

Hilmar Klinkott, Andreas Luther, Josef Wiesehöfer (eds.),  
*Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Iran  
und benachbarter Gebiete. Festschrift für Rüdiger Schmitt,  
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The academic community fairly frequently honors preeminent scholars with *Festschriften*, celebratory books in recognition of their contribution to the field. What follows is a review of a *Festschrift* for Rüdiger Schmitt—a leading scholar of Iranian and Indo-Iranian languages—published to mark the occasion of his 80th birthday. Prof. R. Schmitt, a long-time employee of Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, had established many fruitful collaborations that eventually made this university a leading center for studies on history and culture of ancient Iran. Schmitt’s *Festschrift*, an offering of contributions from his students, colleagues and friends in Germany, Austria and Italy, testifies to the lasting significance of Schmitt’s research output.

The volume encompasses two articles on linguistics (A. Alemany, “Hunnic and Turkic titles in the Bactrian documents,” pp. 13–27; M. Salvini, “Urärtische Präzedenzfälle für die Königsinschriften des Achaimenidenreiches,” pp. 225–240) and ten articles on history. The substantial majority of historical articles directly or indirectly concerns the Achaemenid period.

Testimonies on the Medes under the Achaemenid rule, few and far between, yield little information on them, with a notable exception found in the Behistun Inscription of Darius I, which records some details about the Medes living in Persia. Having analyzed prominent references to the Medes in that inscription, S. Balatti (“Persien und Meden und die anderen Länder. Einige Überlegungen zur Rolle der Meder im früheren Perserreich,” pp. 29–47) surmised that their status in the text stemmed from their prominent contribution to the Persian army, the largest after the Persian contingent. Since Persia’s might relied on its military, the prominence of the Medes in the Behistun Inscription appears entirely justified.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest and most important testimony on Cyrus’ death comes from Herodotus’ account (1.214.5), with two other (and differing) accounts offered by Ctesias in *Persica* and Xenophon in the *Cyropedia*. Subsequent Greek and Roman authors writing about Cyrus’ demise frequently referred to formative foundational accounts by Herodotus, Ctesias and Xenophon. A contribution by R. Bichler (“Kyros’ letzte Schlacht und sein

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 43: “Die starke Präsenz der Meder und ihrer Verbündeten im Heer der ersten persischen Könige in den Jahren der imperialen Expansion ist daher der Schlüssel zum Verständnis ihrer hervorgehobenen Stellung neben den Persern in der Bisutün-Inschrift [...]”

Tod,” pp. 49–92) analyzes in detail all testimonies on Cyrus’ death (from Herodotus to medieval Otto von Freising), tracing shifts in its representation across ages.

In turn, P. Callieri (“Falsi moderni e antichi nell’archeologia e nell’epigrafia dell’Iran di epoca achemenide,” pp. 93–109) examines motives for producing counterfeit Achaemenid artefacts and inscriptions. Currently, the production of fake and forged archaeological artifacts generates substantial profits for those who sell them. Ancient forgery mainly pertained to documents: rulers had them edited to legitimize their claims to power and to boost their propaganda efforts.

Scholars only rarely consider the Achaemenids as a naval power. H. Klinkott’s contribution (“Der Großkönig und das Meer: Achaimenidisches Reichsverständnis in einem neuen Weltbild,” pp. 111–136) demonstrates that the Achaemenids attached considerable significance to their navy—an expression of their might and political ideology. The Persian naval supremacy guaranteed safe communication, fostered the creation of an extensive maritime network and securely brought the seas into the Persian domain.<sup>2</sup>

A. Luther (“Der *karanos* Hystaspes (*wš’t’sp krny*); eine Hypothese,” pp. 137–153) investigates the curious title of *karanos* (*krny*), appearing in one of Aramaic documents traced to Bactria under Alexander the Great. It appears that the title of *karanos*, already known in the Achaemenid era, was chiefly used by military commanders. Having analyzed the aforementioned Aramaic document, Luther claims that *karanos* Hystaspes, an overseer over Bactria and (most likely) Darius III’s relative, served both as a military commander and a royal administration official (p. 146).

The text by S. Müller (“Hermeias von Atarneus, Mentor von Rhodes und die Macht der Suggestion,” pp. 155–169) focuses on Hermias (a Greek tyrant of Atarneus, a city in Aeolis, Asia Minor) and Mentor of Rhodes (a Greek mercenary/satrap and brother of Memnon, a prominent Rhodian Greek commander in the Persian service). Hermias, ruling under Artaxerxes III, won Artaxerxes’ favor and hoped to win the title of Friend of King. Hermias’ opponent, Mentor of Rhodes, slew Hermias under false pretenses, claiming that Hermias had been conniving with Philip II. Many ancient authors refer in passing to Hermias—mainly due to his interest in philosophy, ties to Aristotle and his stance in the face of death—but surviving references do not shed much light on Hermias’ alleged collusion with the king of Macedonia. According to Müller, Mentor of Rhodes’ vehement opposition against Hermias stemmed from danger that Macedonian armies under Parmenion and Attalus posed to Mentor’s lands. Mentor’s pro-Persian stance ensured that his brother Memnon became a commander of the Persian navy on the Aegean and, eventually, the chief defender of Persia against Alexander the Great.

In turn, A. Panaino’s contribution (“Liturgie und Mimesis im mazdayasnischen Ritual. Die Amtseinssetzung der sieben Unterpriester und die symbolische Götter-Verkörperung,” pp. 171–186) deals with sacrificial rites of the Iranian religion as described in *Wisprad* (“All the *Ratus*”). The contributor focuses on *Wisprad* 3.1 (which describes a ritual performed by seven priests, each with a different role to play) and assesses its philological, historical and religious significance.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 121: “Die maritime Aktivitäten der Großkönige waren nicht ausschließlich auf die territorial Expansion oder eine rituelle Inbesitznahme der Ränder der Welt ausgerichtet, sondern waren Ausdruck eines vollständig neuen Konzepts – einer achaimenidischen Herrschaft in weiten, oder um es gemäß der königlichen Ideologie zu formulieren: weltweiten maritime Räumen.”

R. Rollinger and J. Degen's analysis ("Conceptualizing Universal Rulership: considerations on the Persian Achaemenid Worldview and the Saka AT the 'End of the World'," pp. 187–224) concerns aspects of Persia's ideology of universal rulership expressed in the fifth column of the Behistun Inscription. The authors endeavor to pinpoint the dwelling places of "the Saka who wear the pointed cap," against whom Darius I waged war: to reach these people, the Persian army had to cross a body of water referred to as *draya* (the sea?). Due to a poor state of preservation of the relevant inscription passage, one cannot easily identify the location of this crossing. Having cross-referenced the inscription text with other testimonies, Rollinger and Degen infer that *draya* in question referred to the river Aras (Araxes) and "the Saka of pointed caps" were the Massagetae. The mention of a sea meant to flaunt Darius' power, which extended far into the Eastern lands across the *draya*. The word choice would in effect legitimize Darius' authority over Persia.<sup>3</sup>

M. Schuol, an expert on ancient geography who is currently preparing a historical-topographical commentary on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, contributes a text on Susa's absence on the said map ("Persien ohne Susa? Der iranische Raum auf der Tabula Peutingeriana," pp. 241–252). Susa, one of the Achaemenid capitals, remained a significant administrative and economic center under the later dynasties. The creators of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, by and large reliant on Greek geographical treatises, knew little about geography of Iran: the *Tabula's* projection frequently distorts outlines of some Iranian regions and records wrong distances between reference points along the routes. The *Tabula's* point of reference for Iran lies in Ecbatana. Accordingly, although the *Tabula's* projection of the track between Ecbatana and Persepolis does not feature Susa, the accompanying commentary records the distance from Susa to Persepolis, whereas distances given by the *Tabula* for trails from Ecbatana to other towns in Elymais in fact do represent said distances—but as measured from Susa (p. 246–247).

J. Wieshöfer ("Husraw in Petra und Xerxes in Salamis, oder: Prokop, Herodot und die Nahöstlichen Traditionen," pp. 253–263) draws attention to striking parallels between Herodotus' account on Xerxes' participation in the Battle of Salamis and Procopius' account on Chosroes I's part in the siege of Petra. Herodotus' style equally evokes Homeric depictions of Greek gods and kings and Near Eastern royal representations, whereas Procopius undoubtedly patterns his style on Herodotus.<sup>4</sup> Relevantly, both accounts probably are fictional: no other surviving source reports that any of two rulers took part in the described events.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 213: "In the Bisutun inscription Darius seemed to have celebrated not only his accession to throne, but also the victory achieved against an enemy who caused an imperial trauma that happened only one generation ago. By doing so, Darius cloaked his lack of genealogical connection to the former dynasty by legitimizing his rule by outperforming Cyrus' deeds on a completely new level."

<sup>4</sup> P. 260: "Prokop zeichnet Husraw I., der bei der Belagerung von Petra die Maßnahmen seiner Untertanen von einen Hügel aus beobachtet und ihre Leistungen begutachtet, zweifellos nach dem Vorbild des herodoteischen Xerxes während der Schlacht bei Salamis."

<sup>5</sup> P. 261: "Was die Historizität der Szenen in den Griechen- und Römerkriegen angeht, so spricht manches für ein strategisches Engagement des Herrschers im Felde; wie sich Xerxes und Husraw allerdings tatsächlich vor Ort in Salamis bzw. Petra verhalten haben, wird wohl nie geklärt werden können."

The *Festschrift* offered to R. Schmitt encompasses a gamut of valuable contributions to those studying culture and history of Iran under the Achaemenids. Authored by pre-eminent experts in their fields, contributions found in this volume offer new and broader perspectives on ancient sources and thus advance our understanding.

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