

BOOK REVIEW

Persianism in Antiquity. Edited by ROLF STROOTMAN and MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017. Pp. 557. Hardcover, €84.00. ISBN 978-3-515-11382-3.

Chimeras, fun to chase, can be hard to catch. “Persianism,” Versluys’ neologism for Achaemenid elements in Antiochus I of Commagene’s monuments at Nemrud Dagh, provides a bigger umbrella for discussion of scattered, disparate evidence of the Achaemenid *Nachleben*.¹ Some old wine is rebottled: the vexed issue of Parthian and Sasanid memories of the Achaemenids; the Achaemenid ancestral claims of late Hellenistic dynasts in Pontus, Cappadocia, Commagene, and Armenia; Mithraism; and forms of “Persian” religion in Cappadocia and elsewhere in Anatolia. This hefty collection of 22 papers (all but one in English) from a 2014 colloquium at the Netherlands Institute in Istanbul offers an exercise in cultural anthropology and “mnemohistory.” Some stimulating papers mingle with rehearsals of the known, recycled recently published views, and desperate attempts to find evidence.

The editors’ twenty-three-page introduction (9-32) exposes the theme’s elusive character, running from 6th-century BC Greece to 20th-century Iran and including revival of the East-West dichotomy in the current so-called “war on terrorism” (exclusively a Euro phenomenon: 13-14!). As conceded, Persianism (later cultural memory, sometimes invented) must be distinguished from Persianization (cultural influence and/or adoption of contemporary Achaemenid cultural traits) and Perserie (Athenians’ selective incorporation of Achaemenid elements in art to enrich local prestige: Miller 49). Differing, even contradictory Persianisms occur—surely an indication of a contrived theme. Persianism and Persianization can overlap (e.g., Ptolemaic Egypt: Agut-Ladorère 149). Some

¹ A Greek *persimos* is unattested; for Almagor (328) the verb *persizein* replaced the earlier view of *medismos* in the Second Sophistic, as if an innovation, but *persizein* (to speak Persian) is already in Xenophon (*Anab.* 4.5.34) and Strabo (11.11.8) uses *persizein* as “to imitate Persians.”

offer their own definitions of Persianism (Canepa 203-206, preferring “Iranism”; Fowler 357-58; Shayegan 401-402).

Indeed what is “Persian,” as opposed to “Iranian,” bedevils any definition of Persianism. Greeks labeled the Achaemenid dynasty’s empire “Persian” through association geographically with the modern Fars and conceptually with Oriental luxury and despotism. Sasanids introduced the concept of Iran/Eran as a greater ethnic, cultural, and geographical entity with eventual insertion of eastern Iranian elements, such as descent from the Kyanid kings and heroes in the Avesta.² Subsequently, the designation Persia or Iran became a political football. Muslim conquerors tried to obliterate the idea of Iran with its Sasanid connotations, but Persia’s emergence as a modern state (officially Iran after 1935) revived interest in the pre-Islamic period, including the Achaemenids, particularly promoted by the Pahlavi dynasty (deposed in 1979).

The collection features three roughly chronological parts, which expose rather than clarify Persianism’s problematic character. Part 1, “Persianization, Persomania, Perserie,” a chronological and conceptual hodge-podge from 6th-century Greek art to Oswald Spengler, a writer on the “philosophy of art” in the editors’ questionable view (29); Parts 2, “The Hellenistic World,” and 3, “Roman and Sasanian Perspectives,” if chronologically more cohesive, invite thematic discussion.

In Part 1, two papers treat Iran’s historical amnesia and recovery. The natives’ historical ignorance shocked classically-trained travelers to Iran (16th-19th centuries): Achaemenid sites bore biblical/Muslim or Zoroastrian toponyms associated with fantastic legends and folklore (Omar Coloru 87-106). Some problems remain unresolved. The Achaemenid designation of Persepolis (a Greek toponym) is unknown (88) and the equation of modern Hamadan with Ecbatana awaits archaeological confirmation. Judith Lerner (107-19) briefly treats the revival of Achaemenid visual motifs in the 19th century under the Qajar dynasty (of Turkic origin), as western contacts and western educated Iranians elicited interest in the pre-Islamic past. The Achaemenid stimulus of Henry Rawlinson’s publication of Darius I’s Behistun inscription merited more attention. Another pair of papers by Margaret Miller (49-67) and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones (69-86) concern Greek art, where Persians, replacing Lydians as the model of luxury, inspired motifs and admiration; vase paintings converted Achaemenid court practices into Oriental fantasies. Persianism explains the Cappadocian

² Canepa (204) begins his “Iranism” with the Parthians.

Ariobarzanes II's rebuilding of Pericles' Odeion (destroyed in Sulla's siege of Athens) in the shape of a Persian king's tent, although speculation (Miller 65) that Ariobarzanes desired to show Cappadocians that he was more "Persian" than his Anatolian neighbors seems extreme.

The bookend papers of Part 1 are both outliers. David Engels (121-44) excavates an obscure view of Iranian civilization from the scant attention to Persians in Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918-22), a work in the "history of civilizations" genre long dropped from the historiographical canon at least among anglophones. Although Spengler's opposition to ideas of an East-West dichotomy and stereotypes of Persians justified inclusion of a Spengler paper, enlightenment on the larger East-West contrast does not successfully emerge from a volume of more narrowly focused discussions.

Albert de Jong (35-47), in one of the better papers, throws down the gauntlet in questioning the notions of Persianism and an "Iranian world." If he joins the chorus doubting Parthian and Sasanid memories of the Achaemenids, Persianism will not explain Achaemenid survivals in Anatolia, Armenia, and Iberia (Georgia). Use of neither the Persian language nor a Zoroastrian calendar defined an "Iranian world." The Achaemenids continued the Assyrian preference for Aramaic; Zoroastrian practices, diffuse and unsystematized before Sasanid innovations, did not depend on the Persian language. Rather, Zoroaster and his doctrine were grafted onto an oral Iranian historical tradition of Kayanian kings. For de Jong, cultural continuity can be naturalized or embodied and need not indicate negotiation or choice (*contra*, Sergueenkova/Rojas 269). In Anatolia (e.g., Cappadocia) Persian names, gods, and some religious practices continued but largely in Greek. Armenian and Georgian narratives of their *origines*, written in their native tongues, incorporated aspects of the Iranian historical tradition. Notably, other contributors (Strootman, Canepa, Lerouge-Cohen, Jacobs, Sergueenkova/Rojas), stress Persianism as late inventions, although Canepa agrees that his "Iranism" lacked a linguistic and cultural medium comparable to Hellenism. Yet de Jong's point about Armenian and Georgian narratives, tacitly supposing oral traditions, ignores the Late Roman/Byzantine date of their written forms, thus contemporary with or postdating the Sasanids (cf. Wiesehöfer 388, dubiously dating the Armenian Moses of Choren to the 5th century). In Georgia, fire altars at Dedoplis Mindori (c. 100 BC) and elsewhere long antedate

any Sasanid influence and an Achaemenid palace at Gumbati (eastern Georgia) has been excavated.³ Distinction of continuity from late invention invites debate.

Richard Gordon's astute treatment of Mithraism as Persianism (289-325), the only paper exclusively treating religion, accepts the now conventional rejection of Franz Cumont's views of an eastern *origo*. Mithraism, a western cult, featured manipulations of a tradition represented by the bull-killing icon and the figure of Mithras, to which ideas about star lore and popularized notions of Persian religion could be added. Diversity of belief and rituals reflected local practices. Meritoriously, Gordon eschews amalgamating all data of a supposed unified doctrine for comparative analysis of Mithraic dress, equipment and practices in different strains of evidence: western epigraphy and archaeology, the Neoplatonic/Christian tradition, the Byzantine encyclopedic sources, Lactantius Placidus' *scholia* on Statius' *Thebaïs*, and the mithraea at Dura-Europos (2nd/3rd centuries) and Hawarte (late 4th century) near Syrian Apamea. As Gordon concedes (297), the earliest Greek or Latin reference to Mithraism, Stat. *Theb.* 1.720-21, reflects an already sophisticated religious institution. Unnoticed, however, Statius' allusion coincides with the cult's first epigraphical attestation on the Danube, an *ex voto* of a centurion of the *legio XV Apollinaris* at Carnuntum (*CIL III* 4418), recently returned from service with Corbulo in Armenia and the Jewish war. Further, paintings from the mithrea at Dura and Hawarte complicate the exclusively western origin of the cult.⁴ If Mithraism, a Roman invention, is Persianism, its subterranean creation/introduction in the 1st century remains a mystery.

Two papers address Achaemenids in Hellenistic Jewish literature, where, after the Second Isaiah's praise of Cyrus the Great, accurate specifics yielded to fuzzy memories and stereotypes (e.g. the Books of Daniel and Esther). Benedikt Eckhardt (249-65) treats the Hasmonean era, stressing a politically inspired Per-

³ Cf. Achaemenid elements on the Armenian boundary stones of Artaxias I (188-165? BC): Canepa 219; Dedoplis Mindori: see E. Wheeler, review of A. Furtwängler *et al.*, *Rome and Iberia*, in AWE 12 (2007) 320 with n.6 for bibliography; Gumbati: F. Knauss, "Persian Rule in the North. Achaemenid Palaces on the Periphery of the Empire," in I. Nielsen, ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 125-43.

⁴ This legion's western introduction of an eastern Mithraism is dubious: see E. Wheeler, "Legio XV Apollinaris: From Carnuntum to Satala—and beyond," in Y. Le Bohec/C. Wolff, eds., *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut Empire* (Paris 2000) 278-79 with nn.112-13. A recently discovered Mesopotamian mithraeum (not yet dated) under the Late Roman fort at Zerzevan (anc. Zamachi), 28 miles east of Diyarbekir (Amida), may further complicate interpretations. See http://www.tertullian.org/rpearce/mithras/display.php?page=supp_Turkey_Diyarbekir_ZerzevanCastle

sianism rewriting Jewish history to posit a glorious Persian past and liberation from Seleucid oppression. Much here depends on Eckhardt's Hasmonean date for the Book of Ezra and his views of other Hasmonean innovations to the post-exilic Jewish tradition. Richard Fowler (355-79) tries hard (without much success) to find Persianism in a highly speculative literary analysis of Josephus. Eugen Täubler's basic *Die Parthernachrichten bei Josephus* (1904) is unknown and factual errors and imprecisions occur.⁵

Some papers fail to find Persianism. Most notably, Sonja Plischke (163-76) argues that the Seleucids shunned references to both Achaemenids and Alexander in preference for appeals to Seleucus I. The title "Great King" never appeared in official communications, not even of Antiochus III, although former Seleucid vassals, once independent, readily adopted it in imitation of unofficial Seleucid use. Thus Shayegan's emphasis (402-406, 426) on the role of Babylonian scribes in attributing the titles "Great King" and "King of Kings" to various rulers is not definitive. Such scribes followed their own traditions.⁶ Damien Agut-Ladorère (147-62) enters the fray of complex debates about six Ptolemaic texts, in which memories of Assyrian theft of Egyptian religious objects became Persian acts with subsequent Ptolemaic equation of Achaemenids and Seleucids during the Syrian wars of the 3rd century BC. Why is this Persianism?⁷ Eran Almagor (328-43), tenuously identifying the Second Sophistic's interest in Greek-Persian wars as Persianism, a means to revive Greek identity, hints at revival of the "dead horse" of the Second Sophistic's anti-Roman *Tendenz*. Michael Sommer (346-54) reminds readers of Ammianus Marcellinus' preference for stereotypes of

⁵ Sulla did not meet the Parthian ambassador Orobazus on a bridge over the Euphrates (Plut. *Sulla* 5.4-5), as alleged (364); ignored (370) is that Glaphyra, wife of Herod the Great's son Alexander, was Archelaus I of Cappadocia's daughter via an Armenian princess, who supplied an additional link with the Achaemenids; unclear (366-67) is the significance of the Hasmoneans *not* claiming legitimacy through association with either the Achaemenids or the Arsacid Parthians. Why should they have done so?

⁶ Cf. Strootman 191-92, citing D. Engels, "Je veux être calife à place du calife? Überlegungen zur Funktion der Titel 'Großkönig' und 'König der Könige' vom 3. zum 1.Jh. v. Chr." in V. Cojocaru et al., eds., *Interconnectivity in the Mediterranean and Pontic World during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Cluj-Napoca 2014) 333-62, a thorough discussion of these titles, although all these authors (including the editors: 26) overlook V. Rosenberger, "Wer Machte Alexander 'den Grossen'?" *Historia* 47 (1998) 485-89.

⁷ For the equation of Seleucids and Achaemenids in Ptolemaic propaganda see also S. Barbantani, "'Attica in Syria.' Persian War Reenactments and Reassessments of the Greek-Asian Relationship: A Literary Point of View," *Erga-Logoi* 2.1 (2014) 21-91 with further bibliography.

Arabs, Scythians, and Persians and marvels at Ammianus' lack of interest in a Zoroastrian "church," although Iranists now generally reject characterization of Sasanid Zoroastrianism as a "church."

The chief case for late Hellenistic Persianism comes in papers on the Parthians and the dynasts of Pontus, Cappadocia, Commagene, and Armenia. A brief review can hardly do justice to the rich papers of Rolf Strootman (177-200) and Matthew Canepa (201-22). Strootman, stressing the half-Iranian character of the Seleucids through dynastic marriages, would re-write Seleucid history after c. 220 BC, when, following Molon's revolt, Antiochus III replaced Macedonian governors with local vassal kings. Accordingly, Bactria and Parthia recognized Seleucid suzerainty until the 140s BC at the latest. The Parthian era, dated from 247 BC, would be an invention of the Parthian Mithridates I (r. c. 171-138 BC) and Mithridates II's title as "King of Kings" a conscious Persianism, although earlier (17) Strootman denies Arsacid interest in Achaemenids. Supposedly, the confederated Parthian empire followed a Seleucid precedent. These views, based on rejection of material from Justin and other sources, invite debate. His model equating dynastic marriages with vassalage does not fit the Parthians, as Strootman admits (186). Significant is continued use of the Achaemenid satrapal headdress, the *kyrbasia* (cap of felt or leather), known from 5th-century BC satraps' coins in western Asia Minor and present on the coins of Parthian Arsacids and other Seleucid vassal kings. But for Strootman (188-91) the *kyrbasia* can be both Achaemenid and not Achaemenid.⁸ Unnoticed is that in Herodotus (5.49.3; cf. 7.61.1: equation with the *tiara*) Persian soldiers, not satraps exclusively, wear the *kyrbasia*.

Canepa, covering much of the same ground, emphasizes headgear and royal portraits of Parthians, Armenians, and other Anatolian dynasts. In his view late Hellenistic "Iranism" recreated or fabricated Achaemenid traditions, but dynasts

⁸ Extension of the argument about the *kyrbasia* (194) to include the Fratarakā, Seleucid vassals in Persis, is not unchallenged: see M. Marciak/R. Wójcikowski, "Images of Kings of Adiabene: Numismatic and Sculptural Evidence," *Iraq* 78 (2016) 4: a local origin for the *kyrbasia* and continuation of an Achaemenid tradition. Both Strootman (188 n.88) and Canepa (207 n.17) reject calling this cap on early Parthian coins a *bashlyk*, a Turkic term for a similar cap of medieval steppe peoples. This view corresponds to a trend in some circles to deny Parthians any sense of a nomadic heritage from their Central Asian origins. So, too, the seated archer reverse of early Parthian coins as a borrowing from a Seleucid type featuring Apollo rather than the Avestan archer Ārās (Canepa 209; cf. Strootman 188); for a more Iranian and culturally ambiguous interpretation of the type see J.D. Lerner, "Mithridates I and the Parthian Archer," in J. Schleude/B. Rubin, eds., *Arsacids, Romans, and Local Elites* (Oxford/Philadelphia 2017) 1-24.

shunned Achaemenid attire in an effort to distinguish a new Iranian style of power from Greek-Macedonian royal images. For Parthians, hellenizing elements on their coinage represented not accommodation of newly conquered Greek populations but a unifying image of pan-Iranian power for peoples already accepting the legitimacy of Hellenic-Iranian sovereigns (viz. Seleucids). The Seleucid Demetrius II represents the new form of kingship: released (129 BC) from Parthian captivity as a hostage and now a son-in-law of Mithridates I, he parthianized his image on coins (212-13)—for Canepa an example of “Iranism.”⁹ Canepa traces the progression of dynastic headgear from the satrapal *kyrbasia*, later with the Macedonian diadem added, to the emergence of the new Parthian *tiara* of Mithridates II and the Armenian of Tigranes II, which the Orontid Antiochus I of Commagene adopted, calling it a *kidaris*. Remarkably, not a single reference to the hitherto standard treatment of this topic occurs and the strictly Greek-Macedonian character of the Seleucid diadem can be questioned.¹⁰ The novelty of these late Hellenistic tiaras may not be so certain: Xenophon (*Cyr.* 8.3.13) depicted Cyrus wearing a *tiara orthe* with a diadem and some Sacae/Scythians of Central Asia were known for their pointed tiaras (*Hdt.* 7.64.2). Distinguishing between *kyrbasia*, *tiara*, and *kidaris* becomes very messy. Indeed, Canepa’s contention (217) that the Cappadocian and Armenian *kidaris* derived its Achaemenid inspiration only indirectly invites skepticism. As argued, the only examples of a Persian king’s cylindrical headgear appear on gateways and orthostats at Persepolis and on royal tombs. Yet no explanation of the source for this inspiration is offered, unless Cappadocian and Armenian visits to distant Achaemenid sites in Fars be conjectured, and Persepolis, burned by Alexander, remained a Hellenistic backwater.

Even less convincing are other views. An Achaemenid preference for rituals at open-air sites is conceded, but Mithridates VI Eupator’s massive sacrifice and

⁹ An unnoticed parallel is T. Labienus’ “Parthian” image promoted in the Parthian offensive of 40-39 BC, although Labienus remains an enigma: see E. Wheeler, “Parthian *Auxilia* in the Roman Army, Part I: From the Late Republic to c. 70 A.D.,” in C. Wolff/ P. Faure, eds., *Les auxiliaires de l’armée romaine, des alliés aux fédérés* (Lyon/Paris 2016) 185-86 with bibliography.

¹⁰ See H. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zu Zeremonien und Rechtsgrundlagen des Herrscherantritts bei den Persern, bei Alexander dem Großen und im Hellenismus* (Munich 1965); for the Seleucid diadem see M. Olbrycht, “The Diadem in the Achaemenid and Hellenistic Periods,” *Anabasis* 5 (2014) 177-87, reviewing A. Lichtenberger *et al.*, eds., *Das Diadem der hellenistischen Herrscher. Übernahme, Transformation oder Neuschöpfung eines Herrschaftszeichens?* (Bonn 2012): also unknown to Canepa.

banquet (location disputed) to celebrate his victory over L. Murena (82 BC), an exaggeration of his “Persian” pretensions, is Iranism; similarly, the open-air *hi-erethesion* at Nemrud Dagh. Mithridatid and Armenian (both Orontid and Artaxiad) inclusion of a paradise at royal residences must be Iranism, as was the Orontid practice of naming royal residences: e.g., Erundashat (Joy of Orontes) after the common Achaemenid toponymic formula, “Happiness of” But Alexander had passed through neither northern Anatolia nor Armenia; Pontus was never formally part of the Seleucid Empire and the Armenian Orontids (with some interruption, e.g., the later Achaemenid Darius III) directly continued the dynasty of Achaemenid satraps there.¹¹ Why such practices must be “Iranism” (invention) and not continuation of earlier practices is unclear.

Three additional papers essentially supplement Strootman and Canepa. Bruno Jacobs (235-248), in search of *Achaemenid* elements in the religious program of Antiochus I of Commagene (r. 70-38 BC), finds none in the headgear and clothing of the Achaemenid ancestors portrayed at Nemrud Dagh. All reflect 1st-century BC fashions: hence an implication of invention and ignorance of authentic Achaemenid practices. Similarly, the equation of Artagnes and Heracles at Nemrud Dagh is puzzling, as Artagnes does not appear in Achaemenid texts: hence Persianism and invention. Again facts not fitting the presumed result intervene (tunnel vision?). Artagnes, the Armenian version of the Iranian Verethraghna (often equated with Heracles: e.g. the Greek-Parthian bilingual from Mesene: *IGK* 65.54) should not really surprise. Antiochus, an Orontid who adopted Tigranes II’s tiara, inserts the Armenian equivalent of Heracles, who appears as the Greek Heracles (in heroic nudity) in other reliefs of Antiochus I.¹² Hence Persianism via an Armenian intermediary becomes a scholarly artifice.

Charlotte Lerouge-Cohen (223-33) re-plows the multi-furrowed field of genealogical claims of Pontic and Cappadocian kings, which Mithridates VI Eupator carried to an extreme. Skepticism of the claims and acknowledgement of exaggerations are not new. Greek as the medium of Mithridates’ propaganda

¹¹ The Orontes, satrap of Armenia, son-in-law of Artaxerxes II, and ancestor of the Commagenean kings, may not be the Orontes, satrap of Mysia, active in the Great Satraps’ Revolt in the 360s BC: see B. Jacobs, “Herrscherliche Willkür und korrumpierte Charaktere? Die Fall Orontes,” in C. Bender *et al.*, eds., *Diwan. Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Kultur des Nahen Ostens und des österlichen Mittelmeerraumes im Altertum. Festschrift für Josef Wiesehöfer zum 65. Geburtstag* (Duisburg 2016) 247-71.

¹² Vahagan (Artagnes) formed part of an Armenian “trinity” with Aramazd and Anahit. On Vahagan/Artagnes see J. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Cambridge, Mass. 1987) 189-95, 270, 369, and “Pre-Christian Armenian Religion,” *ANRW* II.8.4 (1990) 2680-81.

need not indicate the absence of a persianized population or Persian culture, as de Jong showed, and continuation of a form of Zoroastrianism in Asia Minor is ignored. Assumptions lead to various false issues: no resistance of a Persian population to the Pontic kings' hellenizing tendencies; no appeal to Persian solidarity in ousting Rome from Anatolia; ignoring the Anatolian population in emphasizing Persian or Greek connections. Pontus and Cappadocia, largely un-urbanized before the Roman era, lacked structures for mobilizing such sentiments, if they existed. Indeed the numerous *argumenta e silentio* (no evidence, therefore ...) raise methodological objections.

Valeria Sgueenkova and Felipe Rojas (269-88), uninterested in Achaemenid administration or ancestors of the Roman-era population, superficially survey Achaemenid/Persian survivals in Anatolia (e.g., documents, fire rituals, festivals, toponyms) without a detailed examination of the complexity of Anatolian religions and the iranization of some indigenous or Syrian deities and cults. Their efforts to undermine Persian survivals as appeals to antiquity to generate prestige, *thaumata* to attract tourists, etc. cannot disguise the extent to which Anatolians embraced and perpetuated their Achaemenid heritage. Continuity rather than a contrived Persianism often seems the better interpretation.

Finally, three papers treat Sasanid issues. Josef Wiesehöfer (381-391), long a proponent of Sasanid awareness of the Achaemenids, offers a *status quaestionis* on the ideological competition of Sasanids with Rome. Persianism, if a post-Achaemenid construction of cultural memory by re-invention and re-appropriation of a Persian past, is absent: Sasanids did not evoke Persians or Achaemenids directly, although they were well aware of a distant Iranian imperial presence west of the Euphrates and Achaemenid sites and themes retained their relevance. In contrast, M. Rahim Shayegan (401-55), an Achaemenid-memory denier, presents a wide-ranging paper, both recycling his earlier views and adding some speculative, exaggerated new arguments about genealogies and administrative titles (e.g., *karanos*, *karēn* for a supra-regional commander). Space precludes detailed discussion, although little here convinced this reviewer, especially not the recycled notion (uncritically endorsed by the editors: 26-27) that Sasanids learned about Achaemenids via Roman propaganda of *imitatio Alexandri* in eastern wars. Some interesting modifications of earlier views occur: post-*fratarakā* rulers in Persis re-introduced the title "king" and selected the dynastic patronymic Dārāyān (cf. Darius)—possibly proof of an Achaemenid reminiscence; parallel rhetorical strategies and target audiences underlie both Darius' Behistun in-

scription and Narses' at Paikuli, although a denier's quick rejoinder that no tangible mechanism of an Achaemenid cultural memory can be proved attempts to negate the concessions.

Touraj Daryaee (393-99) adds a geographical aspect to the volume. Persianism can be found in the *Provincial Capitals of Iran* (*Šahrestānīhā i Ērānšahr*), a text dated to the reign of Kawad I (499-531), preserved in Abū Mansūrī's *Shahname* (960 AD).¹³ Here Iranshahr is defined as all territory from the Oxus River (modern Amu Darya), the Hephthalite/Turkic frontier, and the Euphrates or the Nile. For Daryaee these rivers, combined with four frontier walls (Derbend, Gorgan, Tammiske, Wall of the Arabs) corresponded to a Zoroastrian view of the land of the Aryas/Iranians. The Achaemenids, identifying themselves as Aryas/Iranians (if only briefly and obscurely) had given a temporal sense to this Avestan idea and established the idea of the Seven Climes. Hence the Sasanids used the Achaemenids in propaganda for their territorial claims and equated Iranshahr with the central and largest clime. Such would, if accurate, date the Avesta's Yast 10 to the Achaemenid period. Certainly much is speculative and Daryaee's identification (395) of Derbend as the Pass of the Alans (the Darial: Pers. *Dar-i Alān*) is erroneous. Dating material in the Avesta, a medieval document in written form, is tricky and how far back in Antiquity various ideas can be pushed is highly controversial. Only Iranists, some more liberal than others on this sort of argument, can accurately judge the paper.

The Achaemenid *Nachleben* is worthy of study, but this volume does not establish "Persianism" as a new field. There are too many holes in defining the theme. Nor is the problem of discerning invention from continuation successfully resolved. In the scarcity of sources too often conclusions depend on silence. The old adage applies: the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Late Roman manifestations of Zoroastrian practice in Anatolia are not addressed. Basil of Caesarea noted in 377 (*Ep.* 258, PG 32.952C-53A) continued observance of rituals by the Magusaioi. A Sasanid embassy of c. 464, responding to Roman complaints about Christian persecution in the Persian Empire, noted Roman harassment of Zoroastrians in Roman territory (Priscus fr. 41.1.5-9 Blockley). Ariobarzanes II knew the form of a Persian king's tent, but (to follow arguments presented here), Antiochus I of Commagene did know Achaemenid headdresses and clothing. Yet, if we believe the editors (9), Gobarzes, a Laz king

¹³ For an English translation: T. Daryaee, ed./tr., *Sahrestanihi i Eransahr: A Middle Persian Text on Late Antique Geography, Epic, and History* (Costa Mesa 2002).

visiting Constantinople 465/466, knew how to dress like an Achaemenid.¹⁴ Certainly late Hellenistic dynasts paraded and exaggerated Achaemenid genealogies for prestige and legitimacy (as already known), but not all of them were forged. An example from a later era is overlooked: C. Iulius (?) Sohaemus (*PIR²* S761), installed (or re-installed) on the Armenian throne in 164, was said to be a Roman senator of both Achaemenid and Arsacid ancestry.

If some papers enlighten or stimulate debate, others expose a thin theme. The volume is generously illustrated, but lax editing is also apparent: many non-native English speakers do not know the language as well as they think and many items cited in the notes are missing in the common bibliography. This reviewer is not convinced that “Persianism” is a real subject.

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¹⁴ The correct reference is Priscus fr. 44 Blockley, not *Life of St. Daniel the Stylite*. No attention is paid to Priscus’ archaizing language: Sasanids are called Parthians.