

Navigational Insights during the Reign of Cyrus the Great: A Comprehensive Examination Based on Archaeological Findings Such as Clay Tablets, Reliefs, and an Analysis of Historical and Literary Texts

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Abstract

One of the earliest indications of Iranian navigation during the Achaemenid period is a relief found in the audience hall of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, bearing the appellation "God of Water and Sea." The primary focus of this article is to investigate whether navigation and maritime activities during the reign of Cyrus the Great were influenced by and expanded upon Phoenician techniques and Mesopotamian regions. Prior studies have generally taken a historical and overarching approach to this subject. Since complete trust cannot be placed in historical references and texts, and given the existence of certain deficiencies and even contradictions in the writings of ancient historians such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and others, this research aims to shed new light on the obscure aspects of navigation and seafaring during this era, relying on archaeological findings such as the clay tablets, relief, and a reexamination of previous literary and historical texts. This article employs an analytical-descriptive methodology and a library-based approach. Among the archaeological findings from this period, a total of two reliefs in Pasargadae and two clay tablets are subject to investigation and research. The examination of the artifacts and findings from Pasargadae demonstrates that the Achaemenids indirectly came under the influence of Phoenician art and Mesopotamian regions concerning navigation. Furthermore, in the pursuit of maritime development, trade, and shipping, they were directly influenced by the Phoenicians. With the acquisition of maritime power, they successfully annexed many neighboring lands to their powerful empire.

Keywords: *Cyrus, Navigation, Phoenicians, Mesopotamia, Archaeology*

INTRODUCTION

The Achaemenids (550-330 BC), as the inheritors of the cultures, civilizations, and arts of the indigenous and preceding peoples of Iran, as well as conquerors of empires such as Media, Elam, Assyria, Urartu, Anatolia, and others, naturally absorbed influences from these indigenous and subsidiary cultures in their own art and culture (Hozhabri Nobari et al., 2010, p. 6). Certainly, navigation was not an exception to this rule, and it was influenced by the mentioned cultures and civilizations.

The history of Achaemenid navigation can be summarized in a single sentence: The Achaemenids were not drawn towards the sea, but rather, they were driven towards it because the Iranians, who had migrated to Persis by land, were primarily an agricultural or pastoral people with no prior familiarity with maritime affairs. However, when the Iranian Empire expanded to the shores of Asia Minor and faced the maritime powers of Greece and Egypt, it could no longer delay developing its naval capabilities unless it chose to ignore its world ambitions and even the territories it had already conquered (Hasan, 1992, p. 30; Khazaei, 2022, p. 367).

Cyrus had two objectives at the beginning of his reign: the conquest of Asia Minor and the annexation of the Mediterranean coast, which connected all major routes that passed through Iran (Mombeini et al., 2021, p. 267). The capture of Lydia (around 547 BC) marked the first confrontation between the Iranians and Greeks, a situation where none of the Greek states in Asia Minor agreed to accept the demands of Mazares, Cyrus's general, nor did they consent to be besieged. However, Herodotus notes, "The Greeks had no reason to fear, for the Persians were still unprepared to take naval action, even though the Ionians possessed a significant fleet at that time" (Herodotus, 1989, p. 71). Although four years later, the Achaemenids managed to capture the cities of Asia Minor with great difficulty, excluding Miletus, Cnidos, and Cos in Lycia, the lack of a powerful navy was still felt more than ever (Kurth, 2012, p. 140).

After the fall of Babylon in 539 BC, all of Palestine, Phoenicia, Tyrus and Sidon surrendered to the Achaemenids.

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The merchant class of these Phoenician ports favored the establishment of a large and secure empire that would ensure the safety of their trade routes. This led them to align under the Achaemenid banner (Dandamayev, 2010, p. 80). Consequently, after taking control of Phoenicia and its coastal cities, Cyrus not only had the largest land army but also the largest navy. Furthermore, the possession of the Eastern Mediterranean meant that his empire also benefited from the maritime trade of Ionian and Phoenician cities. The coastal regions were divided into two provinces, with the Ionian province joining Lydia, while the neighboring satrapies on the Black Sea continued as the “Maritime Province” (Brosius, 2011, pp. 2-22; Ghirshman, 2009, p. 139; Dandamayev, 2010, p. 42; Vazin Afzal, 2012, p. 80).

All the references above strongly support the pivotal and highly significant role of the Phoenicians in the development of the Persian naval power from the time of Cyrus until the end of this era. They remained faithful and loyal to the Persians even into the late Achaemenid period. The Phoenicians, who resided in modern-day Lebanon, were skilled seafarers who commanded both the seas and their colonies. During the time of Cyrus, the Great and after the incorporation of Phoenicia into the Persian Empire, their ships also came under Achaemenid control. Consequently, the importance of military and economic competition with their rivals became a central element of foreign policy, amplifying the significance of the naval forces, both military and merchant. It was this naval power that, later on, allowed Cambyses to extend his dominion, incorporating vast lands like Egypt into the Achaemenid Empire as its westernmost satrapy (Falsafi, 1963, p. 245; Hasan, 1992, p. 49).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

To date, targeted archaeological and scholarly studies on navigation during the reign of Cyrus the Great have been scarce. One reason for this scarcity may be attributed to the limited material resources and brief historical evidence available from this period, which can pose significant challenges to researchers. Previous studies, such as those by Professor Hadi Hasan in his book “The History of Iranian Navigation,” Ismail Rain in “Navigation of Iranians,” and Dr. Ali Bahrani pour in an article titled “The Evolution of Navigational Classes in the Achaemenid Era.” Primarily took a historical and general approach and paid less attention to the archaeological and specialized aspects.

More recently, a valuable and comprehensive book titled “The Persian Gulf: An Exploration of Navigational Progress from the 3rd Millennium BC to the End of the Achaemenid Era” was published by my esteemed friend, Dr. Mohammad Khazaei. This book, the result of years of dedication and commitment in this field, has played a significant role in explaining the history of navigation in the region. However, even in this valuable work, the discussion of navigation during the glorious era of Cyrus the Great is relatively limited, mainly mentioned in the final chapter. Therefore, this research, with a new approach and relying on archaeological findings such as tablets and reliefs, as well as drawing from previous literary and historical texts, aims to explore and elucidate the lesser-known aspects of navigation during this era, seeking to answer the following questions:

- What was the main reason for the Achaemenids' inclination towards navigation and seafaring?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between the maritime motifs during the time of Cyrus the Great and those discovered from nations like Phoenicia and Mesopotamia?
- Were these motifs created with inspiration and influence from the art of the aforementioned nations, or do they fully possess the characteristics and features of Iran's native and local art?

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study is descriptive-analytical. Data collection is carried out through a library-based approach, involving a comprehensive review of museum documents, books, articles, tablets, inscriptions, and reliefs.

A Look at the Examined Locations

Charkhab Palace

One of the palaces that Cyrus ordered to be constructed for overseeing the Persian Gulf is the Charkhab Palace, located in Borazjan, Bushehr Province, Iran. This palace is situated approximately one kilometer southwest of

Borazjan, within palm groves, and is nearly 500 kilometers from the asphalt road connecting Borazjan and Bushehr. It is also around 65 kilometers northeast of Bushehr city (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Charkhab: column bases of the main hall (Zehbari, 2020).

The present location is only about 30 kilometers away from the sea, which is why, in the past, it was built and dedicated as a coastal palace. It is evident that having such a palace overseeing the sea was not devoid of social, political, and cultural activities, and as the first gateway for maritime trade, fishing, and pearl diving, it has preserved its unique natural conditions and location to this day (Sarfaraz, 2010, p. 34; Shirani & Abbasi, 2015, pp. 16-17).

Charkhab Palace was excavated in 1971 by an archaeological team led by Dr. Sarfaraz. This structure has dimensions of 34x45 meters and, in total, covers an area of 1,575 square meters. The central hall of the palace features the remains of twelve square stone columns arranged in two rows of six, with a spacing of 160 centimeters between each column. The bases of these columns are made of three cubical stone pieces, alternating in black and white colors, forming a stepped configuration, and they are stacked without any binding materials. The precision in the carving of these column bases is comparable to the craftsmanship seen in Cyrus' Palace in Pasargadae (Figure 2) (Khazaei, 2022, pp. 384-385).



Figure 2. Charkhab: main hall base with anathyrosis on torus (Khazaei, 2022).

Cyrus chose to construct such a palace in southern Pars when he had already conquered rich and advanced states like Lydia and Babylon. Unfortunately, this architectural masterpiece, built toward the end of his life, was left unfinished

and in darkness after his untimely demise (Sarfaraz, 2010, pp. 9, 11).

Pasargadae

This city is situated approximately 90 kilometers northeast of Shiraz and 40 kilometers northeast of Persepolis. The true meaning of the name Pasargadae is somewhat ambiguous. Some suggest that “Pasargadae” may mean the city of the Persians, while others propose that Pasargadae might originate from “Pasargadae,” signifying the dwelling of the Persians. Pasargadae was most likely constructed by the order of Cyrus the Great around 550-559 BC. The surviving components of this complex include the Audience Palace or Hall S, the Eastern Palace or Hall R, and the Private Palace or Hall P (Firoozmandi, 2006, p. 78; Mousavi, 2011, p. 35).

Examination of the Reliefs of Pasargadae

The Winged Human Figure

Among the reliefs in Pasargadae, there are very few surviving pieces, and unfortunately, their condition is quite deteriorated. Nevertheless, even these fading reliefs are of great importance because they shed light on many obscure aspects of a specific period (Mousavi, 2011, p. 133). The most important and oldest relief in Pasargadae features the winged human figure (Figure 3).

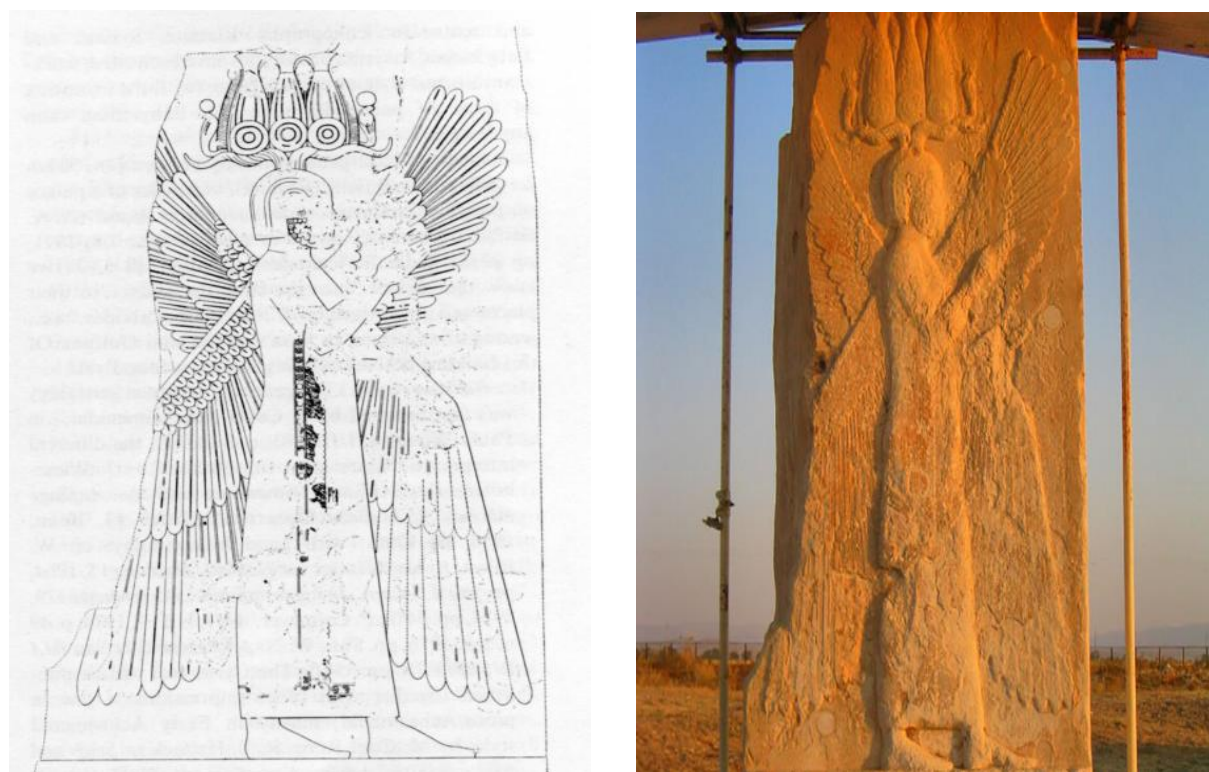


Figure 3. The Winged Human Relief in Pasargadae (Mousavi, 2011).

This relief is located on a stone lintel above the northern entrance of the Eastern Palace (R) in Pasargadae. According to travel accounts from those who visited Pasargadae until 1861, an inscription in cuneiform with the text “I am Cyrus the Achaemenid” was once visible on top of this relief, but sadly, no trace of it remains today. Various interpretations exist regarding this relief: “Mallowan” believes it represents Cyrus, the Achaemenid king. “Barnett” suggests that it signifies a Phoenician god. “Stronach,” following “Herzfeld,” considers it a protective spirit of the royal family (Firoozmandi, 2006, p. 81). An essential aspect of this relief is the distinctive crown worn by the human figure, known as the “Atef” crown, which is similar to two cow horns. On top of each horn, two larger cobra serpents are depicted, and between them, three pomegranates can be seen. There were once three sun disks above the pomegranates, but they have since disappeared. This type of crown is known as the “Atef” and was prevalent in

Egypt. It's remarkable because if this relief is from the time of Cyrus the Great, it raises questions about how Egyptian art influenced Achaemenid Persia. With similar crown depictions found in Phoenician reliefs (Figure 4) and in Egyptian art, it's conceivable that Achaemenids indirectly adopted influences from these regions. Moreover, these motif elements (the Atef crown and wings) might have reached Iran from Phoenician and Syrian lands before the



conquest of Egypt during the time of the Cambyses (Mousavi, 2011, pp. 134-137).

Figure 4. A Phoenician Relief (Mousavi, 2011).

Perhaps we have come closer to an answer. If the winged human relief refers to the direct contact between the Achaemenids during Cyrus' time and the Phoenicians, then this familiarity could have encompassed various aspects, one of the most important being navigation. This relief indirectly brings us closer to the connection between ancient Persians and seafaring during the time of Cyrus the Great.

The Relief of the Fish-Man

Another uniquely crafted relief has been discovered in the southeastern entrance of the excavations at the Audience Palace at Pasargadae. In the front part of this relief, there is a “Fish-Man,” and behind it, a “Bull-Man” both exiting



the palace hall (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Cyrus the Great Relief, which shows a Fish-Man creature moving in front of the Bull-Man (a lamassu) (Rain, 1992).

Among these, the Fish-Man relief is somewhat more mysterious and intriguing. His presence at the gate suggests a mystical aspect to this being, as seen earlier in Assyrian art, where he is found at the gates of temples (Ibid, p. 141). This relief, with its unique design, is not seen in any of the Achaemenid artworks and is of great significance in its own right. Unfortunately, only the lower parts of these two manifestations have survived, while the rest has been broken. To this day, despite the research conducted in this area, no one knows whether these reliefs were carved and added simultaneously with the construction of the main palace or were added later during the expansion and development of the Achaemenid Empire.

In the carvings and myths of Mesopotamia, other beings similar to the Fish-Man relief of Pasargadae are also observed, such as “Dagon”. Dagon is depicted as a creature with a body resembling a fish from the navel down and a human body from the navel up, complete with arms and a human head. Dagon is also known by names like “Sea-Man” and “Sea-Fairy” (Ibid, p. 144) (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Relief of a Mesopotamian Fish-Man (Kulullû) identified in accordance with early 20th century scholarship as Dagan (Knecht, 1910).

Although “Hartmut Schmökel” refrains from using the term “God-Fish” for this entity, he believes that the association with “dâg-fish” could have influenced the iconography of deities among Phoenician sailors (Schmökel, 1928, p. 101). Another similar role that is seen on some Mesopotamian seals and reliefs is known as “Apkallu.” They are seven sages created by the god “Enki” (in Babylon and Akkad: “Ea”) or the “God of Water and the Sea” to impart culture and civilization to humanity (Figure 7).



Figure 7. An Ancient Akkadian cylinder seal showing the water god Enki has streams of water and fish flowing from his shoulders (circa 2300 BC) (Espak, 2006).

Apkallus are often depicted with a Fish-Man or a human wearing fish-like attire (Jones, 2005, p. 5964; George, 2003, p. p.xli).

Among all the reliefs related to Apkallu, a relief next to the entrance gate of the temple of Ninurta in the city of Nimrud stands out more than ever. This relief bears the greatest resemblance, both in terms of its standing posture and the shape and details of its body (with human-like front legs and fish-like hind legs), to the Fish-Man relief at Pasargadae (Figure 8).

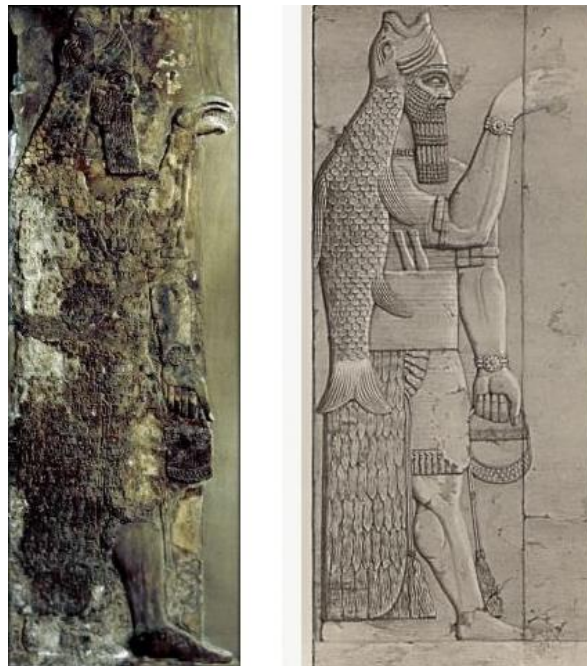


Figure 8. Bas-Relief of an Apkallu figure from the temple of Ninurta at Nimrud (Ataç, 2010).

Therefore, considering the date assigned by the British Museum for this relief (883-859 BC), it is highly probable that the Fish-Man relief at Pasargadae was created with inspiration from this depiction. As a result, we can conclude that the Achaemenids were indirectly influenced by the lands of Mesopotamia and the Assyrian civilization in the field of seafaring. Just as the upper part of the Fish-Man relief at Pasargadae has been lost, we cannot assert with certainty whether the god of water and the sea, worshipped by coastal dwellers and sailors, was of Iranian origin or whether this belief and the artifacts derived from it were merely adaptations from other lands and distant cultures.

Examination of the Clay Tablets

The Cylinder of Cyrus

The Cylinder of Cyrus, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder, is a cylindrical tablet made of baked clay that was inscribed in 538 BC in Babylon under the orders of Cyrus the Great. In his inscription, Cyrus, while describing himself and the extent of his domain in lines 29 and 30, states:

“(29) Throughout the world, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, who live in the dis[tricts far-off], the kings of the West, who dwell in tents, all of them, (30) brought their heavy tribute before me and in Babylon they kissed my feet. From [Babylon] to Aššur and (from) Susa” (Champdor, 2002, p. 307; Olmstead, 1949, p. 51).

What could Cyrus have meant by the text on this tablet? How could Cyrus, around 539 BC, extend his rule from the east to the Indus River in India and to the west to Asia Minor? How was it possible to control such a vast territory, roughly 3200 kilometers in length at that time? (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Map of the Persian Empire in about 530 BC. Look at the wide range of areas between Mediterranean Sea to Persian Gulf (Brosius, 2021).

“Stronach” further delves into the significance of the “Seven Lands or Seven Seas” theory in analyzing and explaining the Achaemenid maps. He presents a map predating the Tibetan Maps (around the 2nd or 3rd century BC) depicting Pasargadae. In this map, Pasargadae is placed at the center of the world, and it is surrounded by seas. Additionally, concentric circles around Pasargadae probably signify the lands over which Pasargadae had dominance as the capital of Iran. This map likely serves to emphasize the power of the Achaemenid Empire during the time of Cyrus the Great (Stronach, 1973, pp. 244, 246, 249) (Figure 10).

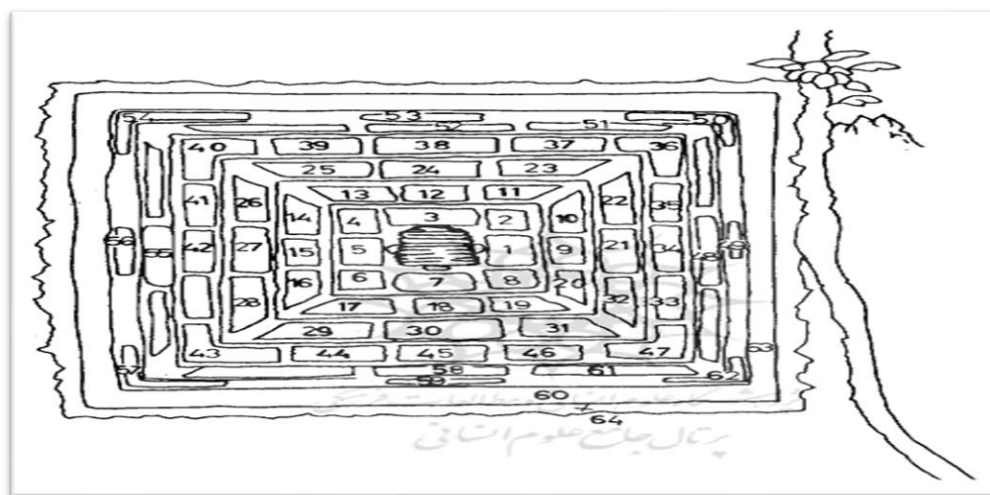


Figure 10. A Sketch of a Tibetan map where each number represents a geographical area (Stronach, 1973).

But truly, why have the theorists of ancient Iran chosen the number seven in their division of the world? In historical geography, they divided the whole lands of the Earth into seven regions. Seven is a Babylonian number; they used it

to divide many aspects of creation, including time and space. This perspective is also observed among other nations and religions. In Islam, the number seven holds sacred (seven heavens, seven layers of paradise, etc.). In ancient Iran, the belief in the sevenfold climate is a symbol of Ahura Mazda and the six “Ameshaspand” that make up the number seven. Apart from dividing the land into seven regions, the Iranians were keen on a central concept. The geographical concept of the seven countries can be traced back to the oldest section of the Avesta. In the Gathas, “Bumi Hapta,” meaning seven lands, is mentioned, and it is referred to as “Khonayrath” in Iran. According to Zoroastrianism, Khonayrath was the best country created by Ahura Mazda, and in its vastness, it stood alone among six other countries, possessing the attribute of being “Bamik” or radiant (Alimirzaei, 2021, p. 38; Nyberg, 1980, p. 401; Doostkhah, 2008, p. 227). Abu Reyhan Biruni, the wise Iranian scholar, mentioned the seven countries in a section of his valuable book, delving into the interpretation of the vastness and importance of the land of the Persians (Biruni, 1983, pp. 530-534). Hakim Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi also composed beautiful verses in the Shahnameh on this subject, and including a few lines from it would not be devoid of charm.

The land of seven nations lies under your rule,

With your armies, occasionally, you are their guide.

Look to each of these seven lands with care,

For there, the sign of Bijan shall appear.

Then he placed the cup upon the palm and saw,

Within it, the seven lands to explore.

All of the above points underscore the significance of the concept of the seven regions or seven countries with Iran at its core, forming an inseparable and vital part. It illustrates that the land of Iran, due to its geographical location, strategic importance, and access to vast bodies of water like the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, played an unparalleled and influential role among all the lands of that era, particularly in shaping the cultures and civilizations of its neighboring regions.

The Nabonidus Chronicle

The Nabonidus Chronicle is one of the Babylonian Chronicles that recounts the events during the rule of Nabonidus and, following that, Cyrus the Great according to the Babylonian calendar.

The Conquest of Lydia

One of the significant events mentioned in this clay tablet is the conquest and assimilation of the Lydian civilization by Cyrus.

Column II, Lines 15-17: In the month Nisanu, Cyrus, king of Parsu, mustered his army and crossed the Tigris below Arbela. In the month Ajaru, he marched to the land of Ly[di]a. He defeated its king, took his possessions, (and) stationed his own garrison (there) [...] (Arfaee, 2010, p. 14; Grayson, 1975, p. 107).

The region of Lydia, which was the target of Cyrus, was bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara to the north, and the River Kızılırmak to the east. Lydia, due to its location along major trade routes connecting Western Asia, Anatolia, the Mediterranean, as well as its natural resources and abundant soil fertility, especially the presence of valuable metals like gold, was one of the wealthiest countries in ancient Eastern lands. This exceptional geographical location, its proximity to the sea, and its maritime borders were the primary incentives for Cyrus to conquer Lydia, as his goal was to gain access to waterways and maritime boundaries on the other side of Anatolia. Consequently, Cyrus led his army northwards beyond the Tigris River, and from there, he advanced towards the land of Lydia. According to Herodotus, “The final battle was at Pteria, near the Halys River (Kızılırmak), which resulted in Cyrus's victory” (Champdor, 2002, pp. 85, 137; Herodotus, 1989, p. 49; Vazin Afzal, 2012, p. 79).

The Conquest of Babylon

In another section of this inscription, it is mentioned how Cyrus's forces captured Babylon and Cyrus the Great's peaceful entry into this land.

Column III, Lines 12-14: Battle at Opis on the [blank of] the Tigris against the army of Akkad, the people of Akkad retreated. He carried off the plunder (and) defeated the troops. On the fourteenth day Sippar was captured without a battle (Grayson, 1975, p. 109; Shea, 1996, p. 4; Badamchi, 2012, p. 34; Karami Pour, 2012, p. 130).

As depicted in the Babylonian inscriptions, Nabonidus, along with his army, marched against Cyrus at the city of Opis on the banks of the Tigris River, where a battle took place between the two armies. The Nabonidus army was defeated and retreated to Babylon. Subsequently, Cyrus's forces besieged Babylon (Razmjou, 2010, pp. 80-81).

According to Herodotus, “when the Achaemenid forces were planning to cross the Gyndes River (now known as the Diala River) during their campaign to attack Babylon, one of Cyrus's sacred white horses drowned in the river. Cyrus became enraged and ordered the river to be diverted. To accomplish this, he halted the army's advance and had them dig 180 canals on both sides of the river to divert the water and make the river run dry. Dealing with this task caused the Iranian soldiers to spend their entire summer on its execution. Cyrus positioned a large portion of his troops at the river's entrance and the rest directly opposite, where the Euphrates River flowed out of the city. He instructed both groups that as soon as the river's water level dropped, they should enter the city. Then, all non-military personnel in his army were gathered and taken to a location where Nitocris had previously created a lake and repeated the same procedure queen had used before. By diverting the water flow, they directed the water towards the lake, which had become swampy, and the depth of the river lowered to the height of a person's waist. Individuals entered the city through the river in this way” (Dandamayev, 2010, p. 61; Herodotus, 1989, p. 93).

Thus, Cyrus through a combination of military genius, diplomacy, and strategic planning, magnificently conquered the world's most renowned city of his time and, on the following day, crowned himself at this very location.

CONCLUSION

To date, there have been limited targeted studies in the field of ancient maritime navigation during the time of Cyrus the Great. One of the reasons for this limitation could be the scarcity of sources and brief material evidence from this period, which presents researchers with challenges and limitations. Previous studies and research have primarily taken a general and historical approach to this subject. Therefore, given the inability to fully rely on historical sources and texts and the existence of certain deficiencies and even contradictions in the writings of ancient historians such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and others, this research has sought to shed new light on the less-explored aspects of seafaring and navigation during this era, with an emphasis on archaeological findings such as clay tablets and reliefs. Among the archaeological findings from this period, a total of two clay tablets and two reliefs have been examined and researched, leading to the following conclusions:

One of the earliest signs of Iranian seafaring in the Achaemenid period is the relief found in the Audience Hall of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae, which is dedicated to the god of water and the sea. This raises the question of whether the Achaemenids were influenced by the Phoenicians and also Mesopotamian regions in the field of navigation and maritime activities, a topic that can be debated and examined through direct and indirect material evidence. The appearance and attributes of the Achaemenid human-headed figure in Pasargadae, including the type of crown and the Phoenician-style reliefs, indirectly suggest the connection between Persian seafaring and the Phoenicians during the time of Cyrus the Great. Additionally, a relief of an Apkallu (a protective spirit) at the entrance gate of the Ninurta sanctuary in the city of Nimrud, bearing a resemblance in form and details of the figure, both in standing posture and the combination of human and fish-like attributes, to the human-fish relief in Pasargadae, indirectly hints at the Achaemenid seafaring connections with the Mesopotamian regions and the Assyrian civilization. It should be noted that the incorporation and influence of the art of these mentioned cultures on these reliefs can be understood as a conscious, effective, yet discreet intervention in the expression of the Achaemenid art, which was carefully designed and harmonized with the unique artistry of that era. This second-layered art demonstrates the characteristics of local and indigenous art, which are intertwined with the well-organized principles of the Achaemenid artistic system.

The foundation of the Achaemenid Empire by Cyrus the Great and the significance of military and economic competition with rivals heightened the importance of both military and merchant naval forces in foreign policy. This led the Achaemenids, who had migrated to Persia overland and were unfamiliar with maritime matters, to consider

the development of their own navy. After the annexation of Phoenicia to Iran, their ships also came under the control of the Achaemenids, enabling them to expand and extend their naval power. Consequently, it can be concluded that the Achaemenids were directly influenced by the Phoenicians in their efforts to develop their maritime fleet, trade, and shipping. As a result, they were later able to use their powerful navy to conquer territories in the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, modern-day Turkey, parts of India (the regions of Sindh and Punjab), and even southern Greece. If we examine the maritime boundaries of the empire established during the time of Cyrus the Great, we will find that its borders stretch from the northernmost point of Asia in the northwestern region. In this expanse, it encompasses the Euphrates River, the Caspian Sea, the Dardanelles Strait, and the Black Sea to the north; the Indus River, the Sea of Oman, the Tigris River, and the Persian Gulf to the east; and the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Sea of Marmara to the west.

It is hoped that with further archaeological explorations and investigations into this important and illustrious era of Iranian and world history and civilization, we can delve deeper into this subject with greater precision in the near future. It is our hope that in the years to come, this matter will be further realized and explored.

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