ADMINISTRATIVE LEGACIES OF THE PERSIAN WORLD-STATE EMPIRE: IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, Part 1
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ABSTRACT
Knowledge about governance and administration is cumulative with strong roots in ancient civilizations. Many of these roots have firm grounding in the ancient Persian Empire whose theory and practice of governance and administration have made immense contributions to world civilizations, their governments, and public administration. By conquering virtually the entire known world of antiquity in a single generation, the Persians changed the world’s political and administrative history forever. Their legacies are both widespread and profound. This article discusses some of these legacies whose impacts and implications transcended far-away cultures and administrative systems and are preserved in various forms in the modern systems of public administration and governance around the world. Although the pre-Persian, six thousand years of administrative history of Iran is briefly touched as a background, the main focus of this article is on the Achaemenid World-State Empire (559-330 BCE). By addressing the theory and practice of public administration and governance of the Persian Empire, the article outlines a number of implications for modern public administration. The article does not address the mighty Persian and Sassanian empires of Persia which, along with Rome, divided and ruled the ancient world for the next millennium.

INTRODUCTION
Persia or Iran, also the Land of Aryans, is home to one of the oldest civilizations in human history. As a bridge between the East and the West, Iran saved western civilizations from destruction by some of the most barbarous forces of the East and nurtured rich and powerful traditions of public administration and governance that have impacted significantly almost all empires and nation states that followed for over two millennia. The Persian legacies can be traced not only in the entire Middle and Near East over which Iranians ruled for over a millennium but also in the western countries which adopted over time directly and indirectly Persian administrative system principles passed on to them by Romans and medieval Islamic civilizations dominated by Persian advance achievements in culture, science, and administrative system. With a global reputation of being "excellent administrators," Persians have in the past made significant contributions to the global theory and practice of governance, public administration, and organization theory.

Beginning around 8,000 years ago, Iranian bureaucracy and public administration grew first in the city-state of Susa, one the oldest sites of ancient civilization contemporary to Sumer and then as the major institution of governance under the successive mighty empires of Elam, Media, Achaemenids, Persia, and Sassanid (6,000 BCE-651 CE). When the Sassanid Persian Empire fell to the Islamic, Bedouin Arab forces in 651, it had already achieved the highest level of state and administrative traditions (Brown, 1995; Ghirshman, 1954; Cook, 1983). Its advanced cultural, state, and administrative heritage was passed on to the Islamic Caliphate who adopted the Persian state and administration almost totally in governing the new empire led by the Bedouin Arabs. This heritage is alive even today despite the centuries of foreign invasion and influence on Iran for Iranians have always found ways to restore and continue their past traditions and national character of independence.

The bureau of the Persian Empire was a formidable institution of administration and governance, both efficient and effective. The organizational and administrative principles developed under the Persian Achaemenid Empire had significant influence on the Roman administration and were adopted almost totally by the Islamic, the Ottoman, and the following Iranian Safavid Empires. The influence of these principles can even be traced in almost every contemporary government in the Middle Near East as the Persian Achaemenid legacy has affected the entire region. The Persian administrative system, however, began to decline during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Public administration in modern Iran is, therefore, a product of both the indigenous ancient tradition and modern concepts of organization and management borrowed from the West as well as the Islamic influence that it has received.

This article highlights some of the early Iranian traditions of administration and bureaucracy from the beginning around 6000 BCE and presents in some detail the Persian Achaemenid World-State Empire founded by Cyrus the Great (559-330 BCE). The pre-Achaemenid Empires of Elam and Media, and the successive mighty empires of decentralized Parthia and centralized Sassanid after, are excluded from this discussion due to space limitation and amount of information available about these empires which is done in Farazmand (forthcoming). Therefore, the focus here is on the Persian Achaemenid period. The attempt in this article is to introduce some of the Persian legacies of public administration, governance, and civilization and highlight some of their ancient contributions to modern theory and practice of public administration.

The significance of this article are many. [First, ] Persians were the first in history who, by conquering virtually the known world of antiquity, established a one-world-state empire in 559 BCE. Second, they also adopted the concept of "state" and put that concept into practice-a concept that was conceived first by their cousin Median kings. Third, founded by
Cyrus the Great, the Persian Empire was the largest the ancient world had seen before and after and its institution of government and organizations of administrative systems were advanced and much more developed than any of the previous ones and were both effective and efficient. Fourth, the Persian bureaucracy was the largest organization of administration the ancient world had ever known and the Persian bureaucrats are historically known for being "excellent administrators" (Frye, 1964, 1975; Cook, 1983). Fifth, Persian influence in culture, governance, and administration over the Islamic Empire was immense to the point that Persians dominated the Islamic Empire for centuries. Sixth, Persia was the birthplace of several major world religions: the ancient Mithraism (God of Good and Justice) widely followed throughout the East and West including the Romans; Zoroastrianism (the Persian adopted religion founded by Prophet Zoroaster in the 17th century BCE) which rivaled that of the Roman church and the radical sect of the Islamic religion, Shi'ism. Seventh, unlike Assyrians before and Romans later, Achaemenid Persians never practiced slavery and, in fact, Cyrus the Great abolished slavery by issuing the first Human Rights Charter in the sixth century BCE.

Eighth, Persians adopted advanced organizational principles with emphasis on merit systems and, by establishing training colleges, developed an advanced professional bureaucracy with implications for modern times. They also instituted a complex and democratic governance system with multi-institutional mechanisms of checks and balances with a universal justice system and undertook massive public works systems with giant projects such as building the Suez Canal in Egypt and Atossa Canal in Europe and carried out the first oceanic navigation in history from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea in the fifth century BCE. Ninth, recent archaeological discoveries show detailed practices in personnel management and supervision of massive public works and other public management projects by women in the construction of the gigantic structure of Persepolis palaces and elsewhere in the Empire. Tenth, the Persians gave the world, among other things, the postal system of Pony Express for communication carried out on an advanced and well-maintained universal road system that was used well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Western as well as the Eastern world.

Eleventh, Persians invented the Old Persian Cuneiform language and promoted the earlier Iranian alphabet, Elamite, to record political history both of which served the Persian bureaucracy for the next millennium although the Old Persian was used mainly for royal purposes. Twelfth, unlike Greeks and Romans about whom much has been written, Persian legacies of administration, governance, and culture are generally understudied in the West. Exceptions are the enormous works of ancient archaeological and historical experts whose works have consistently provided major sources for research and study on governance, organization, and administration of the Persian Empire, particularly with regard to the Persian bureaucracy and administration system as well as the rich culture that was advanced and admired. Finally, despite the recent decline, Persia was a major world power in the East well into the 19th century when its decline continued up to the Revolution of 1978-79. The post-revolutionary Islamic Iran began to reestablish itself as a leading regional power that has maintained an independent status in world politics, especially vis-a-vis the global hegemonic superpower of the United States.

It is also worth noting that, while the ancient city states of Athens and Sparta were busy discussing alternative forms of political systems and at times fighting each other, Persians were already administering with high managerial efficiency the largest and mightiest empire the ancient world had ever seen before (Frye, 1963; Cook 1983; Farazmand, 1994). The rest of the article addresses (1) background of the Persian Empire; (2) the Persian Empire and its praxis of Governance Administrative Systems founded by Cyrus the Great; (3) the Persian bureaucracy and organizational theory in practice; (4) Darius's Administrative Reform and Development; and (5) Persian legacies of, and implications for, modern public administration, governance, and organization theory.

This article is drawn mainly from the author's recent as well as forthcoming works on Persian bureaucracy and public administration. But numerous other historical sources have also been consulted although some are not referenced here.

THE WORLD-STATE PERSIAN EMPIRE
The Median Empire was at the zenith of its military power and was preparing to annex the rest of Mesopotamia, including Babylonia, when it suddenly fell to the Persians. The signal of its worldly might had reached far beyond its realm and is also chronicled in the Old Testament. Their grand design covered a realm deep into Asia reaching China in the East and with a plan to reach Egypt in the West. However, they were met by their cousin Persians, the other branch of the Aryans, whose powerful kingdom in nearby Parsa (modern Fars) on the plain land of South Iran, had already been the rise in reputation for military and administrative achievements and were enjoying autonomy from the Media. Persian forces under Cyrus II, the Persian King, defeated the Median army in a battle commanded personally by the Median overlord, Astyages, who had summoned Cyrus and was to punish him for refusing to denounce a tactical alliance with the last Babylonian Prince Nabunaid. The mighty Median Empire fell to Cyrus in 559 BCE and thus emerged one of the most brilliant military and political leaders of antiquity, Cyrus the Great, who at the age of 40 led the young and vigorous Persians and Medes in their “turn on the conquest of the world” (Ghirshman, 1954: 113).

The Achaemenid Persian Empire founded by Cyrus the Great in 559 BCE was the largest and mightiest empire the whole ancient world had ever known before. The traditional infrastructure in military, politics, governance, culture, and economics that the Persians established has had a long-lasting effect on not only Iran and the entire Near Middle
Eastern governments and their administrative systems, but also on many parts of the world, including the Western countries of Europe that had received Persian influence through Romans who transferred Persian theories and practices to the West, as will be seen later. Therefore, Persian legacies of governance and administration are found in the modern administrative state of the West, including the United States as well as in the East (Cook, 1983; Frye, 1975).

How was such a huge empire with far-extended territories and multinational/multi-people diversity governed and administered? What are some of the key features of the Achaemenid administrative system and what can be learned about the efficiency and effectiveness of its world-famous bureaucracy operating in every comer of the realm? What contributions have the Persian Achaemenids made to the theory and practice of governance and public administration and what can be learned from the Persian administrative system for the modern administrative state? The following is an attempt to answer some of these and other related questions. First, a background is given on the Founding Father, Cyrus the Great, who established the Persian Empire and laid its constitutional foundation that survived more than a millennium and with its institutionalized value system that has influenced Iranian public and private life up to the modern present day. The background also covers a discussion of Darius the Administrator who reorganized, reformed, and stabilized the Empire with a sound administrative system.

Second, the organizational and administrative system of the Empire is discussed in some detail, outlining the position and status of (1) the Great King and the central government; (2) the famous "satrapy" system of government, the institutional mechanisms of control over the satrapal administration and the administrative policy reward toward subject peoples; and (3) the Persian bureaucracy. Third, the discussion of the Persian bureaucracy includes the environment in which it operated, the positions and function of the bureaucratic elite, the structure and processes of the bureaucracy and administration, professionalization of the bureaucracy, and bureaucracy and public management. Fourth, the administrative reforms of Darius the Great are discussed with a focus on roads and communication systems, economic reforms and financial management, legal reform and justice administration, and local government reform. Finally, a conclusion is provided with an analysis of the nature of the Persian Empire with some implications for modern public administration in government.

CYRUS THE GREAT AS FOUNDING FATHER
Cyrus the Great was the founding father of the Persian Empire and of the new Iranian monarchy with a new constitution. In less than 30 years, Cyrus the Great expanded the Persian Empire from Asia in the East to Eastern Europe and North Africa including Egypt and most of the Greek territory in the West. More than 47 empires, kingdoms, and nations were incorporated in his Empire, forming a truly multinational, multicultural, and multicultural realm with a high diversity of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Only part of Greece, namely Athens and Sparta escaped -- at times -- the expansion of this mighty empire. But even these nations were both directly and indirectly influenced by the Persian Gold, the threat of the Persian might, and by the Great King's Peace with the conditions dictated by Persians (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. VI, 1953; Olmstead, 1948).

Like the Medes, the Persians under Cyrus the Great adopted the concept of "state" and formed a global "World-State" Empire of the Achaemenids. The Persian army was formidable with a strength second to none. So was the Persian gold which, along with the Persian diplomacy, influenced nations and peoples not to resist including those of the Athenians and Spartans, changing their policies and helping favored officials to gain power positions. Persian gold often accomplished the tasks for the army where it was suitable to be deployed.

Cyrus was the King of the world, the King of Kings since there were no more kings in the realm (Brown, 1995; Olmstead, 1948; Herodotus, 1984). He was a genius military general and a brilliant political leader with grand ambitions, with a macro managerial approach, and a global design. His vision was to form a synthesis or universal civilization on cooperative and integrative bases incorporating with respect through inter-learning processes all cultures and civilizations of the time. He was also a man of great energy and talents but a man of wisdom and tolerance. His charismatic leadership transcended all boundaries of races, colors, religions, and nationalities. He was highly regarded by Persians and many non-Persians in all corners of the extended Empire. Persians called him the "Father," Greeks and Babylonians called him the "Law-Giver," and Jews called him the Savor and Deliverer (Cook, 1983; Herodotus, 1984; Olmstead, 1948).

Under Cyrus the Great, universal liberal policy of "tolerance" toward, and respect for, the local traditions, customs, and religions of the diverse peoples in the Empire was adopted and institutionalized, a policy that was adopted for the next two centuries with modifications under his successors later. That policy was also adopted under the Persians and Sassanians for the next millennium and so internalized a trait that it has remained a major aspect of the Iranians' national character up to the present day.

Cyrus founded a democratic government based on freedom of religion, association, race, and color and this was the first experience in the ancient world and indeed in political history. He outlawed slavery and, unlike other empires, slavery was not a general practice under the Achaemenid Empire (Ibid.). Persians were also receptive to other cultural traditions and values.

According to Herodotus (1984:97), "No race is so ready to adopt foreign ways as the Persian" but "themselves they consider in every way superior to everyone else in the world, and allow other nations a share of good qualities."
Cyrus was very much conscious of the settled civilizations of some of the conquered peoples and, as part of his global design, sought to create a “synthesis of ancient civilizations” aimed at uniting all of the human world. His idea of a global state ruled by Persians was put into practice for the first time in history but his administrative policy was far more complex than any other that can be found in the ancient world. For the same good reason, Cyrus the Great has remained forever as a noble, liberal democratic leader, an “ideal leader” as Xzenipho elaborated in his Cyropædia (Education of Cyrus) and a “humane” leader (Herodotus, 1984:97). Upon conquering Babylonia, which fell to him like a plum, Cyrus the Great freed a number of Jews from Babylonian captivity and returned them with escorts to Palestine where they rebuilt their Temple.

In decision-making, Cyrus consulted with key generals, members of the nobility, and high-level administrators and relied on “consensus.” According to him, consensus and participation were the best and most democratic forms of decision-making systems in which all voices are heard and all concerns and ideas are incorporated. To Cyrus, majority tends to evolve into arrogance and tyranny while the right of the minority can be violated by excesses of the majority; the excesses of the majority were not tolerated.

Cyrus never developed an elaborate royal court system although his administrative establishment served him well and, therefore, the corruption so characteristic of most royal courts in history was not an issue or challenge to his Empire. Nor did he have time enough to spend in Persia proper to devote details of administration and government. He adopted in principle the administrative system of the Medes and, to an extent, the Assyrian organization but departed from any previous systems of governance. Cyrus also warned against complacency in defense, administration, and justice. Adherence to simple life and merit-principled education in administration, governance were emphasized as well as principles of fairness, tolerance, freedom, and shared values. Cyrus laid a grand theory of governance and administration based on the above principles that served as foundation for the Empire. Its institutionalized values and structures transcended all kinds of differences and conflicts among Persians and non-Persian subjects for the next two millennia.

As King, Cyrus organized his expanding empire on the basis of a “satrapy” system and appointed his own governors whose accountability and loyalty were assured through a complex system of multiple institutions of checks and balances. The former system of vassal-king under the Medes and Assyrian empires disappeared in the Persian tradition of governance (more on this below). As a restless conqueror and a charismatic, skilled statesman, at the age of 70 he was still in expanding campaigns and died in 530 BCE after three days of receiving a mortal wound in a battle he won in the far Northeast. Persians lost a father and the Empire began to experience a short period of turmoil after the succession issue. Cyrus was a founding father and a world conqueror leaving behind many legacies for Iranians and non-Iranians alike.

DARIUS THE ADMINISTRATOR

Cyrus' designated successor, Prince Cambyses, was the viceroy and King of Babylon and had already conquered Egypt where he had adopted also the title of Pharaoh, ruled Egypt many years, and observed the local traditions to an extent as he did in Babylon. He was a relatively experienced governor, a trained fighter, and expanded the empire but was also a harsh ruler. His seven years of rule characterized a critical decade for the Persian Empire. Until his conspicuous death in 522 BCE, he spent considerable time in structuring the Empire under both his father's and his own rule. His death, on his way back to Persia from Egypt resulted in a major debate among the so-called Great Seven Persian Leaders (Seven Noble Leaders) who met secretly to depose the Magu who had falsely claimed himself as Cyrus’ son Bardiya, therefore his successor, and decide on a constitution for the Empire. The real Bardiya-satrap of the Northern Region of the realm—was already dead. Representing the noble aristocracy and aware of the facts, the Seven Paradins: Otanes, Gobryas, Darius, Ardumanish (Aspathines), and their seconds, Intraphernes, Hydarnes, and Megabyxos, first exposed and killed the usurper and debated the future system of government for Persia.

According to Herodotus (1984:234-241), the main arguments were about the forms of government Persia should adopt. While all agreed that no one could ever replace Cyrus the Great as a leader in history, it was proper to debate the three forms of democracy and government by people, oligarchy, and the rule by a council of nobles or aristocratic council, and monarchy and the rule by the King with a professional bureaucracy -- civil and military -- being the main institution of governance and administration under the system adopted. Otanes opted for the first, Megabyxus -was for the oligarchy while Darius prevailed in persuading the uncommitted ones in favor of monarchy. Subsequently, all six agreed on monarchy and chose Darius as the Great King while Otanes “then withdrew on condition that he and his descendants should not be subject to any man” (Ibid.; Cook, 1984:56), a condition that was granted.

Thus Darius became the Great King on 5 October 522 BCE. Like many great Persians, Darius was of high birth, well trained as a noble, and with a powerful personality. He has gained status under Cyrus as the King's spear-bearer. Darius was also a great military leader and a big thinker. He was very young, in his twenties when he assumed the kingship. From the beginning, he took serious steps to document his major achievements. As Cook (1983:56) points out, "Darius laid great stress on the fact that he fought nineteen battles and took captive nine kings in one and the same year.” It was his “annus mirabilis.”

In a few years, Darius expanded the empire further into all Asia in the East including India and to the farthest West taking over North Africa, southern Europe, and all of the Greek territories except Athens and Sparta, the latter of which was a Persian ally for most of the time. The Achaemenid Persian Empire reached its largest size under Darius, prospered
While Cyrus’s style of governance was based on "rule of consent," Darius was a benevolent autocrat (Ibid.) but maintained a balance with the great nobility and never betrayed their interests. The Court under his rule became elaborate and, unlike Cyrus the Great or any other Achaemenid Kings after him who had only one wife, Darius married six wives with numerous legitimate children, all placed in commanding positions of the army or satrapy or both. Darius died in November 486 BCE after 37 years of reign. Darius built many palaces and actively engaged in massive public works projects leaving behind remarkable legacies in governance and public administration as he did in other areas such as economics, arts, and architecture. He built the Suez Canal and navigated the oceans on ship from India to the Mediterranean Sea.

Darius was succeeded by his son Xerxes the Great King whose pomp and powers as the Great King of Persia surpassed that of any king the history of world civilization had ever shown. Under Xerxes, the Empire did not expand and he had a setback in a war against the Greeks but that setback was balanced by both his taking Athens later and by making the Greeks accept the King’s Peace with dictated conditions. Under Xerxes, the construction of Persepolis, which was started by Darius, was completed and Persia reached its highest glory of organization, military force, and cultural and ceremonial traditions. The Persian Royal Court was the most elaborate and the number of foreign exiles, professionals, and mercenaries at the service of the King increased tremendously. Xerxes displayed the glorious power and status of Persia in the world while Darius was a great king, a great organizer and administrator, and a conqueror. But no king ever reached the status of Cyrus the Great and they were all constrained by the tradition of the advisory council at the highest level.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Few world empires in history had an elaborate and advanced organization that the Persian Achaemenids had. Theirs was an elaborate, systematic, well-structured, and effectively functioned with high efficiency; hence, the Persian bureaucracy and organization theory. The organization and administrative system of the Empire manifest features that were unknown before and which made significant contributions to the modern administrative state.

Although the Median administrative and Court systems were adopted by Cyrus the Great and some features of the Assyrian organizational structure were used in principle, the magnitude of the Empire he had founded required a far more effective and complex organization and administration.

The vast Persian Empire was organized on the basis of a powerful central government with the King as the ultimate Sovereign, a strong "satrapy" system governing the various regions, a highly effective and efficient administrative system legged on a professional bureaucracy, a liberal governance policy, and a formidable army commanded by the great aristocratic nobility.
INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNANCE

Sovereign King and Central Government

A five-level hierarchical structure formed the refined system of governance and administration of the Empire with an organizational authority flowing from the Great King and central government to the satrapal and local governments. This hierarchical structure may be divided into two general levels: central and satrapal. At the top of the pyramid was the Sovereign Great King, his court, and the central government armed with an efficient, professional bureaucracy, and the army; next was the satrap and his court establishment followed by the sub-satrapals in charge of the provincial and local administrative districts.

First, the head of the state was the King with a hereditary monarchy. He was the supreme sovereign enjoying a religious sanction: "By the grace of Ahura-Mazda I am King; Ahura-Mazda gave me the kingdom" are the words of Darius in the Behisun inscription. So speak Xerxes and Artaxerxes in their inscriptions of Ahura-Mazda, the Persian God "who made Xerxes (Artaxerxes) king" (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IV, 1960:185). As the empire grew larger and incorporated the previous empires, the Persian kings "sought and obtained the sanction of the religion of these countries," nationalities, and peoples for their sovereignty (Ibid.). Cyrus the Great was called to rule the Babylonians by their god Marduk and Darius and Xerxes adopted names relating to the Egyptian god Re.

The Persian King was the sovereign with supreme authority who recognized "no equal on earth" (Herodotus, 1984:234; Cook, 1983:55). His titles, Great King and "King of Kings" had unique meanings to his kingship for there were no other "kings" under the Persian King (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. N, 1960:185). The Greeks called him Rasilius, "the one and only real king in the world" (Ibid.). Cambyses was made king of Babylonian exception-but only in subordination to Cyrus who was the "King of Lands." Like his successors, Darius claimed that he was "one king of many, of lord of many; the great king; kings of kings; king of the countries possessing all kinds of people; king of this earth far and wide" (Ibid.). The succession from Cyrus to Darius and all the following kings was based on the Achaemenid blood and Darius's succession was based on the virtue of "his being the oldest surviving line of the hereditary royal family" and Xerxes succeeded him because of his mother Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus (Ibid.; Cook, 1983:72; Farazmand, 1991 :72; Frye, 1963:50-51).

The King's will as expressed in words was law. His word, however, was based on consultation with various sources including the Persian nobles, the official experts of the bureaucracy (a custom required of the king), the Council of Advisors, the Council of Cabinet Ministers, and the regard for the countries and peoples of the satrapies concerned (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IV, 2nd ed., 1988:82-83). "The king of Persia might do whatsoever he desires," yet in practice he generally had regard for law and custom and, indeed, "in certain respects, he was practically limited by the privileges enjoyed by Persian nobles" (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. N, 1960: 196), including but not limited to the six prominent families associated with Darius in the overthrow of Gaumata the Magus. These families enjoyed unannounced access to the King and only these families could take his wives from him (Ibid.). Therefore, the King's supreme authority was limited by custom, tradition, and the nobility.

Second, after the Great King, the Court played a formidable role in politics and administration of the Empire because it was the central government. The centrality of the Court is explained by the concentration of various powerful institutions, officials, and personalities. Clearly, the professional bureaucracy was the key institution of the central government (more on this later). Such key officials as the arstibara (spear-bearer), the vacabara (bow-bearer), databara (law-bearers or royal judges), hazarapati (commander-chief of armed forces and the Immortals, the ten thousand permanent bodyguards of the King or the Kingsmen), the Grand-Vizir or Prime Minister as the cabinet secretary, and ganzabara (the treasurer) as well as many VIPs were powerful forces in the Court, accompanied by the harem in the Empire (Ibid.).

Third, the strategic elite of the central government in Susa was the main governing power after the King himself. The Empire and its administrative system was based on it. The Treasury and legal as well as military elites formed the most powerful administrators (more on the bureaucracy later). The above three powerful institutions formed the central government and the first level of hierarchy in the satrapal administration of the Empire.

THE SATRAPY SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

A Satrapy was an enormous territory which included nations, kingdoms, and peoples and was headed by a Satrap or governor appointed by the Great King from the capital city of Susa, the central government. Cyrus the Great adopted in principle the general organization of the Median and Assyrian empires but the satrapal system of governance and administration that he established was a Persian innovation with distinct characteristics. The Assyrians and Medians had tried a similar system on a smaller scale. In contrast, the vast Achaemenid Empire was divided into major satrapies-20 under Cyrus, 22 under Darius, and 23 or more under Xerxes – a territory which was maintained for most of the duration of the 230 years of the Empire. For example, Egypt and Libya, Babylon, "Syria and Beyond the River," Asia Minor, Macedonia with several islands, India, Parthia, Media, and Bactria were separate satrapies and the Greek islands were also grouped into 3-4 satrapies including Lydia with the strategic city of Sardis as a major satrapal power center in the West and the end of the Royal Road.

The satrapal system in the united state of Persia was based on several organizational principles and institutions of political and legal control, including: (1) tolerant governance; (2)
centralization combined with a sufficient degree of decentralization; (3) a multiplicity of institutional controls; (4) relative equality before the Law; (5) the divine kingship -- Great King as the sovereign, supreme authority and also head of the State; (6) the standardization of the state functions and administrative processes based on (7) a centralized, professionalized, and powerful bureaucracy.

After the Great King and his central government was the satrap, the governor of an enormous territory with tremendous power in civil, judicial, and military administration. Appointed from Susa by the King, the satraps were always recruited from the Persian nobility although initially this position was also assigned to exceptional non-Persians and later to a woman. At the district level, great flexibility was exercised by the recruitment and appointment of non-Persian local leaders as well as Persian administrators and governors. They were also allowed to choose their own leaders. As will be shown below, the tolerant, liberal policy of the system designed by Cyrus the Great allowed the diverse peoples and nations of the Empire to practice their local customs and traditions as long as they did not pose a challenge to the central authority of the sovereign and his protector of the realm, satrap (Olmstead, 1948; Cook, 1983; Farazmand, 1991).

The satrap was granted a broad range of authorities, functions, and responsibilities. His ruling establishment was modeled after the central government and the Great King's Court. He rules a vast territory covering different nations and peoples, even monarchies, and was surrounded by a miniature court of his own. His discretionary power was wide in policy and administrative affairs but, in major policy, he had to defer decisions to Susa (Ibid.).

The functions and responsibilities of a satrap included maintenance of law and order, oversight of general administration; supervision in the collection of taxes and tributes, mobilization and supply of military forces and material resources for wars and defense; maintenance of the universal roads, postal, and communication routes; maintenance of the canals and other waterways such as the Darius Suez Canal in Egypt and the Xerxes Canal in Europe; building and maintenance of public works; managing intergovernmental affairs with both the central government and other satraps; and dealing with the neighboring satraps on political and military affairs.

The fifth level in the hierarchy of the Persian government and administrative system form the central government was the sub-satrap or provincial governor, an official recruited from both the ruling Persian or Median race and non-Persian local leaders. Thus, each satrap was also divided into sub-satrapies or provinces headed by a sub-satrap or governor totally responsible to the satrap although provincial officials and peoples were not without access to the central government. The provincial or sub-satrapies were further divided into administrative districts headed by district administrators or political leaders of the local communities. For example, the satrapy of "Beyond the River" was divided into various provinces and local administrative districts, including Syria, Palestine, Phoenicians, Samaria, Judea, and Arabs.

There were, of course, strong satrapies and weak ones but generally the satraps were powerful figures and, in some satrapies for example "Beyond the Rover," certain provinces were allowed some degree of self-governance such as the Phoenician city states which voluntarily joined the Empire and proved their continued loyalty to the united state of Persia (Ibid.). Babylon lost its special status after a revolt which was put down under Xerxes who then ordered its reduction into a part of the "Beyond the River" satrapy. That was the end of Babylon as a special satrapy or even an important name.

Central Control and Coordination of the Satrapies
Several institutional mechanisms established by the central government served as checks and balances in the satrapy system. This was essential for the administrative system to (1) maintain central control over the entire Empire; (2) forestall any possible independence, dissatisfaction, and revolt; (3) prevent abuse of authority and power by the satrap; (4) prevent corruption and decay in the system; (5) protect the diverse subject people in the multinational united state of Persia; and (6) maintain the territorial integrity of the Empire.

First, there was a separation of civil and military administration in the satrapy. While in charge of civil administration with wide discretion, the satraps lacked the command of the military which was given to an independent commander appointed by the central government and confirmed by the Great King. However, at times and based on personality, geographical, and kingship considerations, overlapping civil and military functions and authorities were also granted to certain satraps. Therefore, towards the end of the Empire, it is evident that some satraps assumed both the civil and military administration. The separation of military-civil administration denied the satraps the ability to amass both powers and possibly challenge the central authority. The military commander kept the satraps under check and control of the central administration and of the King from afar. What about the possibility of a conspiracy and joint revolt? Very slim.

Second, the independent commander-in-chief of armed forces with enormous power and closeness to the King was in control of the Persian army across the Empire. Given the rapid communication system in place, the commander was able to monitor any changes of situations in satrapies and the central government was swift to respond to challenges or revolts in any part of the united state.

The third institutional control of the satrapy was the presence in the satrapal courts of the "eyes of the king," an official appointed by the King who performed as a "state attorney" in legal matters. Fourth was the "ears of the king," as "an inspector general of the state" appointed and removed by the central government. The latter institution was highly admired by monarchs of the ancient world and was adopted by Charlemagne, the first Holy Emperor
of Rome to secure “cohesion between the various parts of his empire” more than a thousand years later (Ghirshman, 1954:144). The fifth institution of control was the periodic “examiners” of the state or representatives of the Great King who made unexpected visits to the satraps and their administrators and reported any corruption and mismanagement in the satrapies to the central government.

The final institutional control over the satrapal position was the “King’s secretary, an officer who forms part of every governor’s [satrap] establishment (Herodotus, 1984: 256) in the satrapy. Appointed by and reporting to the central administration, this powerful official served as (1) an independent liaison between the King and his satrapy; (2) a monitor to check the satrapal court and administration; (3) the powerful agent of the bureaucracy and the King; and (4) a model bureaucrat for the satrapal and provincial administrations. He was the key officer-confidant who would read the King’s letters and instructions to the satrapy.

An example of how this official was instrumental to the effective central control over the satrapal power is the case of a powerful man, Oroetes, the satrap of Phrygias Lydia, and Iorna, with a thousand Persians as his bodyguards. To remove him for many crimes he had committed and for his defiance of the central authority, Darius “called a meeting of the leading men in the country” for consultation to decide on the appropriate method of stopping the satrap. Thirty of the company who were present compete so hotly for the privilege of undertaking this service that Darius was forced to make them draw lots to stop arguments. The winner at once carried the King's instructions and order to the Oroetes’ Court, "opened the papers one by one, handing them to the King's secretary" with the instruction to read them aloud, ordering the guards to refuse to serve Oroetes. The instruction also included the words: "King Darius commands the Persians in Sardis to kill Oroetes," an order which was carried out at once (Ibid.).

Thus powerful as the satraps were in their large territories, significant institutional mechanisms of control were exercised over them by the central administration. Some of the above institutions of checks and balances were added by Darius in his major administrative reforms discussed below. Many of these institutions were adopted by the Romans hundreds of years later.

Administrative Policy Toward Subject Peoples
A most important feature of the Persian system of governance and administration of the Empire was a universally-applied liberal organizational policy of “tolerance and respect for subject peoples” throughout the far-extended territories of the realm. “The Persian was a tolerant government” (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. N, 1960-1987) with an administration characterized by both centralization and decentralization (Ibid.; Cook, 1983; Ghishman, 1954; Farazmand, 1991). As a founder of the vast Empire with multinational peoples, Cyrus was very well conscious of the settled civilizations and sought to create a unified world-state with all diversities. He then adopted the liberal organizational policy of “tolerant government.” The traditional life and custom of the many diverse peoples-indeed hundreds, even over a thousand gathered into the vast Empire was allowed to continue at local and even provincial levels as long as their local practices did not conflict with the centralized principles of administration and bureaucracy that were applied in carrying out the will of the King and in managing the political and economic policies of the realm. Administration of such a vast Empire had to have flexibility with respect to local governance.

Cyrus never abandoned—neither did his successors—the tolerant administrative policy towards the subject peoples even when he had to deal with a subsequent revolt in Sardis where he have appointed a Lydian in charge of the Treasury. In Babylon, at first he tried a local leader as governor for three years with his eldest son, Cambyses, as the Viceroy and the King's representative there, adopting the local conditions of governance and administration. Then Gobryas, the conquering army leader in Babylon, was appointed as the S satrap (more on this later). When Cyrus conquered Babylon, a large number of Jews in captivity were freed and sent to Palestine in 538 BCE. where he ordered their temple be rebuilt at the expense of the royal treasury and sent to Jerusalem "Sheshbazzar as governor with the store of gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar [the last Babylonian ruler] had removed" (Cook, 1983:41; Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. VI, 1953:176-179).

The centralized system of administration was based on various governmental, political, military, and bureaucratic institutions as well as on some traditions. Centralization was a key to an effective and efficient administration of the vast Empire, effective for political control and efficient for organizational and managerial performance. However, decentralization also served the system in two ways: it was a central component of the "tolerant government" policy allowing for local and provincial leadership and respect for the traditions of the subject peoples and it provided the administrative system with maximum opportunity for flexibility and efficiency. Both organizational principles of centralization and decentralization complemented each other toward the effective administration of the Empire.

Unlike the Assyrians before and the Romans later who reduced subject peoples to total slavery and obliterated their customs and traditions, the Persians maintained from Cyrus the Great the universal policy of tolerant governance and administration. Not only were the Persians tolerant of the various traditions, customs, and religions in their realm, realm, they took further steps and "actively supported the temple-worship of the gods of their subjects, or contributed to the building of their temples, and conferred on the priesthood and religious institutions special privileges. Cyrus and Darius not only permitted the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem but laid the cost of it on the royal treasury. Persians also adapted to the local customs and traditions and were eager to learn from the diverse cultures and civilizations already in place. They were great learners (Herodotus, 1984).
The administration of the "Beyond the River" with Damascus as its capital was, for example, conditioned by two principles: (1) the "diversity of ethnic and national groups, exhibiting various patterns of relationship vis-à-vis the Persian authority, and (2) considerations of administrative efficiency, with allowance for the interests of the local groups" (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IV, end ed., 1988: 147). "Beyond the River," with the territories of Syria and Palestine, was initially organized together with Babylonia as "Babylonia and Beyond the River," implying more significance of the former but then it was soon separated, perhaps under Darius, into two Satraps, an organizational restructuring that was reversed, this time signifying the latter. Under Xerxes, Babylon was punished for the revolt and reduced to a province of the "Beyond the River" Satrapy; its previous status was never recovered again (Cook, 1981:41).

Two types of organizational subdivision were adopted in the satrapies: (1) the administrative unit for managerial efficiency and administrative purposes and (2) the division based on ethnic, religious, and racial groupings in accordance with the tolerant governance policy. While the administrative subdivisions could expand or contract at different times, the ethnic grouping was generally unchanged. This dual system of administrative organization was one of the major innovations the Persians introduced to the governance system (ibid.; Frye, 1963; Olmstead, 1948). Both types of administrative subdivisions along with the organizational principles of centralization and decentralization were integrated in the professionalized bureaucracy of the Empire.

THE PERSIAN BUREAUCRACY
The Persian bureaucracy was the most efficient and effective institution of governance and administration of the world-state Empire. No bureaucracy of the ancient time ever matched the status the Persians had established. In fact, the reputation of the Persian bureaucracy has remained even to the present day.

After the King and the army, the bureaucracy was the most powerful institution of the Persian world-state Empire. As a powerful organizational instrument, its high efficiency was manifest in various managerial functions and processes while its effectiveness was demonstrated in its performance as an instrument of political and administrative control throughout the far-extended Empire.

The Persian bureaucracy was gigantic, centralized, and professionalized. Its size, functions, and performance surpassed any of the bureaucracies in the ancient world. It was omnipresent and omnipotent in every comer of the realm. "Everywhere the armies of the Great King went, there the Achaemenid bureaucracy was planted with all of the required administration-military, financial, and judicial, and communication with other provinces and [satrapies] was insured by the official language" (Frey, 1963:97).

The Persian bureaucracy operated in an environment that was both vast and diverse, stable and peaceful. The economy of the Empire was prosperous as the vastness and the diversity of climate and natural resources of the Empire provided an abundance of revenues for the Treasury. The Achaemenid government recognized the significance of a sound economy for the maintenance and enhancement of the Empire and its world-state scale of operations. Through various economic and financial reforms and with a sound judicial system in place, the Persian economy throughout the realm developed with a monetary system, leading to the growth of early capitalism, mercantilism, and free trade.

Capitalism grew along with the feudal system of economy and social relations where aristocracy maintained the ruling status but the society was court-oriented and court-guided. Silver coins and other precious metals were used as major instruments of exchange in the economy, gold was used primarily for royal, political, and military purposes and there was plenty of gold in the Treasury. Taxation was also based on kind goods and services as well as on money and precious metals. An advanced weight measuring system was adopted, fixed, and variable property collected with efficiency; and the diversity of the economic system in the far-extended territories from the East to West with all climate differences provided the Empire with a sound and flexible economy. No doubt, the peasantry carried the burden of taxation particularly toward the end of the Empire when over taxation and bureaucratic abuse became major problems and a contributing factor to the vulnerability to external challenges. However, overall the economy flourished under the powerful and stable Persian Empire (Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. N, 1963).

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