Chapter III

Indo-Iranian Relationship in Achaemenids Era
(559-330 B.C.)

3.1 Introduction

3.1 Political relationship

3.2 Economic relationship

3.3 Cultural relationship
3.1 Introduction

The Achaemenid (Old Persian: Hakhāmanishiya) was a dynasty in the ancient Persian Empire with high cultural and economic achievements during its highest power. At the height of their power, around 500 B.C., the Achaemenid rulers of Persia ruled over territories roughly encompassing today's Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Bulgaria, eastern parts of Greece, Egypt, Syria, much of what is now Pakistan, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Caucasian, Central Asia, Libya, and northern parts of Arabia. The empire ruled by Persia eventually became the largest empire of the ancient world.

The founder of this dynasty was supposedly Achaemenes (Old Persian Haxamanis: "Of Friendly Mind"). He was succeeded by his son Teispes, who first took the title King of Anshan [Ansan] after seizing Anshan city from the Elamites. Inscriptions indicate that when Teispes died, two of his sons shared the throne as Cyrus (Kurush), king of Anshān, and Ariaramnes (Ariyāramna: "Having the Iranians at Peace"), king of Parsua (later called Pārsa "Persia", hence Fārsi, the native name for modern Persian).
They were succeeded by their respective sons Cambyses I of Anshan (Kambūjiya: "the Elder"), and Arsames (Arshāma: "Having a Hero's Might") of Iran (Persia).

In 559 B.C., Cambyses I the Elder was succeeded as king of Anšān by his son Cyrus the Great, who also succeeded the still-living Arsames as King of Persia, thus reuniting the two realms. Cyrus is considered to be the first king of the Achaemenid dynasty to be properly called so, as his predecessors were subservient to Media. Cyrus conquered Media, Lydia and Babylon.

His successors were less successful. Cyrus' unstable son Cambyses II conquered Egypt, but died in July 522 B.C. as a result of either accident or suicide, during a revolt led by a priest, Gaumata. Gaumata usurped the throne by pretending to be Smerdis (Bardiya; Cambyses' brother whom he had secretly assassinated in 525 B.C., before starting out for his Egyptian campaign) until he was overthrown in 522 B.C. by a member of a lateral branch of the Achaemenid family, Darius I (Old Persian Dāryavus: "Who Holds Firm the Good", also known as Darayarahush or Darius the Great).

Darius I was the first to speak of Achaemenes, who he claimed was an ancestor of Cyrus the Great (576 - 529 B.C.) and therefore the progenitor of the entire line of Achaemenid rulers. However, some scholars hold that Achaemenes was a fictional character used to legitimize Darius' rule, and that Darius I usurped the Persian throne. In any case, the name Achaemenid has been commonly accepted for the line of Persian kings beginning at least with Darius I. When the name refers to the entire line of early Persian rulers, including Cyrus and his son Cambyses, the Achaemenid era stretches from about 650 to 330 B.C. At different times, the Achaemenids also ruled Egypt, although the Egyptians twice regained their independence from Persia. After the practice of Manetho, Egyptian historians refer to the period in Egypt when the Achaemenid dynasty ruled as the Twenty-Seventh (525 - 404 B.C.) and Thirty-First Dynasties (343-332 B.C.). The last Achaemenid king was Darius III (336 - 330 B.C.), who was defeated by Alexander the Great, king of Macedon. After the Macedonian conquest, the Persian Empire was annexed by Alexander.
According to Herodotus, the native leadership then debated the best form of government for the Empire. He reports that it was decided that oligarchy would divide them against one another, and democracy would bring about mob rule resulting in a charismatic leader resuming the monarchy. Therefore, they decided a new monarch was in order, particularly since they were in a position to choose him. Darius I was chosen monarch from amongst the leaders. He was cousin to Cambyses II and Smerdis, claiming Ariaramnes as his ancestor.¹

Darius attacked the Greek mainland, which had supported rebellious Greek colonies under his aegis; but as a result of his defeat at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., he was forced to pull the limits of his empire back to Asia Minor.

The Achaemenids thereafter consolidated areas firmly under their control. It was Cyrus and Darius who, by sound and farsighted administrative planning, brilliant military maneuvering, and a humanistic worldview, established the greatness of the Achaemenids and in less than thirty years raised them from an obscure tribe to a world power.

Under Xerxes I, the Greeks were beaten at Thermopylae (Battle of Thermopylae), Athens conquered and burnt down, the Athenians with Sparta driven back to their last line of defense at the Isthmus of Corinth and in the Saronic Gulf. At Artemisium the battle was indecisive as large storms destroyed ships from both sides. The Battle was also stopped prematurely as the Greeks caught news of the defeat at Thermopylae and retreated. Finally, the Battle of Salamis (September 28, 480 B.C.) was won by the Athenians. Having lost his communication by sea with Asia, Xerxes was forced to retire to Sardis; the army which he left in Greece under Mardonius was in 479 B.C. beaten at Plateau. The defeat of the Persians at Mycale roused the Greek cities of Asia.

The zenith of Achaemenid power was achieved during Darius’ reign (521 B.C. - 485 B.C.) and that of his son Xerxes I (485 B.C. - 465 B.C., Old Persian Xshayārsha: "Hero among Kings"). These two rulers built great beautiful palaces in the
ancient cities of Persepolis (built 518-516 BC), Susa and Ecbatana (Hagmatāna "City of Gatherings", modern Hamadan). The Persian Empire reached its greatest extent in this period. After the death of Xerxes I (465 B.C.), the decline of the dynasty began. Persia saw a sequence of weak rulers ruling the empire. Decadence became rampant, and the army, finance and government administration were neglected. The last Achaemenid king was Darius III (336 B.C. - 330 B.C.), who was defeated by Alexander III of Macedon. After the Macedonian conquest, Alexander annexed the Persian Empire.

3.2 Political relationship

The emergence of the Achaemenid Empire in Persia, founded by Hakkāmanish (Sakhamani in Sanskrit, meaning “one with friends or allies” saw parts of northwest India come under Persian rule. Indian emissaries were present at the courts of Cyrus the Great or Kurush (590 - 529 B.C.), whose empire extended as far east as Gandhara and Sind. It is also believed that when Cyrus was threatened by Croesus of Lydia, he received military assistance from an Indian king. Under Darius I or Darayawus (521 - 485 B.C.), there were inscriptions referring to Persian relations with India. The Behistun rock inscription (ancient Bagastana "place of Gods" or Sanskrit Bhagasthana) dating back to around 518 B.C. includes Gandhara in the list of his subject countries. Here Darius also refers to his language as Aryan. The Persepolis inscription mentions Punjab as a part of the Persian Empire. The epigraph of Nagsh-i-Rustam shows India as the 24th state of his empire. The Indian province of Darius was believed to be the richest in Darius's empire. Herodotus tells us of the wealth and density of the Indian population and of the tribute paid to Darius. 'The population of the Indians is by far the greatest of all the people that we know; and they paid tribute proportionately larger than all the rest – (the sum of) 360 talents of gold dust'. Herodotus also mentions the Indian contingent in the Persian armies consisting of infantry, cavalry, and chariots. Later, elephants are also mentioned. Under Xerxes I or Khashayarsha, the successor of Darius, it is believed that Indians (specifically from north-west India, Bactria and Gandhara) fought alongside the Persian army against the Greeks in the battlefields of Plataea and Marathon.
In 330 B.C., Alexander the Great defeated Darius III. In the decisive battle of Gaugamela, Indian soldiers with fifteen elephants fought with Darius against the Greeks. Alexander marched into India after defeating the Persians. Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Mauryan dynasty, had friendly relations with the successor of the Macedonian conqueror in Persia. Seleucus Nicator, the Greecian ruler of Persia, sent Megasthenes as the envoy of Hellenistic Persia to the court of Pataliputra in India, the seat of the Mauryas. Persian nobles were also present in the courts of Mauryan kings. Tushaspa, a Persian, was present during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Kharoshti script was introduced by the Persian officials in the northwestern frontier province and continued to be in use till the 4th century A.D.

The similarity among these empires is not a new matter particularly Ashoka and Darius. Everyone who is familiar with the history of relationship between Iran and India is aware of this fact. It is obvious that both the nations have profoundly influenced each other. These effects can be studied from different views including political, cultural, and economic.

The American archaeologist and great contemporary scientist David Brainerd Spooner worked with a central archaeologist organization of India for many years. During this time (1913 A.D.), he conducted a survey of the legacy of the ancient places in India. Spooner created a serious, shocking, and wonderful claim through his discovery of relics from the Mauryan palaces. These palaces were from a dynasty which refers to two well-known Indian kings, Chandragupta and Ashoka. Mauryan palaces are located in Pataliputra near Patna.

Dr Spooner found the similarity and even union of these buildings, with the Persepolis buildings. This discovery proved the early influence of Iran in establishing the Mauryan dynasty. Spooner mentioned about that in his annual reports to the Archaeological Survey of India and his article "The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History."
Political and governmental situation of northern India contemporaneous with Medes and Achaemenids empires in Iran:

Magadha was the first great imperial government in India which was comprised of Medes government in Iran. The Magadha government was only a small local government, but when Bimbisara (544 - 493 B.C.) became king, he began political change of Magadha. Bimbisara, who was 15 years old when he was crowned king, obtained many confederates and supporters in the northern plateau through several marriages. With dominance and supremacy, Bimbisara joined the local governments and thus established one government over northern India. Therefore he was able to establish relationship with adjacent governments, such as Gandhara (Gandhar) located between Iran and India. Maybe, Indian ambassadors who reached the court of Iran were sent by this king.

Bimbisara was succeeded by Ajatashatru (493-462 B.C.) who developed his father’s kingdom extensively. The capital city of this government was Rajgriha (shah-Neshin in Persian). It was a city surrounded by seven natural hills. These hills supported the city like huge walls. The king’s main palace was located in the middle of the city. Also, the city engineers made Rajgriha in such a way so that no one was able to enter through the gate at night, even the king himself. With these traits, this palace is very similar to a palace which is referred to as Medes, located in Hegmataneh Iran. In addition to the great government of Magadha, there were also some local, semi-independent governments with fifteen other small governments, such as Anga, Kashi, Vriji, Kosala, Malla, Chedi, Vasta, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Surasena, Ashvaka, Avanti, Gandhara, Kambija, and Takhasila. Gandhara (Gandhar) included present-day Peshawar and Ravaelpindi. The capital city was called Taxila or Takshashila and was a large business and science centre of old the world. The king of Gadghara had fifteen other small governments and their most important governments were Saks in the north of India. Also, it is called “Kapilavastu” as its other name.
The age of Great Cyrus of Achaemenids (558–529 B.C.)

The age of Cyrus, founder of Achaemenids dynasty, is known as the beginning of the relationship between Iran and India. King Cyrus extended his reign to the East and reached the border of India during his war in central Asia.

In this text, a clay cylinder now in the British Museum, Cyrus describes how he conquers the old city. Nabonidus is considered a tyrant with strange religious ideas, which causes the god Marduk to intervene. That Cyrus thought of himself as chosen by a supreme god, is confirmed by Second Isaiah; his claim that he entered the city without struggle corroborates the same statement in the Chronicle of Nabonidus. (Picture from: oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/PA/IRAN/PAAI/PAAI_Misc_Finds.html)

Cyrus dominated the people of the East and extended his dominion to India, to Erythraean Sea i.e. the Indian Ocean. According to a narrative, Cyrus was killed in his own wars in central Asia by an Indian. In those wars, Indians fought with Indian elephants as hired soldiers of Debrik tribes who have lived in the borders.
The presence of Indian soldiers in the mortal battles between Indians and Assyrians during the Medes period have been also mentioned by Xenophon, ancient Greek historian. Also there are some names in Assyrian king’s inscriptions that are probably of Indian origin. Tiglat- Pileser III, King of Assyria, fought with some Medes kings in Hamedan region in the foot of Mount Alvand. There was a king called
Remataja in the Medes camp in seventh century B.C. His name is of Indian origin and it is comparable with Ramtaja who is author of the songs “Rig Veda”.¹⁰

Xenophon wrote, “When Cyrus had come to Medes with his uncle’s aid, Kiaxar, and a Persian army force, his uncle sent precious clothes to him because there was a meeting in the court…. Cyrus came to court without wearing precious clothes and Kiaxar complained why he came in his own simple clothes. He did not wear purple clothing and did not use torque and baldric. Cyrus answered, “I did your command late. If I wore purple clothes and used torque and baldric, I would be to come to talk. It is better than the corps, which are ready to follow your command at once.” Indian ambassadors said that they came from the king of India to ask why the Medes want to fight with Assyria. They stated that they would ask king of Assyria this question, too. Indians will be against the side that is the aggressor. At this time, Cyrus asked Kiaxar to let him have some words. After obtaining permission, he said “As you heard, tell your own king we did not. If Assyrians say that they do not either at that time, then we are ready to accept the king of India as the ruler between us, in order probe and give a fair order. Also, Xenophon wrote, “Indian ambassadors from their own king, Jenin, told Cyrus, “very pleased to be informed about your intentions. I want to be honest. I will send some money to you. If you need money again, tell me. My ambassadors have a mission to do what you command them”¹¹.

Although his story is never confirmed by other writers there are some other writings from which we can gain information about the relationship between India and western Asia. Moreover, Indian traders had relationships with Babylon, which was a large business centre at that time, before the appearance of Achaemenids. Maybe, this was why Indian meddled with the problems about western Asia and the war of Cyrus with Assyria and Lydia. Indians wanted to have peace in the region so that they could continue their business.

While Cyrus fought with Kaldanian, he learned that the king of India was very rich and wealthy. Sometimes, the king hired some soldiers from people of Kaldeh. Cyrus
used information from Kaldanians and Armenians and communicated with king of India that he could receive money and other aids. Certainly there are two different theories in this case. The first theory realizes that money was sent from the king of India to Cyrus because he paid tribute.

This domination had been based on Cyrus’ wars in central Asia and the border regions of India. If the king of India did not obey, he had to pay the tribute. However, another theory states that Cyrus never reached India and the Indian king’s aid was merely based on companionship and bias against Cyrus’ enemies. According to Narkous in Arian in Anabasis, Cyrus lost his huge power because of an undesirable situation of Baluchistan thus he could not go to India.

Megastens writes, “Indians never fight with foreigners as no foreigner has attacked India except the nations of Dilionysus- Heracsles and finally the Macedonians. The famous queen of Assyria, Semiramis also wanted to attack India. However, the primary works have recorded that she died before accomplishing her attack. Even, Persians used Indian hired soldiers in their army but they never attack India”.

Of course, if Indus River was western border of India, the idea of Narkos and Megastens would be correct. Cyrus never reached India and his developments had been on the western side of the Indus River. Otherwise, it can be claimed that Cyrus was the first non-Indian power that reached India from the west.

Pliny, the ancient historian, knows that the border the Cyrus conquered in India to Kapisa region in Gorband- Valley. Arian the other ancient historian writes, “The people from the region between Kabul and the Indus River obeyed the Assyrians and Medes in the past. Finally, during the age of Cyrus, the Persians conquered the region and received tribut.”
Thus, it was necessary to keep the eastern tribes ready to move west for him at all the times. Cyrus wanted to be known to people all over the world as a conqueror, especially as a founder of an empire and an organizer. He established adopted his political ambition with profits of various tribes.

In fact, the great king made his own history by his development due to the East. He returned to the world which had appeared and formed his ancestor’s beliefs. Across Ayaksart (Sir Sea- Sihon) and due to north, there were neither Greek nor Babylonian, nor Apollonian, nor Marduk, but there was a God of endless space. Cyrus was aware of the significance of the eastern region and the protection of this exchange zone because it provided the facility of supplements of primary materials and agricultural products for him. In addition, according to Damascene Nicola, the head of Hirkani, Parthian, Sakas, and Balkhi tribes introduced themselves to Cyrus. Pars had obtained more power through this loyalty and union. Therefore, he could make presidios and new cities in the capitals of those states (545-540 B.C.). He built the bases of his empire by conquering parts of western India. After that, no danger could threaten him from the East and North. The political powers were made. The defensive lines were established across the rivers. Also, all the economic developments were guarantees for survival of his empire.18

The age of Great Darius of Achaemenid (521-485 B.C.)

Darius divided the kingdom into twenty states called Shahrban (Satrap) and appointed governors over each state. He selected a commander in each state for the whole present forces of the state. Also, the commander was an agent from the king. Along with those two occupations, he also created a third job which was of receiving the taxes. All states according to their wealth should pay tribute. Its sum was over 14,560 Talents silver which is almost around one third of what should be paid to the treasury by Indian state.
Furthermore, these payments were done in costly metals. The states submitted their natural gifts that Darius named India, in the inscriptions of Persepolis and Naghshe-Rostam. India has been named in three languages: ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.  

According to classical writings of India Darius added the Indus River region to his conquered lands. 

In the carvings of Darius grave in Naghsh-i -Rostam in Fars province of Iran, Professor Hetresfeld has identified three Indian soldiers who covered themselves with a piece of cotton cloth. They have short turban hats on their head. Their weapons are long and wide swords that they hang with a rope over their shoulders. The clothing style of these three men shows that they were Indians. According to historical documents, Cyrus and after him Darius, calculated the Northwest Regions (Kabul and Indus) as their lands, that age has been called “Zoroastrian Era” by Indian historians. 

Tara Chand, an Indian historian, stated about influence of Achaemenids in India: “One-third of gold that flowed into the imperial treasury of Iran came as tribute from India which was sent to the treasury of the kingdom as tribute are from India. Indian clad in white cotton cloth fought in the armies of Xerxes on the battlefields of Plataea and Marathon against the Greeks.”

Inscriptions of the Great Darius

Behistun inscription:

Darius’ Behistun inscription is located on the road of Hamedan- Kermanshah in western Iran. In this inscription, Darius named Harauvati as the most eastern state of his kingdom. This state is present Ghandhar. As it is mentioned, Gandhar was added to
the kingdom of Iran by Cyrus. The date of the genesis of Behistun is 517 B.C. Therefore, after that date the occupation of western regions of India belonged to Darius who commanded to dig the Suez Canal in Egypt before his attack on India. He wanted to develop business between the East and West. This matter was written in the third line of the inscription about Suez Canal. Also, it is supposed that some ships had been
sent to the shores of India at the same time to discover the water paths between West Sea, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean.

Five years later, Darius occupied the western region of the Indus River. Also, he passed Indus River and added part of Punjab to this new state in his kingdom. The significance of Iranians entering India has been very important to Indians.\textsuperscript{23}

The period of Darius is the glorious period in the relationship between Iran and India. We also realize that the spiritual influence of Iran on India reaches to its maximum during this time. In later centuries, it bloomed into the Mauryan Empire. Behistun inscription consists of a list of 23 states or Satrap. India was mentioned there. As it was mentioned, the most eastern part of the empire pointed out includes present day Ravalpindi and Peshawar and their neighbours, Soghdia (Sakndiana), Shaka (Sakeeye) or Sakishia and Bakterish (Bakhtar) and Bahika. Of the next two inscriptions, one is in Persepolis (518-515 B.C.) and another is in Naghsh-e-Rostam (515 B.C.)

The name of Gandhara or Gandhar has been mentioned in all the four of Darius’s inscriptions as an eastern state in his territory.\textsuperscript{24}

Says Darius the King: “These are the countries which belong to me, by the grace of Ormazd I have become King of them, Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, those which are of the sea, Sparta, Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, the Sacae, the Satagydes, Arachosia, and Mecia, in all twenty-three countries.

“Says Darius the King: These are the countries which belong to me; by the grace of Ormazd they have become subject to me, they have brought tribute to me.” \textsuperscript{25}
(pic.13) Darius I the great (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

(pic.14) Behistun inscription (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)
In 521 B.C., the Persian king Darius I the Great ordered that a new alphabet, the Aryan script was to be developed. This was used for a small corpus of inscriptions, known as the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions. An overview of all inscriptions can be found here. The following text, which contains a useful list of satrapies, was written in three languages and is known from eleven Old Persian, five Elamite, and three Babylonian fragments. One of these, a Babylonian stone tablet of $25 \times 37$ cm, is almost complete. They must have belonged to several copies, which included clay tablets and a small cask. In the following text, Darius tells how he built the royal palace of Susa and imported products from all over his empire:

“This palace which I built at Susa, from afar its ornamentation was brought. Downward the earth was dug, until I reached rock in the earth. When the excavation had been made, then rubble was packed down, some 40 cubits in depth, another part 20 cubits in depth. On that rubble the palace was constructed.

(pic.15) A Copy from Darius’ inscription in Susa, (Source, Kokh, p. 97.)
“The silver and the ebony were brought from Egypt. The ornamentation with which the wall was adored, that from Yaunâ was brought. The ivory which was wrought here was brought from Nubia and from India and from Arachosia.

“A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this world, who created yonder sky, who created mankind, who created happiness for mankind, who made Darius king. One king for many, one leader of many.

“I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, king of all kinds of peoples of all kinds of origins, king of this earth far and wide, the son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenid, Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan of Aryan descent.

“King Darius says: By the grace of Ahuramazda, these are the nations that I subdued outside Persia. I ruled them. They brought me tribute. What I ordered them, they did. They kept my law: the Mede, the Elamite, the Parthian, the Arian, the Bactrian, the Sogdian, the Chorasmian, the Drangian, the Arachosian, the Sattagydian, the Macian, the Gandaran, the Indian, the Haoma-drinking Saca, the Saca with pointed caps, the Babylonian, the Syrian, the Arab, the Egyptian, the Armenian, the Cappadocian, the Lydian, the Greeks near and across the sea, the Thracian, the Libyan, the Nubian, the Carian.

“King Darius says: Much that was done badly, I made good. The nations were in commotion; people were fighting each other. By the grace of Ahuramazda, I brought about that they no longer fight each other at all. Each one is in his place. They feel fear of my law, so that the stronger does not fight or destroy the weak.

“King Darius says: By the grace of Ahuramazda, many constructions that had previously been put out of place, I put in place. In a town called [lacuna], the wall was fallen from age. Before this un repaired wall I built another, [to serve] from that time into the future.
“King Darius says: May Ahuramazda and the gods protect me, my royal house, and what I wrote in this inscription.”26

Darius also talks about the construction equipments of Shush palace in his own inscription in Shush. He mentioned India and his neighbours for collaborating to complete that palace. Darius’s inscription gives a picture of performance and decoration. Darius stated:

“I have built this palace in Shush. Its materials and jewels have been brought from far away. The land has been taken from far down so that I reach stone in the ground, as the digging has been done. After that, mortar has been accumulated. Also, a part with its depth is 20 Arsh. A palace has been built on it and the land which was dug and mortar which was accumulated and adobe which has rubbed by Babylon’s people. The lumber of the palace has been brought from Lebanon. Assyrians brought it to Babylon. Kairha carried it to Greece, and Greek people brought them to Shush. Wood, Yaka, has been brought from Gandhar and Kerman. The gold which was used here has been brought from Soghd….the ivory which was used here has been brought from Abyssini, India and Rakhaj…. ” 27

An inscription of Darius the Great from Rumania

One of the most remarkable inscriptions from Antiquity is the fragmentary text, written in Persian cuneiform script, found in 1937 on a clay tablet in Gherla, and published in 1954.

This is of course not a text full of very important information, but the fact that it exists is remarkable, because Gherla is in the northwestern part of modern Rumania.28

Darius' Suez Inscriptions

The next three texts are part of a slab of pink granite that was discovered in 1866, by Charles de Lesseps, near Kabret, 130 kilometers form Suez. The upper part shows Darius (twice), flanking a cartouche with his name (DZa). To the left and right is
inscription DZb; at his feet is DZc, written in ancient Persian and Elamite; the reverse of the stone gives the same text -with some extra details- in Egyptian. The first two texts resemble DNa.

The monument, also known as the Chalouf stele, was related to the construction of a canal that connected the river Nile and the Red Sea. The project, finished by king Darius, was not the first of its kind: in fact, Ramses II (pharaoh from 1279-1213 B.C.) had already built a canal like this, and the list of places mentioned in the biblical book of Exodus as the route of the Jews leaving Egypt, resembles the general direction of the canal. But although Darius merely restored an older water course, the project was very important, because it facilitated trade between the Nile, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf.

King Darius says: “I am a Persian; setting out from Persia I conquered Egypt. I ordered to dig this canal from the river that is called Nile and flows in Egypt, to the sea that begins in Persia. Therefore, when this canal had been dug as I had ordered, ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia, as I had intended.”

**Darius the Great: building inscription from Persepolis**

In the following text, to be found on the terrace walls of Persepolis, Darius asks the gods to protect Persia, and tells about the size of his empire. The full text of the inscription is given below:

“I am Darius the great king, the king of kings, the king of many countries, the son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid.

“By the favor of Ahuramazda these are the countries which I got into my possession along with this Persian people, which felt fear of me and bore me tribute: Elam, Media, Babylonia, Arabia, Assyria, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, the Greeks who are of the mainland and those who are by the sea, and countries which are across the sea, Sagartia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, Hinduš, Gandara, Sacae, Maka.”
Darius: four Empire lists

Darius fought several foreign wars, which brought him to India and Thrace. When he died, the Persian Empire had reached its largest extent. He was succeeded by his son Xerxes.

In the following texts, often called Empire lists, we see the expansion of the Persian Empire: Darius mentions the territories he had conquered. The oldest list is the Behistun inscription (519 B.C.); a second text was found on the Persepolis terrace (515 B.C.); a third one is from Susa (after 513 B.C.); and the last one can be read on Darius' tomb at Naqš-i Rustam (after 492 B.C.). (The list of tax districts in Herodotus' *Histories* is an odd example of the same genre.) The texts are very interesting, not only because they show the expansion of the empire, but also the changing borders of the satrapies.
Behistun inscription

“These are the countries which are subject unto me, and by the favor of Ahuramazda I became king of them: Persia, Elam, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, the countries by the Sea, Lydia, the Greeks, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdia, Gandara, Scythia, Sattagydia, Arachosia and Maka; twenty-three lands in all.”31

Persepolis terrace

“By the favour of Ahuramazda these are the countries which I got into my possession along with this Persian people, which felt fear of me and bore me tribute: Elam, Media, Babylonia, Arabia, Assyria, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, the Greeks who are of the mainland and those who are by the sea, and countries which are across the sea, Sagartia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, Hinduš, Gandara, Scythians, Maka.”32

Susa inscription

“By the favor of Ahuramazda these are the countries which I seized outside of Persia; I ruled over them; they bore tribute to me; what was said to them by me, that they did; my law - that held them firm: Media, Elam, Babylonia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Maka, Gandara, Hinduš, Sakâ haumavargâ, Sakâ tigrakhaudâ, Parthia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, the Greeks who are by the sea and who are across the sea, Thracians, Libyans, Ethiopians, Carians.”33

Naqsh-i Rustam

“By the favor of Ahuramazda these are the countries which I seized outside of Persia; I ruled over them; they bore tribute to me; they did what was said to them by me; they held my law firmly; Media, Elam, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandara, Hinduš, Sakâ haumavargâ, Sakâ tigrakhaudâ, Babylon, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, the Greeks, Sakâ paradrayâ, Thrace, the Macedonians, the Libyans, the Nubians, the men of Maka and the Carians.”34
(pic.17) Naqsh-i Rustam (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

(piq.18) Pesopolic general view (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)
Darius I accepted representation of all countries of his great kingdom. They provided that the best gifts from their lands for dedicated to the king. The meeting started with Medes and Elamite people in the upper row. At the end, the low row belonged to Indians. They were wearing just a wrapper. The first Indian person who carries the gift has a horizontal stick on his shoulder on which a basket is hanging on each side of it. There are two closed bags in each basket that contained the golden powder of Indus. Also, Indians brought an ass with themselves. With the figures of Indians, ends the long line of figures from imperial tribes. The order of location of these tribes is the same order which Darius accounts in his grave in Naghsh-e-Rostam near Persepolis, but with some small differences.\textsuperscript{35}
The documents of the plaques several times, the satraps who were travelling, have been mentioned in the relic, which existed in the ruins of Persepolis and Shush. However there are no details about the duration of their missions and portions. However, the name of Indian person is mentioned. Apadaiva, came to the Shush in 499 B.C. and then, he returned to India. It seems he wanted to receive a Satrap command for Indians so he had made a long journey. His monthly portion was 2100 liters Beer and probably 900 liters wine.
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1. The text mentions Babylonia twice; Parthia is a restoration.
2. The nomads of Sagartia, only mentioned as an independent satrapy on the Persepolis list, was, at this time, added to Drangiana.
3. The Carians had been subdued by Cyrus the Great, but had retained something of their independence.

(pic.21) Gold Tablet of Darius I fond in the Perspolis (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

(pic.22) IRAN: Persepolis - Palace of Darius, Flight of Stairway, Relief of Servants on Wall of the Stairs. (Oriental Institute Photograph Number: 57730)
(pic.23) IRAN: Persepolis - Palace of Darius, Facade of W Flight of Stairway, General View.

(Orient Institute Photograph.)

(pic.24) IRAN: Persepolis - Palace of Darius I, Relief of Servants on the Stairs.

(Oriental Institute Photograph.)
A closer look at one of the Indian tribute-bringers from the Apadana, Persepolis

(Source: Hide Mari Kokh, p.133)

**A description of Herodotus**

Ancient Dorian Greek historian Herodotus, who is regarded as the Father of History, describes in his third book (94th Article) that India was one of satraps of Darius’s kingdom. India was a rich satrap. It was able to supply one third of empire with its income which was 360 talents in golden dust. This gold had been mined
from north of Indus. It was a region with plenty of gold at that time according to geologists.

(pic.26) Darius's capital of Persepolis contained in its Apadana depictions of “Indians delegation” bearing tribute (Source:http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/PA/IRAN/PAAI/IMAGES/PER/APA/1E1_72dpi.html)

Herodotus has an interesting description about mining gold from soil. He wrote, “Probably these animals have been Tibetan mastiff which has been mentioned in Mahabharata. They have been used to have mining gold in Dardistan.”

In 512 B.C. Darius gave a mission to Admiral Scylax Decaryanda, a Greek commander who was in the service of Darius to find a way from Indus River to Egypt. It was a vast map for discovering sea paths in order to connect the eastern parts of
the kingdom to its western possessions. This attempt was both political and official. Moreover, business aims were another stimulant to Darius for performing his purpose.\textsuperscript{38}

Through the writings of Herodotus it is realized that Darius’ territory included entire south regions of Indus, east dry lands of this region, and Rajputana. Also, Indus region included present day Punjab. In the west of the Indus river to its mouth, it has neighborhood in the west with Gandara which included Aria, Harat, and Arakhuzia (Ghandhar).\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Iran and India after Darius}

After Darius his successors particularly king Xerxes continued the relationship between India and Iran. In addition to infantry, Indians supplied lancer, and chariots for king Xerxes. Moreover, horses, burros, and many dogs were also sent from India to Iran. The equipment of troops were the same equipment for infantry and carriages have been moved by horses Indian soldiers fought in the battles between Iran and Greece. Therefore after King Xerxes returned Iran, he resented force under Pharnazathres, son of Atrabates’s command. While the king arranged a consultative meeting for his campaign to Greece, he started to give a speech himself at first stand. Then, he asked his own commanders to express their idea. Mardoniyeh talked about the inferiority of the Greeks in front of the brave nations which have obeyed, and united with the Persians. These nations were: Sake, India, Abyssinian, and Ashurian.\textsuperscript{40}

Herodotus wrote a description of these nations.

“Our commander was Pharanazatresers son of Aratabate….. The weapon of Indian lancers was the same those of the Indian infantry. Not only the people of northern India, residents of Indus and Punjab who were Aryan but also a group of Non – Aryan Indians served in king Xerxes’s legion. Herodotus called them, eastern Abyssinian, Seemingly, these people lived in the coastal regions of the Oman Sea. He writes about this group and their weapons:
“The eastern Abyssinians have served with Indians. It seems, there was not any difference between western and eastern Abyssinians except for their language and their hair. Eastern Abyssinian’s hair is straight but Libyan Abyssinians (African) have curly hair. Asian Abyssinians were armed like Indians. They had a coat on the head which was formed from forehead and head of a horse with its ears and mane. When they wear it, the ears stand straight and mane of horse was like the feather of a hat. They used crane skin instead of buckler.”

After king Xerxes and his successors, there is no record of the Iran-Indian relationship. Iranians stayed in India till 320 B.C. as Alexander the Great attacked Iran. According to Darius III’s request, when Alexander Macedonian attacked Iran, a combined force including westerns Sogdianas, and Indians came to help the Achaemenids king to fight against Alexander in Gogamel. The commander of this force was Satrap Arachosia. This is the reason that Iran did not dominate on its own territory at the end of the Achaemenids dynasty completely. Even satrap were not sent there. Hence, Indians fought under the commanding of satrap, Arachosi.

Dr. Spooner, famous Indologist, believes that forming the Mauryan dynasty in India was not only on the basis of Alexander dominating west Asia, but also the Achaemenids dynasty influenced the Mauryan dynasty. Mauryans imitated Achaemenids form of government.

Spooner stated in his article on the “Zoroastrian Age in the History of India” that the Iranian Zoroastrian minority had a remarkable power and influence in Achaemenids age in western parts of India, Indus and Punjab, even northern regions of the central plateau and east of India, Bihar and Assam. This influence was effective in establishing the Mauryan government. In addition, he believes that the Buddhist religion was affected under Mazdaism and Brahmanism.
3.3 Economic Relationship

Trade expanded mainly because Achaemenians introduced coinage, which facilitated exchange. India exported spices like black pepper and imported gold and silver coins from Iran. The grape, introduced from Persia with the almond and walnut, was cultivated in the western Himalayas. One of the earliest Indian words for a coin is Karsa (also a small weight), which is of Persian origin.44

According to Herodotus, Artaxerxes or Artakshathra exempted the inhabitants of four Babylonian villages from taxation in return for their breeding Indian dogs for hunting and war. The dog is only once mentioned with respect in ancient Indian literature and was rarely, if ever, treated as a pet. The exception occurs in the Mahabharata, when the five Pandavas and their wife Draupadi take their dog with them on their final pilgrimage to heaven, and the eldest brother Yudhisthira refuses to enter without his faithful friend. It has been suggested that the episode shows Iranian influence, because for the Zoroastrians, the dog was a sacred animal.45

The Achaemenids Empire extended from the Indus River to the Aegean Sea. It comprised such economically developed countries as Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, Babylonia, Elam, and Asia Minor, lands which had their long traditions of social institutions, as well as Sakai, Massagetai, Lycians, Libyans, Nubians and other tribes undergoing the disintegration of the primitive-communal phase. Therefore, the socioeconomic structure of the empire was characterized by extreme diversity. For this reason the empire remained a relatively decentralized state with each ethnic province honoring its own local customs and traditions46.

Despite its enormous size, the royal sector did not occupy a decisive place in the economy of the empire. The main source of state income was taxes. Those taxes were used for the maintenance of the army, the administration, and partially, the royal court. A considerable portion of taxes was also set aside in the royal treasuries located in Pasargadae, Persepolis, Ecbatana, Susa, Babylon, and other places.47 According to
Herodotus (3.90-94), the total annual sum of taxes calculated in silver amounted to 14,560 Eubonic talents (1 Eubonic talent = 25.86 k.g.). Taxes had to be delivered in unminted silver evaluated by purity and weight and according to a given standard. In addition to taxes, subjects delivered gifts to the king of precisely determined sizes. These gifts included: trunks of ebony, wood, elephant tusks, horses, vessels of gold, silver, etc. While the dominant majority of subjects paid taxes, gifts were delivered only by the peoples who lived on the borders of the empire, i.e., by Colchians, Ethiopians, Arabs, India, etc. According to Herodotus, the Persians, as the ruling people, were exempt from taxes and forced labor. This exemption apparently applied only to monetary taxes, for, the Persepolis documents indicate that the Persians were not exempt from taxes in kind. In the Achaemenids inscriptions, the Persians were not included in the lists of nations performing obligatory service on construction projects.

Darius in his inscription at Naqshe Rostam mentions some countries who gave him tribute. “By the favor of Ahuramazda, these are the countries which were seized outside of Persia. I ruled over them. They bore tribute to me. What was said to them by me. That they did. My law held them firm Media, Elam, Parthian, Aria, Bactrian, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandara, Sind, Amyrgian Scythians, Scythian with pointed caps, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia, Leonia Cappadocia, Sardis, Scythians who are across the sea, Skudra, Petasos- wearing Ionians, Libyans, Ethiopians, men of Maks, Carians.”

The Indian province of Darius was the richest in his empire and the most populated. Herodotus tells us of the wealth and density of the Indian population and of the tribute paid to Darius: “The population of the Indians is by far the greatest of all the people that we know. They paid tribute proportionately larger than all the rest – (the sum of) 360 talents of gold dust’ (equivalent to over a million pounds sterling).” Herodotus also mentions the Indian contingent in the Persian armies consisting of infantry, cavalry, and chariots. Later, elephants were mentioned. One third of gold that flowed into the imperial treasury of Iran came as a tribute from India.
Indians clad in white cotton cloth fought in the armies of Xerxes on the battlefields of Plataea and Marathon against the Greeks. Of the two scripts employed in India, one evolved from Armaic, which the Achaemenids scribes employed. Indian mercenaries roamed the coasts of Caspian Sea and skirmished with the Scythians. The Khudrakas of the Ravi were deployed beyond the Hindukush. The Achaemenids brought rice from India to be planted in the Near East. It is also believed that cane sugar was first used by man in Polynesia from where it spread to India. In 510 B.C., the Emperor Darius described what he found in India "the reed which gives honey without bees", which he then brought to Persia.

The Achaemenids were certainly not the first government to note the importance of trade in West Asia. Assyrians and Babylonians thrived in trade and fought for it, while the Elamite and Hittite kingdoms were created almost as a reason to control parts of the trade and trade routes. Still, Achaemenids was the first empire to control the entire area between the River Oxus and the Mediterranean Sea, and thus paid special attention to the promotion of the overland and sea-faring trade.

The issue of coins was adopted from Lydia by the central government with a standard weight. It was one of the means of promoting trade. Indeed, the existence of Daric coins greatly facilitated the trade among Phoenician and Greeks of Asia Minor with Mesopotamia. Although the coinage was a way of establishing royal power, it was later abused by rebellious satraps of Asia Minor. Still, the existence of a universal means of exchange contributed much to the promotion of trade.

One of the most significant achievements of the Achaemenids administration was the establishment of the Royal Road that connected Susa to Sardis. In the beginning the roads was used exclusively by the royal messengers (Barids). It eventually developed into the main communication nerve of the empire. Major trade routes were connected to the Royal Road and it may have extended eastwards from Susa as well, although no Greek accounts confirm such suspicion. The Achaemenids Royal
Road was clearly a sign of the administration’s awareness of the need for quick communication routes and the importance of road-making, a trait continued by most subsequent rulers. It can also be credited as the first clear forerunner of the famous Via Apia, a major road system of the Roman Empire.\(^{57}\)

An immediate use of the Royal Road was made by the members of the Barid system. Barid was the name of the Achaemenid postal system established by Darius I in order to facilitate the communication between the central and the satrapal governments. All satraps and local governments had the duty of providing fresh horses and amenities for the Barid messengers. Satraps and King’s Eyes sent regular reports of the state of their satraps to the Imperial Court in Persepolis and Susa, where detailed records of the empire were kept. Sadly, with Alexander’s burning of the Persepolis Treasury and pillage of the Susa Treasury, none of these records survived to our time. We can only speak of their existence based on various archaeological findings and the records of Greek historians.

Although the Barid was used for the purpose of imperial communication, its use later became less exclusive and included personal and business communications. Barid messengers became the bearers of information much sought after around the empire, including price information for various tradable goods. In this way, Barid played a role similar to the modern postal system and is indeed considered as a forerunner of later Iranian communication and postal systems. The name Barid is used up to the modern times in various Arab countries as the original term for the word “Post”.\(^{58}\)

On the other hand, the most important achievement of Darius, as the chief reformer of the Achaemenids, was the expansion of the satrapal system established by Cyrus. Based on this system, the empire was divided into administrative sections with the considerations to geographical boundaries, cultural traits, and the economic output. Each satrapy was ruled by a Satrap, appointed by the central government and sent from the capital. The Satrap was accompanied by a centrally appointed chief judge, commander of satrapal troops, administrative officer, financial officer, and a
“King’s Eye”, responsible for relaying the news of the satrapy to the capital. Maintenance of an exact number of the population of the satrapy was an important task of the financial officer. The satrapy was run by the central administrators according to the local traits and established practices. As usual, not much pressure was applied to change long operating rules.

The autonomous and central nature of the satrapal system aided the successful control and operation of the vast Achaemenid Empire for a long time. It was indeed so successful that it was preserved by subsequent rulers, from Alexander to the Sasanians. 59

The greatest achievement of Darius I was his creation of the “Guidance of Good Conduct”, a series of laws applicable equally throughout the empire. These laws were obviously influenced by the comprehensive laws of Mesopotamian kingdoms, most famously that of the Hammurabi. At the same time, they presented a new possibility in the use of law. Mesopotamian laws were largely local and country bound sets of regulations that more or less were applied to the “heartland” of the Assyrian or Babylonian empires. Local laws of the conquered lands were maintained by the conquerors and no set of universally applicable regulations were available. With the Guidance of Good Conduct, Darius established a universal set of laws applicable equally throughout his empire. While local laws of old countries such as Egypt and Babylon were respected and preserved the prevailing set of legally bounding regulations were dictated by Darius’ Laws. 60

The outcome of the application of the Guidance of Good Conduct was different in various parts of the empire. Apparently, many copies of the laws were made and sent to all the satrapies where they were preserved by the central judge and used for reference. While in places such as Babylon, these laws might have managed to create stability in social conduct, the existence of the laws inside the Iranian Plateau helped to develop the Iranian identity between various cultures of the area. On the other hand, the universal application of the Guidance was adopted by the succeeding
Roman Empire and created the famous “Roman Law”, renowned for its binding power and its influence even in the areas of scientific inquiry. 61

According to Herodotus, the Persian emperor Artaxerxes (5th century B.C.) exempted the inhabitants of four Babylonian villages from taxation in return for their breeding Indian dogs for hunting and war. The dog is only once mentioned with respect in ancient Indian literature and was rarely, if ever, treated as a pet. The exception occurs in the Mahabharata, where the five pandavas and their wife Draupadi take their dog with them on their final pilgrimage to heaven, and the eldest brother Yudhisthira refuses to enter without his faithful friend. It has been suggested that the episode shows Iranian influence, for with the Zoroastrians considered the dog a sacred animal. 62

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Darius is often renowned above all as being a great financier. He fixed the coinage and introduced the golden Daric. He developed commerce within the empire and trade without. For example, he sent an expedition down the Kabul and Indus Rivers, led by the Carian captain Scylax of Caryanda, who explored the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Indus to Suez. 66 Arasto makes also mention of this adventure in his politic book (seven book, chapter 14, patr, 2.) During his reign, the population increased and industries flourished. 67

According to historians such as Herodotus and Achaemenids inscription and modern research, can be state that most of Indian trade was via Iran and Indian merchants were sending their goods to the west via Iran. Iran also was sealing Greek and western goods in India, Thus Iran was a broker between India and the west.
In the province of Bihar, near Rajgir a stone monument was discovered that perhaps was a great wall of the big city in sixth century B.C i.e. Buddha era. That city was in the best condition and prosperous. Some ornaments and jewelry were found in the city that was the same as those of Achemanids. All those belonged to the fourth century B.C. and indicate that relations between Iranian and Indian merchants were active there.

### 3.4 Cultural Relationship

Achaemenian art and architecture also had a significant influence on India. Before the Ashokan period of history, there is not much evidence of epigraphy in India. It has been suggested that the idea of issuing decrees by Ashoka was borrowed from the Achaemenian emperors, especially from Darius. The pillars, with their animal capitals, are influenced by Achaemenian pillars. The use of this means of propagating official messages and the individual style of the inscriptions both suggest Persian and Hellenistic influence.

By approximately 1000 B.C., Indians and Persians had established themselves as distinct cultural and racial entities with their boundaries meeting at Kabul and Sistan.

During the Achaemenids period, some parts of northwest India came under Persian rule. Indian emissaries were present in the courts of the Medes and Emperor Cyrus in 550 – 529 B.C. One of the great Achaemenids emperors was Cyrus. His correct name in the inscriptions is Kurus (Kuru of Aitareya-brahmana and Mahabharata in Sanskrit). Kuru is described as a country of everlasting happiness beyond the most northern ranges of the Himalayas. Cyrus founded the imperial capital of Pasargad or Pars-gard (the seat of Persians). Gard is Garta in Sanskrit, which means a seat.

The audience hall of the Achaemenids emperors was called Apadana. Its Buddhist parallel is Avadana. Darius, the third ruler of the Achaemenids dynasty, sent an expedition to India. His inscriptions refer to his relations with India. The Behistun rock inscription of the column no1 (ancient Bagastana ‘place of Gods’ or Sanskrit
‘Bhagasthana’) dating back to around 518 B.C. includes Gandhar in the list of his subject countries.

Here Darius refers to his language as Aryan.\textsuperscript{72} The Persepolis inscription mentions Punjab as a part of the Persian Empire. The epigraph of Nagsh-i-Rustam shows India as the 24\textsuperscript{th} state of his empire. When Cyrus the Great was invaded by King Croesus of Lydia in Greece, a contemporary Indian king is believed to have rendered military assistance to the Iranian emperor.\textsuperscript{73}

(Pic. 27) Just a few dozen meters from the Shrine of the Double-Headed Eagle sits the Jain Stupa, a relic of the Sirkap city period (2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D.). The shrine is badly ruined. Nothing of the superstructure survives. The persepolitan columns with lion ornamentation that sit on the four corners were brought here from the ruins of the courtyard.

(From"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire").

Among the sculptures found at Naqsh-i-Rustam and –Persepolis is representations of the provinces of the empire of Darius. According to Professor Herzfeld, “All the three representation of Satagu, Gandara and Hindu are identical. They are nude but for a loin cloth and a sort of turban on their heads; and their weapon is a long, broad sword handing
by a strap from the shoulder. As a matter of fact the climate of the plateau of eastern Iran
does not permit, and never permitted such primitive clothing. These three nations were
inhabitants of the low lands of India.\textsuperscript{74}

The Indian province of Darius was the richest in his empire and the most populous.
Herodotus tells us of the wealth and density of the Indian population and of the tribute
paid to Darius.

The culture and civilization of the Achamenids influenced the Indian subcontinent
in the field of literature, architecture and state management. For example, Ashoka as the
greatest emperor of the Mauryan dynasty (273 B.C.) in the Indian subcontinent took the
pattern from the Achaemenids. Before Asoka, Kautilya, who was the minister of
Chandragupta (the founder of Mauryan dynasty and grandfather of Ashoka) wrote
Arthashastra that was about the state management. He also mentioned about the state
management Achamenids in his book. That book had a great impression on Ashoka.\textsuperscript{75}

Ashoka used the art and architecture of the Achaemanids in the construction of
buildings. For example, his royal palaces were influenced by the halls and pillars of
Persepolis.\textsuperscript{76}

Even the form and frame of Ashoka pillars, with four lions at the head, was
influenced by Achaemenids architecture.\textsuperscript{77} Ashoka also used the tradition of Dariush in
writing inscriptions, and left some inscriptions on the Gaya Mountains in the Bihar state.
Moreover, Ashoka has left his writing in Khoroshti line which was written from right to
left that was under the influence of Aramaic and Pahlavi writing in the period of
Achaemenids.\textsuperscript{78}

Of the two scripts employed in India, one evolved from Armaic, which the
Achaemenids scribes employed.\textsuperscript{79} Achaemenids art and architecture had a significant
influence on India. Before the Ashokan period of history, there is no evidence of
epigraphy in India.\textsuperscript{80} It has been suggested that the idea of issuing decrees by Ashoka was
borrowed from the Achaemenids emperors, especially from Darius, although; the tone and content of Ashoka's edicts are different. The pillars, with their animal capitals (fine examples of Mauryan imperial art), are influenced by Achaemenids pillars.\textsuperscript{81} At Kandahar, Ashoka left instructions in both Greek and Aramaic.\textsuperscript{82}

Before Ashoka, Alexander the Great is known to have conquered one part of India, which was earlier still occupied by the Achaemenids. There is some evidence for the fact that Alexander as well as the Achaemenids paved the way for Asoka and his grandfather Chandragupta Maurya, the earliest emperors of Aryan India.\textsuperscript{83} The history of India may be traced from the time of the Achaemenids, who first developed so highly the art of empire-building among the Aryans.

The Achaemenids built good roads, studded with posts; raised strong forts and grand palaces; developed a centralized and efficient administration; minted coins on a uniform system of weight; and engraved their orders and ideas in numerous stone inscriptions. All these features appear in the first empire of India, the Mauryan empire, which, rising on the ruins of the Achaemenids empire in the Indus valley, spread all over India. Alexander the Great, intervened between the two empires, and the accounts of his Indian conquests give some idea of the unrecorded similar exploits of Darius I on one hand, and Chandragupta Maurya on the other.\textsuperscript{84}

**Achaemenid’s Influence on Maurya according to Excavation of Pataliputra**

As long ago as 1896 a summary excavation brought to light a column-capital of a familiar Achaemenid pattern. It has the steeped impost, side-volutes and central pattern of its Persian prototypes. Its design, if not its execution can be attributed to an earlier phase of the transplanted Achaemenid craftsmanship. Two stone legs of a throne of Persian type were also found. Subsequently, in 1912, a more ambitious but still very incomplete excavation seems to have uncovered some part of a large pillared hall, represented by an unframed cluster of some eighty monolithic columns showing the Persian polish. In front of them is a row of massive timber rafts, presumably designed to carry platform of
monumental staircase. Inadequate though the evidence be, it is tolerably clear that we have here a Persian dewan or Apadana or audience-hall, and that were confronted once more with a deliberate, Persianization, that bespeaks the presence of imported ideas and imported master-mason.

Beside the inscriptions, there is some more archaeological evidence for the history of Ashoka. It shows clearly that the most of the equipments of Ashokan imperialism had been borrowed from Persia. According to Sir Martimer Wheeler, an authority on India archaeology, says “I have already suggested the likelihood that at the end of the sixth century B.C., when Achaemenid Persia acquired its Indian province, Persia supplied India, not merely with administrators, but also with new materials and ideas above all, with the use of iron, which now appears in India for the first time, and the idea of a currency, which was minted at Taxila in native guise but on Persian standards, and emerged in the Ganges basin in or shortly after the 5th century B.C. Persia moreover lent India the Aramaic alphabet which, with Aramaic speech, had been the official medium of communication throughout the Achaemenid empire. In India, script was modified to suit the local Prakrit language and, as Kharoshti, was used by Ashoka for his inscription in the north-west. Even as far south as Brahmagiri, the Ashokan scribe has added a word in this alien Kharoshti, though elsewhere in metropolitan India the Brahma script was unchallenged. But the Persian contribution to India did not end with iron and currency and Kharoshti. These were the symbols of that new security which advanced imperial rule imposed along the highway, and of a new burgeoning of inter-regional trade. Local capitals which were also caravan cities sprang up besides the main routes: probably Begram north of Kabul; certainly, as recent work has shown, Charasada (Pushkalavati or Lotus City) on the Peshawar plain; and far-famed Taxila in the Punjab.”

Indeed in Aryan India the term architecture can first be applied unreservedly to the famous sandstone columns, which Ashoka set up as memorials after his conversion to Buddhism. On some of these columns he subsequently carved his pious injunctions to his subjects. It has long been recognized that these columns, without precedent in Indian
architectural forms, represent in partibus the craftsmanship of Persia. Actually, the name, Percepolitan, which is commonly given to them by writers in Indian architecture, is not altogether happy, since the innumerable columns of Persepolis are invariably fluted, whereas those of Ashoka are unfluted, as indeed was substitute, Persian custom. But as for, Persepolitan, we substitute, Persian, or better still, Achaemenid, there can be no dispute. The Chunar sandstone from which Ashoka’s columns are wrought is superbly carved is finished with a lustrous polish of a kind which in India is characteristic of no other age. This is a Persian accomplishment. The masonry of the palaces of Darius and Xerxes goes to the extreme of highly polished stones, looking, when well preserved, like mirrors of black marble. Equally, Persian are the famous lions which crowned the Ashokan column at Saranath, near Banaras, and have been assumed as the Republican badge of India.

**Rock cut:**

The mention of rock-carvers recalls another debt of Ashoka’s to Persian prototypes. From the seventh the century B.C. if not earlier, tombs in the likeness of pillared halls had been cut into the cliffs of Media and Persia. In India, the first of a long and distinguished series of rock-cut structures, were carved in the time of Ashoka out of the hard gneiss of the Barabar hills, nineteen miles of Gaya in southern Bihar. It is significant that they reproduce wooden building a round hut with a thatched roof, an oblong hall or shrine with a vaulted, wood, roof, a monumental doorway imitating bamboo and timber. In other words, the more grandiose Persian idea is adapted to the Indian idiom. At the same time on the Persian tradition of polished stonework surface of the interiors of these humble cells has been varnished until it resembles glass or metal.

**Description of Megasthenes from Pataliputra (Capital of Ashoka)**

Megasthenes was sent by Seleukos as an ambassador to the court of Ghandragupta at Pataliputra. He describes as situated at the junction of the Son and Ganges, as being more than 9 miles and 1 3-4 miles wide. In other words, it was stretched out along the bank of the Ganges in a fashion similar to that of the modern Patna. In the royal palace, as
we are told by Aelian, following Megasthenes, there was much that was, calculated to excite a smiration, and with which neither Susa, with all its costly splendor, nor Ecbatana, with all its magnificence, can vie. In the parks tamed and cultivated plants… and tree branches which the art of the woodman has deftly interwoven ….There are also tanks of great beauty in which they keep fish of enormous size quite tame. The whole description significantly reminiscent of a Persian paradise.

Majumdar several times mentioned the influence of Achaemenid on Maurya art. He said: “The origin of this court–art the Mauryas has a subject of keen dispute among scholars. But the general opinion seems to be that the impetus originally came from outside, from Iran of the Achaemenid emperors. One of the most important functions of Mauryan court–art, like Achaemenian court-art, was to impress and overawe the populace with the power and majesty of its rulers. To this function can be traced the compactness of the solid animal figures, their exaggerated forms and their conventional appearances, also the most imposing stateliness of the columns.”

The excavations of the historic site of Patliputra led Dr. Spooner to what he calls “the Zoroastrian period of Indian History “. The theory that the Zoroastrians had extended their sway as far as the Gangetic valley and ruled at Patliputra as imperial rulers came as a surprise to the scholarly world.

The Iranians, it is possible, had come to India to fight with Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, and lived in India as subject races. Some of these served as chiefs and petty Rajas in the Mauryan times and they probably had a hand in the erection of the Mauryan palaces, which were built after the style of the Persepolitan Halls.

There are good reasons for believing that the regal pomp of the Mauryan Court was to some extent copied from Iran and that the Mauryas employed Iranians as soldieries, architects, masons, and in other capacities. The stone architecture on a large scale, sculpture, and the erection of monuments with inscriptions were due to Iran’s influence
on the Mauryas. It is even possible that the Mauryan palaces were imitated from those at Persepolis. It is also not improbable that Zoroastrian doctrine, tradition, and ritual had some share in the formation of Mahayana Buddhism.  

The Mauryan Empire of India was the sequel to the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, not its reflection.  

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Notes and References

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