perspective on the kinds of influence that affected the shores of the Black Sea. The cross-cultural and political encounter between Persian and Greek, Anatolia, the Black Sea as well as the Persian periphery in Black Sea region has been the subject of another interdisciplinary conference in Greece. The international conference, *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran: Cross-cultural encounters*, was held in 2006 through the cooperation of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) in Greece and the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) and the Hellenic National Commission for UNSECO at Athens. Many scholars from different disciplines in particular archaeology, classical history and ancient history participated and aspects of Persian and Greek cultural interaction were examined. In January, 2008, an interdisciplinary

conference entitled "Achaemenid Impact in Black Sea Communication of Powers in Circumpontic Cultures" was organized in Sandbjerg in Denmark with the support of the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Black Sea Studies. It is also promising that new Society for Hellenistic and Iranian Studies (SHIS) has been established just recently and its first annual lecture took place on Tuesday, 10 March 2009 in King College, London (<http://www.sh-is.org/>).

At the same times archaeologists have been working in the vast region from India to the Mediterranean Sea and from Central Asia to Egypt, all regions that fell within the Persian imperial sphere of influence such as Central Asia and Afghanistan, Anatolia and Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt and Mesopotamia, all outside modern Iran. Many archaeological sites have been identified and excavated, with some associated to Persian rule in those territories. A record of some of those investigations and surveys is overviewed in "*L'archéologie de l'empire Achéménide: nouvelles recherches*", a conference under the direction of Pierre Briant and Rémy Boucharlat was held in Paris, Collège de France in 2003. This conference provided an excellent overview of the state of field research in the whole empire in Anatolia, Central Asia, Mesopotamia, east and south of Mediterranean Sea in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Iran itself (Briant and Boucharlat (eds) 2005). Pierre Briant and Remy Boucharlat, in their relatively long introduction in the proceedings of this conference briefly, and other participants more comprehensively, overviewed the history of archaeological excavations and some discovered objects in some of those lands including the regions in southern

Caucasia (Transcaucasia which included modern Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), Cilicia and the Hatay in southeast modern Turkey, southeast Anatolia, Coastal Plain of Palestine, northeast Syria, Egypt, northern Iraq and Central Asia during the Persians rule (Briant and Boucharlat (edits) 2005: 17-27). The archaeology of Iran was briefly reviewed and an Achaemenid site in Fars, Tepe Hakvan at Moshkan more comprehensively outlined. Most of those papers now are available on line in PDF format at (<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/colloque/pdf>).

This was not the only archaeological conference which was held in association with Achaemenid history. There have been a number such colloquia and studies focussing thematically in terms of geographical scope like Transeuphratian, Caucasia, Anatolia and Central Asia in which regional archaeology during the Achaemenid period has been discussed (<http://www.mediatechnix.com/transeuphratene/menua.htm>). Eastern Georgia was, for example, the subject of a regional conference in which new discoveries in this region from the Achaemenid period were discussed. A Georgian-German team started excavation at site of Gumbati in Eastern Georgia in 1994. Since then the question of Achaemenid rule in Transcaucasia has become an issue of lively discussion and the subject of two international conferences in Tbilisi (<http://www.achaement.com/pd/collques/resumes/>; cf. Florian S. Knauss, 2005). Much archaeological excavation was also conducted at the Transeuphratian territories, in many satrapal capitals of Persian territories in modern Turkey like Dascylium, Sardis, and Gordion

in Phrygia and Lycia; the account of part of those works during 1980s and 1990s has already been published (Elayi-J. 2000; Young Jr, 1999: 191-242 and 236; BH Ach I: 22-24). The archaeological discoveries, in particular the ceramics in Central Asia during the Achaemenid and the role of Achaemenid Organization in Central Asia, Afghanistan and, Pakistan, has been the subject of meetings and discussion in the 1980s, in particular by J. C. Gardin, "Les relations entre la Méditerranée et la Bactriane dans l'antiquité d'après des données céramologiques inédites", Paris 1989; "Migrateurs et porteurs de pots en bactriane de l'âge du bronze à nos jours", Paris 1986 (Gardin, 1989: 447-460; Gardin, 1986: 76-84); and Briant, *L'Asie Centrale et les royaumes proche-orientaux du premier millénaire .C. VIIIè-VIIIè siècles avant notre èr.* (Briant, 1984: 47ff. ; Magee, Knox and Khan, 2005: 711-741).

Many Achaemenid objects and documents have been discovered in Egypt during archaeological excavations in the last twenty years which have changed the previous view on the nature of the Persian presence in Egypt during the reign of the Great King, Darius and Xerxes affording "A certainty and new lead" (http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/History/hakhamaneshian/new_trends.htm: 9).

We can, for example, mention the discovery of the tomb of Udjahorresnet, one of the high ranking Egyptian collaborators with Persian imperial power under Cambyses and Darius (Bare , L. Abusir IV, 1999); the discovery of a funerary Stele part of which depicts an individual seated on a Persian-style throne wearing a Persian type of robe (Mathieson, Bettles, Davies and Smith, 1995: 23-40; cf. Giovino, 2006: 105-114); the

discovery of a corpus of Aramaic documents dated in the regal years of Persian kings as well huge discoveries including an entire ancient village dated to the Achaemenid period at the site of Ayn Manawir buried in the sand, south of Khagegeh Oasis in the western Desert, in the region Dash, with houses, fields, orchards, irrigation channels and, most importantly, Qanats using an Iranian technique

([Http://www.achemenet.com](http://www.achemenet.com);

http://www.caissoas.com/CAIS/History/hakhamaneshian/new_trends.htm: 8).

Less than two decades after the revolution of 1979 a number of archaeologists, first Iranian archaeologists based in the western academic institutions and then French, British, Australian and other European and North American archaeologists, were allowed to work in Iran, in the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire. Abbas Alizadeh from the University of Chicago and Kamyar Abdi, from the Museum of Anthropology, the University of Michigan and an academic member of the Dartmouth College, were two of the Iranian archaeologists permitted to carry out their excavations in Iran from 1995 (Alizadeh, 1995: 29-32). Kamyar Abdi began his archaeological activities in Iran first in Islamabad plain in Kermanshah and at Malyan in Fars province from 1997. He then continued his survey in collaboration with Iranian archaeologists in Malyan for few seasons, the report of those excavations can be read in the journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, *Iran*, from 1999 onward. They have been allowed to work in joint excavations with Iranian archaeologists and under the direction of the Iranian Culture Heritage Organization

(ICHO). Iranian Culture Heritage Organization was later named Iranian Culture Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO). The Iranian Centre of Archaeology Research (ICAR) is an academic branch of this organization with archaeologists working under its direction. This organization sponsored two symposia first at Susa on 14–17 April 1994 and second in Tehran on 18–21 November 1997 (Chegini, 1997).

Accordingly during the last decade, many excavations in different parts of Iran have been carried out but only a few of them have focussed on the Achaemenid period and the Fars region. During this period many other joint-excavations have been carried out by foreign archaeologists in the Tehran Plain and Busher province, with their reports available in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* (2002, 2003, 2004, 2006) and *Journal of Archaeology and History* which is Published by Iran University Press since 1986. A joint excavation under the supervision of Ali Reza Asgari, from the Iranian Archaeology Research Centre (IARC) and Daniel Thomas Potts from the Australian University of Sydney carried out excavations at an Achaemenid historical site in Norabad of Mamsani, Fars province in Southwest of Iran, between Sousa and Persepolis from 1382/2003. In the second season of excavations at this site, a restricted amount of remains of a columned balcony hall and stairway were discovered; this is one of the ten largest buildings with a structure similar to Persepolis. This Achaemenid building has huge columns with a base about one meter thick, the same as the Persepolis columns. The dimensions are similar to columns of the Hall of Hundred Columns of Persepolis. There are traces of

lotus flowers on the base of the columns and the colour of the columns are the same as the Persepolis columns. (<http://www.payvand.com/news/08/feb/1076.html>). The results from a few sessions of excavations can be read at Potts and Roustae in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* (2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007) and in Potts and A. Asgari Chavedi (2009). It is believed that the building could be either one of the buildings of the famous Lidoma Town and a depot for collecting and storing the tax of the region with similar function that has been attributed to that of Borazjan construction in Bushier province in south-western Iran (<http://www.payvand.com/news/08/feb/1076.html>) or it could be one of that main Royal Road Stations which connected Susa to Persepolis. However, the joint excavation, from the Archaeology Research Centre of Iran (IARC) and British Institute of Persian Studies under the name of the Mamasani Archaeological Project is still going on in the Mamasani region with the latest reports of these excavations presented by Cameron Petrie & Lloyd Weeks in the 10th annual Workshop of the British Institute of Persian Studies (Bips) in Manchester on 30-31 January 2009 entitled: *From Village to Town: Socio-economic and political transformations in the Mamasani District, Fars* between 6000 and 3000 BC, excavations by the Mamasani Archaeological Project in 2008/09.

However, by taking into account the previous discoveries at Farmeshgan in Fars (between Shiraz and Firouzabad) by Mostafavi, the site that Mostafavi believed was probably a Royal Road Station connecting Suruvan (Fahlian) to south-east and traversed Bishapur, Kazrun, Jerreh, Frashband and Firuzabad and then to the

province of Persepolis (Razmjou, 2005; Mostafavi, 1967: 3008-3010), it seems the Mamasani site could be a Royal Road Station connecting Susa to Persepolis, although, it cannot be ignored that this station could also be located beside a relatively regional governmental centre in a strategic place between two Persian Capitals, Persepolis and Susa.

A joint Iranian-Italian Archaeological Mission from the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research, the Parsa-Pasargadae Research Foundation, the University of Bologna, and the Italian Institute for Africa and the East carried out their first season of activities of a five-year program, *From Palace to Town*. The first season began in September and this excavation was concluded on November 7, 2008 providing the first information about a city where the common people lived, a city some distance from Persepolis, at the time of the Achaemenid dynasty. It has been claimed that, in collaboration with the Parsa-Pasargadae Research Foundation, the team is also studying the possibility of setting up a centralized data base compiling all the information on Persepolis and the surrounding area, which may also be put online on a web site (<http://www.payvand.com/news/08/dec/1012.html>).

The new discoveries through this project in the Persepolis area, together with Mamasani discoveries, can perhaps be called the only significant Achaemenid archaeological developments which have taken place in the heartland of the Persian Empire during last thirty years. In particular when we remember that a few seasons of excavation carried out in Hegmataneh, Hamadan by the Iranian archaeologist, Sarraf and by the Franco-Iranian team in Susa and Pasargadae did not

bring so much change in trends of Achaemenid history (Sarraf, 2003; Razmjou, 2005; cf. BHach I, 1997: 42-43 and BHach II, 2001: 71-73).

I must also mention a number of relatively less thematic colloquia, partially associated with Achaemenid history that have been held mostly in Britain during last three decades.

British scholars of the ancient history of Iran continued their research and studies in Achaemenid history after the revolution of 1979. In addition to their effective role in the publication of the *Cambridge History of Iran* and the *Cambridge Ancient History* (see above), they also organized a number of conferences on the ancient history of Iran, with some of them associated with Achaemenid history. The number of British participants and their communications with the Achaemenid History Workshops during the years 1983-1990 was more than any country, nearly twice of the French who then became more active in parallel and the subsequent meeting which was held with Achaemenid workshop (<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>).

Amelie Kuhrt, (University of College London) immediately after the first Achaemenid Workshop in Groningen joined Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and continued her collaboration after this workshop. It was through her efforts and financial help from the British Academy and the support of University College London that the third Achaemenid History Workshop was held in London in 1985. British scholars became more active later in the 1990s and 2000s, holding a number of conferences in association with Achaemenid history. In most of those meetings and conferences which have

been held in London, John Curtis from the British Museum and Vesta Sarkhosh (Curtis), the general director of the British Institute of Persian studies have directly or indirectly played a crucial role in organizing such meetings, in some cases with financial support the Soudavar Memorial Foundation.

In honour of a distinguished Russian scholar who died in 1984, a group of his friends decided to establish a fund in his memory by launching an annual seminar at the British Museum. Four seminars were held in memory Vladimir G. Lukonin in the British Museum, all on the relationship of Mesopotamia and Iran in which the third was dedicated to "Relations between Mesopotamia and Iran in the Achaemenid Period" in July 1995. In this seminar, scholars from different disciplines such as archaeology (D. Stronach, E. Haerinck, R. Boucharlat), Old Testament (Christopher Walker) and ancient Babylon (T.C. Mitchell) discussed various aspects of those relationships. The proceeding of this seminar was published in 1997 by John Curtis from the British Museum. The lecture series entitled "The Idea of Iran", whose title was borrowed from Gherardo Gnoli's collection of essays, *The Idea of Iran* (Rome 1989), was another multidisciplinary conference series with a session devoted to the Achaemenids, *The Birth of the Persian Empire*, delivered at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the spring and summer terms of 2004 and organized by the London Middle East Institute at SOAS and the British Museum. The fourth Lecture Series of the *Idea of Iran* with support of Soudavar Foundation was held in January 2009 in London. Taking into account the nature of the origin of the Persians, they broadened the approach and scholars from different

disciplines (archaeology, history, religion and philology) were invited to debate various issues concerning the origin of Iran as a political, religious and ethnic entity (Cf. Sarkhosh Curtis and Stewart (eds), 2006). The non-thematic international conference the *World of Achaemenid Persia* with wide range of subjects including history/historiography, new sources, art & architecture, gender, political continuity/change, iconography, religion, origins & legacy was organized by the British Museum and the Iran Heritage Foundation in association with the Persian Cultural Foundation and with support of the Soudavar Memorial Foundation from 29th September to 1st October 2005 in London. Over 50 speakers at this three day conference discussed the Achaemenid dynasty. This conference coincided with a comprehensive exhibition, *Forgotten Empire: the World of Ancient Persia*, which was on display at the British Museum (9 September 2005 - 8 January 2006).

One of the chief aims of the exhibition was to redress the negative Eurocentric view of the ancient Persians that has resulted from the exclusive reliance on classical Greek sources throughout history. Coinciding with the Exhibition, a collection of papers commissioned for this event was published with the same name: *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*, 2005, edited by John Curtis and Nigel Tallis, British Museum (Wilkinson, 2006: 295-299). Furthermore, in addition to some regular lectures and seminars in Achaemenid history held in various institutes in European and American Universities (http://www.college-de-france.fr/default/EN/all/civ_ach/cours_et_seminaires_anterieurs.htm), many papers also in relationship with

Achaemenid history have been presented in some of the non-thematic conferences related to the History of Iran or the Near East such as the SIE and RAI conferences which are organized by different societies and organizations (cf. Imanpour, 2008; idem 2006; idem 2004; idem 2002-2003; idem. 1386/2008).

The result of these academic activities and meetings has been a huge number of books and articles that have come to print. The number of publications on Achaemenid History in the first decade after the revolution of 1979 is comparable with the number that had been published in all previous decades (Abdi, 1992: 32). Nonetheless, they are not comparable with what has been done in this field during the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly in recent years, when one could claim that Achaemenid Studies reached its climax. In particular, we note that many of those meetings and conferences, archaeological excavations, and study of texts and cuneiform (Elmaite, Babylonian, Aramaic, Phoenician, phrygian, Lycian, demotic and hieroglyphic Egyptian, etc ..), took place during the last two decades from 1990. It is worth mentioning that between autumn 1995 and autumn 2000, more than 1250 books and articles appeared that they were reviewed by Piere Briant in *BHach I* and *BHach II*. Pierre Briant also gathered relevant publication from 1970-1985 and reviewed them in his book, *Histoire de L'Empire Perse De Cyrus A'Alexandre* (1996:1056-1077).

However, the majority of those contributors in Achaemenid studies from various disciplines, archaeologists, Biblical scholars, linguists and classicists etc. helping the explosion of Achaemenid researches and

publications in the 1980s and 1990s, only partially and incidentally corresponded with the Achaemenid period and territory. As Pierre Briant mentioned the number of researchers who were fully engaged with the history of the Achaemenid world were sparse, little more than around fifteen.

(<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>, p.4).

After the Achaemenid Workshop, most of those Achaemenists worked in a relatively isolated manner and there was no journal specifically devoted to the field of Achaemenid studies. The only Institute that at moment is optionally offering an Achaemenid History course is a French University, Toulouse-II within the context of the normal Licence d' Histoire (<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>, p.5). Thus, the establishment of an international network in which all existing research projects relevant to Achaemenid history, including archaeological, linguistic, classical and biblical activities, could be co-ordinated and would stimulate further work remained necessary (<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>: p.4.) It was following this feeling of shortcoming that Pierre Briant called scholars from different disciplines to collaborate in the establishment of such an international network, an Achaemenid Website. His call received positive responses from colleagues in different disciplines and thus, *achemenet.com* was established by end of 2000. It was decided that the communication crossroads be established at the Collège de France, centred on the chair Histoire et civilisation du monde Achéménide et de l'empire d'Alexandre [<http://www.college-de-france.fr/>] and a steering committee in charge of the development of the site was elected (<http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/call.pdf>). The

establishment of this site was the next important development in Achaemenid studies in the early 2000s that provided an opportunity for scholars from various disciplines to contribute to Achaemenid research through either creating a link between their speciality and the *achaemenenet.com* site or by transmitting their information directly to the central site in Paris for inclusion.

The bilingual (French and English) *achaemenenet.com* site included two main sections; first, a museum cell which is linked to many museums in Europe, north America and Turkey where archaeological materials of relevance to Persian empires, such as coins, seals and other objects, are held. This cell has a number of sub-groups, including museums and institutions and geographical areas; an iconography cell, for example, includes Achaemenid images, both central and provisional and contains seals, coins, sculpture, treasury etc. A tool has been installed on this screen that allows researchers to closely examine the objects they are looking at or working on.

The second and main section includes six main cells, each containing a number of sub-groups like *Announcement, Explore the empire, Texts, On-line publication, Research tools and Contacts*. Through the first cell scholars are able to find up-to-date information about Achaemenid publications (new books, articles, and projects), conferences, seminars, exhibitions and other news related to Achaemenid studies. Under the *Explore the Empire* cell, archaeological sites like Pasargadae in Iran, Ayn Manâwir in Egypt and Berel in Central Asia have been introduced. Clicking on each toponym, researchers gain access to whatever

information the archaeological teams have uploaded. On the screen a colour map also shows all archaeological sites of relevance to Achaemenid history. Minting and monetary systems is another sub-group in which some information on coins and monetary systems throughout Persian Empire territories is provided. Anatolian documents in various categories, Egyptian and Babylonian texts as well as Royal inscription and the Persepolis Tablets have been classified under the Texts cell.

It is perhaps one of the most important sections in the *achemenet.com* site in that it enables linguists and scholars of Achaemenid history easy access to documents and texts from Asia Minor, Egyptian texts (Aramaic and hieroglyphic) as well as to many Babylonian texts, Royal Inscriptions and Persepolis Tablets via this site or via a link to the Oriental Institute in Chicago and Abzu (<http://www.etana.org/abzu/>) where the Persepolis Tablets and Royal Inscriptions are available on line. In the next cell, on-line publications, journals like *Arata*, *Nabu*, *Jasr* and in press articles relevant to Achaemenid history all are made accessible via this site. The fifth cell is named Research tools which includes a number sub-groups like bibliographies, digital books, directories and the Persepolis Fortification Archive. In the bibliographies sub-group, *BHach* I and *BHach* II have been made available to scholars on-line and access is provided to the thematic titles of new series of *Persika*, (12 issues) from 2001, and to *Abstracta Iranica* in which publications related to Achaemenid and other parts of Iranian history are reviewed. Through the next sub-group scholars also can access to digital books, such as the *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (1969) or the *Persepolis Treasury*

Tablets (1948), *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis* (1970) etc. available via Oriental Institute of Chicago, <http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/OIP.pdf> . In the next sub-groups, it is possible for scholars to link to websites that relate to Iranian studies or the Near East like the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project; especially those are relevant to Achaemenid history. Communication with scholars from different disciplines whose work focuses either entirely or partly on the Achaemenid history is also possible via the last link which is provided (<http://www.achemenet.com>).

The establishment of *achemenet.com*, which began as the brainchild of Pierre Briant, roughly coincided with the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (PFA) at the Oriental Institute of Chicago University where a new phase in recording and distributing the information began.

(<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/pfa/>;
<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/persia.html>)

After the Achaemenid History Workshop, perhaps it can be called the second main development in the field of Achaemenid studies in the early 2000s, in particular, when we remember that, in recent years, there has been a close collaboration between Pierre Briant, and his colleagues like Wouter F. M. Henkelman from the Collège de France, Paris, and with Matthew W. Stolper the director of PFA in Oriental Institute of Chicago University. The result of those collaboration have been the publication of *L'archive des Fortifications de Persepolis État des questions et perspectives de recherches* (2008): available in pdf at <http://www.college-de-france.fr/media/>

During 1930-31, the Oriental Institute organized a Persian Expedition to conduct excavations at Persepolis, an Achaemenid royal administrative centre in the province of Fars, under the direction of Ernst Herzfeld. He served as director of the Persian Expedition until the end of 1934, when he was succeeded by Erich Schmidt, who continued to excavate in the region until 1939. In 1933/4 Herzfeld, working on the Fortification walls at the northeast corner of the Persepolis trace, found thousands of clay tablets and fragments in two small rooms at the edge of the great stone terrace. There were four main kinds of tablets and fragments: pieces with texts in the cuneiform script and Elamite language, pieces with texts in the Aramaic script and language, pieces with no texts but with seal impressions, and some oddities ; a tablet in Greek, a tablet in Phrygian, a tablet in Old Persian (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/pfa/>).

Most of the Fortification tablets arrived in 2,253 numbered boxes at the Oriental Institute in 1936, on loan for study and analysis. They became available for study in 1937. The results of long, painstaking work were the translation and analysis of 2,087 Elamite and Aramaic texts (Cameron, 1948; Hallock, 1969; Bowman, 1970). Following Richard Hallock's death in 1981 Matthew W Stolper has been in charge of overseeing the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project. He collaborated with a number of the younger generation of scholars in this field including: Elspeth R. M. Dusingberre (Universit of Colorado), Mark B.

Garrison (Trinity University), Wouter F. M. Henkelman (College de France and Amsterdam), Annalisa Azzoni (Vanderbilt University), Margaret Cool Root (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Gene Gragg (Oriental Institute) and many other scholars who, directly or indirectly, have been involved with this project. Many books and articles have been published in recent years by those scholars with some of them available through *www.Achemenet.com*, and in *Arata; Persika* and in Briant, Henkelman and Stolper (eds), 2008 and in Brosius and Kuhrt (eds.) 1998. Along those activities, the PFA Project Team has also organized the Persian Gallery, The Virtual Museum; Photographic Archives of Persia and an Exhibition of Photographs: Persepolis and Ancient Iran.

The *achemenet.com* and the Oriental Institute have began new phase of research activities by under taking the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (2002) using electronic equipment and media alongside the conventional tool-kits of philology and scholarship, translation and distributing the information of the Royal inscriptions, Seals and Persepolis Fortification Tablets including Hallock's Persepolis Fortification Texts and Cameron's Treasury Tablets books, etc have brought Achaemenid studies alive

(<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/pfa/>).

Up-to-date on-line information about Persepolis Fortification Tablets and other news in this regard can be read at :

<http://persepolistablets.blogspot.com/2007/01/persepolis-in-news.html>.

In other words, *www.achemenet.com* website together with the Oriental Institute, by providing

information and access to many Achaemenid archaeological and textual sources and objects on-line including Achaemenid objects held in European, North American and Turkish museums, have become an important academic international network through which students of Achaemenid history can easily access huge number of materials and objects and publications for their research. Moreover, many of the senior and new generation of scholars and students of this field have now become affiliated with the Oriental Institute and have played a productive role in the development of Achaemenid studies in particular in 2000s. Margaret Cool Root, Mark Garrison and Wouter F. M. Henkelman have had a close affiliation with this centre and the result of these collaborations has been a number of publications such as: Garrison and Root, 2002; Garrison and Root, 1996. Furthermore, Setting up data structures for recording, linking, analyzing and presenting images and documents on-line; Oriental Institute of Chicago and PFA entered co-operative agreements with projects at the Collège de France, the University of Southern California, and UCLA which led to distribution of PFA data through at least three other on-line sources.

Finally, and not least, Achaemenid history also has attracted the attention of many students of Near East studies during last thirty years. Despite of the Iranian government policy banning foreign archaeologists and scholars of ancient history from working in Iran following the revolution of 1979, senior generations of scholars of Achaemenid history in different disciplines (archaeology, Old languages, classical history, ancient civilisation, biblical studies, etc) continued to study Achaemenid history and to train new researchers in this

field, using either new archaeological discoveries from Persian territories outside of current Iranian borders or by re-examination and analysis of previously discovered materials. Taking into account these restrictions, only few of more than fifty doctoral dissertations that have been written on Achaemenid history have been devoted to the Achaemenid homeland, Parsa, during this period, where access to new materials have nearly been impossible (cf. Razmjou, 2008; Arfaee, 2008; Codella, 2007; Nimchuk 2003; Bae, 2001; Jamzadeh, 1991 and Imanpour, 1998).

Most of those researches also have been done at universities in the United States and in European countries including United Kingdom and France and sparsely in other countries where scholars of ancient history of Iran, in particular of the Achaemenid period are based. The presence of some senior scholars in those institutes has encouraged students of the ancient Near East to choose topics associated with Achaemenid history. For example, the presence of David Stronach and Crawford H. Greenwalt Jr. at the University of California, Berkeley; Margaret Cool Root and Brian B. Schmidt at University of Michigan; Matthew W. Stolper at University of Chicago; John Huehnergard at University of Harvard etc. in United State and late T. Cuyler, Jr. Young at University of Toronto in Canada; Amelie Kuhrt and Lindsay Allen at University College, London; the late David Lewis at University of Oxford, Pierre Briant and Wouter Henkelman at Collège de France and Robert Rollinger at Innsbruck etc. each has played an important role in keeping Achaemenid Studies alive in those institutes and training new generations of researchers. We can also name Javier Alvarez-mon(

Berkeley), Elspet Roger McIntosh Dusinger and Mark Bradley Grassion (Michigan), Wouter F.M. Henkelman (Leiden) Margaret Christina Miller (Harvard), and Maria Brosuis (Oxford) as part of a new generation of distinguished Achaemenists who have been graduated from those institutes. Of course, many dissertations in others universities like Gent University at Belgium, Manchester and Liverpool Universities at United kingdom and Colombia and New York Universities in United State and from Russia or others countries in association with Achaemenid history have been written, which have not been mentioned here.

Of course, they have not been the only scholars or institutes that have been active in Achaemenid studies. There have been many individual scholars in ancient languages, history and the archaeology of Iran that in different institutes partially helped the development of Achaemenid studies in the last three decades. For example we can mention about Daniel T. Potts from Sydney University in Australia (2005: 7-29) and Matt Waters (2004: 103-119) who have written articles on Achaemenid history, or there are many universities in the united State like Pennsylvania, Colombia, New York, Minnesota, Baylor and in other countries like South Africa and Belgium, where research on Achaemenid history has been done and not been mentioned here. That is also true of the list of conferences, archaeological and linguistic activities and internet websites which I discussed before. There have been a lot of archaeological excavations or meetings on Achaemenid history and the history of Iran and the ancient Near East in which papers on Achaemenid history were also presented and there are many websites

in which material and information about Achaemenid history is distributed that have not been mentioned here. For example, mention should be made of the many excavations which have been done by Israeli archaeologists in Gaza and the West Bank during the last three decades years and many lectures and seminars which have been organized in France and other European countries which and have not mentioned here (cf. http://www.college-de-france.fr/default/EN/all/civ_ach/cours_et_seminaires_anterieurs.htm).

What I have provided in this research is a selective tour around the horizon to illustrate that Achaemenid studies in various institutes and by scholars from different disciplines has continued and flourished during these years.

In conclusion, the identification of the Achaemenid capitals, Persepolis and Pasargadae, and the reestablishment of Achaemenid history by western scholars in the 19th century, provoked nationalism and interest in ancient Persia among Iranians that led to the politicization and nationalisation of ancient history of Iran; in particular Achaemenid history during Pahlavi dynasty. Following the Islamic revolution of 1979, which was against nationalism (not the politicization of history) and owing to the ideological agenda of the new government which questioned the whole notion of the monarchical system, those foreign scholars who worked in the archaeology and ancient history of Iran were forced to leave the country. Thus Achaemenid studies came to halt in Iran.

However, Achaemenid studies continued in Western institutes without any hiatus, first by materializing and analyzing the previously discovered archaeological materials from Iran or by studying the classical and Biblical sources and then by studying the new archaeological materials and ancient texts and cuneiform texts which were discovered from the lands on the periphery of the Achaemenid empire during the Persian rule, in the western and north-western periphery like Caucasia (Transcaucasia which included modern Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), Anatolia, Transeuphratian, Coastal Plain of Palestine and other peripheries like Egypt and Central Asia. In the first decade after the revolution, Achaemenid studies continued relatively smoothly and the Achaemenid History Workshop was the main event in this regard, which kept Achaemenid studies alive, but in the second and then in the third decades from the early of 2000s and following the digitalization of many of Achaemenid objects in Oriental Institutes of Chicago and the establishment of *www.achaemenet.com*, which brought Achaemenid history news and data on line, Achaemenid studies increased sharply. These developments took place because Achaemenid kings ruled over a vast area covering all the ancient Near East as well as west Central Asia in which many nations with different languages and cultures lived, and many scholars from different disciplines have worked on the archaeology, ancient history, languages and cultures of those nations during the last thirty years, and part of those studies (period 559-330 BC) included Achaemenid history. Taking into account the circumstance and the position of Achaemenid history a new methodology developed; an "interdisciplinary", "structural" and "statistical"

approach for the study of Achaemenid history which helped the development of Achaemenid studies. The multidisciplinary approach resulted in many scholars from various disciplines such as linguistics, iconography and numismatics, archaeology, ancient history, classical history, Assyriology, Egyptology and Old Testament studies to be able to contribute to the study of Achaemenid history. This approach not only gave the opportunity to scholars from different disciplines to study Achaemenid history, it also saved Achaemenid history from the Hellenocentric view that relied solely on Greek history.

The second approach, the "structural", looking at the Achaemenid Empire from below, not so much through the study of events and chronologies, but through the analysis of an entire society to see how this great empire worked within the lower strata, also helped the development of Achaemenid history. This approach helped scholars of Achaemenid history to break away from the dominant Hellenocentric view, looking at Achaemenid history just from the top; in particular, aided by the numerous evidence and materials that have now become available through new archaeological discoveries and linguistic studies in the lands on the periphery of empire.

Furthermore, by using "statistical" approaches in this new trend of Achaemenid history, scholars of ancient history could assert a mechanical relationship between the number of documents and objects, such as coins and seals, found in Achaemenid territories and provinces. Archaeologists and linguists have also provided sufficient materials and evidence enabling

scholars of ancient history to study the intensity of the presence of Persians and the control exercised by the Persian central government over those territories and provinces. In other words, although the politicization of Achaemenid history and the ideological agenda of the Iranian government, which questioned the whole notion of monarchical systems after the revolution of 1979, could bring Achaemenid studies to a halt in Iran, Achaemenid studies continued and developed in the West, first because of the geo-historical position of the empire, which included vast areas which now are mostly beyond the present boundaries of Iran and over which the Iranian government cannot enforce its policy, and secondly because of new methodological approach which was followed by scholars of ancient history for the study of the Achaemenids: the Multidisciplinary, Structural and Statistical approach.

There is no doubt that if archaeologists and scholars of ancient history were allowed to work in Iran, in particular in Parsa, the Achaemenid homeland, and if Achaemenid studies were supported by the Iranian government, they could bring more light to Achaemenid history and the Persian homeland, Parsa. Nonetheless, Achaemenid studies still will be able continue to develop and the Persian Empire is not something that can be forgotten.

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