◎◎ ◎◎ ◎◎ ◎◎

O N E

INTRODUCTION

Assessing Achaemenid Anatolia

In the middle of the sixth century B.C.E., the kingdoms of Anatolia were abuzz with rumors of imminent upheaval. The new king of Persia, Cyrus II, had consolidated the Median and Persian peoples and was amassing his forces in the northwest part of his territories, high on the Anatolian plateau near the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.[1] The king of Lydia, legendarily wealthy Croesus, held control over much of western and central Anatolia from his seat at the ancient Lydian capital, Sardis. Hearing of the activities of Cyrus, he realized that the borders recognized for the past forty years might no longer hold. Might he cross the eastern edge of his kingdom, at the Halys River, and annex new territory to his lands?[2] He sent to the prophetic priestess of Apollo at Delphi for advice. "If Croesus crosses the Halys," intoned the oracle, "he will destroy a mighty empire"; and so Croesus crossed the river that marked the boundary of his kingdom and invaded the Persian Empire with joyous confidence – only to learn it was his own empire that would fall.[3]

The annexation of Anatolia to the Achaemenid Empire, the workings of the imperial administration, the responses of the newly subject populace, and the impact of imperialism on the peoples of Anatolia form the focus of this study. Our knowledge of the Achaemenid Empire's workings has grown tremendously thanks to recent scholarly work and intensive archaeological investigation. This book seeks to develop two aspects of study of the Achaemenid Empire and, indeed, of ancient imperialism in general:

1. It provides an overarching discussion of Anatolia when it was part of the Achaemenid Empire. Anatolia works well as an isolatable, coherent segment of the empire. The name designates a large geographic area but does not

◎◎   1

EMPIRE, AUTHORITY, AND AUTONOMY IN ACHAEMENID ANATOLIA
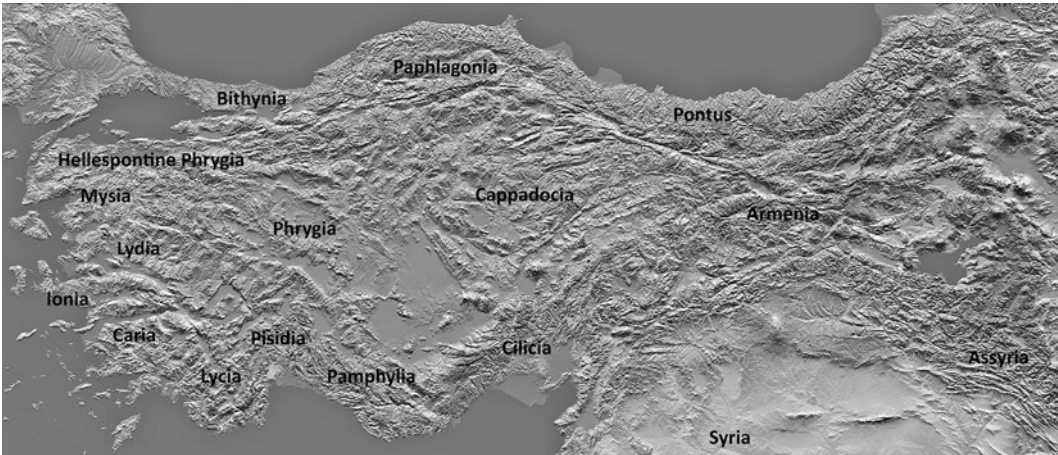
2. Achaemenid Anatolia. Syria and Assyria shown for context. Courtesy Karl Mueller.

correspond to an Achaemenid political entity or concept. It was inhabited before the Persians arrived by varied populations with long-standing histories and traditions, most of them speaking a variety of Indo-European languages. Its geographic, geologic, agricultural, and climatic diversity is very great; in this way it functions as a microcosm of the empire as a whole. I have used the modern boundaries of Asiatic Turkey to define the area of this study.

Anatolia has been the focus of much high-quality archaeological research over the past 150 years. We thus know much about the region, but its full Achaemenid history has not been considered before in a single venue except as collected articles by different authors.[4] Previous research on the area has tended to focus on specific geographic regions or a specific issue. This study departs from others in attempting to provide an overarching discussion of this prosperous, important, and well-researched but undersynthesized region of the empire: What was going on across the entire Anatolian peninsula?

2. This book also proposes a new model for understanding ancient imperialism, which I call an "authority–autonomy" model. It explores the complex relations between imperial authority and various aspects of authority and autonomy within the empire. It allows us to remove ourselves from the limiting geographically determined models (e.g., "core–periphery"), world-systems models, or models following North American notions of "spheres of influence" that have dominated the discourse so far. Instead, this interpretive framework conceives of the empire as a web of relations that includes geographic factors but is not determined primarily by locale. It recognizes the fact that different social groups (e.g., priests, the military) may have exercised particular sorts of authority and autonomy. It explains features of the empire such as the tremendous difference in mortuary treatments combined with a simultaneous similarity in the mortuary inclusions of the elite. The authority–autonomy model represents a shift in the way we might think about the Achaemenid Empire or, indeed, empires in general.

Background: Core–Periphery and Tempered Sovereignty

Discussion of the Achaemenid Empire has been dominated by core–periphery models, with an occasional nod at world-systems analysis. These approaches have not, however, formed satisfactory models for understanding the empire. It is clear that the various satrapies, or administrative regions, of the empire were not affected solely by their proximity to the imperial heartland or by geographic proximity to each other, as "core–periphery" would suggest. Indeed, defining particular areas as discrete and coherent "peripheries" has proved challenging and idiosyncratic. Although it is clear that different areas of the empire adopted and adapted different aspects of Achaemenid ideology to fit their local needs and traditions, it is also clear that factors other than geographic ones were often the most important organizing principles.

In beginning this work, I considered the idea of tempered sovereignty to replace and refine the standard core–periphery model. Tempered sovereignty involves the notion that certain nations or regions might operate with some, often circumscribed, sovereignty of various sorts within an overarching sovereign state. I was particularly interested in those aspects of local sovereignty that might preserve the vitality of distinct cultural communities within the empire.

The language of inquiry within this approach ultimately proved unproductive for my purposes. "Sovereignty" is a term so grounded in European political theory that it requires engagement with modern notions like nation and nationality that actually confuse salient issues of imperialism in antiquity. Moreover, each modern field has its own definitions and bibliography: the word "sovereignty" introduces definitional murkiness to an interdisciplinary study. Sovereignty as an idea seemed insufficiently nuanced to enhance the study of imperialism.

Deriving a New Model

The new authority–autonomy model proposed here examines primary issues at stake within an empire. The line of inquiry is clear: to consider the imperial authority's point of view. What matters to the imperial administration, and does the administration try to enforce consistency in these areas? The variability in response allows us to see the point of view of the people on the ground. The approach can be surprisingly clear and straightforward.

The question "what matters to the imperial authority?" seems simplistic, but it has interesting ramifications. The most obvious approaches to the question are the following:

1. to look at the archaeological and textual evidence and see what it suggests, expecting that great variability means the imperial authority had little

vested interest in a given matter, whereas great conformity means a present and guiding imperial hand; and

2. to consider what might matter most to the administration and see whether the material evidence bears that out.

Thus the approach can be multidirectional, beginning from the evidence and determining where great consistency, and hence matters of great imperial concern, lie or beginning from suppositions about matters of imperial importance and seeing whether the evidence supports that.

A major element is the empowerment of local populaces: variability may suggest that the imperial administration did not care about something, or it may suggest just the opposite. A particular matter might be of such importance that it could become a meaningful way for a local populace to resist imperial domination. Thus the fabric of this inquiry has imperial authority as its warp, but its weft is autonomous agency. Particularly interesting is the variability in *types* of autonomy. Autonomy may be local, with geographically conscripted responses to the imposition of imperial authority. But autonomy may also spread across an issue regardless of geography: autonomy may emerge in a whole category of behavior, such as funerary customs or the education of children.

An "Authority–Autonomy" Framework of Interpretation

I use the term "authority" here to mean power with a claim to legitimacy, the justification and right to exercise that power.[5] Many different kinds of authority exist. In the Achaemenid Empire these included political, legal (authority based on the formal rules and established laws of a recognized sociopolitical entity), religious, military, craft-based (authority of the more skilled over the lesser in crafts such as farming as well as those such as carpentry), educational, bureaucratic or organizational, financial, and familial, as well as that informal authority of leadership that generally arises when humans group together (usually based either on traditional authority, deriving from established customs, habits, and social structures, or on charismatic authority, deriving from the personal traits of an individual).[6]

What distinguishes authority from coercion or force is its legitimacy.[7] Leadership, persuasion, and influence play an essential role in manufacturing and sustaining legitimacy. When these qualities are lacking, more charismatic leaders are likely to foment social movements or outright revolutions against standing authority. Thus for a sociopolitical entity to remain secure, a leader must have acknowledged legitimacy of power in the eyes of the populace as well as military leaders, the administration, and those running the political apparatus.

Within this network of authority, groups or individuals possess agency. Such agency can run counter or parallel to perceived authority. Successfully allowing

4

INTRODUCTION

3. Achaemenid Empire. Courtesy Karl Mueller.

for or even implementing autonomous agency is a key element of long-lasting social structures such as the Achaemenid Empire.

Human behaviors were the great organizing feature of the Achaemenid Empire, often, if not always, transcending geographic boundaries. I have thus organized this book by issues rather than by regions or artifact category. The book cannot be an encyclopedia of all archaeological and textual finds in the separate regions of ancient Anatolia, but it considers as much of the archaeological and other evidence as possible to help us understand how the Achaemenid Empire worked. When I have foregrounded particular evidence, it is because that evidence is typical of an issue or serves as an especially illuminating case study. For instance, although the discussion does not include every example of a sealstone or seal impression found in Anatolia that might date to the Achaemenid period, it seeks to articulate the patterns that those seals demonstrate and to describe individual seals that serve as exemplars of or, sometimes, deviations from those patterns.

This chapter includes a brief historical overview of the Achaemenid period, focusing on imperial activities in the center of the empire and its western edges. It summarizes political events, rather than social history, and is based primarily on texts – in this context, I will not constantly question the reliability or frailties of such evidence, but many of the literary sources are Classical Greek and Roman texts and are therefore quite naturally skewed toward western Anatolia.[8] The chapter then turns to look at Anatolia: Who was already living there when Cyrus II arrived, and what kinds of societies made up its complex variety of

Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia
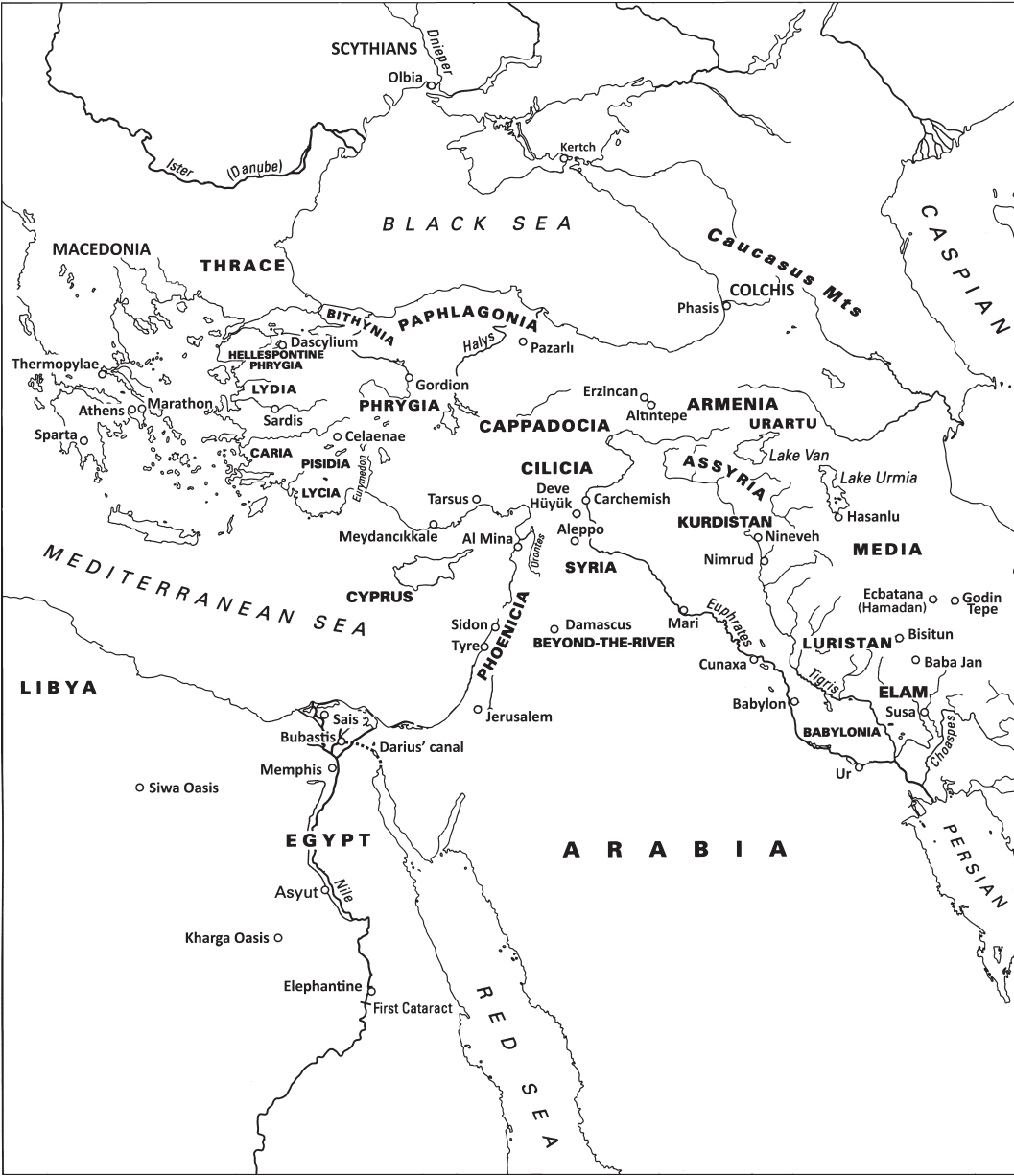
INTRODUCTION

4. Achaemenid Empire. Author's drawing, after Miller 1997.

cultures? Many of the issues faced by the Achaemenid administration across the empire were encountered in Anatolia, and the opening chapter of this book therefore attempts to provide a glimpse into its diversity. The chapter ends with an overview of the book as a whole.

A Brief Overview of Achaemenid History

The Achaemenid Persian Empire (ca. 550–330) was a vast and complex sociopolitical structure founded by Cyrus II (the Great) that centered on southwest Iran and lower Mesopotamia, the area of its genesis in the western Zagros Mountains when Cyrus united the Persians and Medes under his leadership.[9] Under Darius I (522–486) the empire reached its greatest extent, stretching from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River, from Egypt to the modern Central Asian Republics. Although there were subsequent fluctuations in territorial control, there were no major losses apart from Egypt (and that temporary). The empire encompassed within its boundaries twenty-three distinct subject peoples, who spoke different languages, worshiped different deities, lived in different environments, and had widely differing social customs. The Achaemenid dynasty was to devise a method of hegemony that would allow these various peoples to function within the confines of the new imperial authority, to construct a system of empire flexible enough to provide for the needs of different peoples and ensure their ability to operate as part of the system of the new Achaemenid Empire.

Recent historical studies of the Achaemenid Empire have emphasized its complexity, its strengths, the multiple avenues for its investigation, the ways in which various sources may balance and correct each other, and the situations of those living outside the imperial centers.[10] The historical overview presented here cannot provide the kind of richness such specialized studies offer but seeks to present a summary, focusing on the Achaemenid kings and the political and military events that characterized their reigns – my goal is to provide a framework for the discussions that make up the rest of the book. If I privilege the western part of the empire, particularly Anatolia itself, this is a result of both the focus of this book and the nature of our sources.

According to traditional versions of history, Cyrus became king of the Persians in 559 and defeated Astyages, the king of Media, in 550. Perhaps in 547 or 542 Cyrus conquered Lydia and became overlord of most of Anatolia.[11] Either before or after this conquest, he added Bactria and Sogdiana to the empire; in 539 he conquered Babylon. Sometime before 530 he founded a new palace and garden site in southwestern Iran at Pasargadae. In 530, according to one tradition, he was killed in Central Asia during a campaign against the Massagetae.

Cyrus's construction at Pasargadae established certain trademarks of Achaemenid imperial architectural and artistic rhetoric for centuries to come.[12]

8

"Palaces" characterized by many-columned halls and formal gardens with sym-
bolically charged layouts, watered via elaborate channels, and spatial layouts
emphasizing open air and movement set Pasargadae apart both from normal life
and from the palaces of earlier Mesopotamian kings. In addition to the archi-
tectural articulations of the landscape, the art forms that adorned certain door-
jambs set the scene for later Achaemenid developments, in some cases drawing
on earlier iconographies (such as the figure clad in an Assyrianizing fish cos-
tume, carved on the jamb of the southeast doorway of Palace S)[13] or in others
creating new forms (such as the four-winged "genius" with the unusual com-
posite crown from Gate R).[14]

Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who consolidated the eastern
Mediterranean and added Egypt to the empire in 525. The written sources for
Cambyses' actions in Egypt highlight certain difficulties of Achaemenid history.
The Greek historian Herodotus in Book 3 of the *Histories* is hostile, portraying
Cambyses as a brutal foreign invader, a despotic and paranoid ruler with pre-
tensions of grandeur and no sensitivity to local concerns. The autobiographical,
hieroglyphic inscription on a statue of an Egyptian naval commander named
Udjahorresne, almost certainly from Sais, paints a different picture, however:
according to this contemporary source, Cambyses tried to forge links with local
elites and install them in symbolically important if not politically powerful
positions.[15]

Cambyses seems to have drawn on the knowledge and support of the local
elite to facilitate acceptance of his rule and to learn how best to fill the role of
a king in local terms.[16] He is said to have died in Syria in 522, apparently while
on his way back to the great capital cities of the empire. His throne was taken
over (either before or after his death – the chronology is opaque) by a man
named Bardiya. In September 522 the throne was usurped by a Persian noble-
man named Darius.[17]

Darius circulated various versions of his accession to the throne. According
to the great trilingual inscription and relief sculpture at Bisitun above the east–
west road through the Zagros near modern Hamadan, his assumption of the
throne was followed by numerous revolts across the empire as local personages,
including individuals claiming to be such important figures as Phraortes of
Media and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, sought to take power into their hands.[18]
These revolts were swiftly suppressed. According to Herodotus, Darius then
reorganized the empire, creating different administrative regions governed by
satraps who were responsible for collecting taxes as well as administering their
provinces.[19] Under Darius I and his generals, new territory, including parts of
Scythian territory, was added to the empire, until it reached its largest size. In
499 various Ionian city-states revolted unsuccessfully against their Achaemenid
overlords, and in 490 an Achaemenid force landed on the peninsula of Attica at
the plain of Marathon, where it was defeated by the Greeks.

5. Statue of Udjahorresne. 22690. © Vatican Museums.

Herodotus's characterization of Darius consistently has him out for profit, usually at odds with the natural harmony and balance of the world.[20] Conversely, Darius portrayed himself as solely responsible for the harmony and balance of the world.[21] The triumph of Truth over the Lie, of Light over Dark, and the benefits that his rule brings to his subjects form key parts of Darius's imperial rhetoric and that of his successors in inscriptions and in art. Thus DPd, one of four trilingual inscriptions Darius displayed on the palace terrace wall at Persepolis, proclaims:

§1. 1–5. Great Ahuramazda, the greatest of gods – he created Darius the King, he bestowed on him the kingdom; by the favor of Ahuramazda Darius is King.

§2. 5–12. Saith Darius the King: This country Persia which Ahuramazda bestowed upon me – good, possessed of good horses, possessed of good men – by the favor of Ahuramazda and of me, Darius the King, does not feel fear of (any) other.

10   ✌