

1ST BIENNIAL
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE SOCIETY OF
IRANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY:
"CULTURAL INTERACTIONS,
CONTINUITY AND DISRUPTION"

EDITED BY:

SEYED MEHDI MOUSAVI
SHAHIN ARYAMANESH
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MORTEZA KHANIPOUR



Aryaramna Press



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Monuments and Memory at Pasargadae

Jacob Marc Stavis

The ancient site of Pasargadae, also called Batrakatash in the Elamite language, is often considered to be the first Achaemenid capital founded by Cyrus. Pasargadae is situated on the Dasht-i Morghab plain, one of the most elevated and northerly valleys along the main route between Isfahan and Shiraz in what is now Fars province. Perhaps because of its fewer architectural and sculptural remains, the site remains less well studied than the ostensibly grander later capitals at Persepolis and Susa. The Tomb of Cyrus is in fact the only monument at Pasargadae commented on by Greek historians, and often the only feature mentioned by later travelers, using the Classical sources to both support and refute its identification. Broadly speaking, current interpretations of Pasargadae describe the site as “early” Achaemenid art, a necessary precursor to the “Classical” styles which flourished under Darius and Xerxes. While there is indeed a slightly different flavor to the monuments of Cyrus, it is important to ask new questions of Pasargadae, moving beyond this purely evolutionary model of Achaemenid art.

Excavation History

Although Darius and his successors sponsored major projects elsewhere in the empire, including a new capital at Persepolis and a lavish palace at Susa, Pasargadae likely remained an important locale

throughout the Achaemenid period, especially as the site of Cyrus' tomb. After the conquest of Alexander, however, the site was largely abandoned for centuries, until the tomb of Cyrus was eventually revived as a mosque sometime before the 14th century.¹ The only Classical texts to mention the city focus on Alexander honoring Cyrus at his tomb, and by the Islamic period the monument had in a sense shed its original Achaemenid identity, and was instead called the tomb of the mother of Solomon by local populations.

Scholars thus disputed the location of Pasargadae for centuries, comparing brief descriptions in Strabo and Arrian with the *Mashhad-I Madar-I Solaiman* to both support and refute the identification. These debates are summarized in George Nathaniel Curzon's *Persia and the Persian Question*, wherein he ultimately concluded based upon his own observations that the scattered ruins of the Dasht-i Morghab were in fact those of Pasargadae.² Several Western travelers drew the visible monuments, including the architect and archaeologist Felix Marie Charles Texier in 1840, and Jean-Baptiste Eugene Napoleon Flandin and Xavier Pascale Coste, painter and architect respectively, in 1841. The latter pair surveyed the site as well as the ancient road linking Persepolis and Pasargadae, though the first in-depth study of Pasargadae did not come until the early twentieth century under the auspices of Ernst Herzfeld.

Herzfeld's 1908 PhD thesis corroborated Curzon's identification of Pasargadae as Cyrus' capital, but he was unable to back up his hypotheses with archaeological evidence because the French delegation still had a monopoly on all excavations in Persia. His close relations with the Iranian elite and authorities eventually permitted him to become the first foreigner to excavate in Iran after the dissolution of this monopoly in 1928. He focused on the two palaces and gate, summarizing his 28 days of fieldwork in a short report of 12

¹ Excavations by Stronach revealed a "small city" from the late 4th to the early 2nd century BC, which was reoccupied in the early Islamic period. However, no written testimonies exist between the Classical Greek historians and thirteenth and fourteenth century texts, which refer to the tomb as belonging to *Madar-I Solaiman*. Boucharlat, R. 2015, 30.

² Curzon, 1892, 70-90.

poorly-illustrated pages.¹ Herzfeld frequently sketched the architectural remains and sculptural fragments, and he collaborated with the architect Friedrich Krefter to reconstruct the plan of the site which would remain “unsurpassed until the end of the twentieth century despite the later valuable fieldworks.”²

Shortly after Herzfeld’s initial excavations, Aurel Stein worked at Pasargadae as part of a broader survey of Fars, with the objective of situating the site in a broader context. His work on the small mounds southeast of the Achaemenid ruins (*Do Tulan*) revealed a small fourth-third millennium settlement, but the absence of anything later until the Achaemenid period suggested Cyrus founded Pasargadae on what was practically uninhabited terrain.³ Stein’s map, which largely complemented Herzfeld’s was supplemented by aerial photographs of the site taken in 1935-6 by E.F. Schmidt, who had previously excavated at Persepolis. After the Second World War, the Iranian Archaeological Service continued work at Pasargadae under the leadership of Ali Sami. Between 1949 and 1955, Sami completed plans of the palaces and gate begun by Herzfeld, as well as revealed a series of stone watercourses, an irrigation system, and parts of the *Tall-I Takht*. He was also responsible for launching preservation initiatives, enclosing the monuments within baked brick walls and leveling the surroundings to prevent water runoff.⁴

From 1961 to 1963, David Stronach, on behalf of the British Institute of Persian Studies, conducted perhaps the most comprehensive excavations at Pasargadae, which he subsequently published in 1978. His monumental volume, replete with updated maps and plans (figure 1), offers a detailed examination of the site’s topography and monuments as well as a catalogue of objects. This study, alongside Carl Nylander’s *Achaemenid Imperial Art*, suggests that “Cyrus carefully

¹ Ernst Herzfeld, “Bericht über die Ausgrabungen von Pasargadae 1928” *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran I* (1929-1930): 4-16. .

² Remy Boucharlat, “Archaeological Approaches and their Future Directions in Pasargadae,” in *World Heritage in Iran: Perspectives on Pasargadae*, edited by Ali Mozaffari and Brian Graham (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 35.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

planned his prestigious buildings by consciously integrating elements from various parts of the newly founded empire," in order to make Pasargadae "a mirror of the diversity and wealth of his already World Empire, just as Darius would some decades later at Persepolis."¹ This anthropocentric understanding of the architecture remains the predominant interpretation at both sites, and while it is not incorrect, art history as a discipline has turned to other modes of inquiry that are worth exploring.

An Original Obsession

One question that remains largely unanswered at Pasargadae is how do the monuments work? What was the purpose of these various edifices and other interventions into the landscape? Most of the ruins at Pasargadae are referred to by utilitarian designations (Gate R, Palace S, Palace P) or conventional nicknames (the *Zendan*, or prison). The notable exception is the tomb of Cyrus (figure 2), the only monument at Pasargadae commented on by Greek historians and often the only feature mentioned by later travelers to the site, who used the Classical descriptions to both prove and refute its identification with Cyrus. Still, the textual sources leave us frustrated: all refer to an inscription on the tomb, but of eight royal Achaemenid tombs known to date (Cyrus at Pasargadae, and seven rock-cut tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam near Persepolis), only one (that of Darius) is inscribed.²

Most art historical scholarship on the tomb of Cyrus thus far has concentrated on the question of origins: what inspired the architectural plan and who was responsible for its construction? The basic design combines a high plinth of six receding tiers and a modest, gabled tomb chamber accessed by small double doors. Inside, one encounters a small room with smooth, flat walls and a rounded moulding just below

¹ *Ibid.*, 38. Regarding Persepolis, see Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*.

² Greek historians admittedly often quoted at second or third hand, leading Stronach to suggest a conflation of epitaphs (e.g. CMa) from the adjacent palace and the tomb. David Stronach, "The Tomb of Cyrus," in *Pasargadae. A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 26.

the ceiling. A long hollow space within the roof seems to have relieved stress from the span below, though its function remains unclear.¹ The tomb is at once both simple and imposing, standing apart from the other major monuments to dominate the southern half of the Morghab plain, its massive masonry reaching a height of nearly six meters. In some ways the stepped form evokes Elamite ziggurats as well as Urartian platform temples, yet there is no clear precedent for this type of mortuary architecture in Iran or Mesopotamia. Instead one must look further west.

Carl Nylander's seminal work, *Ionians in Pasargadae*, examines the Greek contribution, which he suggests has been the most controversial aspect of discussions of origins and influences on Achaemenid art. From its inception, Achaemenid art history was written according to a presumed east west binary, an analogical extension of the belligerent relationship represented in Classical texts like Herodotus' *Histories*, and thus the suggestion that Achaemenid art could stem from the same peoples who later built monuments like the Parthenon was practically inconceivable. Herzfeld's report from Pasargadae was among the earliest analyses to complicate this relationship, while Scheil's publication of the Susa foundation charter offered philological support for the Ionian involvement.² Considering sculpture, Frankfort subsequently noted the Greek influence in plasticity on Achaemenid reliefs, and Richter took the extreme position, surveying across genres to describe Achaemenid art as "a peripheral province of the Greek artistic world."³ While Richter's theory was seized upon by classical scholars in particular, anti-Greek sentiments persisted, and further studies continued this partisan debate without much progress.

Nylander criticizes previous stylistic analyses as largely vague and often resulting in contradictory verdicts. He focuses his study precisely

¹ Sami suggested this space was used as the actual burial chamber, though neither historical nor structural evidence supports such a theory. David Stronach, "The Tomb of Cyrus," 38.

² Jean- Vincent Scheil, "Inscriptions des Achéménides à Suse: Charte de foundation du palais," in *Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse* vol. XXI (Paris: Leroux, 1929): 3-34.

³ C. Nylander, "Origins of Achaemenian Art" in *Ionians in Pasargadae. Studies in Old Persian Architecture* (Uppsala: Universitetet Stockholm, 1970), 15.

on the identity of the craftsmen who built the Achaemenid monuments, arguing it is easy for foreign craftsmen to adopt iconographic formulae and "procedures concerning the superficial rendering of form," but for an "artist" it is "difficult, if not impossible, to renounce his deeper artistic heritage... to change the syntax, the structure and the conception of the whole."¹ Nylander describes the dichotomy of archaic and classic phases of Achaemenid art represented by Pasargadae and Persepolis respectively, and his book takes a Morellian approach to better understand the technical underpinnings of the former.

The surfaces of the worked stone monuments on site (as well as unfinished monuments) reveal the tools and techniques used for their manufacture. Very few stonemasons tools have been found on site, likely due to iron corrosion, and a lack of written or pictorial sources describing the construction process leaves the stones with their tool marks as Nylander's primary evidence. A thorough description of stone cutting practices and materials leads him to suggest the techniques used for sculpture and relief were essentially the same as those used for architecture, though we have little unfinished sculpture as compared to architecture, especially at Pasargadae.² Ultimately Nylander presents a technically advanced and refined artisan tradition, the aesthetic sophistication of which "may justly be said to rival that of Egypt and Ionia, and the great care devoted in Iran to constructional detail and solidity is unique in the early Near East outside the Egyptian and eastern Greek and Lydian spheres."³

Although this connoisseurial approach provides interesting technical data for comparative purposes, still Nylander falls victim to the enduring East West dichotomy and tropes about the stagnant Orient. Greek and Lydian workmen, he concludes, are the necessary catalyst to motivate Achaemenid creativity:

In the East a kind of unintellectual, static and conservative, irresponsible and passive spirit seems to be manifest in a certain lack

¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

² *Ibid.* 35.

³ C. Nylander, "Origins of Achaemenian Masonry" in *Ionians in Pasargadae. Studies in Old Persian Architecture* (1970), 47.

of interest in solidity, in improvement and rationalization of the working traditions, especially considering the many disturbances with which unruly nature used to curb man's ambition to create for more than a short time. In the Greek sphere, even in the earliest stage of monumental construction in stone, there is a dynamic note, a continuous striving for better results with less expenditure of labor, time and money. We sense a dynamic relation to the materials and their possibilities, a kind of freedom, a questioning of tradition, an analysis of the issues involved and a deduction of fundamental principles.¹

For too long Achaemenid art historical scholarship has narrowly fixated upon questions of ethnicity, effectively equating the material monuments with the artisans and stonemasons responsible for their construction. How might we instead benefit from less anthropocentric modes of inquiry?

Accepting the identification of the tomb of Cyrus, we might ask ourselves, why this form? What does it do? We do not know how Cyrus' own ancestors were buried, nor do we know much about the burial methods adopted by Median kings, and the only older local tombs are quite primitive by comparison, basic cist graves with pitched roof slabs.² The kings of Mesopotamia were by and large interred in humble tombs, and lavished with grave goods rather than architectural or sculptural adornment as we observe in their palaces.³ The decision to build a conspicuous monument like the tomb of Cyrus suggests an evolving relationship to death and royal legacy. Given the closest parallels for this type are indeed found in the western reaches of the empire, in Lydia and Ionia, some comparative analysis might provide insights about the role of such a structure in Achaemenid imperial realm.

¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

² David Stronach, "The Tomb of Cyrus," 39-40.

³ The discrepancy between humble funerary architecture and lavish grave goods is perhaps best demonstrated by the Assyrian queens' tombs at Nimrud. Muzahim Mahmoud Hussein, *Nimrud: the queens' tombs* (Chicago: Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, 2016).

Tumulus as Sema

Lydia offers perhaps the best comparanda to the early Achaemenid empire in terms of both political and material structures. The golden age of the Lydian kingdom, from the Mermnad dynasty down through the Persian conquest, was reached through “symbiosis with its neighbors: Ionians, Carians, and Phrygians.”¹ The Achaemenid empire might similarly be understood as a collection of satrapies, a confederation distinguished from, for example, the Neo-Assyrian empire, which relied on torturous tactics of mass deportation to control its citizens.² Lydian material culture often shares a variety of features with “East Greek” objects, while proximity to and the ultimate Lydian takeover of Phrygia likewise led to mutual borrowings in material and perhaps linguistic culture. Additionally the Lydian kings were in contact with both Mesopotamian rulers and Saite Pharaohs, expanding the reaches of their cultural milieu further south and east.³

Yet to describe Lydia as simply derivative is misleading, particularly in the building of the capital. Lydian Sardis may be distinguished from Phrygian Gordion and likened to later Pasargadae in that the citadel of Sardis is not built on a stratified mound accumulated through generations of settlement, destruction and rebuilding. Instead the city is “set upon a mountain spur dominating the Hermus plain by its natural elevation and strategic position,” and what remains of the unfortunately eroded city is “both impressive and surprising in its monumentality: terraces with ashlar retaining walls, [and] the masonry with its drafted edges of excellent quality, connected by stairs”⁴ (figure 4). Such masonry is likewise observed in

¹ Machteld J. Mellink, “Lydia and Sardis in Anatolian Context,” in *Sardis: Twenty-seven years of discovery*, edited by Eleanor Guralnik (Chicago: The Society, 1987), 18.

² Reinhard Bernbeck, “Imperialist Networks: Ancient Assyria and the United States,” *Present Pasts* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2010): 142-168.

³ Taking the maximalist position, Mellink suggests “the capture of Sardis by Cyrus and the Persians in 547 BC was to some extent a case of *Lydia capta ferum victorem cepit*, as is evident from the prominent role of Sardis in the history and culture of the Persian empire and other empires subsequently.” Mellink, 19.

⁴ Previously identified by Stronach and Nylander as the likely sources for early Achaemenid forms observed at Pasargadae. *Ibid.*

the tomb chambers of the nearby Bin Tepe cemetery north of the Hermus River (figure 5).

The term “tumulus” is used to describe the artificial mounds covering a tomb chamber. In such an arrangement the deceased is at once both interred and elevated, as these mounds literally stick out from the natural landscape, raising a sort of presence, even though the inner architectural components may not be visible. The Lydians were not the first people to build tumuli in the region. Tumulus type burials were introduced into Anatolia during the Iron Age, though comparable tombs are observed throughout the southern and eastern Mediterranean as well as further north towards Thrace and the Black Sea. The timber and earth tumuli of the Phrygian aristocracy at Gordion are among the most famous examples, though these are perhaps better known for their luxurious contents than the structures themselves.¹

Whereas the chambers within the Phrygian tumuli lack doorways, the Lydian tumuli, like the Tomb of Cyrus, feature stone chambers with doorways and sometimes, anterooms and short dromoi, which is to say they are “symbolically and practically provided with access.”² Considering the role of doors in sacred and mortuary architecture, Orhan Bingöl suggests that tomb doors, “both functionally and symbolically, have a similar meaning as naos doors,” in that they belong to “those who have finally arrived at immortality,” either by religious dogma or monumental commemoration.³ The comparison is also apt in the case of the Pasargadae, since unlike the tumuli which were covered with a thick layer of earth, the tomb of Cyrus remained accessible in its finished state.

Lydian tumuli are also valuable comparanda in that previous studies have often focused on identifying the ethnic identity of the

¹ Likely the descendants of “timber-lined, covered burial pits resembling kurgan burials in southern Russia and Scythian burials, which have wooden burial chambers covered by piles of rubble and large earth mounds.” *Ibid*, 20.

² *Ibid*.

³ Orhan Bingöl, “A ‘Door’ Between Two Worlds. A reflection on tumuli,” in *Tumulus as Sema*, edited by Olivier Henry and Ute Kelp (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 450.

owners, particularly in the case of tumuli beyond Sardis.¹ Early studies of Lydian tumuli focused primarily on Bin Tepe as the presumed royal cemetery, with only limited attention given to those tumuli of greater Lydia. In fact the tumulus form seems to have carried prestige well beyond the capital: more than 500 Lydian tumuli have been documented outside of Bin Tepe, with larger clusters generally interpreted as symbolic markers of Lydian (and later Perso-Lydian) “family estates that probably controlled rural modes of production and resource exploitation with continuing strong connections to the capital at Sardis.”² Putting aside these questions of ethnicity and allegiance, I wish to revisit the Sardis tumuli to consider issues of space and place.

Lydian Sardis was not built on a historic man-made tell, but was instead constructed on a strategic and easily defensible natural outcrop, though this is not to suggest the region is void of earlier archaeological or cultural significance. The Bin Tepe necropolis sits roughly ten kilometers north of Sardis on a limestone ridge, a commanding and central position invested with ancestral and sacred qualities. Aiming to reassess the meaning of Iron Age tumuli in Lydia, the Central Lydia Archaeological Survey has identified a network of Middle and Late Bronze Age citadels to show that the Bin Tepe tumuli were neither the only nor the first monumental sites in the area. None of these citadels was reinhabited after the Late Bronze Age collapse, yet the continuous occupation of smaller nearby settlements as well as the construction of Iron Age tumuli in close proximity appear to indicate collective knowledge of these sites. Thus we might suggest the Bin Tepe tumuli are monumentalized not only through grand form and opulent contents, but also through their location.

The Bin Tepe ridge is not only directly visible from Sardis, visually communicating with the Lydian seat of power, but also may be considered the site of meaningful memories of a sprawling Bronze Age

¹ Olivier Henry, “Marking Karian Soil. Lydian Tumuli in Karia, Sixth to Fourth Century BC,” in *Tumulus as Sema*, edited by Olivier Henry and Ute Kelp (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016): 429-444. Christina Luke and C.H. Roosevelt, “Memory and Meaning in Bin Tepe, the Lydian Cemetery of the Thousand Mounds,” in *Tumulus as Sema*, edited by Olivier Henry and Ute Kelp (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016): 407-428.

² *Ibid*, 410.

network of power centered on the Gygaean lake. The ridge forms a physical bridge between the lake and the Hermus River, bodies of water associated with both sacred and mythical heroes.¹ Excavations have yet to reveal significant earlier settlement within the Dasht-I Morghab, but the combination of above ground mortuary architecture and (man-made) water features at Pasargadae is nonetheless striking. What sort of associations might this pairing evoked for the visitor instead?

Monumental Presence

What do the monuments at Pasargadae do? How can we describe their function, beyond their utilitarian or conventional names? In his book *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East*, Ömür Harmanşah interprets the building of cities as an architectural practice, but also a type of public celebration and a source of political discourse. Eschewing earlier theories of “disembedded capitals” which focus primarily on the temporally particular act of founding cities, he instead seeks to contextualize urbanization within long term settlement trends, landscape processes, and broader environment histories.² This holistic approach leads him to describe the construction of cities and commemorative monuments as well as the cultivation of the landscapes as components of what he calls “spatialized narratives of the state,” in which “the political landscapes became cultural artifacts that represented the utopian ideals of the governing elites on the one hand and attempted to construct an image of ecological prosperity in the collective imagination on the other.”³ It is with this perspective in mind that I wish to re-examine the tomb of Cyrus and associated monuments at Pasargadae not only at their moment of creation, but instead through and even after the Achaemenid period.

One way we can shift the conversation is from origins to experience: in turning our focus from reference to sense, we might ask,

¹ *Ibid.*, 418.

² Alexander Joffe, “Disembedded Capitals in Western Asian Perspective,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 40, No. 3: 549-580.

³ Ömür Harmanşah, Introduction, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.

how has the erection of such monuments altered the way one experienced Pasargadae as a site? Following Lefebvre, the space of Pasargadae may be understood as a social product, generated through the activities of a collective body.¹ Harmanshah examines the relationship between the construction of monuments and the idea of the ceremonial event (or festival), “a civic spectacle that transforms the society through the society’s bodily participation, while it also transforms the spaces within which the event occurs.”² He clarifies that such spatial practices “are not confined to building activities, but equally encompass all practices that contribute to the formation of material and symbolic assemblages of spaces.”³ In defining Pasargadae as a social space, I suggest that the site was not only built through the collective activities of various teams of labor, but also was experienced (and effectively “reproduced”) through various forms of social action including ritual practices and state spectacles, and even everyday movement.

While the architectural form of the tomb is atypical of Near Eastern practice, the centrality of the king to society in Mesopotamia from the earliest periods is striking, and a monument which literally raises his presence makes sense. The Mesopotamian tradition has celebrated the king as protector and provider through texts and visual monuments alike as early as the fourth millennium BC.⁴ As Amelie Kuhrt writes, “civilized existence was conceived to represent a god-given and divinely established order, and the king acted as its guardian against chaos which was unleashed by the uncontrolled, anarchic powers of demons.”⁵ It was the king’s prerogative to oversee the construction and maintenance of urban infrastructure as well as the provisioning of the temple economy to provide for the gods, who protected his people in turn. The centrality of the king in Achaemenid art has been

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 1991.

² Ömür Harmanshah, 106.

³ Ömür Harmanshah, 107.

⁴ ZB textbook citation?

⁵ Amelie Kuhrt, “Usurpation, conquest, and ceremonial: from Babylon to Persia,” in *Rituals of Royalty: power and ceremonial in traditional societies*, edited by David Cannadine and Simon Price (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 30.

previously discussed by Margaret Cool Root, whose seminal book *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* explains the development of a royal iconography at Persepolis as a means to provide an idealized vision of kingship and empire. Perhaps we can expand her argument beyond the iconographic level to consider the phenomenological response to monuments at Pasargadae.

Important to this inquiry is a brief consideration of the ontological status of the image and the practice of image making in the ancient Near East. Images in the Mesopotamian tradition were not the unidirectional referential devices we interpret them to be in Platonic discourse, wherein the image points back to some essential form. Assyro-Babylonian aesthetics disregards this duality of real and mimetic, or in Derridean terms, soul and body, and instead considers the individual “not bipartite but a multifaceted assemblage of parts.”¹ Images, or *salmu*, to use an Akkadian term, were not mere illusions of their referents, but in fact valid and coextensive parts of that referent. In other words, there was an ontological equivalence between a thing and its representation. This was particularly important in the context of divination. Zainab Bahrani explains that for the Mesopotamians, “the domain of the real by definition includes a multilayered and complex system of signs that might be described as a metasemiotic real as opposed to metaphysical.”² They were not superstitious so much as empirical in their observation of signs and patterns, whether these occurred in textual exegesis or the natural environment around them.

Representational practices permitted patrons to take preemptive measures to avoid unsavory fates or to ensure a favorable legacy. Both the creation and desecration of images of the king for such purposes is well attested throughout Mesopotamian antiquity, while the practice of votive image-making was available to anyone who could afford the

¹ Zainab Bahrani, “Salmu: Representation in the Real,” in *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 121.

² *Ibid.*, 127.

materials and labor required.¹ In each case, the image functioned as a viable extension of the person for whom it was created. For the everyday worshiper, a representation could manifest a perpetual act of devotion, perhaps to be ritually installed before a god image (likewise a legitimate extension of the deity). We may call these performative images, borrowing a term from Austin's explanation of performative utterances.²

It is also worth noting that the term *salmu* is not restricted to mimetic imagery. Bahrani explains we cannot approach *salmu* "from the point of view of the opposition of person/image," and advocates against the translation "portrait": "the portrait is a copy of a real person (whether one thinks of it as encoded or pure). *Salmu*, on the other hand, has the potential of becoming an entity in its own right, a being rather than a copy of a being."³ This mode of thinking shares elements with contemporary semiology, in that representations may be at once both encoded and embedded into the real. If representation is understood a making present, *salmu* might be interpreted as "a mere facet of presence," part of an immeasurable whole also including but not limited to one's name (written and uttered), organic body, and shadow. In fact royal texts describing the installation of a royal monument often include the phrase "*šitir šumiya u salam šarrutiya*," roughly, "the written [characters] of my name and [visual] image of my kingship."⁴ I suggest we might try understand the monuments of Pasargadae as *salmu*, aspects of distributed presence.

We can assume that Cyrus was somewhat familiar with Mesopotamian visual practices, or at least the ontological status of Mesopotamian visual images, based on contemporary accounts which describe his conquest of Babylon. In the Cyrus Cylinder (figure 6), we read about a divinely-sanctioned and nearly bloodless takeover by the

¹ Regarding royal substitution, see *ibid.*, 129-131. On votive production, see Zainab Bahrani, "Votive Offerings: The Essence of Beings and Things," in *Mesopotamia: Ancient Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017), 50-51.

² J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

³ Zainab Bahrani, "Salmu: Representation in the Real," 125.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

Persian king after Nabonidus has neglected his duties as king, instead enjoying a lengthy sojourn in service of the moon god at Teima. The text recounts how Marduk, chief god of Babylon, abandons his city, and the suffering the Babylonians endure as a result of his absence. Marduk seeks out a suitable ruler to take charge of his city, and eventually settles on Cyrus of Persia, whom he ultimately leads back to Babylon, where he is welcomed as a savior king. This document in many ways may be understood as a work of propaganda, as it conveniently downplays the battle of Opis, won by the Persians in 539.

Although it may not represent a faithful recording of the events, the Cyrus Cylinder nonetheless indicates an awareness of the importance of images and image-making in Babylonia, particularly in the context of divine and royal order. Cyrus explains:

I sought the welfare of the city of Babylon and all its sacred centers...

From [Babylon] to Aššur and (from) Susa,

Agade, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turna, Der, as far as the region of Gutium, the sacred centers on the other side of the Tigris, whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time,

I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there, to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes.¹

He continues to describe his building activities, completing projects abandoned by the deserter king and adding new structures, previously unsurpassed in quality. He also notes encountering a building inscription with the name of the Assyrian king Aššurbanipal.

This likely refers to a foundation inscription, a well-attested Mesopotamian object type first appearing in the Early Dynastic period. Originally these were anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figurines with a nail or peg-shaped end, which were inscribed and buried in the foundations of buildings alongside a host of other auspicious objects to serve a protective function. An Early Dynastic limestone foundation figure (figure 7) in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, for example, represents the upper half of a man with his hands clasped in prayer, while the lower half is inscribed:

¹ Cyrus Cylinder, 30-32. (From Livius, after Hallo and Younger 2003; verify?)

For the (goddess) Namma,
 Wife of (the god) An,
 Lugalkisalsi,
 King of Uruk
 And king of Ur
 Erected
 This temple of Namma¹

The Sumerian inscription identifies the building which it is meant to protect, but also notably names the donor, Lugakisalsi. The iconography of the upper half is not mimetic, but instead largely adheres to the priest king archetype we see across numerous monuments from the Uruk and Early Dynastic periods.² It is the inscription, especially the invocation of specific names and acts, which makes the object particularly effective. The foundation figure is likewise a distribution of presence, a votive object which concretizes the pious act of temple building and will continue to oversee the house of the goddess Namma long after the king's death.

Over time the anthropoid form of foundation figures became less popular, while the inscriptions themselves became lengthier and more detailed, yielding the clay and stone prisms typical of the second and first millennia (figure 8). Foundation inscriptions also demonstrate a Mesopotamian awareness of the past, in that often these were rediscovered in antiquity by later rulers in the process of ritual rebuilding and repair, as we read in the case of the Cyrus Cylinder, which is also most likely a foundation inscription.³ It was important

¹ Joachim Marzahn, "Foundation Figure of Lugalkisalsi," in *Art of the First Cities*, edited by Joan Aruz and Ronald Wallenfels (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art Press, 2003), 64-65.

² E.g. alabaster priest king statue (Iraq Museum, IM 61986); Stele of Ushumgal (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 58.29)

³ The exact provenience of this cylinder is unknown but it was most likely excavated from a wall in Babylon. Hormuzd Rassam, who was not on site at the time of its excavation, has referred to the findspot as Omran/Tell Imran ibn Ali, and also the ruins of Jimjima village, indicated indiscriminately on different maps. The cylinder text itself mentions the great wall of Babylon, Imgur-Enlil, which ran just south of the Imran ibn

that these objects were carefully handled and ultimately redeposited in their original findspot, effectively preserving the archaeological record for later inquiries. In some cases the reigning king would add his own foundation inscription alongside that of his predecessors, continuing tradition and furthering a dialogue across generations.¹

Returning to Pasargadae, I would argue that the various monuments and interventions into the landscape may be understood as a dissemination of presence by or on behalf of Cyrus. As previously mentioned, in terms of form the tomb of Cyrus is perhaps most closely paralleled by the architectural structures contained within the earthen mounds of Lydian tumuli. Scholars across disciplines and subfields interested in tumuli have noted “their impact on the landscape, their allurements, as well as their symbolic reference to a glorious past,” though few have interrogated the ontology of these monuments.² The tomb of Cyrus stands apart from the other major monuments at Pasargadae, its massive stonework and minimal decoration creating “an impression of dignity, simplicity, and strength.”³

Built to safeguard the physical body, the tomb might be described as *banû*, an adjectival form of the Akkadian verb *banû*, “to build, construct, form,” which translates to “well-formed, well-made, of good quality, fine, or beautiful.” The verb is used to describe building large-scale projects such as a city, a wall, or a canal, but also art objects and

Ali mound. John Curtis, “The Cyrus Cylinder,” in *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning for the Middle East* (London: British Museum, 2013),

¹ eg Shamash tablet from E-Babbar temple, dated to the reign of Nabu-apla-iddina, discovered with copies in deposit box inscribed by Nabopolassar. Zainab Bahrani, “Babylonian Sculpture: Looking to the Past,” in *Mesopotamia: Ancient Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017), 273-278.

² Such supra-regional interest led to a 2009 conference and subsequent publication of the volume *Tumulus as Sema: space, politics, culture and religion in the First Millennium BC*. Luke and Roosevelt suggest that Lydian kings chose to build their tumuli at Bin Tepe to associate themselves with and co-opt local memories of heroes and sacred meanings. Henry, seeing the tumuli as ethnic markers, examines tumuli from North Karia to reveal the use of Lydian burial traditions in shaping the landscape and asserting control over a foreign land.

³ David Stronach, “The Tomb of Cyrus,” 26.

architectural monuments including stelae, statues, and tombs.¹ To encounter such a monument was to encounter a bit of royal essence. Irene Winter explains that *banû*, “meaning ‘to build, also ‘to generate,’” is a literary descriptor frequently applied to mytho-historical heroes and rulers, as well as gods and goddesses.² Taking the Akkadian victory stele of Naram Sin (figure 9) as a case study, Winter identifies good conformation (i.e. *banû*) of the main figure as one of four chief “positive signs of value inscribed in the ruler’s body,” and argues that these qualities “had to exist within a lexicon of cultural value before they could be deployed as part of a politicized aesthetic.”³ As previously stated, the Mesopotamian viewer existed in a metasemiotic real, and the body, like nature or a text, was encoded with signs. Winter’s interpretation of the Stele of Naram Sin is especially concerned with the representation of *kuzbu* (roughly, “charisma” or “sexual allure”) as a quality heavily associated with the Akkadian royal body and increasingly machismo aspects of kingship, though the other three characteristics she examines – *banû* (“good form”), *damqu* (“auspiciousness”), and *baštu* (“vigor” or “vitality”) – are continually associated with the ideal ruler in Mesopotamia long after the fall of Akkad. Given that these terms are all likewise used to describe architectural monuments, I would suggest that like a figurative statue or stela, the tomb of Cyrus might be also understood as a sort of *salmu*, conveying presence not only through the physical body it protects, but also through architectural form.⁴

A further example to demonstrate the encoding of presence in ancient Near Eastern monuments comes from the third dynasty of Ur. Winter has examined the canonical corpus of Gudea statues (figures 10, 11) and associated Sumerian texts to make similar claims about certain characteristics which recur in images of “the able-bodied ruler.” She suggests that features such as the wide ears and large eyes

¹ CAD *banû*.

² Irene Winter, “Sex, Rhetoric, and the Public Monuemnt: The Alluring Body of the Male Ruler in Mesopotamia,” in *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near Easy, Egypt, Greece, Italy* edited by N.B. Kampen and B. Bergman (New York: Cambridge University Press), 11.

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ CAD B, D.

are not simply formal stylistic choices, but qualities that bear meaning linked to divine epithets, designating the ruler who pays attention to his people, and who is looked upon with favor. For our purposes, Winter draws connections between the height and impressive proportions of the statues to texts which describe Gudea's "rightful head made to stand out in the assembly by (his personal god) Ningišzida." His "outstanding" height conveys capacity for leadership, a visual parallel to the Sumerian title *Lugal*, or "big man."¹ The tomb, reaching nearly 35 feet in height, is likewise a commanding presence standing out against the Dasht-I Morghab landscape. Such a towering funerary monument does not only convey symbolic prestige, but quite literally lifts Cyrus, imparting an authoritative air high above the surrounding plain.

The viewer moving about Pasargadae cannot but help encounter the presence of Cyrus by virtue of his salmu. Stronach describes tomb's setting as "masterly... its position is such that it attracts the eye from almost any vantage point."² Of course, given the scarcity of architectural remains from Pasargadae, one ought to wonder if the less well-preserved structures including Gate R and Palaces P and S might also have possessed *banû*, *damqu*, or *baštu*, and if so, might we also think of these monuments as examples of the royal image? While aspects of their formal design are left to speculation, I would suggest there is in fact another reason why we might understand these buildings, and perhaps the whole Pasargadae complex, as similarly perpetuating Achaemenid presence.

The Inscriptions

Three palatial structures have been excavated within the Pasargadae precinct, conventionally referred to as Gate R, Palace S, and Palace P. Separated by distances of over 200 meters, the apparently random distribution of these units has led some scholars to describe Pasargadae as modeled after a royal encampment, perhaps a nod to

¹ Irene Winter, "The Body of the Able Ruler: Toward an Understanding of the Statues of Gudea," in *On Art in the Ancient Near East* Vol. 2 (Boston: Brill, 2010), 156.

² David Stronach, "The Tomb of Cyrus," 26.

the Persians nomadic origins. Stronach notably refutes this argument, instead stressing formal links between the gardens, pavilions, and palaces in at least one area of the site.¹

Gate R (figure 12), situated near the eastern limit of the site, was a freestanding building, a hypostyle hall entered by two main and two side doorways.² From an art historical standpoint, the gatehouse is noteworthy for featuring the only basically in tact architectural sculpture (figure 13) at Pasargadae, curiously combining a wide variety of iconographic motifs in new ways. A winged genius stands in profile facing right, barefooted, his right arm raised in a gesture of prayer. He wears the long, fringed garment familiar from Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs and a simple cuff on his wrist. His closely cropped beard is rendered as a series of knots, while his hair curves around the ear in stylized, flat bands. His four wings are shown en face, the plumage varied between the upper and lower sets. Most unusual is the headdress, which some have likened to the *atef* crown known from Egyptian art, though closer inspection reveals key distinctions. Whereas the *atef* elaborates on the traditional white crown by adding feathers to either side, the Pasargadae headdress features three equally sized elements reminiscent of bowling pins with radiating feathers or leaves, perched atop undulating horns, which terminate in cobra heads.³ The crown is symmetrical, though it is not immediately clear whether it is depicted in profile or en face. Many have commented on the range of cultural influences observed in this

¹ David Stronach, "The Royal Garden," in *Pasargadae. A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 107-112.

² Reconstructions are partially based on comparisons with the Gate of Xerxes at Persepolis, as well as the majestic size of the column bases suggesting an especially soaring elevation. David Stronach, "Gate R," in *Pasargadae. A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 47.

³ There is considerable variety in how both the hairstyle and this crown have been copied in line drawings of this admittedly eroded relief. Compare for instance the reproduction in Henri Frankfort's *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (pl. 427) to Eugène Flandin's version in *Voyage en Perse* (pl. 198).

apparent hybrid figure, though this obsession with understanding its origins has overshadowed consideration of what the relief does.

Besides figural representation, the relief was originally surmounted by a trilingual inscription, which reads “I, Cyrus, the king, the Achaemenid,” in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian Akkadian cuneiform.¹ The semantic content connects this text to earlier Mesopotamian building inscriptions, though the trilingual format is a hallmark of the Achaemenids. Much ink has been spilled over the question of whether the inscription was carved under Cyrus or added later by Darius, as most scholars agree it was the latter who oversaw the invention of Old Persian cuneiform for monumental purposes. I will return to this question shortly. The inscription exhibits a calligraphic quality, as if the script were designed specifically for display. A far cry from alphabetic Aramaic, the contemporary vernacular, the cuneiform signs are elegantly carved with precision, suggesting a sense of authority for even the illiterate viewer. Together the image and text evoke a commanding presence in this self-proclaimed Achaemenid monument.

Palace S, also called the audience hall, likewise consists of a rectangular hypostyle hall surrounded by columned porticoes on all four sides (figure 14). In terms of sculptural remains, fragments of the capitals include a horned and crested lion, a bull, and an abstracted horse (unique among Achaemenid figural capitals), while the scant remains of reliefs which adorned the four entrances of the hall show only the lowest parts of the composition. In the northwest portal, we see the bare legs and feet of a human followed by a monster with talons, as well as the end of an elaborated belt tie (figure 15). Based on comparison with Assyrian reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib, Stronach suggests these may have represented a short-skirted warrior and a lion demon, though the meanings of such images have long puzzled scholars, even in the case of more complete reliefs.² Carvings

¹ The last visitor to see the CMA inscription was John Ussher in 1861. By the time Stolze made photographs of the site in 1874, the upper part of the jamb had been removed. David Stronach, “Gate R,” 48.

² David Stronach, “Palace S,” in *Pasargadae. A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press,

from the southeast doorway show the lower part of a barefooted human figure wearing a fish-skin cloak followed by the legs and tail of a rampant bull (figure 16). Based on Assyrian parallels Stronach suggests these represent a fish-cloaked genius and a bull-man – likewise familiar iconography, the precise meaning of which is still debated. The southwest doorway reliefs (figure 17), which are the most damaged of the three, seem to depict two long-robed barefooted human figures and the leading foot of a third human figure following a quadruped, described variously as “three tribute bearers bringing gifts of horses, as priests leading a bovine animal to sacrifice, and as warriors leading horses.”¹ Based on the split hooves Stronach rejects the identification of a horse in favor of a bovine, but otherwise leaves the meaning of this scene open to interpretation. Of the original eight stone antae, or corner pillars, three remain standing – one on either side of the southwest portico and one from the southeast portico. Until at least 1840 each of these bore a copy of the same trilingual inscription above the Gatehouse relief (Kent’s CMA text) based on the drawings of Flandin and Coste, though today only the column from the southeast portico stands high enough to preserve the text.²

Palace P (figure 18), also called the private or residential palace, is somewhat different in plan from the previous structures, lacking the symmetry and balance typical of Achaemenid royal architecture. A central rectangular hall with five rows of six columns is flanked by porticoes on its long sides, one with two rows of twenty columns in *antis*, and a shorter one with two rows of twelve columns. Four reliefs of the same subject (figure 19) once decorated the jambs of the doorways connecting the central hall with the porticoes, though only the lowest parts survive. Each relief shows two striding figures in

1978), 68. On Assyrian comparanda, see Anthony Green, “Neo-Assyrian Apotropaic Figures: Figurines, Rituals, and Monumental Art,” *Iraq* Vol. 45, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 87-96; John Malcolm Russell, “The Program of the Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud: Issues in the Research and Presentation of Assyrian Art,” *AJA* Vol. 102, No. 4 (October, 1998), 655-715; Mehmet-Ali Ataç, “Visual Formula and Meaning in Neo-Assyrian Relief,” *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 88, No. 1 (March, 2006), 69-101.

¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

² *Ibid.*, 63.

pleated robes, the first at a slightly larger scale than the second. The larger figure holds a scepter, and lines of small rivet holes on the vertical pleat of his robe, the hem of his skirt, and the tops of his shoes may have once supported metal attachments, leading Stronach to identify him as the king followed by a servant figure, similar in style and content to the reliefs at Persepolis.¹ In addition to the images, traces of a trilingual inscription identifying “Cyrus, the great king, an Achaemenian” were still preserved when Herzfeld first excavated the Palace in 1928, with the Old Persian apparently cut above the present limits of the relief, while the Elamite and Akkadian versions were relegated to balancing folds of the skirt.²

In focusing primarily on identifying the stylistic and iconographic roots of the Pasargadae relief program, art historians have largely neglected the role of text in these monuments. Despite their brevity, the texts play an important role in understanding these monuments, especially given their trilingual format, incorporating the historic languages of power in the region as well as a new one, and my earlier suggestion that Cyrus was aware of the Mesopotamian visual tradition. I will focus primarily on the CMA text, as it is the most frequently observed of the three and the most complete. The inscription declares, “I, Cyrus, the king, an Achaemenid.”³ As previously mentioned, the performative image was a well-established concept in the ancient Near East, with examples stretching back as far as the late fourth millennium, when we first observe a variety of

¹ David Stronach, “Palace P,” in *Pasargadae. A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 95.

² This is Kent’s CMc text. Additional inscribed fragments found in Palace P suggest that a trilingual inscription once occupied the top part of each jamb above the figure of the king. Stronach rejects the identification of these fragments as Kent’s CMB text, which begins with the name of Cyrus, as at least part of the name of Darius occurs in the Akkadian fragments. *Ibid.*

³ Precise translations vary but the general sentiment is the same (cf. Kent, “I am Cyrus the King, an Achaemenian”).

different votive types.¹ The simultaneous development of the votive image and cuneiform writing as a system of representation led to the production of numerous inscribed monuments starting in the Early Dynastic period. These inscriptions were not simply labels identifying the figures represented. On the contrary, the dialectical relationship between word and image was key in enacting the power of the image.

An inscribed relief plaque from Early Dynastic Girsu (figure 20) demonstrates this principle in action. Relief plaques like these are paradigmatic Early Dynastic objects, perforated at the center and placed on pegs in temples as commemorative monuments. The plaque, which is divided into two registers, was commissioned by a man called Urnanshe, *ensi* of Lagash to commemorate the construction of a building. Urnanshe is represented twice, in both cases identified by his size as the most important figure, clean shaven and wearing a flounced skirt (*kaunakes*) typical of Early Dynastic imagery. Above, he stands with a basket balanced on his head, carrying the earth used to mold the first bricks, while in the lower register, he sits with a libation vessel, gesturing to suggest a sort of ritual banquet. We are observing two moments in time, presumably before and after the construction of the building in question. In both registers he is flanked by his family and attendants, while the remaining space is filled with text.

The inscription identifies the primary figure and lists the temples he commissioned: "Ur-Nanshe, king of Lagash, son of Gunidu, built the temple of Ningirsu; he built the temple of Nanshe; he built Apsubanda." The invocation of names and titles is an especially salient feature. The power of writing in ancient Near Eastern art is evident in what Bahrani calls Babylonian grammatology. Much like images, written signifiers "were thought to be in a continuous influential relationship with the signified in that each was capable of controlling the other in different contexts."² Building on the research of

¹ Zainab Bahrani, "The Performative Image: Narrative, Representation, and the Uruk Vase," in *Studies in Honor of Donald Hansen*, edited by Erica Ehrenberg (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002): 15-22.

² Zainab Bahrani, "Being in the Word: of Grammatology and Mantic" in *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 107.

Assyriologist Jean Bottéro, she argues that Mesopotamian ontology was “firmly grounded in notions of representation that related to the structure of the writing system.” A distinctly Mesopotamian “scientific spirit” is demonstrated not only in the structure of the cuneiform script, but also in the traditions of deductive divination and oneiromancy, practices rooted in reading and deciphering signs in nature and dreams. These signs were subsequently organized and classified in groups and recorded in compendia for future consultation. According to Bottéro, divination was understood as a sort of pictography, and “all methods of divination functioned through the same belief that the gods had written into creation.”¹

For the Mesopotamians, the relationship between signified and signifier was not unidirectional. On the contrary, images and words, especially names, exerted a great amount of power over their referent. To make an image or to write a text was quite literally a creative act. Votives like the Urnanshe plaque take place in a sort of doubling: in representing the act of temple building, that gesture is made permanent, enabling us as viewers to know about the acts of piety long after the destruction of the actual temples and the death of Urnanshe. Through text and image, performative monuments like these perpetuate the presence of the commissioner and their specific deeds, oftentimes in service to the gods.

Returning to Pasargadae, I would argue that the inscriptions (figures 21-23), sometimes overlooked as brief and formulaic, play a crucial role in the efficacy of the monuments. All three of the inscriptions invoke Cyrus by name, and describe him as (great) king, an Achaemenid.² The inscriptions appear in a trilingual format: in each example, the text is rendered in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian Akkadian. In each case, the cuneiform script has been rendered with aesthetic precision, commanding the attention and awe of viewers even if they cannot read the text. Such declarative statements take on new force in a system where writing as an act of representation encroaches on the ontological. The presence of Cyrus, during his

¹ *Ibid* 110.

² CMa, CMb, and CMc from Roland G. Kent, *Old Persian: grammar, texts, lexicon*, 116.

lifetime as the king and subsequently through monuments, functions as an ordering principle at Pasargadae.

Old Persian is a limited text corpus language, comprised mainly of royal inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, as well as short inscriptions on seals and one administrative tablet. The origins of the Old Persian script, as well as the date of its invention, have been debated since antiquity.¹ The predominant view today is that the script was invented early in the reign of Darius, and that the inscriptions ascribed to Cyrus were therefore added under Darius.² Because royal inscriptions comprise the majority of the corpus, Old Persian has sometimes been called a court language, a tool for spreading royal ideology and propaganda, and the script considered a *Prunkschrift*, with many inscriptions carved in places where they would be impossible to read. In some cases, the inscriptions from Pasargadae are described as “inauthentic” because they were added under Darius. Such characterizations largely disregard the role of writing in visual culture of the Ancient Near East.

It is important to note that there is a well-established tradition in the ancient Near East of commissioning monuments not only for the benefit of oneself, but also on behalf of family and loved ones. The aforementioned Urnanshe plaque also names his wife, children, and high functionaries in the inscription. A limestone mace head also from Early Dynastic Girsu was carved with relief and inscribed as a votive. In this case, a workman called Barakisimun dedicated the object to the god Ningirsu on behalf of Enanatum, the ruler of Lagash.³ An Old Babylonian statue depicts a man called Lu Nanna, who is shown kneeling and holding his right hand to his face in a gesture of

¹ A concise summary of the factors and history of this debate can be found in Jan Tavernier, “Old Persian,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, edited by D.T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 648-650.

² An alternative theory suggests “the development of a script designed for the denotation of Old Persian” began during the reign of Cyrus II or later under Bardiya/Smerdis (the successor to Cambyses), but that “its use was really extended by Darius I.” *Ibid.*

³ Zainab Bahrani, “Sculpture: The Votive Image,” in *Mesopotamia: Ancient Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017), 67-68.

adoration. The inscription on the base explains that Lu Nanna, son of Le'I, dedicated the statue to Martu for the life of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, and for his own life.¹ Other examples of this phenomenon are less figural. From the second and first millennia we see a number of eye stones, plano-convex pieces of banded agate with short inscriptions, often including names and titles, and sometimes prayers to gods.² Inscribed seals, which were seen as fundamental facets of one's identity, were worn on the body and used in everyday transactions. These were sometimes kept for generations as heirlooms, passed down through the family, while others were recut and reinscribed centuries later to fit new owners.³ This small sampling shows how the network of relations between patrons, inscribed objects, and viewers/users is in fact quite complex, and that monuments might "work" in particular ways for different people at different moments.

Accepting the suggestion that it was in fact Darius who added the trilingual inscriptions at Pasargadae, I suggest we think of the monuments of Pasargadae as multitemporal. The site has a life and agency that extend well beyond the period in which it was first conceived, and considering later instances of engagement with the material past may help illuminate how we've come to understand the past. While the site is most readily associated with Cyrus, Pasargadae continued to thrive after the founder of the dynasty as a moderately sized city with a treasury, based on references in the Persepolis tablets.⁴

There is of course an argument to be made that adding inscriptions explicitly identifying Cyrus' Achaemenid lineage serves Darius' agenda as a usurper who did not descend from the original Teispid

¹ Zainab Bahrani, "Portrait Sculpture and Vital Images," in *Mesopotamia: Ancient Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017), 181-183.

² W.G. Lambert, "An Eye Stone of Esarhaddon's Queen and Other Similar Gems," *RA* 63, 65-71.

³ Dominique Collon, "Cylinder Seals in Society," in *First Impressions. Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (London: British Museum Publications, 1987), 99.

⁴ Remy Boucharlat, "Southwestern Iran in the Achaemenid Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, edited by D.T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 511.

branch. Yet that most of the monumental inscriptions would have been difficult or impossible to read due to viewing angle, coupled with the fact that these trilingual texts did not employ the vernacular Aramaic alphabet, suggests there is more to these statements than mere propaganda. Neither Cambyses nor Bardiya produced any major monuments known to date, so the interest in perpetuating Cyrus' legacy at the first Achaemenid ex novo capital might be understood as a gesture of filial piety. In both the ancient Near East and Egypt (which was incorporated into the empire under Cambyses), we have numerous examples of kings capturing monuments and either desecrating them to curb their power, or rededicating them on their own behalf, effectively rewriting history in attempt to harness that power.¹ That Darius would instead invoke the legacy of Cyrus through monumental inscriptions suggests an honorific intention, rather than the one-upmanship so commonly observed in Assyrian and Egyptian royal inscriptions.

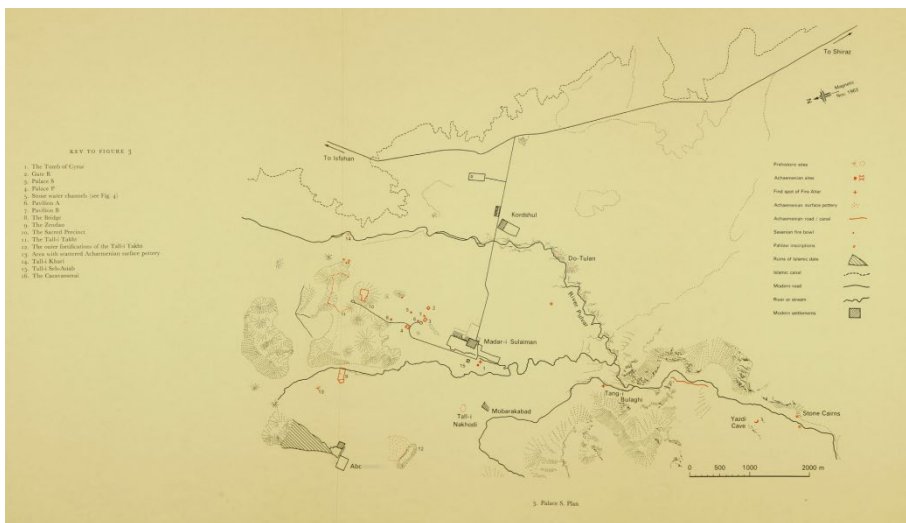


Fig 1. General plan of Pasargadae (after Stronach, 1978)

¹ Zainab Bahrani, "Assault and Abduction: the fate of the royal image in the Ancient Near East," *Art History* Vol. 18, No. 3 (September, 1995): 363-383.

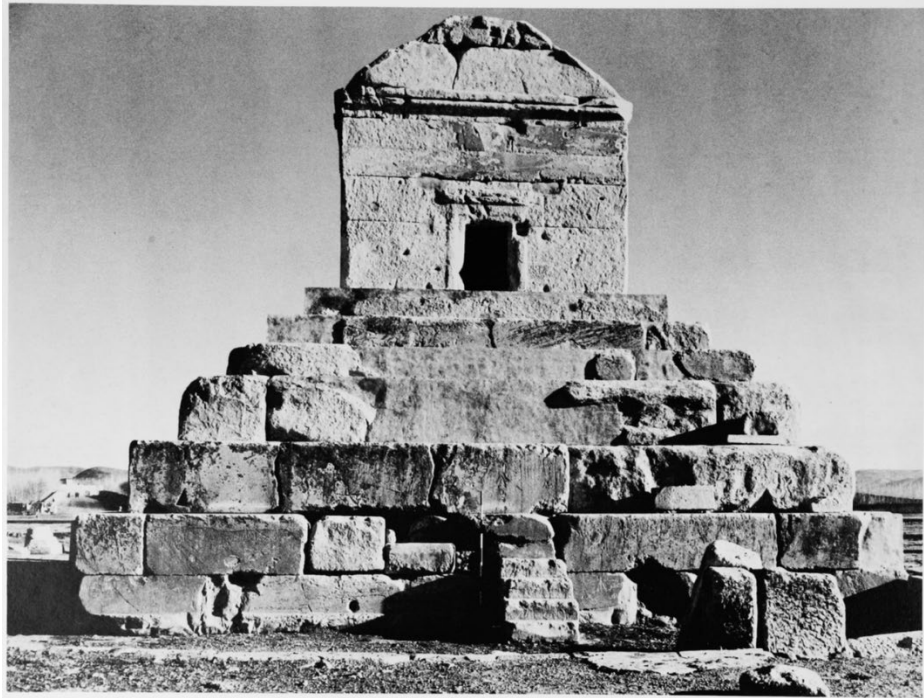


Fig 2, 3. Tomb of Cyrus from the west and northwest, Pasargadae, Achaemenid (after Stronach, 1978)



Fig 4. Ashlar masonry with mason's marks from gate of Lydian fortifications at Sardis (after Cahill 2010)



Fig 6. Cyrus Cylinder, clay, from Babylon, Achaemenid, after 539 BC (BM 90920)



Fig 7. (L). Foundation figure of Lugalkisalsi, limestone, from Girsu, EDIII B, ca. 2400-2250 BC (VA 4855)

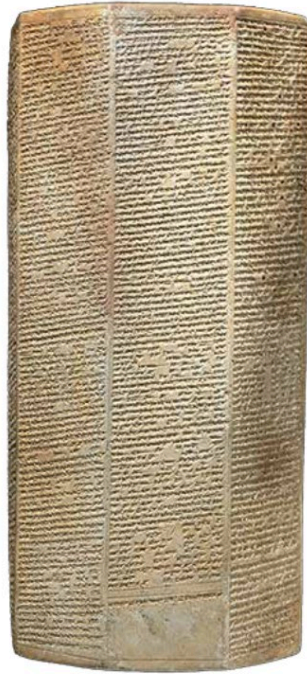


Fig 8. (R). Annals of Sennacherib, baked clay, from Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian, 694 BC (BM 1030000)



Fig 9. Victory Stele of Naram Sin, pink limestone, from Susa, Akkadian, 2254-2218 BC (AO 2748)



Fig 10, 11. Statues of Gudea, diorite, from Girsu, Ur III, ca. 2100 BC (AO 1, AO 5)

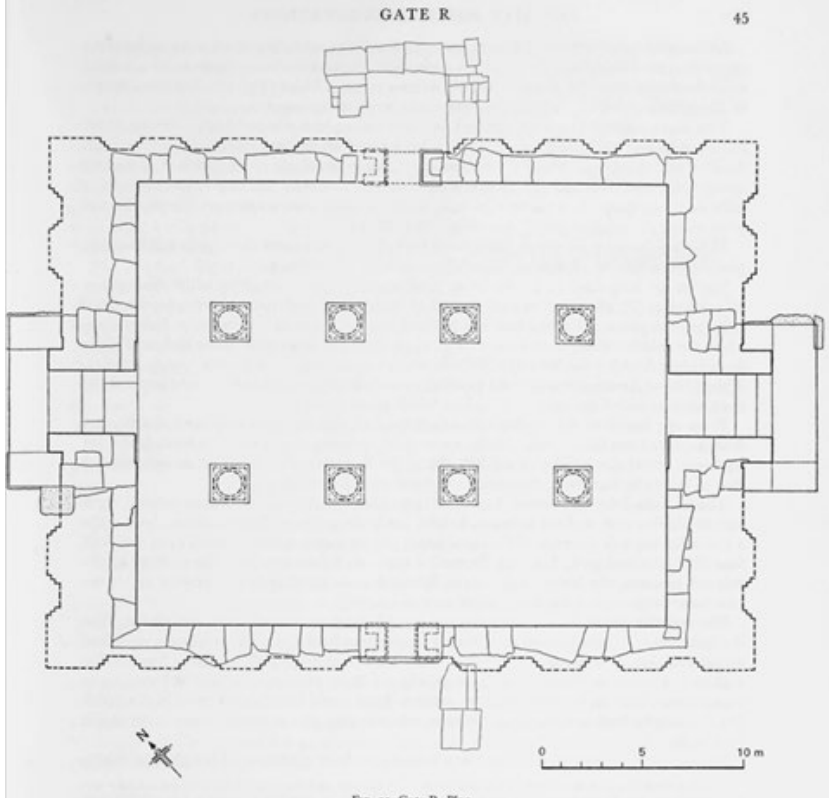
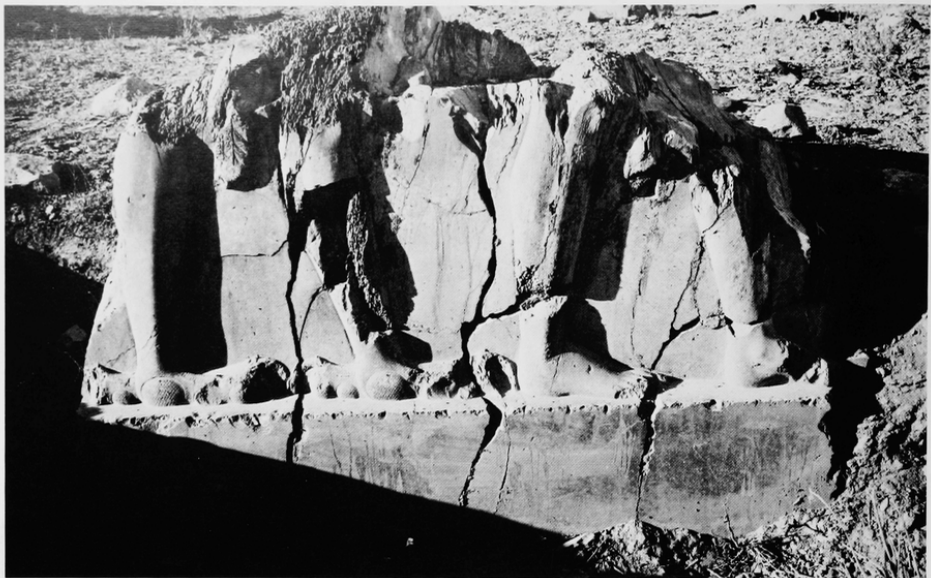
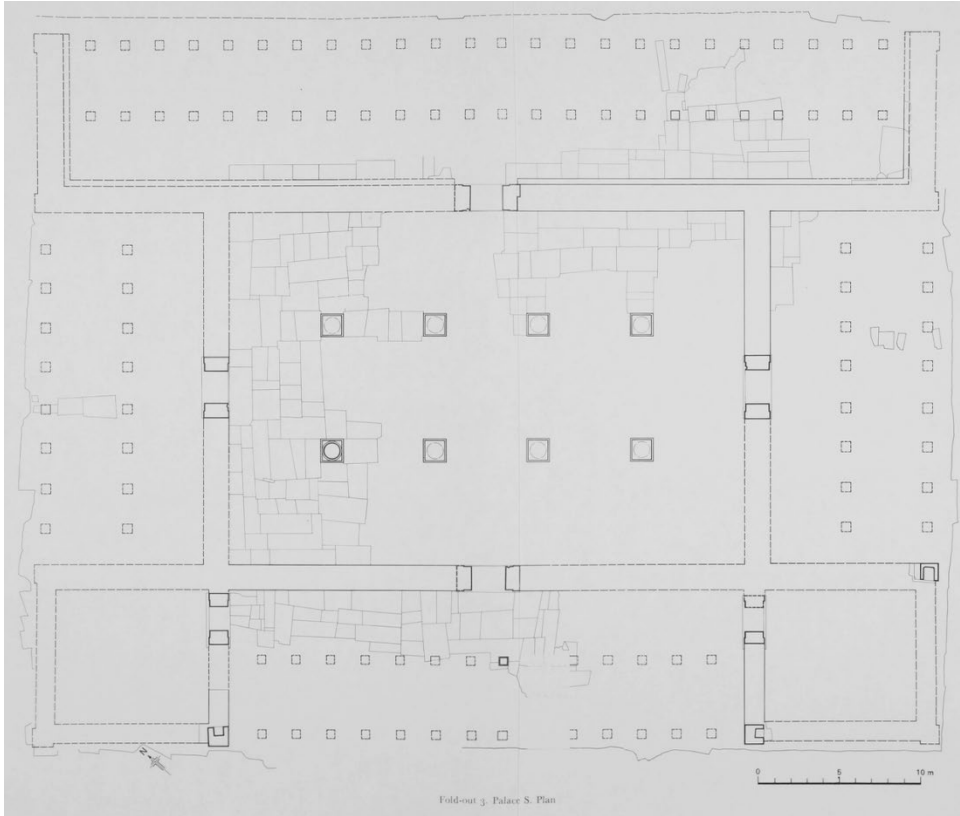


Fig 12. Gate R plan and relief from Pasargadae, Achaemenid, 547-519 BC? (After Stronach, 1978)



Gate R. The winged figure

**Fig 13. Gate R plan and relief from Pasargadae, Achaemenid, 547-519 BC?
(After Stronach, 1978)**



a Palace S. The remains of the relief from the left-hand jamb of the main north-west doorway. Photograph: E. Herzfeld

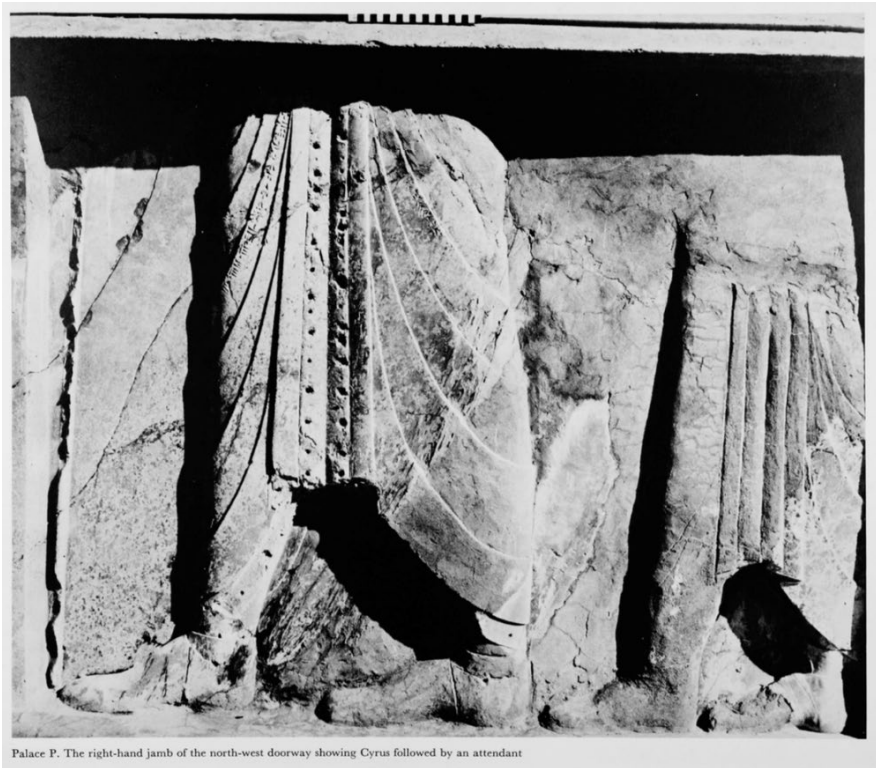
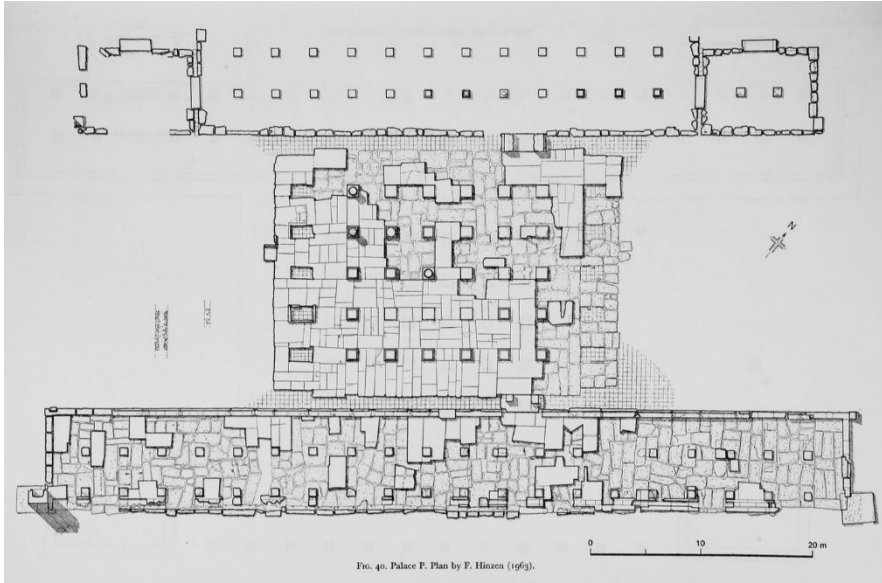


Palace S. The surviving portion of the left-hand jamb of the south-east doorway. (Restored in 1951)



a Palace S. The fragmentary remains of the relief from the left-hand jamb of the south-west doorway. Photograph: E. Herzfeld

Fig 14, 15, 16, 17. Palace S plan and reliefs from Pasargadae, Achaemenid, 547-519 BC



Palace P. The right-hand jamb of the north-west doorway showing Cyrus followed by an attendant

Fig 18, 19. Palace P plan and reliefs from Pasargadae, Achaemenid, 547-519 BC



Fig 20. Urnanshe Plaque, limestone, from Girsu, EDIII 2550-2500 BC (AO 2344)



Fig 21. Drawings of the Gate R relief with original inscription

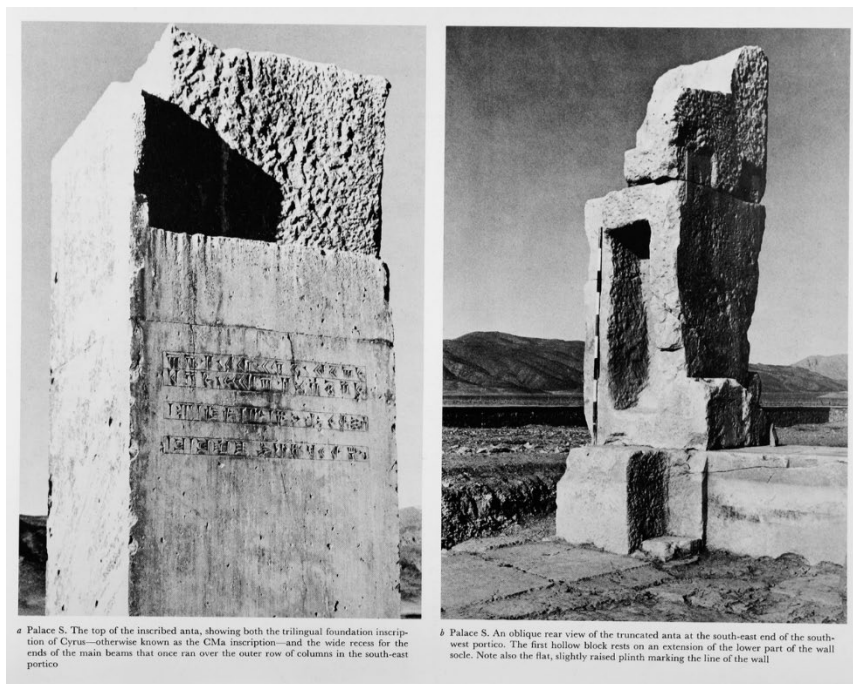


Fig 22. Palace S Anta inscription (After Stronach, 1978)

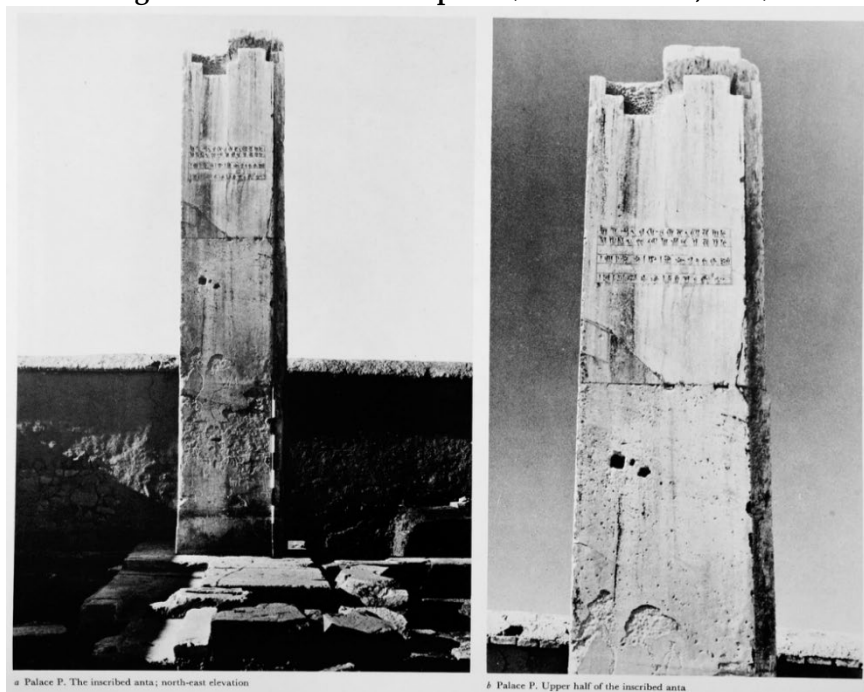


Fig 23. Palace P anta inscription (After Stronach, 1978)

انتشارات آریارنا

انتشارات آریارنا بر آن است تا کتاب‌های ارزندهٔ تألیفی و ترجمه‌ای پژوهشگران ایرانی یا نیرانی را در زمینه‌های گوناگون ایران‌شناسی همچون باستان‌شناسی، تاریخ، فرهنگ و زبان‌های باستانی منتشر کند، کتاب‌هایی که برای شناخت تاریخ و فرهنگ گرانسنگ و ورجاوند ایران بسیار ارزشمند باشند. با توجه به پیوندها و ریشه‌های ژرف و عمیق فرهنگی میان ایران و جهان بشکوه ایرانی که از سده‌ها بلکه هزاره‌های دور و دراز برجا بوده است و در دهه‌های اخیر تلاش دشمنان بر آن بوده تا این پیوندهای ژرف را بگسلند و ریشه‌های عمیق را با تیشه برکنند، ایران فرهنگی که دل و دین به آن سپرده‌ایم از چشم دست‌اندرکاران انتشارات آریارنا دور نمانده و چاپ کتاب‌های پژوهشی و ترجمه‌ای ارزنده دربارهٔ جهان ایرانی یا ایران فرهنگی از اولویت‌های انتشارات آریارنا است؛ باشد که از این راه پیوندهایمان پیوسته‌تر و ریشه‌هایمان ژرف‌تر شود. کتاب‌های انتشارات آریارنا پیشکشی ناچیز است به ایرانیان، ایرانی‌تباران، ایران‌دوستان و همهٔ مردمان جهان ایرانی که ایران و جهان ایرانی را از جان دوست‌تر می‌دارند.



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به کوشش
دکتر سیدمهدی موسوی، دکتر شاهین آریامنش،
دکتر مجید منتظر ظهوری و دکتر مرتضی خانی‌پور
و همکاری
دکتر جواد حسین‌زاده و دکتر مصطفی ده‌پهلوان



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نخستین

همایش دوسالانه بین‌المللی
انجمن علمی باستان‌شناسی ایران:

”برهمکنش‌های فرهنگی، پیوست و گسست“

به کوشش

سیدمه‌دی موسوی، شاهین آریامنش
مجید منتظر ظهوری و مرتضی‌خانی‌پور



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