

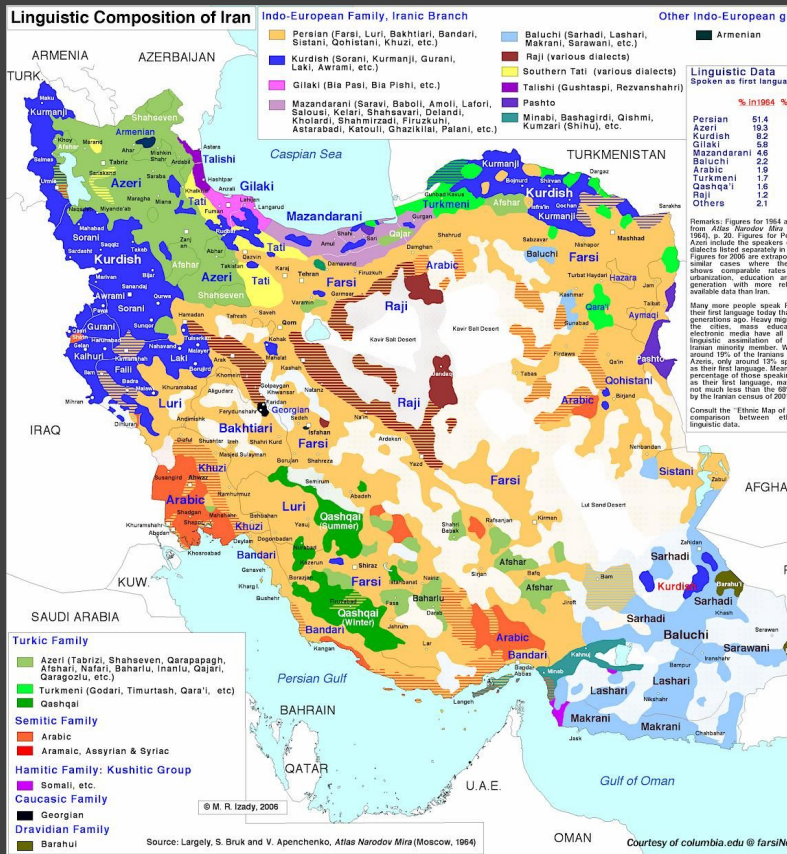
Middle East



Our current world assumes that culturally distinct states with unique national histories determine the units in the international system.

Yet our ideas of “national history” fit poorly the complex reality of Iran and Persian history.

Maybe our model is wrong...

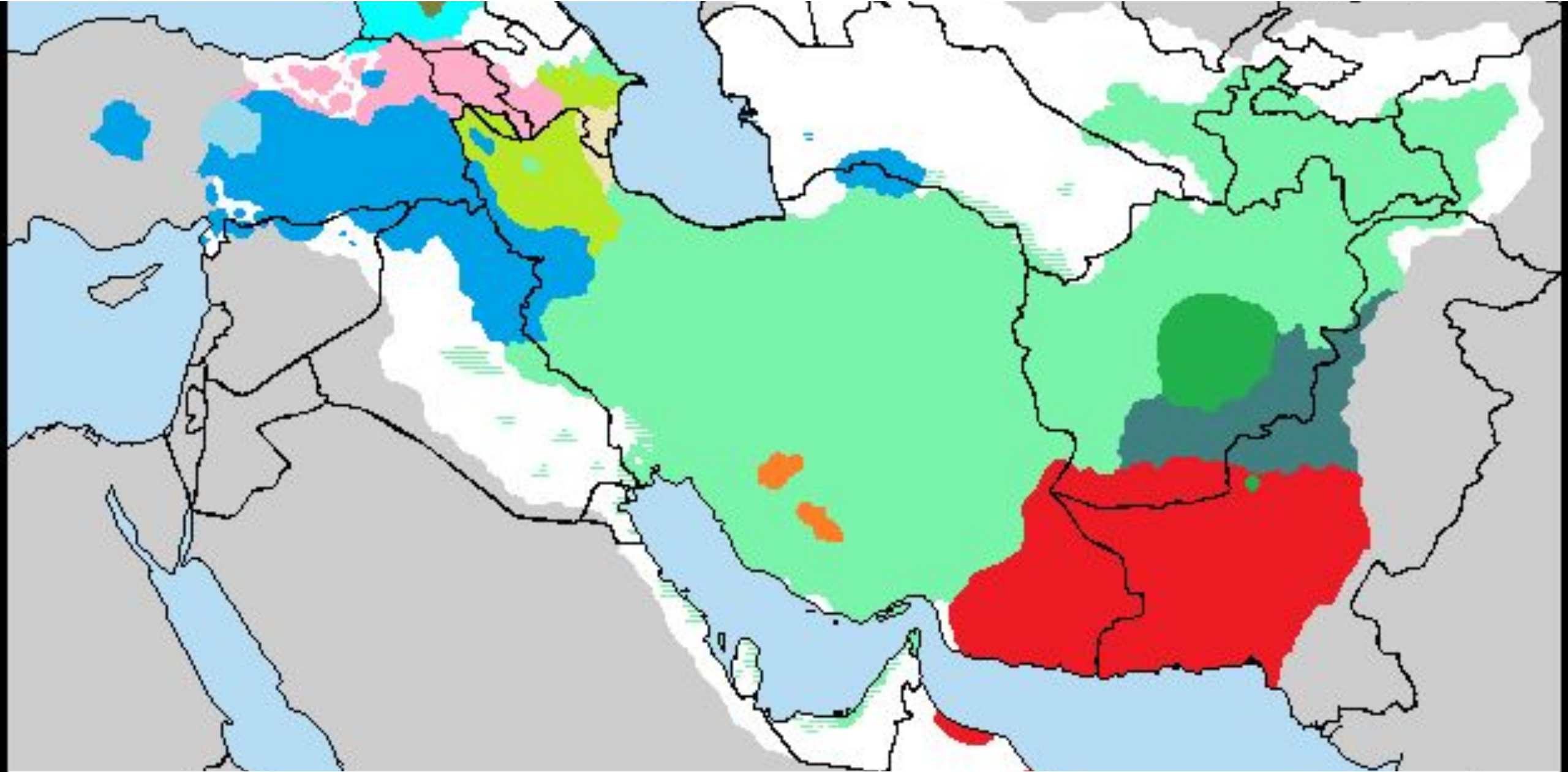


Linguistic diversity within modern Iran

Persian related language groups in the region

News to me.





Greater Persia ?

Historic bias against nomadic/tribal culture?



Physical Diversity as well





Salt Desert - Dasht e Lut



Mount Demavand, north of Tehran



Namal Forest, Elborz Mountains





Golestan Province, Elburz Mountains



Narin Castle, Yazd. Achaemenid Era

The Azadi
Tower, (1971)
commemorating
2500 years of the
Iranian nation



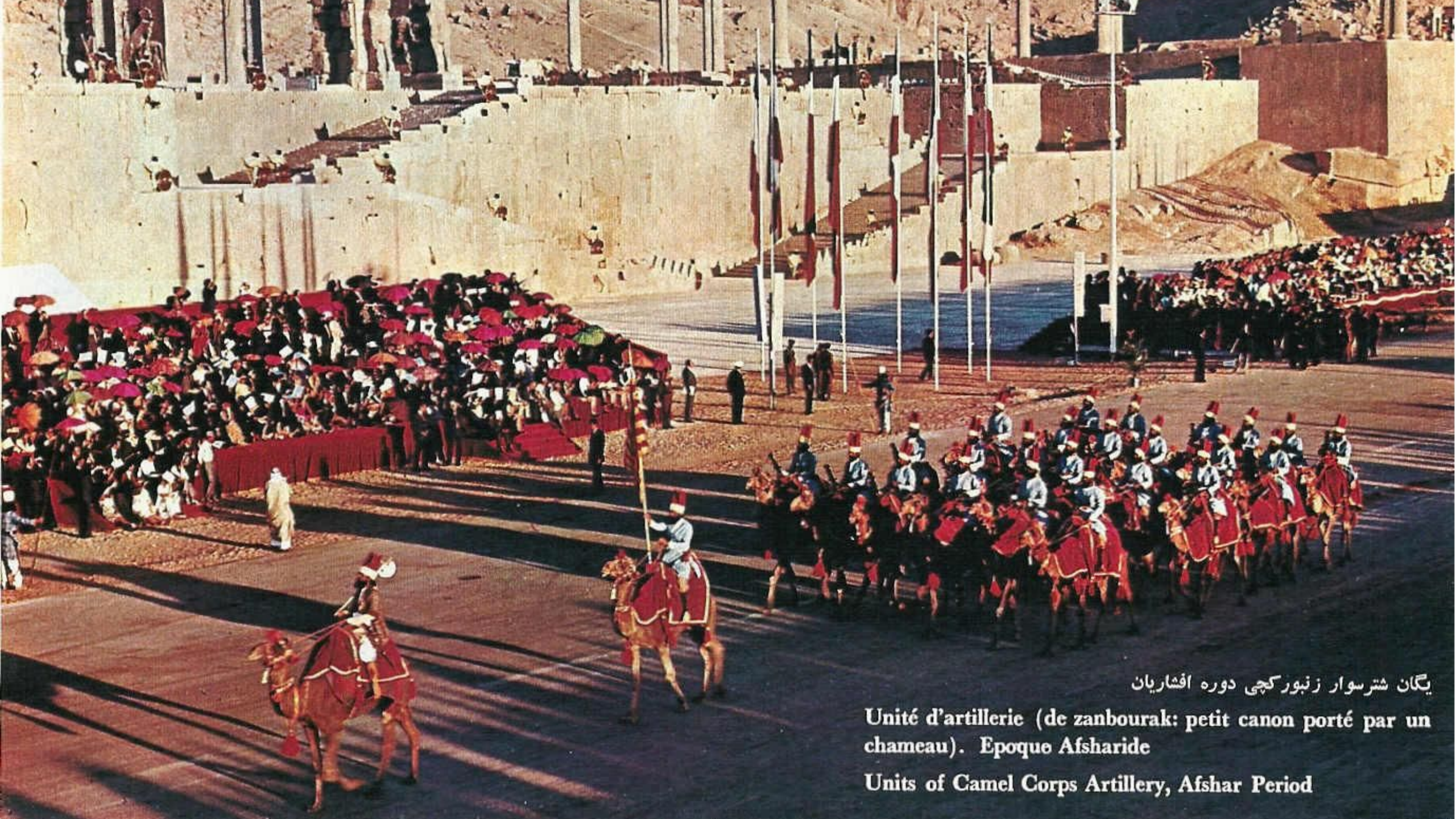


Inside and on the top of the Azadi Tower

And in the Azadi Museum – The Cyrus Cylinder



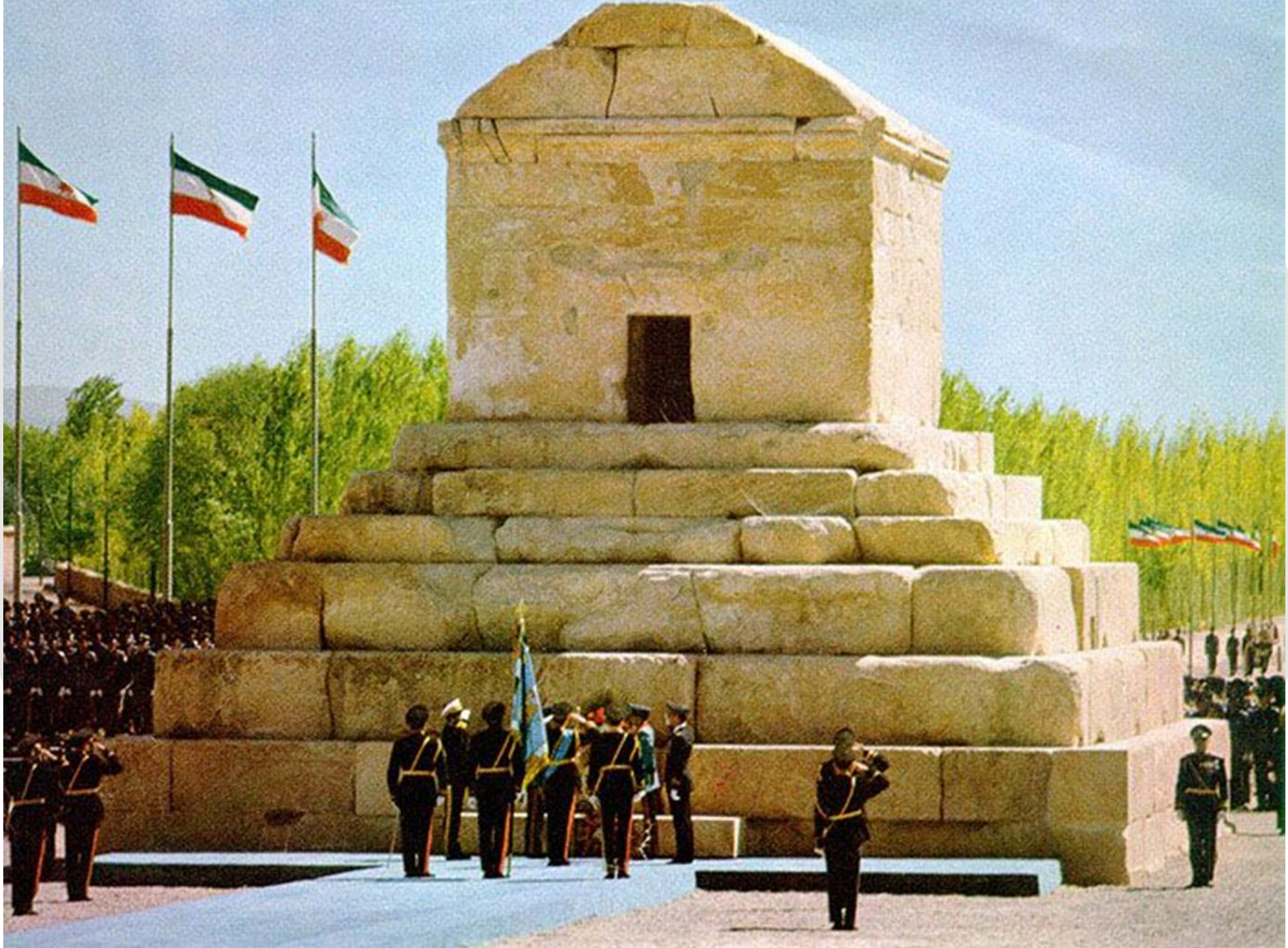
(of course the real one is in the British Museum)



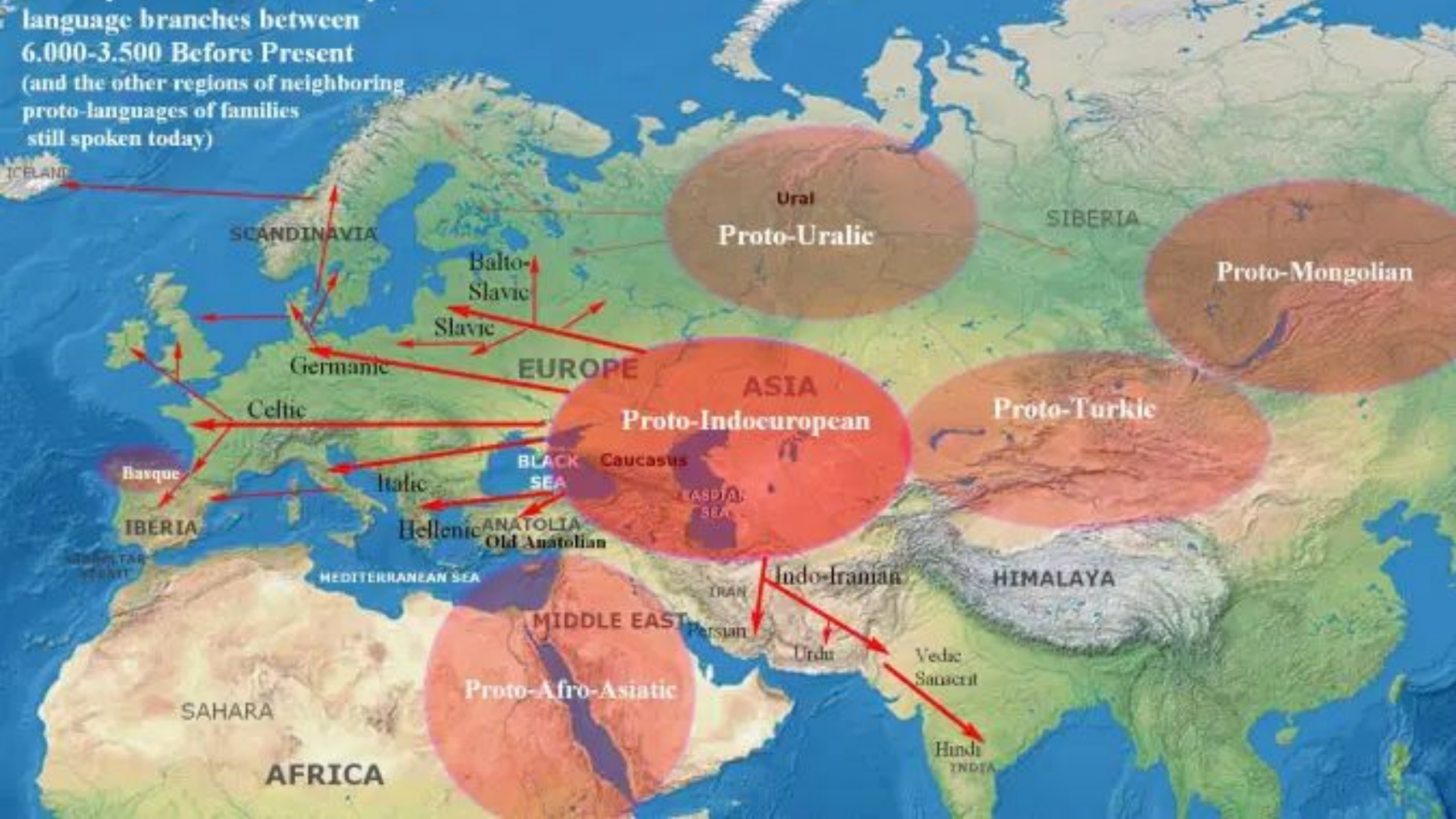
یگان شترسوار زنبورکچی دوره افشاریان

Unité d'artillerie (de zanbourak: petit canon porté par un chameau). Epoque Afsharide

Units of Camel Corps Artillery, Afshar Period



language branches between
6.000-3.500 Before Present
(and the other regions of neighboring
proto-languages of families
still spoken today)





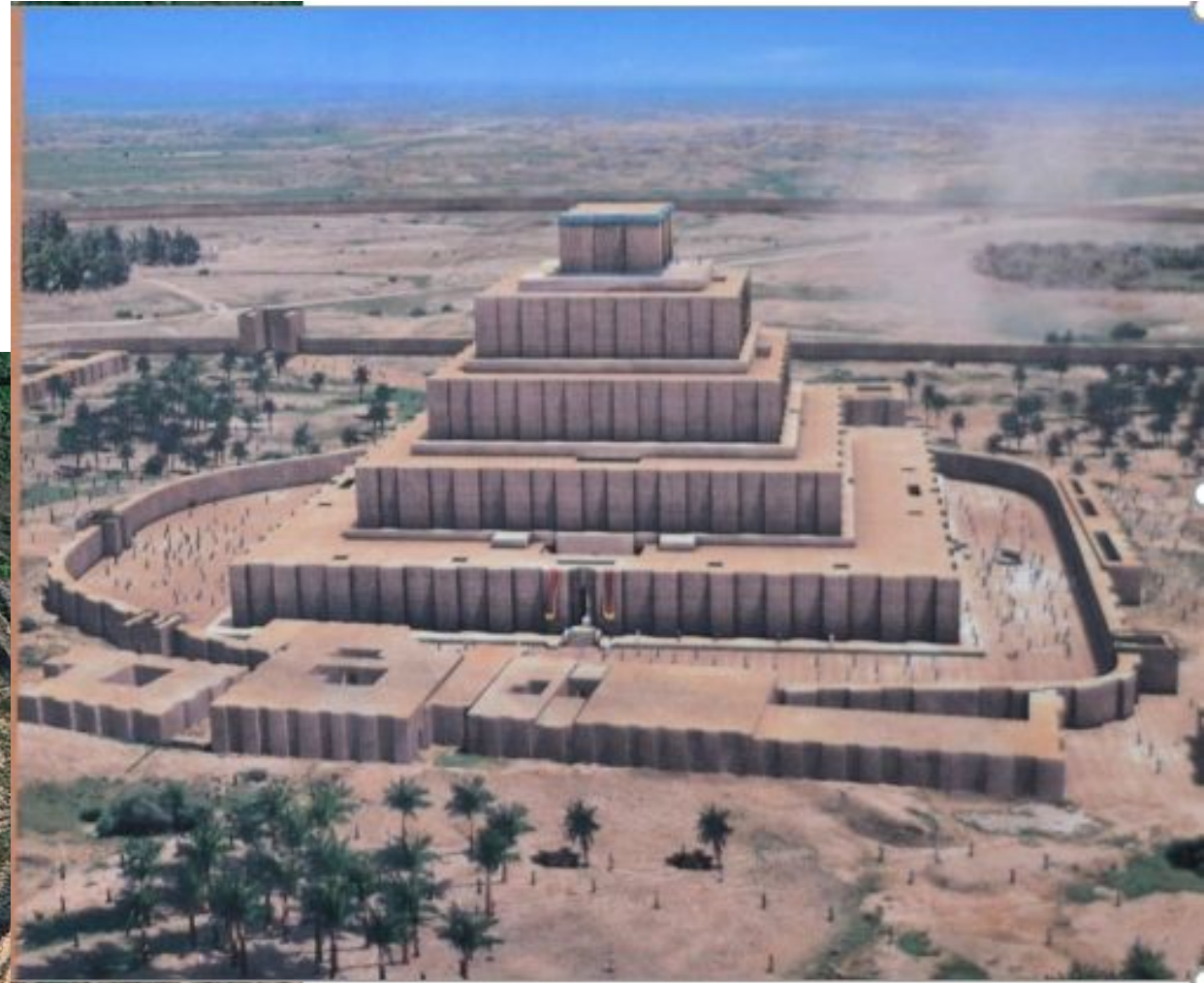
The world preceding Cyrus: the Elamites interacted with Mesopotamia, but developed separately. (The Persian scholars would not like the map on the left, more of a Western biblical map)



Elamite Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil (Susa) c. 1250 bce

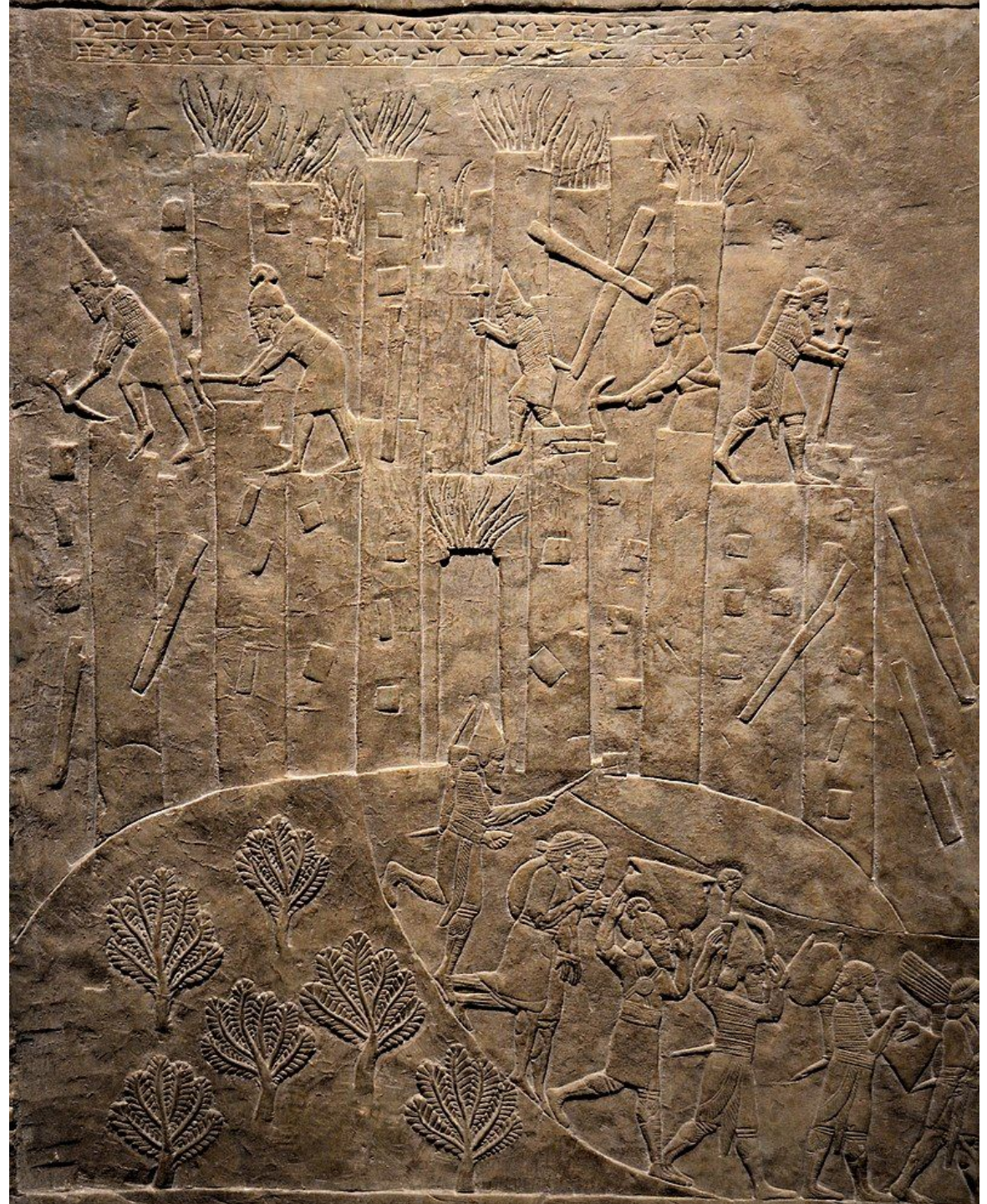


Chogha Zanbil now and then (?)



645-635 BCE. Typical
Assyrian Inscription:

"The city of Hamanu, a
royal city of the land
of Elam, I besieged, I
conquered, its booty I
carried off."



"Susa, the great holy city, abode of their gods, seat of their mysteries, I conquered. I entered its palaces, I opened their treasuries where silver and gold, goods and wealth were amassed. . . .I destroyed the ziggurat of Susa. I smashed its shining copper horns. I reduced the temples of Elam to naught; their gods and goddesses I scattered to the winds. The tombs of their ancient and recent kings I devastated, I exposed to the sun, and I carried away their bones toward the land of Ashur. I devastated the provinces of Elam and, on their lands, I sowed salt."

—*Ashurbanipal (of Assyria) 647bce*

Of course, the Elamites not the only city punished by destruction...The Assyrians also destroyed Jerusalem

- 722 bce 1st Some Israelite tribes in Assyria
- 586 bce destruction of Jerusalem, forced deportations to Babylon



Tissot, the Flight of the Prisoners, 1901?





Assyrian reliefs

Long fascination with Cyrus' challenge – he appears in the Jewish scriptures, the Greek historians, 19th c. Art...

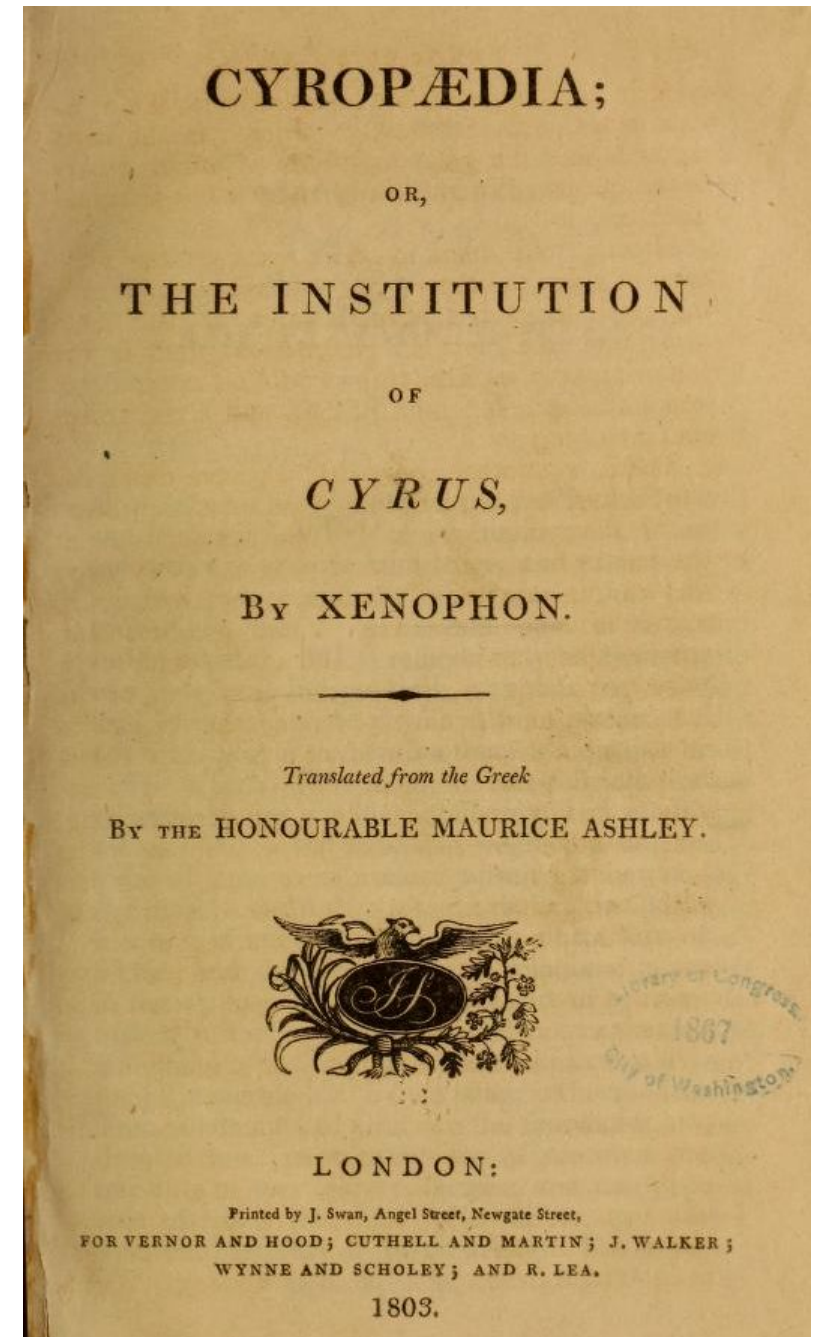
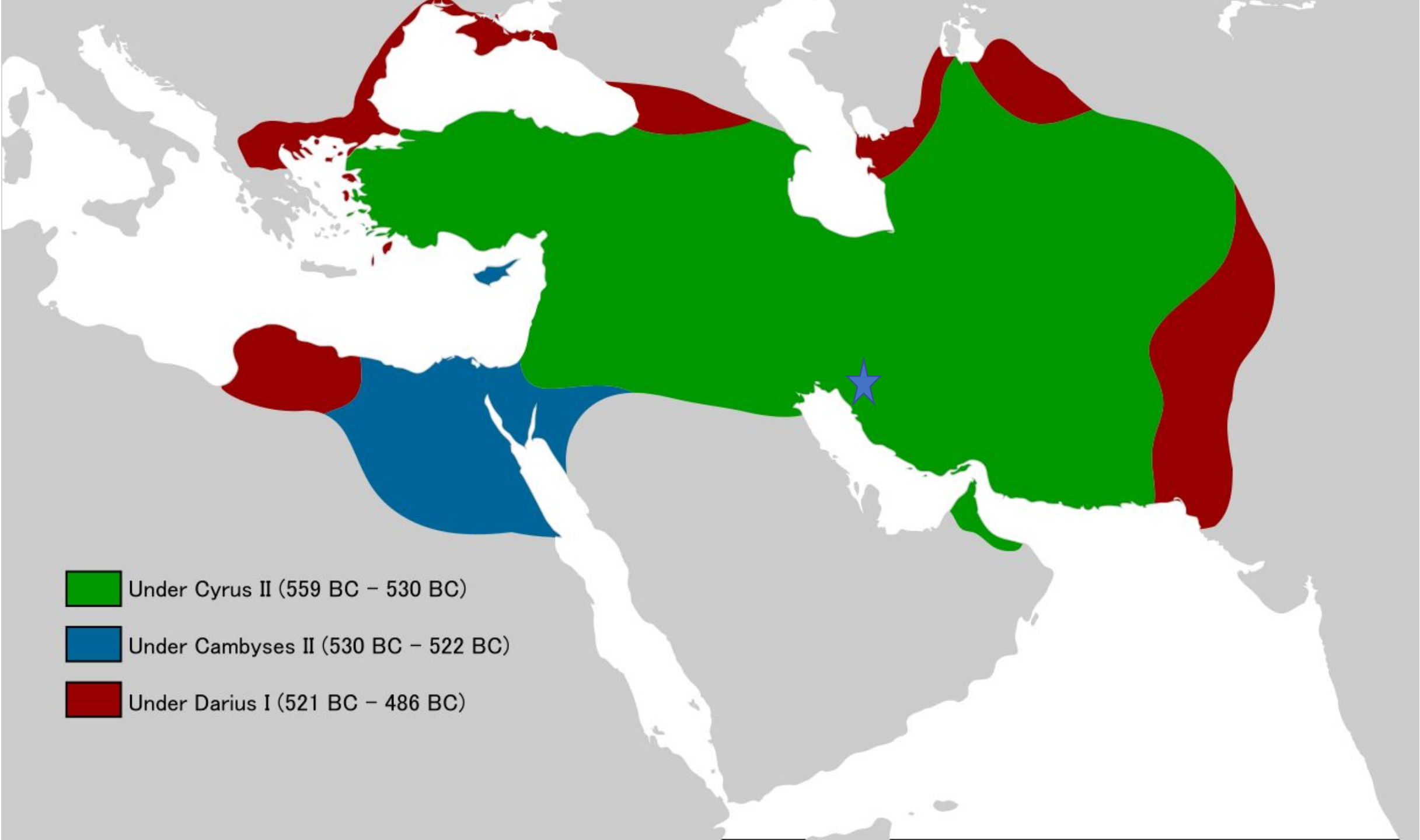





Illustration based on scene from life of Cyrus in Herodotus



 Under Cyrus II (559 BC - 530 BC)

 Under Cambyses II (530 BC - 522 BC)

 Under Darius I (521 BC - 486 BC)



Apart from building a massive empire, also known for:

- Administrative system of Satraps (like viceroys)
- Multicultural empires – but also spread of “Persian cultural realm”
- Peaceful conquest of Babylon and imperial tolerance (?)
- Liberation of the Jews, contribution to the 2nd Temple
- Imported Artisans for construction, engineering

Cyrus a popular subject of 19th c.
European Artists

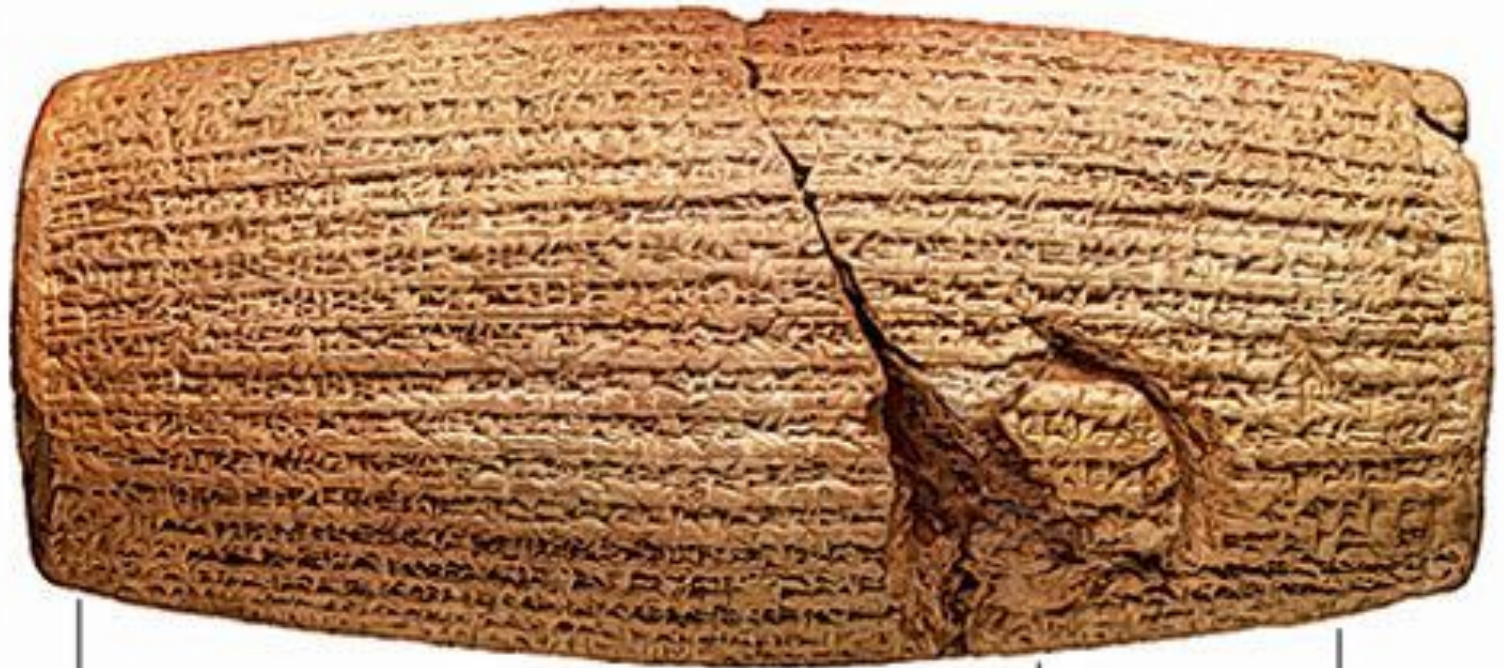


The Faravahar (above) found in various versions from Egypt through Assyrian world, denoting divine Kingship.

The image at left, associated with Cyrus, shows influence of Egyptian and Assyrian elements.

It seemed much about Cyrus might have been hyperbole, but then in 1879 the Cylinder Unearthed and translated

(Publicity from 2014 exhibit in India)



What: Clay cylinder, 22.5cm by 10cm, inscribed with arguably the world's first known human rights charter

Antiquity: 539BC, when Persian emperor Cyrus conquered Babylon

Contents: Freedom of worship for all, call for repatriation of deportees

Home: London Museum

India trip: Dec. 21 to Feb. 25 at Mumbai's Chhatranati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Transcription of Cyrus Cylinder

(pretty
different in
tone from
predecessors -
no talk of
sowing with
salt here...)

*Nabu ir-a-mu pa-la-a-Š ú a-na tu-ub lib-bi-
Šú-nu i h-Ši-ha Šarru-ut-su e-nu-ma a-na ki-
rib Babilī e-ru-bu sa-li-mi-i Š*

Nabu love, in whose administration they
rejoice in their heart. When I made my
triumphal entrance into Babylon,

*i-na ul-si ù ri- Š á-a-tim i-na ekal ma-al-ki ar-
ma-a Š ú-bat be-lu-tim ^{illu}Marduk belu rabu
lib-bi ri-it-pa- Š ú Šá mare Babilī ú . . . an-ni-
ma ú-mi- Šam a-Š e-'-a pa-la-aḥ- Šú*

I took up my lordly residence in the royal
palace with joy and rejoicing; Marduk, the
great lord, moved the noble heart of the
residents of Babylon to me, while I gave
daily attention to his worship.

*um-ma-ni-ia rap-Ša-tim i-na ki-rib Babilī i-
Šá-ad-di-ḥa Šú-ul-ma-niŠ nap-ḥar mat [Šu-
me-ri] ù Akkad^{ki} mu-gal-[l]i-tim ul ú- Šar-Ši*

My numerous troops marched peacefully
into Babylon. In all Sumer and Akkad I
permitted no enemy to enter.

*dannat Babilī ù kul-lat ma-ḥa-zi- Šu i-na Šà-
li-im-tim a Š -te-'-e mare Babi[li . . .] ki ma-la
lib-[. . .]-ma ab- Š a-a-ni la si-ma-ti-Šu-nu Š
ú-bat-su-un*

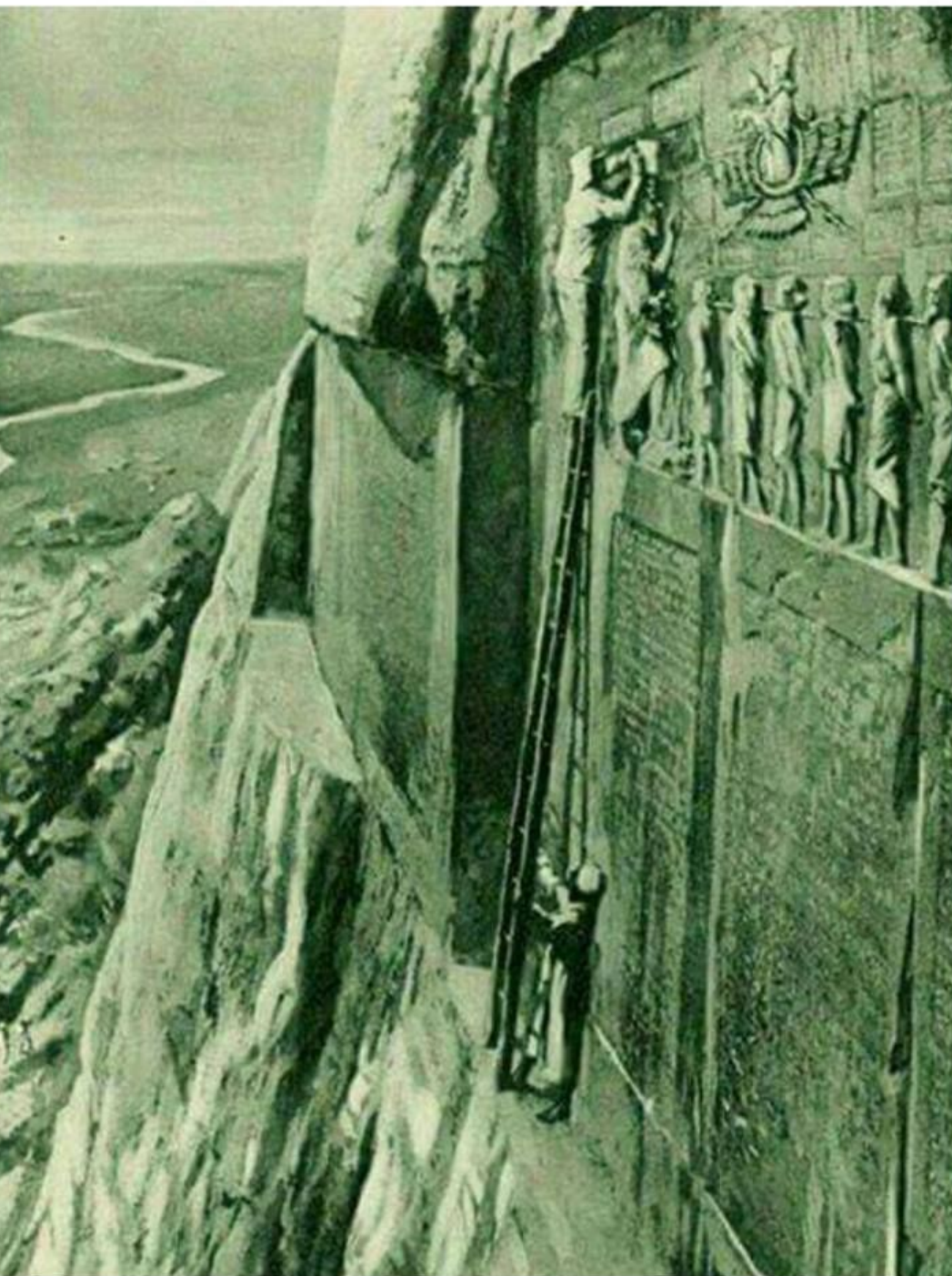
The needs of Babylon and of all its cities I
gladly attended to. The people of Babylon
[and . . .], and the shameful yoke was
removed from them. Their dwellings,

*an-ḥu-ut-su-un ú-pa-a Š -Ši-ha ú-Š á-ap-ti-ir
sa-ar-ba- Šu-nu a-na ip- Še-e-ti-[ia]*

which had fallen, I restored. I cleared out
their ruins. Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced

Behistun Inscription of Darius-The Rosetta Stone of Cuneiform





Translation of texts
succeeded in 1840s.

A world of military
adventurers,
missionaries, gentlemen
archaeologists from the
West appearing in Persia

Cyrus almost a cult figure in the West. a preIslamic Christ-like figure.

D.W. Griffith featured Cyrus' liberation of the Israelite captives of Babylon in the 1916 film, *Intolerance*.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgQpl-jpJao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgQpl-<u>jpJao</u>)



After Cyrus, the Achemenid's most known for Darius' ceremonial city of Persepolis



4 minute tour of
Persepolis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7VPOuV3WV8>

Persepolis, 3d
recreation tour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhboQIZ-18c>





Persepolis
Relief



Aechemenid arm aand that has lost its inlay, from the Oxus Treasure collection, British Museum.

We can get just a glimpse of the glories of Persepolis now.



HISTORY, POLITICS

What Trump And His Religious Supporters Can Learn From Cyrus The Great

by Farid Parsa · 1 year ago



Cyrus Keeps appearing in the most unlikely contexts, like this 2019 article in *The Iranian*. (Diaspora online magazine)

<https://iranian.com/2019/04/16/trump-cyrus-the-great/>

Even Ahmadinejad praises Cyrus!

Cyrus the Great Cylinder & Ahmadinejad's quest for legitimacy

08 January 2011

By Amir Taheri

LONDON, (CAIS) -- Hoping to regain a measure of legitimacy in the wake of the disputed presidential election in 2009, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad may be trying to recast himself as a nationalist leading a struggle against foreign foes.

We have already noted this trend in previous columns as, slowly but surely, the president abandoned the standard Islamist discourse in favour of a nationalist one. Now, there are fresh signs to confirm the trend.

On Tuesday, Ahmadinejad made a trip to Semnan, the native province of his parents, to inaugurate some real or imaginary projects. At a gathering of his supporters, he made an hour-long speech in which, according to the text published by the official news agency IRNA, the word Islam was not mentioned once.

Ahmadinejad spoke of "the land of the pure" one of the names that ancient Aryans gave to Iran as they settled in it. Instead of using the word "ummah" which denotes the Muslim community and is favoured by the mullahs, the president used the word "mellat" which means "nation" in Persian.

He developed his new theme of the "Iranian school", as opposed to the "Islamic school", and claimed that, thanks to its ancient civilisation, Iran was capable of offering mankind leadership.





120 years ago
Cyrus hardly
figured in the
national memory,
but today he is
seen as the
“Father of Persia”

[Iran celebration at Cyrus Tomb, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-8QwyWHGFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-8QwyWHGFU)

Things to read on Cyrus' era:

2016 article on the role of Cyrus in Modern Iran

<https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/discovering-cyrus-the-greats-secrets-in-modern-iran/>

Article on Women in the Achemenid Empire:

<https://www.ancient.eu/article/1492/women-in-ancient-persia/#:~:text=Cyrus%20established%20the%20Persian%20paradigm,of%20women%20of%20every%20class.>

2019 article in *The Iranian* on what Trump could learn from Cyrus. (Diaspora online magazine) <https://iranian.com/2019/04/16/trump-cyrus-the-great/>

Iran Beyond the Revolution - Weekly Topics

Week 1. Cyrus and the creation of a Persian “Founding Father”

Week 2: Zoroastrianism, Judaism in and after Persia, and Alexander the Great

Week 3. Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh and the Sassanids

Week 4. The Persianizing of Islam

Week 5. The Persianizing of the Turkic Invasions

Week 6. The Persianizing of India

Week 7. The Qajar Dynasty

Week 8. The Pahlavi’s and the creation of Iranian “National” History