

Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period. Edited by WOUTER F. M. HENKELMAN and CÉLINE REDARD. *Classica et Orientalia*, vol. 16. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2017. Pp. 496, illus. €98.

The religious ideology and practice of the Achaemenid Persian elite form a long-debated crux within the greater historiography of ancient Iran, focused on the timing and causation of the evolution of Zoroastrian identity. The Achaemenid Persian rulers Darius I and Xerxes ascribe their success to the favor of the creator deity A(h)uramazdā, the namesake of the Mazda Ahura celebrated in the later Avestan scriptures, but did they consider themselves practitioners of a formal Avestan creed that followed the tenets of the prophet Zarathustra?

While some scholars have espoused the presence of a vibrant Achaemenid Zoroastrianism as early as the reign of Cyrus the Great, others have argued that the early Persians engaged in more limited worship of a “Mazdaean” deity without the full trappings of the belief system and clerical institutions that evolved in the centuries after the Achaemenid era. Most recently, Avestan specialists have begun to shift their emphasis from early Zoroastrian “belief” to arguments for “practice,” the performance of sacred ritual attested in the later scriptures at the centers of Achaemenid power. At the same time, the ongoing publication of the Persepolis Fortification Archives has increasingly illustrated a world of sacred pluralism in which A(h)uramazdā was not the predominant divine figure apparent from the royal proclamations. *Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Period* offers a wide-ranging exploration of these topics through the publication of twelve papers first presented in a 2013 colloquium at the Collège de France. Despite differences in emphasis, the chapters share common ground in the recognition of the significant diversity of the “Achaemenid Iranian religious landscape” (p. 7).

Three initial chapters explore the evidence for Avestan elements within the religious practice of the Achaemenids. Jean Kellens, the primary organizer of the Paris colloquium, develops the case that the Avestan “long liturgy” known as the Yasna was familiar to the Achaemenids and performed at the imperial court. He argues that at the very least, the Achaemenids show striking similarities to the Avestan tradition; that so-called citation names, the appearance of onomastic echoes of the Yasna within Darius’s own family, point to a probable familiarity; and that key phrases in Xerxes’s Daiva inscription suggest the actual practice of the liturgy. Alberto Cantera builds on Kellens’s discussion, asking how and why the Yasna might have been transmitted from its eastern Iranian origins to the Achaemenid heartland in western Iran; no source, of course, describes such a process directly, but various lines of indirect evidence might shed light on the transmission. Cantera is cautious about models of royal “conversion,” preferring the existence of separate strands of Achaemenid and Avestan “Mazdaism,” but argues for the deliberate performance of an eastern liturgy honoring A(h)uramazdā alongside rituals in honor of other divinities at the Achaemenid court.

Antonio Panaino turns from the liturgy itself to the Avestan ritual calendar, perhaps an adoption from an Egyptian model that is commonly dated to the Achaemenid period. He argues that its structure of twelve thirty-day months, with the addition of five days at the end of the calendar year, was probably combined with pre-existing Iranian month-names; the reform is presented as a convenient simplification of pre-existing measures of time, planned by eastern Iranian religious specialists but facilitated by the expanded interregional communication of the Achaemenid era.

A different approach to Achaemenid religion, represented by Salvatore Gaspa’s chapter, de-emphasizes Avestan elements in favor of a wide-ranging study of Mesopotamian precedents for Achaemenid sacred ideology. Gaspa considers various contexts for the transmission of religious concepts between the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid states, not only echoing traditional identifications of Medes and Elamites as cultural intermediaries, but also pointing to the Arbela region as a center of continuity and significance for both Assyria and Persia. Focusing on their common representations of a supreme god as royal patron, Gaspa argues not only that A(h)uramazdā picks up attributes of the Assyrian royal deity Aššur, including the shared imagery of the winged sun disc, but that the concept of divine protection and royal combat against the Lie follows Assyrian ideological lines (with notable echoes, for instance, of the succession narratives of Esarhaddon).

Further discussion of the Assyrian material occurs in Adriano Rossi's closing chapter, which focuses on religion within the larger question of ancient Median identity, and also looks at Assyrian sources for cultic practice in the western Zagros while stressing the difficulty of associating this evidence with Mazdaean ritual.

Wouter Henkelman offers a stimulating exploration of the religious evidence from the largest body of primary source material for the Achaemenid empire, the Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA). Henkelman opens with the completed edition of a new journal text, Fort. 1316-101, from year 23 of Darius I, or 499/8 BCE (an appendix provides exhaustive textual commentary and beautiful color photographs of the tablet). The journal records barley distributions in administrative and military contexts as well as the items of particular interest here, allocations to religious functionaries for rituals in honor of named deities. These entries prove a critical point, already advocated as probable in Henkelman's earlier studies—that the *lan*-ritual mentioned frequently in other Persepolis texts was neither identical with a Zoroastrian rite nor specifically dedicated to A(h)uramazdā; here, at line 14, there is explicit attestation of a magus conducting a *lan* sacrifice for the Elamite deity Napiriša. Fort. 1316-101 thus expands the evidence for A(h)uramazdā's worship alongside a broad pantheon of Elamo-Iranian gods, also including Humban, a royal patron deity predating the rise of Darius's regime but continuing in importance within the Persepolis archives.

Henkelman's study demonstrates the pragmatic interactions between ritual practice and the economic activities of the Persepolis administration, while also noting other significant finds within the PFA, such as the references in PF-NN 1670 to the existence of temples (*ziyan*) in the Achaemenid heartland, in contradiction of Herodotus's famous denial of Persian temple-building (Hdt. 1.131.1). In another chapter on Persepolis material, Gian Pietro Basello focuses on the Elamite text of a unique bronze plaque, produced outside the administrative archives themselves but dealing with religious activity at the town of Kesat, which also appears in Fortification texts; Basello argues for its potential interpretation as a land grant or foundational document for cultic practice at Kesat's temple.

Jan Tavernier's chapter speaks to a different category of Achaemenid administrative documentation, the fourth-century Aramaic letters from officials in the province of Bactria published by Shaul Shaked and the late Joseph Naveh in 2012. Despite the eastern Iranian context, Tavernier stresses the scarcity of explicitly Mazdaean allusions in the Bactrian texts, which employ the Babylonian administrative calendar rather than its Zoroastrian ritual counterpart; a few instances of calendrical terminology associated with the Zoroastrian calendar by the archive's editors are examined here with caution. Mazdaean theophoric names make up only a minority within the onomastics of the Bactrian archives, and the one clear instance of ritual involves an offering to the god Bel, comparable to the offerings to deities in the Persepolis Fortification tablets.

In addition to the textual materials surveyed thus far, there is copious iconographic evidence for representations of divinity within the Achaemenid world. Mark Garrison explores the implications of glyptic depictions of divine and "numinous" imagery, and like Gaspa, calls attention to the importance of continuities between earlier Mesopotamian and Achaemenid iconography. He illustrates the difficulty of proving the particular presence of A(h)uramazdā in glyptic scenes, and shows that Achaemenid seal art portrays a pluralism of supernatural entities and objects of worship, more visibly connected to Mesopotamian than to Zoroastrian antecedents. Bruno Jacobs treats the Achaemenid monumental reliefs and their famous winged disc figure, whom he identifies with A(h)uramazdā, pointing out a strong physical resemblance between the god and the king and speculating on A(h)uramazdā's origins as Darius's familial deity (perhaps a direct ancestor via the hero Achaemenes).

Finally, several chapters present archaeological studies on the material traces left behind by ritual practice. Pierfrancesco Callieri surveys the remains of ritual structures in the vicinity of Persepolis, including the recent finds at Tol-e Ajori showing importation of Mesopotamian decorative methods and iconography; he associates the towers at Pasargadae and Naqš-e Rostam with "dynastic ritual," and accepts Shahrokh Razmjou's argument that the *tačara* complex at Persepolis served a ritual purpose (while disputing his case for a change in function under Xerxes).

Claude Rapin discusses the evidence for sacred structures at three sites in Achaemenid Sogdiana (Kok-tepe, Sangir-tepe, and Kindyk-tepe), contrasting the presence of open-air stepped platforms at

the first with the apparent construction of covered temples at the other two. Rapin stresses the common presence of fire cult regardless of differences in site design, but indulges in what may be excessively adventurous speculation on the construction of the sites by Darius I and their importance for the transmission of Avestan concepts to the Persians. Adriano Rossi's chapter on Media strikes a note of contrast by touching on the difficulties of interpreting the religious contexts for archaeological remains, and critiquing attempted identifications of an altar site at Tepe Nush-e Jan with specifically Mazdaean fire rituals.

Together, these essays succeed in moving beyond older questions of Zoroastrian identity and illuminating the range of current approaches and new evidence for Achaemenid religious studies. The volume is neatly edited, lacking visible errata despite its length and inclusion of papers in French, English, and German; its generous illustrations and photographs are of high quality, and provide essential supporting evidence on the documentary and iconographic materials and archaeological sites under discussion. It represents a welcome and valuable addition to the scholarship on ancient Iranian and Near Eastern religion.

JOHN O. HYLAND
CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY

Constructing Authority: 8th Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology. Edited by TAMÁS A. BÁCS and HORST BEINLICH. Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft, Früher Hochkulturen, vol. 4.5. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2017. Pp. 296, illus. €78 (paper).

The focus of this volume is “constructing authority.” The most repeated concept throughout is “display.” Display of ancestors, divine support, violence ... the authority vested in ancient Egyptian kingship was constructed through myriad displays—encompassing vast landscapes and detailed in monuments down to the level of marginal inscriptions, royal epithets, and iconographic motifs. There is not much that will prove surprising in this volume.

“The exercise of violence lies at the core of any display of royal authority, and the modes of violence are not differentiated in the treatment of foreigners or criminals” (p. 109) notes Christopher Eyre in “Calculated Frightfulness and the Display of Violence.” He remarks that Egyptian displays of violence “seemed more restrained” (p. 90) than those of the Assyrians. Nonetheless, the themes he explores include impalement, mutilation, collecting hands, branding, burning, and forced labor. However, Eyre focuses primarily on Eighteenth Dynasty texts. In “Ramesses III at Medinet Habu: Sensory Models,” Anthony Spalinger contrasts what he calls the “sober terseness of Dynasty XVIII war records” with the records of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, which he describes as “gruesomely powerful, pervaded by the sense of doom of earthly transcendent judgment coupled with unswerving retribution” (p. 246). He dates the shift in tone to Merneptah's Israel Stela (p. 252). His focus is on the grammatical structures. The ideas he explores are intriguing. However, the presentation would have been more compelling if he had described less and shown more, as Eyre does with the inclusion of numerous direct quotes from the ancient texts.

In “Intriguing against Governor Senwosret: Remarks on Papyrus Berlin P. 10032AB,” Ulrich Luft explores “how Egyptian officials of the high and middle level in the hierarchy communicated with each other” (p. 178) through analysis of correspondence addressing a shortfall in bird offerings proffered by the governor Senwosret. He focuses on understanding terminology, particularly the titles “referee of the gateway” (*wḥmw n rrrj.t*) and “overseer of the bird's pens” (*jmy-r3 jwy-r-mw*).

In “Constructing Authority in New Kingdom Towns in Nubia: Some Thoughts Based on Inscribed Monuments from Private Residences,” Julia Budka explores the imposition of royal authority even in the domestic sphere in Nubia (at Aniba and Sai), where stone door lintels from the times of Thutmosis III and Ramesses II feature officials adoring the royal name through the intermediary of Viceroy of Nubia. She further suggests that the innovation of Thutmosis III may subsequently have inspired